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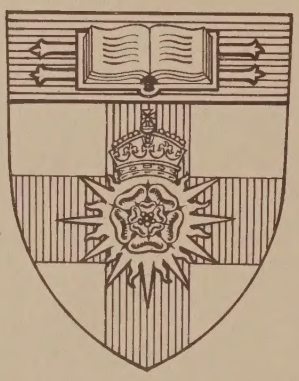

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REPORTS

FROM

COMMISSIONERS, INSPECTORS,

AND OTHERS:

FIFTY-ONE VOLUMES.

—(37.)—

HOUSE LETTING (SCOTLAND); HORSE BREEDING; IRISH RAILWAYS.

Session

29 *January* 1908 —— 21 *December* 1908.

VOL. XLVII.

1908.

REPORTS

FROM

COMMISSIONERS, INSPECTORS,

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1908:

FIFTY-ONE VOLUMES:—CONTENTS OF THE

THIRTY-SEVENTH VOLUME.

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DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON HOUSE-LETTING IN SCOTLAND.

REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

ON

HOUSE-LETTING IN SCOTLAND.

VOLUME II.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDICES.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of his Majesty.

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1907.

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Scott, Francis John, . . .	Solicitor, and President of the Aberdeen House Proprietors' Association.	28th January 1907.	9964–10,122	242–245
Scrymgeour, Edwin, . . .	Member of Dundee Town Council,	14th January 1907.	8043–8103	197–198
Shepherd, Edward, . . .	House Factor, Member of the Dundee Landlords' and House Factors' Association.	14th January 1907.	8540–8707	207–210
Smillie, Robert, . . .	President of the Lanarkshire Miners' County Union.	3rd January 1907.	4728–4901	113–117
Stark, Alexander, . . .	General Secretary of the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society of England, Ireland, and Scotland, with Headquarters in Glasgow.	17th December 1906.	4019–4091	95–96
Stevenson, William, . . .	Burntisland, formerly a House Factor in Leith.	7th January 1907.	6917–7071	169–172
Stewart, Archibald, . . .	President of the Partick and Govan House Factors' Association.	10th December 1906.	1284–1493	33–37
Stewart, Thomas Maclachlan, LL.B.,	Solicitor, and Secretary of the Glasgow Landlords' Association, Ltd.	10th December 1906.	915–1283	24–33
Stiven, Alexander W., C.A., .	Police Treasurer of Dundee, . .	14th January 1907.	8104–8196	198–200
Tait, William, ...	President of the Airdrie and District Landlords' Association	3rd January 1907.	5351–5445	128–129
Tannahill, Robert Dunlop, .	Assessor for Kilmarnock, . .	3rd January 1907.	5116–5350	123–128
Tasker, Alexander, ...	Late Horse Driver, Dundee, .	14th January 1907.	8522–8539	206–207
Taylor, John. . . .	Provost of Clydebank, . . .	28th January 1907.	9928–9963	241–242

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Thompson, Ernest, . . .	Member of the Executive of the Paisley Tenants' Protection Association.	26th November 1906.	558–733	13–18
Thomson, John Russell, . .	Architect, Rothesay, . . .	4th January 1907.	5880–5968	143–145
Wallace, J. F., ...	Secretary of the Falkirk and District Landlords' Association.	7th January 1907.	7109–7221	173–175
Watson, John G., . . .	Estate Agent, 4 New Bridge Street, Newcastle-on Tyne.	30th January 1907.	10,996–11,208	265–270
Williamson, A. M., . . .	Advocate, Aberdeen, . . .	28th January 1907.	10,123–10,335	245–251
Wills, J. B., ...	House Factor, an Ex-President of the Association of House Factors and Property Agents in Glas gow, etc.	11th December 1906.	2536–2735	60–64
Wilson, Thomas, ...	Inspector of the Edinburgh Labour Exchange under the Edinburgh Distress Committee.	7th January 1907.	7713–7751	188–189
Wood, William J., . . .	Collector of Assessments for the Burgh of Glasgow.	26th November 1906.	341–557	8–13
Do. . . .	Do.	4th January 1907.	5531–5550	132–133

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

ON

HOUSE LETTING IN SCOTLAND.

FIRST DAY.

MONDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 1906.

At the Burgh Court Hall, Glasgow.

Present:

SHERIFF CHARLES J. GUTHRIE, K.C., *Chairman.*

SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, Bart.
MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR EDWARD COX.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.
MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

26 Nov. 1906.

(*Chairman.*) In opening the proceedings of this Departmental Committee, it will be well just to indicate two things: first, the scope of our inquiry; and, second, the procedure that we propose to adopt. We are appointed to inquire into the letting of the smaller class of dwelling-houses in Scottish burghs, and in doing so we shall, of course, have to look at three points:—

(1) What is the present system of letting the smaller dwellings in Scottish burghs.

(2) What are the grievances which it is alleged flow from the present system.

(3) What are the legislative remedies, if any, which should be recommended to remove these grievances.

We have resolved to meet to-day in Glasgow at the start of the inquiry, because it has been evident from the deputations who appeared before Sir George Trevelyan, Lord Dunedin, and Captain Sinclair, and also from what has appeared otherwise, that the main complaint has been from Glasgow and the West of Scotland. We had proposed to lead certain evidence to-day, but we found that many of the witnesses whom we had expected to see could not possibly have their evidence ready by to-day. The result is that we shall meet again in Glasgow on Monday, 10th December. Further procedure will depend upon circumstances. Possibly we may have to lead evidence elsewhere—possibly in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee—but all that will depend on what happens in connection with the evidence that is led in Glasgow. I may just add that while the commission to us is as I have above stated, we quite anticipate that there may be questions which are not perhaps directly remitted to us for inquiry, but which arise out of our inquiry—such questions as the rating question, procedure in ejections, the law of hypothic, and others, which we shall not exclude from the evidence laid before us, although to some extent they may be rather side issues than directly involved. We propose to-day to begin by hearing evidence from Mr William Crawford Menzies, the manager of the City Improvements Department of the Glasgow Corporation. Of course it will be understood that we are not here to inquire into the merits of any bill or bills that have been already before Parliament or are before Parliament now. And we should like it to be known, because in the evidence that has been already forwarded to us for consideration, some of the witnesses seem to imagine that what we are here to do is to criticise Mr Cross's bill. It will be kept in view that we have the whole matter before us, and it will also be kept in view that this whole question has been the subject of a series of bills—nine in number—beginning in 1890, and going on in 1894, 1895, 1897, 1898, 1900, 1904, 1905, and 1906, not by any means all in the same terms, but proposing different legislative remedies for the same alleged grievance. It will therefore be understood that the whole matter is before us.

26 Nov.

Mr W. Crawford Menzies.

MR WILLIAM CRAWFORD MENZIES, called and examined.

1. (*Chairman.*) You are the manager of the City Improvements Department of the Corporation of Glasgow, and you are in charge of their houses and shop property?—Yes.

2. You have held that office for fourteen years?—Yes.

3. Were you in the employment of the Corporation before that?—No. My father was a builder in Glasgow, and I was brought up in connection with the property interest in Glasgow since I was a boy.

4. You are prepared to-day to speak to the work of the Corporation in letting their property?—Yes.

5. And, so far as you know it, on the general practice prevailing among house agents in Glasgow?—Yes.

6. Would you just kindly tell us the description and

number of the houses under your charge?—Yes. Belonging to the Corporation under my charge are the following: 665 one-apartment houses, 1401 two-apartment houses, 360 three-apartment houses, and 22 four-apartment houses—a total of 2448 houses.

7. In what parts of the town are they situated?—A considerable number are situated in the central district, around the Cross of Glasgow. We have also houses in the Townhead district, to the north; we have a number in Stobcross Street and the adjacent streets towards the western district, and we have a number in the Calton district—that is to the east. We have a few on the outlying eastern border of the city. We have also a few on the south side. So they are pretty well distributed.

8. For how many years have the Corporation held property of this description?—They commenced to hold property immediately after the passing of the Improvements Act of 1866, but that was old property. They retained a considerable holding of that old property, although some of it had been demolished, up till a few years ago. Since 1888 they have demolished practically the whole of the old property that had been returned, and it now consists of new buildings.

9. So the 2448 houses, we may take it, are, practically speaking, new property?—Yes, except about 200 or 250 houses.

10. Could you tell us the variation of rents in each class?—Yes.

11. Take your 665 one-apartment houses, and give us the minimum and the maximum?—If I take the one-apartment houses, the lowest net rent that we have—that is, exclusive of any rates—is £4, 10s., and the highest is £8, 15s.

12. Then the two-apartment houses?—They range from £7 to £14, 3s.

13. The three-apartment houses?—We have them from £12, 9s. to £22.

14. The four-apartment houses?—From £18 to £32.

15. In which of these cases are there bath-rooms in addition to the apartments you have mentioned?—In houses with three apartments—a few, not very many—there are bath-rooms, and in the four-apartment houses.

16. Are there none in the two-apartment houses?—There might be one or two, or half a dozen, but it is so trifling that I do not mention it.

17. How many of the 2448 houses are let by year, from Whitsunday term to Whitsunday term?—671.

18. That leaves 1777 not let by the year?—Yes.

19. How are these let? What is the term? Monthly?—Monthly tenure.

20. You do not have quarterly or half-yearly tenure?—No.

21. You have told us that there were 671 let by the year. Can you tell me which description of your four classes that applies to? Are there any one-apartment houses let by the year?—Yes, there are.

22. How many?—91.

23. Out of 671 there are 91 one-apartment houses let by the year?—Yes.

24. Out of the 1401 two-apartment houses, how many are let by the year?—352.

25. Out of the 360 three-apartment houses, how many are let by the year?—206.

26. And out of the 22 four-apartment houses, how many are let by the year?—22.

27. The whole of them?—Yes. I shall put these particulars in tabular form for your reference.

28. When you are letting houses, do you use a missive?—We use a missive for a new tenant taking the house for the first year.

29. In connection only with the yearly lets, or also with the monthly lets?—With the monthly lets also.

30. In all cases?—Yes.

31. In the case of renewals, do you use a missive?—No. I speak now of the yearly houses. About the 24th or 25th January we send out a circular to all these yearly tenants.

32. Do you have a copy of that circular?—I do not have one with me, but I can send one in. I send out this circular about 24th or 25th January, advising tenants that the letting term for the ensuing year is 2nd February, the Candlemas term, and asking them to call at my office, and hand over the arles for the following year if they are to remain as tenants. When this is done the transaction is noted in the "Arles Book" and the entry signed by two clerks as witnesses. If by the 2nd February they have not called and arled their houses for the succeeding year, then two of my clerks take this book, the "Arles Book," and ask them to re-take in the same way. By the end of the first week in February our list is practically complete.

33. By the end of the first week in February your list for the Whitsunday term is made up?—Yes.

34. Would you tell me, apart from the length of tenure, what are your periods of payment of rents?—The rents of the monthly houses are paid monthly, and the rents of the yearly houses are paid quarterly.

35. In every case?—Yes.

36. Have you any forehand rents?—The monthly rents are all forehanded.

37. And the yearly rents?—No, none.

38. Have you any system of asking cautioners for the rent?—It is not usual. It may be done in the case of a tenant that is a stranger to Glasgow, but if they have a good record from the previous factor, we do not ask any cautioner.

39. Do you insist in each case, whether monthly or yearly, on the house being furnished?—Yes, we do.

40. And from time to time have you had occasion to exercise the landlord's hypothec?—Yes, occasionally.

41. Does your practice differ from that of others factoring property, or is it similar?—In regard to 1487 of the houses it is different.

42. Which are those?—In 1487 of these houses, monthly houses, we collect the whole of the tenants' rates along with the monthly payments of rent.

43. What is the highest rent in any of these 1487 houses?—The highest rent in any of these is £18.

44. And the lowest is how much?—£4, 10s.

45. Have there always been a certain number of cases where you have collected the rates along with the rents in your experience, or is it a new experience?—It is really a new experience.

46. When was it inaugurated?—About eleven or twelve years ago.

47. What led to it?—I expect it was the feeling that led to the appointment of the Committee. There was a disposition to say that letting covered too long a period from January, and it was an experiment gradually extended.

48. Has it proved successful in your view?—Fairly successful.

49. What do you mean by "fairly successful"?—I might say that the new property began to be built about the year 1888, and four or five years after that we initiated this system of collecting the tenants' rates along with the monthly rents. To enable me to do this, I had to compound with the rate collectors; I had to send out lists to the water rate collector, the police rate collector, and the poor and school rate collector, and that involved a considerable deal of work. At first, when there were only two or three hundred tenants under that tenure, it was very easily done, but I found as it was growing to over a thousand that it involved a very considerable amount of clerical work on my staff. And, therefore, of late, for the last five or six years probably, we have not extended the system except in the special case of houses which are built under Section 12 of the 1897 Improvements Act, which gave power to erect houses for the poorest classes in Glasgow. In these houses we restrict the tenants to those who are in receipt of small wages. We do not extend it beyond that class now.

50. Do you propose to extend it?—If we were building more for that class, but not for houses occupied by other classes.

51. The rates that you refer to which are collected along with the rents are the burgh rates and the parish council rates?—That is so.

52. Of course there are no imperial taxes paid by that class at all?—No.

53. Neither inhabited house duty, which only applies to houses above £20, nor income tax, which only applies to incomes above £160?—That is so, there are no imperial taxes.

54. May I take it that there are three sets of taxes that have to be paid, taking them generally—first, imperial taxes, consisting of inhabited house duty and income tax; second, burgh rates, consisting of burgh general assessment and the general improvements rate; and then, third, the parish council rates, consisting of school rate, poor rate, registration rate, and special parish rate?—Yes, and I would add to that the water rate, which is collected in Glasgow by a separate collector.

55. Is that not a burgh rate?—It is not included with the usual police assessment. There is also a stair lighting charge, which we recognise as separate too; it is charged in a different way.

56. These are all collected in the 1487 houses, so far as they apply to those particular houses?—Yes.

57. Is your practice in regard to sending out a notice in the end of January similar to that of other factors?—Yes, it is practically similar. The only difference is that I think we are a little later than the other factors in Glasgow.

58. Was there not a resolution some years ago to adopt 15th March as the period for concluding contracts?—My information is that there was a resolution of that kind carried out in Edinburgh, but I never heard of it in Glasgow.

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59. Do you find in the case of your yearly lets any difficulty in letting the houses because of the yearly tenure?—There is no difficulty when our lists are complete at the proper time, but there is a difficulty when a house becomes vacant through any cause between the terms.

60. Do you not find at the ordinary term people saying that they would rather take the house monthly than yearly?—The only reply I can give to that is this, that we have had people who were living under the monthly tenure, where we collected the rates and rents each month, and when they went to another property, where we let by the year, we have found them sometimes saying that they would rather have it monthly. These are the only cases.

61. Have you, on the other hand, found cases of people who had a monthly tenure saying that they would rather have it by the year?—I have had one or two isolated cases where the tenants almost felt as if they were descending to a lower class of house and tenure when they were asked to pay monthly. But that was merely at the first—usually it passed away.

62. Is there any distinction, in your experience, between the state of repair and the general amenity in a monthly house from that in a yearly house?—Practically we have none.

63. You keep up the one as well as the other?—Yes.

64. And that includes sanitary arrangements also?—Yes.

65. Do you consider that there is any difference between your monthly lets and your yearly lets so far as the rate of rent is concerned. Suppose you let your monthly lets yearly and suppose you let your yearly lets monthly, would that involve any change in the rent?—No, except—and I must always make this exception—except in regard to the houses which have been built under Section 12, which are let at a lower rate than the market rate and are restricted to a special class.

66. Would there not be a saving of expense to you in the way of factoring if all your lets were yearly?—I do not think there would be any saving as far as our Department is concerned, because we have care-takers staying in each of these districts, and they would not be fully occupied with a quarterly collection.

67. In the case of an ordinary factor, it would reduce the amount of work for his clerks by changing from monthly to yearly?—Yes, in regard to collecting.

68. Would it be a substantial difference?—Yes.

69. Do you not find that you sometimes have your monthly houses vacant for a number of months as compared with those that you have let by the year?—The loss through the vacant monthly houses is so small that it is very inconsiderable. We very seldom lose a month's rent, although we have a number of changes.

70. In your case you let them so cheap that that is so?—That may be so in regard to those provided for the poorest classes under that special section that I have referred to, but not with the ordinary ones that we have.

71. Have you ever found, in the case of your yearly lets, a difficulty of this sort—an undesirable tenant who is objected to by the neighbours, but whom you cannot turn out so long as he pays his rent?—Yes, we have found that difficulty occasionally.

72. To any great extent?—No, not to any great extent.

73. Could you give us any idea in which class of cases you find the greatest proportion of arrears, monthly or yearly?—Our arrears are so inconsiderable over the whole that they would not amount to one-half per cent. of our rental. I might say that we are careful in letting, so we do not have very many tenants that fall into arrear or difficulties.

74. In Glasgow, are the pay-days on the Clyde weekly or fortnightly?—I rather think that they are weekly now, but I could not say for certain.

75. Has the tendency been to make the letting date still earlier than it used to be?—Yes, that is so. It used to be 2nd February, and gradually it has been put further back, till now it comes on to the 23rd or 24th January.

76. What is that due to?—It seems to me it is because tenants begin to ask if there are houses to let before they give up their old ones. They go round the factors about the New Year time, and they want to know what houses are to be let for the ensuing year. The result is that the factor, finding inquiries for the next year, presses tenants to give a reply.

77. Have you known any cases in your own experience where, in the case of a yearly let, a tenant has had to remove owing to circumstances and has been liable for both rents? Or will you tell us what you do in the case of subletting?—We have every now and again some tenant saying that he has to remove, and asking us to sublet his house or take it off his hands. We ask him to sign a form of which I will send in a copy, giving us power to sublet the house and stating that he will be liable for the rent till the period has run out. We very often get the houses sublet for the tenant—we have not any great difficulty in that way.

78. What do you charge him?—We charge him practically just the stamp duty.

79. How much is that?—It depends on the rental of the house. The usual rate is 2s. 6d. on £25, and it will be 1s. 6d. on £15.

80. Will you tell me the largest amount of rent that you recollect that a tenant removing had to pay for a house which he no longer continued to occupy?—I cannot charge my mind with the particular cases, but I know I have never charged more than one quarter.

81. You have had cases where you have had to charge one quarter?—Very seldom, but I have had cases.

82. Do you find that practically an enormous proportion of the removals from your houses and the entries to your houses are at Whitsunday?—With the yearly lets that is so. But with the monthly lets I think we have more people changing their houses between the terms.

83. Do you say more people?—Yes. It has been hurriedly got up, but I have some figures about it.

84. Perhaps you could tell us afterwards, with regard to the monthly lets, what percentage of the removals are at Whitsunday, and the balance will be for the rest of the year?—I found last year, in regard to the monthly houses, where we collect the rates along with the rents, that we had nearly 300 removals between the terms, as against 200 at the two legal terms, the one at the beginning of the year and the other at the end. Taking Whitsunday 1905, I find that I had 68 removals from that class of house, and during the course of that year we had over 290. Then at Whitsunday of this year we had 138. I suppose that is owing to dull trade and fluctuations in business being worse this year.

85. In the case of sub-letting, is it an absolute right in the tenant, or must the new tenant after the present one be subject to your approval?—He must be subject to our approval.

86. In the case of removals at Whitsunday, do you find any complaints from tenants about the great expense caused through the large wages for those removing and the cost of hiring being excessive at that crowded period?—We find no complaint. I think the custom is so well established that people look upon it just as a law of nature.

87. Is it the fact that the charges are higher for removal, both the hiring and the actual wages, than for removing between terms?—I could not condescend on that.

88. Or could you say whether the charges for painting and papering, for instance, and other work done in connection with the Whitsunday term, are higher than at other periods of the year?—So far as we are concerned, our painter work is fixed by contract over the year, so it is no higher, but there is a good deal of inconvenience at the Whitsunday term, when there is so great a demand.

89. How does it show itself?—If a new tenant comes in at Whitsunday, instead of getting his repairs done within a week or ten days, it may be a month before he gets them finished.

90. Do you find any difficulty, from the sanitary point of view, in getting houses cleaned, owing to the great majority of removals being at the Whitsunday term?—No.

91. You have not experienced that?—No.

92. In the case of a tenant being in arrear and necessity arising for ejecting him, do you find any difficulty from the procedure?—I find it rather slow sometimes.

93. You are speaking of monthly tenants?—Yes.

94. Do you go to the Burgh Court or the Sheriff Court?—The Burgh Court usually.

95. I think your rents are paid forehand?—Yes.

96. If a tenant does not pay his rent at the beginning of a month, what happens? How long do you allow him to run on?—It depends entirely on circumstances. We sometimes allow him to run the month.

97. Suppose it runs a month and then you resolve to eject him?—We give him ten days' notice, and if he does not remove at the end of the period we have to take him to the Burgh Court and await the procedure, and it may take other ten days.

98. Does it take, roughly, about three weeks?—Yes.

99. So, in that case, subject to your right of hypothec, you might lose a month and three weeks' rent?—Yes.

100. And of course there is the cost of the proceedings?—Yes.

101. How much would that be?—About 8s., I think, before we get the ejectment, but perhaps some other witness will give the exact figures. I know it is somewhere under 10s.

102. Have you many tenants who obtain relief from the burgh rates?—We have thirty or forty that obtain relief from the poor rates.

103. In what class of houses are they?—They are mostly in the single-apartment houses, particularly in those reserved for the poorest classes.

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104. Does that number depend on such circumstances as trade and so on?—No, these are really people in receipt of relief.

105. How many of the forty will be in receipt of relief?—The whole of them.

106. In the case of the monthly tenants whose rates are collected along with their rents, are any of them included in the forty?—There might be one or two, but I don't think so.

107. Suppose there were, would there be an application there, and, if so, at whose instance?—Yes, the tenant would apply to us, and we would represent the case to the poor rate authorities.

108. And if it was successful, what would be done?—We would give them a relief to the extent of the poor rate.

109. Without deduction for any expense you had been put to?—Yes, without deduction.

110. Mr Esslemont suggests to me, what about the burgh rates?—Some years ago I made application for these same people who were on the poor roll, and I was informed by the police treasurer that there was no statutory provision by which they could be relieved from the police rates, but I think we do get a relief in some indirect way.

111. I notice under Section 343 of the Burgh Police Act of 1892 the enactment is, "The Commissioners may, on the ground or inability of any person liable to the burgh general assessment under this Act, remit, in whole or part, payment of the said assessment by such person" &c.—Is that a general Act?

112. Yes.—Does it apply to Glasgow?

113. I see you are not under that?—It is since that date that I applied to the treasurer and could not get relief, but there is some relief given now in an indirect way.

114. (*Mr Esslemont.*) In how many cases?—Very few. If there is a right of relief, we will have the whole forty that we apply for relief from the poor rates for, but I don't think we have anything like that number that get relief from the police rates. I could not be certain of that—it is a matter that the rates collector could tell better about. I know when I made inquiry there was no statutory provision at the time, but there was something said about leaving them over and just putting them in with uncollected arrears.

115. (*Chairman.*) Who is the best person to tell us about that?—The police treasurer.

116. (*Mr Binnie.*) But you are collecting the rates from the tenants along with your rents?—Yes.

117. When you get relief of the poor rate, you deduct that from the amount that you charge your tenant with?—Yes.

118. Is there any case in which you have deducted an amount in respect of the relief that you have got for police or burgh rates?—I better not commit myself. I think there was a case or two where we did get relief from the burgh rates and gave the remission to the tenant, but it was not a regular thing.

119. (*Chairman.*) I don't know whether you can tell us this or not—under your local Acts in Glasgow is the provision the same as under the general Act, that in rents under £4 the owner pays the whole rates?—That is the case in Glasgow.

120. It is the same limit?—Yes, under £4 the owner pays the rates.

121. In the case where you collect the rates, what is the percentage of allowance to you?—The only percentage we get for collecting rates is in the case of rents under £10, and we get from the burgh authorites only 7½ per cent.

122. Do you think that is enough?—It is enough for us.

123. Do you mean that you would be in a different position from other factors when you say that it is enough for you?—I think we may be in a somewhat more favourable position, because our properties are new, and they were in great demand for a while, and we could get fairly good tenants always.

124. Looking to your class of tenants in the cases where you do not collect the rates, are the rates fairly well paid?—Yes.

125. Have you any notion how many of your people have been disfranchised in a year for non-payment of rates?—I don't know, but there would be very few.

126. In regard to empty houses, can you give us any notion of how many of your 2448 houses might be empty at any period of the year?—I can tell you how many are empty now—there are just about 40, and they are all two-room and kitchen houses, with one or two exceptions.

127. What are the exceptions?—We have 1 single-apartment and perhaps 2 two-apartment houses, and all the rest are three-apartment houses.

128. Is that a normal amount, or is it exceptional?—It is very exceptional for us.

129. What is your average number?—Less than half.

130. In your districts is the population increasing, or is it in some cases decreasing?—In some cases it is decreasing.

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131. Are you in the Calton at all?—Yes.

132. Is the population decreasing there?—Yes.

133. And are you in the Townhead?—Yes.

134. Is the population decreasing there?—Yes, I think so.

135. Are you in Blackfriars?—Yes, we have some property there.

136. Is the population decreasing there?—I could not say: I am not aware of it.

137. Are you in the Cowcaddens?—We have none there.

138. Or Woodside?—No.

139. Or Mile-end or Springburn?—No.

140. Or Langside?—No.

141. Have you property in any district where the population is increasing, and, if so, which?—We have some property that is really on the verge of the City, just on the margin. There is no doubt that the population is increasing out there.

142. The most of your properties are in the districts where the population is decreasing?—Or stationary.

143. And you would therefore not have the difficulties that might arise in some cases where the population was increasing—difficulties in getting houses, for instance?—I don't think there is any difficulty in any district in Glasgow just now.

144. But it does not apply to your districts?—No.

145. Suppose a man in Glasgow shifts his employment and he is still in Glasgow or in the surrounding district, does he necessarily want to change his house?—Not necessarily.

146. Why not?—It may be that he has a family, and the house he has may be more suitable for his family than a house in the district to which he has transferred his employment.

147. Do you mean even in the case of his getting permanent employment elsewhere?—Yes.

148. How does he get over the difficulty?—By travelling himself and keeping his residence in the place suitable for his family.

149. Have the means for such a man getting to his work very much increased in recent years?—Yes, the facilities are very much better.

150. Then suppose a man gets temporary employment elsewhere, what do you find in a case of that kind?—He does not seek to move for some time.

151. (*Mr Binnie.*) Do you find that frequent removals increase the outlay for repairs?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

152. For the gentlemen who are not acquainted with Glasgow, perhaps you would explain about the workmen's trains that go to the like of Clydebank. Do you know about them?—I know that there are morning and evening trains, and they give weekly tickets at a very cheap rate.

153. Do you know what that rate is?—No.

154. (*Mr Dobbie.*) How do you collect the rates? Do you spread the amount over twelve months?—Yes.

155. The whole of the rates?—We simply take the total amount of the rates, add it to the yearly rent, and divide the whole by twelve, and collect each month.

156. Do you compound with the authorities and get any abatement in respect of doing this?—The only abatement that we get is the 7½ per cent. on the police rates alone, which we only get on houses under £10.

157. Then about the poor rate—you said that there were about forty people that were on the poor roll and got relief. Could you tell us how many of the other tenants would get exemption, if any: would there be any apart from the forty out of your monthly lets?—Get exemption in what way?

158. Get off paying poor rates on the ground of poverty?—In our system we cannot distinguish in the collection—we have to collect from everybody. They come and say, "We get relief from the rates," and then we make an appeal to the poor law authority, and allow it back to the tenant.

159. Does that mean that, under the system of monthly letting which you have here in the case of 1777 houses, there are none of the tenants who are already on the poor roll disqualified for failure to pay poor rates?—They would be disqualified when we got the rates recovered.

160. But none of the others besides the forty?—So far as I know there are none of them.

161. That is one of the results of this system, that only forty already on the poor roll are disqualified in respect of failure to pay their poor rates?—I never heard the question raised, but I believe that is so.

162. Out of some 2400?—Yes, but of course we do not collect the rates from all these.

163. Then you mentioned that there was, I think rents rightly, a sentiment against tenants paying their quite monthly rather than quarterly. Is that the only objection you have heard taken?—It was such a slight sentiment that I do not put any weight on it.

Mr W. Crawford Menzies. 26 Nov. 1906.

164. If the custom was universal, I suppose the sentiment would die out?—I think so.

165. Do you find any more trouble in enforcing hypothec in the case of monthly lets as against your yearly lets?—With the smallest class of house we simply think it is not worth while going to the expense of attaching the hypothec for all we would recover, and if people go away at the end of the month we simply wipe it off as a bad debt.

166. Could you tell us whether you lose more through bad tenants, defaulting tenants as a rule, who are taking their houses monthly, as against tenants who take them by the year?—What we lose through bad debts is so infinitesimal that I hardly ever think of it, either monthly or yearly.

167. Of course you are rather popular landlords?—That is for other people to say.

168. I mean in view of your method in regard to repairs?—I believe our property will compare with any other property.

169. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you experience any difficulties in getting the properties finished in time for the new tenants?—That is a common experience when they are being prepared for the term letting.

170. The rush is so great at that time that it is sometimes very inconvenient?—It is sometimes difficult to get tradesmen to do work at that time, when they are being pressed to do repairs.

171. Do you ever experience it in connection with new property?—It is difficult to get them to finish new property when they are so busy with repairs at other properties.

172. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) About the £20 limit that is proposed in Mr Cross's bill, does that draw a reasonable distinction?—In what respect?

173. I mean between houses above £20 and below.—That distinction is drawn by the imperial authorities. House duty is charged on houses with a rental of £20 and above, while none is charged on houses with a rental below that.

174. Some of the houses you have been talking about to-day are over £20: I see some of the three-room houses go up to £22.—Is that in regard to the provisions of Mr Cross's bill?

175. I won't discuss his bill. I am talking about the £20 limit. Would that include the class of houses you have been talking about?—It would practically include all the smaller class houses.

176. (*Chairman.*) Is there any distinction between the class of tenant, in regard to his employment or habits or anything else, in a £20 house and in a £25, say, house?—I don't think so.

177. Or £30? When you come to £30 houses do you rather come to men like foremen?—Yes, I think you are getting away beyond the working class altogether. I think £20 would be the limit for the working class.

178. (*Mr Howden.*) Even when their families get up in years, and there are two or three of them working?—It might occasionally be within their means, but as a rule it is beyond them.

GLASGOW CORPORATION CITY IMPROVEMENTS DEPARTMENT.

Numbers and Sizes of Houses owned by the Department, and how Let.

	Houses let Monthly.		Houses let yearly and Rates paid by Tenant.	Total.
	Rates compounded.	Rates paid by Tenant.		
1. Apartment houses .	422	152	91	665
2. Do. .	965	84	352	1401
3. Do. .	100	54	206	360
4. Do. .	...	...	22	22
Total . .	1487	290	671	2448

Mr J. M'Fie.

Mr JOHN M'FIE, called and examined.

179. (*Chairman.*) You are a partner of the firm of John M'Fie & Son, factors, Glasgow?—Yes.

180. How long have you been in business?—Since 1875.

181. Even since then have you been factoring houses of different numbers of apartments in Glasgow?—Yes.

182. In what district or districts?—From Cathcart and Partick to Parkhead and Springburn, the whole of Glasgow.

183. Are you factoring houses both in districts with an increasing population and in districts with a decreasing population?—I am not in the decreasing lot.

184. That is Calton and Townhead?—There is not much decrease in Springburn.

185. No, I think Springburn is increasing. Will you tell me how many houses you have charge of at present?—5555.

186. Will you kindly divide them?—There are 850 one-apartment houses, 2450 two-apartment houses, 800 three-apartment houses: a total of 4100 houses. The difference between that and the 555 is shops.

187. Will you tell us about the rents?—The rents of the one-apartment houses are from £3, 10s. to £8, 15s.; the rents of the two-apartment houses are from £6 to £13, 10s., and of those that have a bath-room with hot water from £13 to £15, 15s. The rents of the three-apartment houses are from £8, 8s. to £17, 10s., and with bath-room and hot water from £15 to £21, 10s.

188. So you vary from £3, 10s. up to £21, 10s.?—Yes, but of course we have far larger houses than that.

189. But I am talking of the one to three-apartment houses. I think that is accurate?—Yes.

190. Your two periods of letting are yearly and monthly?—Yes.

191. You have no half-yearly or quarterly?—No.

192. Take the one-apartment houses: what percentage of these are let monthly?—75 per cent. are let monthly.

193. The remainder being let yearly?—Yes.

194. Then the two-apartment houses: about 10 per cent. are let monthly?—Yes.

195. And the remaining 90 per cent. are let yearly?—Yes.

196. The three-apartment houses: about 1 per cent. are let monthly, and the remaining 99 per cent. are let yearly?—Yes.

197. What are the terms of payment for the monthly houses?—Monthly: it is supposed to be in advance.

198. They are all forehand rents?—Yes.

199. In the yearly lets, how often are the rent paid?—Quarterly.

200. Are any of them forehand?—Not very many, unless by desire of the tenant.

201. Do you let both in the case of the monthly and the yearly houses by missive?—Very few missives. The single-apartment houses are let monthly.

202. In the case of the monthly lets, suppose a man comes in for the first time, does he sign a missive of lease?—Not if he pays a monthly rent; but we require to know something about him.

203. In the case of yearly lets, is there a missive in every case, both when you have a new tenant and when an old tenant retakes his house?—There is a circular sent to the tenant.

204. You produce a copy of the circular that is sent?—Yes. (Hands in.)

205. I notice that in the circular sent out for reletting, the date is blank January?—Yes.

206. At what period in January is it sent out?—About the 18th, and it is asked to be returned on the 25th.

207. It is to be returned not later than blank January. You say that that is the 25th?—Yes.

208. When do you make up your list for letting in the case of houses that are not to be retaken? Suppose that a tenant does not send this circular back, what do you do?—We call on him and let him know that he must come with his missive or we let the house.

209. Up to what time do you give him a chance of taking his house?—His time is up on the 25th.

210. How many days' grace do you generally give him?—We call on him and send a post-card.

211. May I take it that the list is made up by Candlemas, 2nd February, the list is made up?—That is considered to be the time.

212. In the cases where you don't use missives, what do you do?—They come to the office, or two of our clerks go round and accept the arle, a penny or a halfpenny. That is how we do in that case.

213. Suppose a tenant wants to remove in the middle of a term, what takes place?—He comes to the office and makes an application. He has to write to us, and he pays 5 per cent. as a rule if he is a capable man, but if the bread-winner is dead, or anything of that kind, we put up the ticket for nothing, except the board.

Mr J. M'Fie. 26 Nov. 1906.

214. Suppose he presents to you a competent tenant to take his place, what do you charge in that case?—We charge the same as in the case of a death.

215. It is a nominal sum?—Yes.

216. Have you had many cases where a man wanted to sublet and it could not be done, and he had to pay rent for the rest of the time?—No.

217. Could you give us a notion in how many cases it will happen that a man has to continue to pay rent for a house that he does not occupy?—No, I could not give anything to verify what is said. It is a rare thing.

218. In what circumstances do you find the cases happen? It may happen owing to death, or it may happen owing to complete loss of employment, or to change of employment. Those are the three causes?—Yes.

219. Do you find that there are cases where the tenant says he would rather have a monthly let than go on with his yearly let?—That is a rare occurrence, but we are quite willing to agree with him if he wants a monthly let. If he is a man that we know, we are quite willing to take his monthly rent, but not to relieve him of his house.

220. But I am putting this: suppose a man has had a house on a yearly let, and at the end of the year he says, "I want to retake the house, but on a monthly let." Have you had cases of that kind?—Very rarely. It would not be according to the system if I was doing that way.

221. If a man did that, what would you say to him?—If he was a man that I knew well and he was competent to do what he said monthly, then I would agree with him.

222. You would give him a monthly let?—Yes.

223. Would that only be in the case of an exceptionally good tenant?—Yes.

224. Suppose a new man comes to you and proposes to take a house by the month that had previously been let by the year—what would you say then?—I would be apt to say no.

225. Why?—I may not know the man; I may not know the sort of people; and perhaps I do not want a monthly tenant in that property.

226. If he gave you a forehand rent, would you object then?—No, I am quite sure then.

227. (*Mr Howden.*) That is for a monthly tenancy?—It is all the same if I get twelve months' rent.

228. (*Chairman.*) I am afraid you do not see the point. Suppose a man says, "I want a monthly let; I am only to 'be bound for a month, and I am to pay you forehand so 'long as I remain here"—would you agree to that?—No.

229. Why not?—Because I did not know the man. If I knew the man, it would be a different story.

230. In your view, is it to the interest of the landlord to have a man bound for a year?—Yes, I think so, although I could modify that system.

231. You would modify it?—I could modify it to make it something like the Edinburgh system.

232. Will you tell us about that?—I don't know much about it.

233. Is your system of sending out the missive that you have told us about just similar to what other factors do in Glasgow?—Yes.

234. In Edinburgh there is a difference. The house is retaken there from about the end of March?—So I understand.

235. Do you see any reason why that should not prevail in Glasgow?—No, none in the world.

236. How far would you go? Would you go to the end of March?—Yes.

237. That gives you sufficient time before the 28th May?—Yes.

238. Do you think that there is a grievance in the present system which would be remedied by that difference?—I don't think there would be much remedy all the same, but if a bargain-maker wanted it he might have it, although I don't think he would gain much.

239. Has it been proposed to have that system in Glasgow?—Yes.

240. When was it proposed? I do not recollect, but it has been talked of for a while.

241. But it was not carried out?—No. It was proposed by Sir James Bain that the taxes should be included in the rent.

242. Do you find that the great mass of your removals are at Whitsunday?—Yes.

243. Can you give us any idea of the percentage at the Whitsunday term as compared with the other times of the year?—We have about 400 tenants removing at Whitsunday.

244. And what will be the total removals during the year?—It is difficult to answer that.

245. Would it be 90 per cent. that would remove at Whitsunday?—No, not at all: about 400 out of the 5000.

246. But they don't all remove?—That is the proportion, 400 out of 5000.

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247. (*Mr Binnie.*) But of the actual removals, how many are there at Whitsunday?—400.

248. And how many are there during the rest of the year? That is what the Chairman asks?—I cannot answer that without looking up the books.

249. (*Chairman.*) Could you find that out conveniently?—I could try.

250. Give us the total removals in the year and the number at Whitsunday. Do you find that the tenants have a difficulty, owing to so many removals at Whitsunday, in getting their removals conducted?—I don't think there is much trouble about that.

251. In your experience, are the rates of hiring and the cost of the work higher at Whitsunday than at other times of the year?—I believe it would be—I have heard that.

252. How much higher? I have heard it suggested two or three times the amount?—That is an exaggeration.

253. But it is materially higher?—Yes, from what I have heard.

254. Does that apply also to the cost of such things as papering and painting?—No, there is no difference there. We get our papering done for the same rate all the year round. Of course, it takes a longer time before it is done.

255. Does it result in this, that there are a good many tradesmen who are over-pressed at the Whitsunday term and are out of employment at other times of the year?—The painters just have to have men at that particular time.

256. But that is the effect, that there is over-pressure of work at that particular time?—Yes, there is pressure, but not what they cannot overcome.

257. In regard to the payment of your monthly rents forehand, is that a common practice in Glasgow?—It begins with forehand, but it ends with the opposite.

258. In all cases does it begin forehand?—Yes.

259. That is the practice?—Yes, the general practice.

260. I suppose that by far the greatest proportion of such property in Glasgow is factored by gentlemen similar to you?—Yes, pretty much. A good many factor their properties themselves.

261. Would there be 75 per cent. of it factored by regular professional factors?—Yes, I think about that.

262. Do you find a larger proportion of arrears in the monthly lets or in the yearly lets?—In the monthly lets certainly.

263. And in the cases where you have to eject the tenants, do you find a larger proportion in the monthly lets than in the yearly lets?—Yes. The small one-room and kitchen houses are on a par with single-apartment houses.

264. Do you find any difficulty in the ejectment procedure owing to its being prolonged?—We have just to bear it.

265. In regard to the rates, do you in any case collect the rates along with the rents?—Yes.

266. In what cases do you do so?—Five cases in Kinning Park, one in Govan Street, and one in South Wellington Street.

267. What class of houses are these?—One-room and kitchen.

268. Why do you collect the rates there and not in other cases?—It is done at the will of the proprietor.

269. Do you yourselves make your arrangements with the rating authorities?—Yes; they give us 7½ per cent.

270. Is that sufficient to cover your cost?—We have to be satisfied with it.

271. You would prefer 10 per cent.?—I suppose so. We have never asked that, at any rate.

272. Do you find that it makes any difficulty in the way of friction between you and the tenants when you are collecting the rates as well as the rents?—Not a bit.

273. Then there would be no practical difficulty in your collecting all the rates?—Not a bit, but it would mean a good deal of work to us.

274. (*Mr Howden.*) But the 7½ per cent. would cover that?—If we had 7½ per cent. on it all, it would do very well.

275. (*Chairman.*) Are these collected with monthly rents?—Yes.

276. To what rates does that apply?—All the city rates, the poor rate and the burgh rates. There are not many of them with the parish council—that is not the district for the parish council.

277. They have the school rate to pay?—Yes.

278. And the poor rate?—Yes.

279. And in addition the burgh rates?—Yes, and in that case we have the property taxed.

280. Do you get your 7½ per cent. both from the parish council authorities and from the burgh authorities?—No, we get it from the burgh authorities.

281. What do the parish council authorities allow you?—About the same, I think.

282. Have you any notion—I don't know that you will—how many of your 4100 tenants in the one- to three-

apartment houses may be disfranchised in the year for not paying their rates?—I have no idea.

283. Have you many moonlight flittings?—A good many, but as few as we can have.

284. Can you tell us how many you will have in the course of a year with your 4100 tenants? Will you have a dozen?—Yes, but I am notable to say exactly how many we will have.

285. They will be chiefly from the one-apartment houses?—And from the one-room and kitchen too.

286. Is it from the monthly or the yearly houses that you find the moonlight flittings chiefly?—From both kinds.

287. Mostly from the yearly?—There will be a little from both kinds.

288. Do you find that you have to enforce your right of hypothec?—Occasionally, but not very often.

289. Is that in the case of the yearly lets?—Yes. We can only do that where we have value for it.

290. What do you do in the case of the monthly lets where the rent has not been paid forehand?—We must enforce our hypothec there.

291. Suppose you had yearly lets and no right of hypothec, what would that result in? You would want either forehand rents or a cautioner?—A good cautioner would be as good.

292. Have you cautioners in many cases?—No.

293. Can you tell me how many empty houses you may have at any particular time of the year out of your 4100?—Last year before Whitsunday we had 300, and this year we have 200. We are getting better.

294. Between terms, how many may you have?—We do not change very much. We are always filling them up.

295. Do you find complaints from yearly tenants that when they want to change their house they are saddled with a whole year?—They don't care.

296. You find that they object?—No, not if they want to remove.

297. Have you found cases where a man changes his employment, but does not necessarily change his house?—Yes.

298. What kind of cases?—Masons and joiners.

299. How far do you find them travel? Suppose they have a house in the town here and a man gets employment outside Glasgow, do you find that they travel several miles?—Yes.

300. For instance, have you men who are working at Clydebank?—Sometimes, but we don't very well know where they are working, unless we get the information at first when we are letting the house.

301. (*Mr Binnie.*) You told us that last year you had 300 empty houses and this year you had 200?—Yes, at Whitsunday.

302. Five or six years ago, how many would you have?—Perhaps none.

303. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Out of these 4100 houses of one, two, and three apartments, how many tenants would be paying the rates as well as the rents to you?—None at all. It was only in these three properties I mentioned.

304. So it was a comparatively small number?—Yes.

305. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do you find more arrears in the smaller rented houses, in the one-room houses for example?—We try to keep him out of arrears because he is not a same man to be in arrears. We have no hypothec here as a rule.

306. Do you find any difference in the amount of loss between the two classes of lets, the 75 per cent. let by the month and the 25 per cent. let by the year?—Yes, but we have just to look better after them.

307. But my point is this—you think that there is more risk of loss in the case of the 25 per cent. let by the year, or is there less, as compared with the 75 per cent. let by the month?—In a case like that, if I was going to invest, I would prefer the small houses rather than the other ones. Even though you have them half let during the course of the year, you always get half of the rent.

308. (*Mr Howden.*) You told us that you charged 5 per cent. for subletting. That is one shilling in the pound of rental?—It might be in a £10 house.

309. It would work on a £10 house the same as on any other one?—Yes.

310. Does that include the putting out of a board?—Yes.

311. And all the expense of letting?—Yes.

312. Do you know cases where the letting has been charged in addition to this shilling in the pound?—I do not know of any. In fact, we only took 2½ per cent., but we found that it would not do.

Mr J. M'Fie. 26 Nov. 1906.

313. We have been told that all the expense in subletting a £25 house was the stamp?—Yes, but if they take it by arles there is no stamp.

314. If the stamp is done away with altogether, then there will be less expense in subletting that house?—Yes.

315. Why do factors charge 5 per cent. on the subletting of a house if a suitable tenant is guaranteed to them? They charge 5 per cent. for subletting a house even when they get a suitable tenant?—That may be the case, but I cannot tell.

316. Is it not the case in your own particular business?—No.

317. Then you don't do that?—Not to my knowledge.

318. (*Chairman.*) What do you charge in that case that Mr Howden puts? A man comes forward and gives you a suitable successor, what do you charge then?—It would depend on the agreement that the man might make.

319. But can you tell us?—I do not think that we would charge 5 per cent. in that case.

320. (*Mr Howden.*) Suppose he does not get a suitable tenant accepted by you, and you charge him this factorage fee, you hold him responsible for the rent?—Yes, we hold him responsible for the house. That is the most important.

321. In addition to the factorage fee?—Yes, whatever that may be. It may be modified.

322. You have told us that tenants do not remove near their work when they secure work away from where they live. Is not what determines them the fact that they have their twelve months' let over them and they are responsible for it?—That may be so.

323. In a case where these people have to travel night and morning, that would entail a considerable amount of travelling expense?—Yes, but perhaps they had an object in doing that.

324. You think that there would be an object in doing it?—Yes, he would have an object in working away from his house.

325. In any case he is more or less tied to his house?—Yes, I quite understand.

326. What would you put the travelling expense at if a man had to travel to Clydebank?—I don't know what the expense is.

327. Would about two shillings a week be a fair thing?—It might be.

328. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) You have told us that there are 75 per cent. of the single-apartment houses let by the month. Can you tell me what the tendency is? Is it to let more by the month or more by the year in the case of the small houses?—Some of these are £8, 15s. houses.

329. Yes, but what is the tendency with the smallest class of house—is the tendency to let more by the month or by the year?—We don't have many of them at all; besides, they don't likely remove very often.

330. (*Chairman.*) But you are not catching the question. What is the tendency—not tenancy? Is the tendency you find to let more by the month?—Yes.

331. Do you expect from monthly lets a higher proportionate rent than from yearly lets?—Monthly lets are a varied lot. There are two or three different kinds of monthly tenants.

332. Looking to the extra expense of factorage and the extra expense of repairs, do you expect to get a bigger proportionate rent from the monthly lets than from the yearly lets?—Yes. Houses go at a higher rent when they are put into single houses.

333. Is that because they cost more?—Yes, and there is greater risk.

334. Risk of what?—Loss.

335. From arrears?—Yes.

336. You have risk of loss from arrears, and have you extra expense in the way of repairs?—There is no doubt that when people are grouped in a small room with children, they are apt to kick about their things.

337. That would apply whether they were monthly or yearly?—Yes, of course.

338. Do you find, when people take a house for a year, they will keep it in better repair than monthly tenants?—They are more likely to do so.

339. And are the factorage expenses less in the case of yearly lets with quarterly collections than in the case of monthly lets?—They are pretty much the same. They are mixed in the one property.

340. And the man is there anyway?—Yes.

Mr W. J. Wood & Mr W. Cochran.

26 Nov. 1906.

Mr William J. Wood and Mr William Cochran, called and examined.

Mr W. J. Wood & Mr W. Cochran.

26 Nov. 1906.

(*Chairman.*) We propose to ask Mr William Cochran, Chairman of the Glasgow Parish Council, to appear along with Mr W. J. Wood, Collector of Assessments for the Burgh of Glasgow. I have got from Mr Wood a note of his *precis*, so I propose to ask him questions from that. We thought it convenient, Mr Cochran, if you had anything to add as Mr Wood goes along, you might do so, and then at the end we will ask you if you have anything to say in addition to what he has said.

341. (*To Mr Wood.*) How long have you been collector?—21 years.

342. You have been in the service of the Council for over 35 years?—Yes.

343. Is the parish of Glasgow the largest parish in Scotland?—Yes.

344. Indeed in the United Kingdom?—Yes.

345. What is the area?—24 square miles.

346. And the population for 1905–06 was what?—663,729 in the burgh and 26,745 in the landward portion, being a total of 690,474. The parishes of Edinburgh, Govan, and Glasgow are united for common interests, and they have had this matter before them. They occupy the position that I am going to take up here to-day, but if it is wished that they should give more evidence afterwards, they will do so.

347. What is the gross rental in the parish?—In the burgh it is £4,163,125 for 1905–06, and in the landward it is £138,175, being a total of £4,301,300.

348. Now take the assessable rental?—In the burgh it is £3,240,241, and in the landward it is £101,219, being a total of £3,341,460.

349. This is all for the parish of Glasgow?—Yes.

350. Will you tell me the number of ratepayers on the roll?—In the burgh there are 152,853, and in the landward part of the parish 7726, being a total of 160,579.

351. What do you mean by the landward?—The portions of the parish outwith the burgh of Glasgow.

352. What burgh, the ancient burgh?—The Municipal Burgh as at the present time.

353. Since the recent additions?—Yes.

354. Roughly, what does the burgh of Glasgow exclude? Does it exclude Govan?—Yes.

355. And Partick?—Yes.

356. And what more?—To the eastward, Shettleston; northward, Lambhill and Possilpark—portions of these—and Millerston and Tollcross. I should explain that, of course, the parish of Glasgow does not take in the whole of the burgh of Glasgow; it only takes in that portion of the burgh of Glasgow that is north of the Clyde and east of the Kelvin.

357. Your two chief parish rates are the school rate and the poor rate?—Yes.

358. The other two, the special and registration rates, are a mere bagatelle?—Yes, and they only apply to the landward part of the parish. The Town Council collect the burgh portion of the registration rates, and the special parish rate by Act of Parliament applies only to the landward area.

359. The two of these rates together are just about £250?—Yes.

360. Taking the poor rate, what was the amount assessed?—For the year 1905–06 the amount assessed was £295,121, while the amount collected was £280,097. I exclude the shillings.

361. Then take the school rate?—The amount assessed was £211,339, and the amount collected was £198,787.

362. Take the two small rates?—The amount assessed for the registration rate was £253, and the amount collected was £238. For the special parish rate it was £9. In 1905-06 there was no special parish rate assessed, and that £9 was simply a grant.

363. So the total amount assessed for the year 1905–06 was £506,714, and the amount collected was £479,133?—That is so.

364. I understand the Glasgow Parish Council have directed their attention not to the merits of any proposals that have been made to deal with the question before us, but they have directed their attention to the results in the way of difficulties that would arise in collecting the rates if at least some of these proposed measures were passed?—Yes.

365. For instance, a measure was proposed in 1890 which was backed up by Mr Proven, Mr Baird, Mr Robertson, and Mr Caldwell, which proposed merely to reduce the number of days before the Whitsunday and Martinmas terms during which agreements for letting should be possible. What you are now going to say has no reference to a proposal of that sort?—No.

366. I think you have directed attention to what would be the effect of certain proposals made by later Bills, and, in particular, by Mr Cross's Bill, which has been introduced in successive Parliaments?—Yes.

367. And, of course, what you are now going to say will apply to any such proposal, whatever Bill it was in?—Yes; any proposal that proposed the same thing.

368. You have taken Mr Cross's Bill for convenience, and you refer to certain sections?—Yes.

369. I notice you refer to section 3, and you are proceeding on the footing of the proposed measure applying only to burghs as defined in section 3 and applying only in burghs to dwelling-houses at a rental of not more than £20 a year in any case?—Yes, that is the provision of section 3.

370. Did you, at the request of the Parish Council, prepare a return showing for the year 1902–1903 the amount of poor rate levied and paid by tenants divided into nineteen classes according to the rental?—Yes.

371. You deal in that list with houses much above £20?—Yes, the whole subjects on the roll.

372. Now, limit yourself to dwelling-houses at £20 and under. Out of that list which you so prepared will you tell us how many there were?—There were 125,401 for that year.

373. Dwelling-houses of £20 and under?—Yes, the number of dwelling-houses at £20 and under was 125,401 out of a total entry on the roll of 153,201.

374. What percentage did that give?—81·9 per cent.

375. Do these include houses with shops, or are they only dwelling-houses alone?—Where it has been a house and a shop it will include the shop.

376. As a separate item?—No. Very often an entry appears on the roll as a house, but when you come to visit it you find it is a house, and perhaps the front part of it is used as a shop. It includes that.

377. Only in the case where one rent covers both?—Yes.

378. That is 1902–1903?—Yes.

379. You have no return up to date?—No. We have no occasion for making up this return yearly, but occasionally it is asked for, and the last time it was asked for was 1902–1903. It is a very elaborate return. I have no doubt that the percentage remains about the same.

380. What is the total amount required for poor rate?—£78,265,—that is poor rate alone. That was the return asked for; I do not have the other rate.

381. What is the proportion of that levied on £20 and under?—£24,363.

382. I do not understand that. I thought you told us that you levied for poor rate £295,101 in 1905–1906?—Yes, but this applies only to that class.

383. No. You told us the total amount for poor rate for 1902–1903 was only £78,265. How can that be if the total amount for poor rate this year is £295,101?—You are dealing with different years. There have been considerable extensions since that, and perhaps there is some other item in it.

384. There must be?—There has been an increase since that. I will look it out, and correct it if it is wrong.

385. (*Mr Binnie.*) Are you sure about the figure you have given us for houses of £20 and under, namely, £24,363?—Yes. The percentage is right. If there is a mistake in the one then there would be a mistake in the other. That is evidenced, because we asked the same information from the parishes of Govan and Edinburgh; Edinburgh gave its percentage as 79, Govan gave it as 73, while our percentage is 81. That is the percentage of the number. The percentage of the amount is 30 in the case of Edinburgh, 30 in the case of Govan, and 31 in our case.

386. (*Chairman.*) Would you tell us how you proceed with your Parish Council rates in dealing with occupiers?—In what way?

387. Take people who are rented at £4 and under?—In the burgh the tenants of houses of £4 and under are rated direct.

388. That is to say, the owner has to pay?—No, the tenant is rated direct for houses of £4 and under for poor and school rates.

(*Mr Cochran.*) But not the burgh rates.

389. (*Chairman.*) That is so. (*To Mr Wood.*) For Parish Council rates in the burgh the occupier is rated direct, and has to pay the rates direct?—Yes.

390. You distinguish the burgh from the landward?—Yes.

391. How does it stand in the landward?—The proprietor is charged the tenants' rates for houses of £4 and under.

392. Which he pays with his own rates?—Yes; he is separately assessed for them, and he pays them under a separate notice.

Mr W. J. Wood & Mr W. Cochran.

3 Nov. 1906.

No. 1.

TOTAL POOR RATE ASSESSMENT LEVIED.

Mr W. J. Wood & Mr W. Cochran.

26 Nov. 1906.

Year.	Rate per £.			Assessment Levied.		
	Owner.	Tenant.	Total.	Owner.	Tenant.	Total.
	d.	*d.*	*s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*
1902-03 . . .	$5\frac{23}{32}$	$6\frac{9}{32}$	0 $11\frac{24}{32}$	73,043 14 3	78,265 3 7	151,308 17 10
1903-04 . . .	7	$7\frac{14}{32}$	1 $2\frac{14}{32}$	94,200 0 11	100,574 14 7	194,774 15 6
1904-05 . . .	$8\frac{3}{32}$	$8\frac{28}{32}$	1 $4\frac{31}{32}$	112,016 2 10	123,667 4 8	235,683 7 6
1905-06 . . .	10	$10\frac{29}{32}$	1 $8\frac{29}{32}$	140,666 16 7	154,454 4 3	295,121 0 10

No. 2.

STATEMENT giving for 1904-05 the Total Number Assessed and the Total Amount Assessed (both Owner and Tenant), also showing the Number and Amount exempt for Unlet Property (Occupiers' Proportion), Statutory, &c. Exemptions and Irrecoverables, with the Percentage that each is to the Total.

Details.	Number.	Per cent. of Total Number Assessed.	Amount.	Per cent. of Total Amount Assessed.
			£ *s.* *d.*	
Unlet (occupiers' proportion) . . .	10,139	5·784	9,846 9 0	2·361
Statutory exemptions	946	0·539	4,814 11 7	1·154
Paupers	3,314	1·890	1,271 7 5	0·304
Inability	12,248	6·976	3,807 8 11	0·912
Irrecoverables	12,710	7·251	5,058 16 8	1·213
Totals . .	39,357	22·440	24,798 13 7	5·944
Paid . .	135,914	77·560	392,205 18 8	94 056
Total entries on roll and total assessment .	175,271	100·000	417,004 12 3	100·000

Note.—The total number of Receipts involved in the £5058, 16s. 8d. irrecoverable was 15,063. Of these, 12,710 were wholly irrecoverable, and 2353 partially irrecoverable. The *amount* of these 2353 Receipts, so far as irrecoverable, is included in the £5058, 16s. 8d., but the *number* of them is not included in the 12,710, because they are already included in the 135,914 paid for the portion so paid.

393. With regard to rents above £4, what do you do in the burgh?—They are assessed direct.

394. And also in the landward?—Yes.

395. Do you find any difficulty resulting from the landlord having to pay in the landward the rates for tenants of houses of £4 and under?—No.

396. You have never had complaints of any difficulty arising?—No.

397. From the practical point of view, whatever the rights and wrongs may be, do you think there would be any difficulty in the landlord collecting the occupiers' rates in houses of £4 up to £20?—No.

398. There would be no practical difficulty?—No. I am speaking subject to points that are coming up afterwards, allowances and all that, and the effect upon other things.

399. But I am talking of practical difficulties?—There would be no practical difficulty.

400. Take the rents below £4: you have there, of course, no arrears?—In the landward?.

401. Yes, in the landward?—No.

402. On the other hand, I suppose you have arrears in the burgh?—Yes.

403. And both in the landward and in the burgh you have arrears in the case of houses above £4?—Yes.

404. In the case of a tenant who enters at Whitsunday on a yearly let or on a monthly let, and only remains part of the year, is he bound to you by statute to pay the whole rent?—Yes. Of course, I should explain that he does not appear on the roll as a monthly tenant; there is no distinction made on the valuation roll which is sent to me by the assessor, and which is my authority for assessing. He is simply entered as a tenant, and I must assume that he is presumably the tenant for the year,—at least, I don't ask myself the question.

405. And you have a legal right to make him pay whether he remains to the end of the year or not?—Yes; and he has a right to go against the subsequent tenant for that tenant's proportion.

406. Suppose a yearly tenant had to break the tenancy, or suppose he leaves at the end of a month, you have no right to sue the person who comes in the middle of the term?—No.

407. If you make the first man pay as you say, he has a right to go against the subsequent tenant?—Yes.

408. Suppose the first man leaves the country, what, in point of fact, do you do?—Of course, if there is no subsequent tenant, then the whole is lost. If there is a subsequent tenant, what I do is this, I ask him where he comes from. In many a case he comes from another house in the parish, for which he has not paid as the original tenant, and then I charge him the whole year's rates, because, between his two houses, he has occupied a house in the parish for the year, and he was liable to me for the full year's rates for the house from which he came.

409. But you only charge him one set of rates?—One year's rates.

410. Suppose he has occupied before a house of a different rent from the new one?—Then, of course, I have to come and go with him a little, and I have to say, "Your 'first house was £10, and you have now come into a £12 or 'a £15 house; you ought to pay me a little more than the 'whole of your first house's rates."

411. But the case is not a possible one of his being at the commencement of a tenancy in one part, leaving that, and being liable there for the whole rate, going to another house and being made to pay the rates of his second house also?—I think not; I don't know of any case of that kind.

412. If he was coming from another town it might happen?—Yes. If he was a new tenant, he would say that he came from Greenock, and I would say, "I want you 'to pay a proportion," and he might say, "I won't pay 'anything," and I could not enforce it.

413. Then the case could not arise of his being liable to pay the whole rates at Greenock, and also to pay in Glasgow as an incoming tenant between terms?—No.

414. Why not?—It might arise in this way, if he came from Greenock in the way you indicate, he might pay to me, of his own free will, the proportion for the time; but if he did not do so, I have no power to force it.

415. You are talking not merely of your practice, but

of your legal power?—Yes. My summary warrant is not different from my roll,—I must follow my roll, and in my warrant the name of the original tenant appears, and consequently I have no warrant against the subsequent tenant.

416. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you find much difficulty in collecting rates under these circumstances?—No. There will be a few isolated cases and individuals who take up an extreme position, but it very seldom happens.

417. (*Chairman.*) Suppose that the law was so altered that all tenancies were monthly tenancies, would that, in your view, make any difficulty in connection with the collection of parish council rates?—Yes, I would say that it would very seriously jeopardise the collection of my rates.

418. That would be on the assumption that it would lead to more frequent removals?—Yes.

419. If the monthly tenants remained on just as long as the yearly tenants, it would not?—No.

420. But if it led to their more frequently removing, it would?—Yes; but that, I understand, is the basis of the Bill. The Bill is based on the assumption that there are a large number of people who wish to shift their houses more frequently than at present and cannot do so. That assumption is either correct or it is incorrect. If it is correct, then there will be more shifting; if it is incorrect, it takes away to some extent the reason for the Bill.

421. Suppose, instead of more removals, the removals were spread over the year, would the difficulty arise?—It would arise in a modified form, because, there being more frequent removals, unless I knew that "A" was the same tenant as was in a former house, and he admitted that, I would have no right to recover against him. If A remains in one house all the year, he is on the roll, and I have power to recover the rates; but if he had power to go to other houses in the course of the year, I might have him in one or other of two houses, but I would not know that he was the same individual, and he might say, "I am a new tenant here," and then I would be powerless.

422. You are collecting rates at the present moment from a very large number of monthly tenants?—Yes; I don't know that it is a very large number.

423. Can you give us what proportion of your total ratepayers are monthly tenants?—No, because the roll does not show that.

424. For the reason you mentioned?—Yes; I can only tell this, there are certain proprietors who, for reasons best known to themselves—it may be that they have let their houses monthly, or it may be for convenience or for some other reason—come to me and say, "We want to pay our tenants' rates." Of course, I never refuse money; and when they come and say that they want to pay their tenants' rates, I take the rates from them. For instance, the City Improvements Department of the Corporation does that, and the Glasgow Workmen's Dwellings Company does it to a considerable extent. Some of the North British Railway Company's houses are in that position, and it is also done by the Cowlairs Co-operative Society, the Kyrle Society, and others. I have made a rough estimate of the number of tenants whose rates are paid through the proprietors, and I make it out to be 1780, and I estimate the amount of the tenants' rates so involved at about £1000. These are all within the burgh. I am confining myself to the burgh, because the theory only applies to the burgh.

425. (*Mr Esslemont.*) To the parish?—No, to the burgh portion of the parish.

426. Not to the whole of the burgh?—No; it is so much of the burgh as is within our parish.

427. And it is not the whole of the parish either?—No.

428. (*Chairman.*) You could not give us, or get for us, the proportion of your 153,000 total entries on the roll who are monthly tenants?—No, I do not have the information.

429. Who would have it. I know it is somewhere, because I have seen it in the papers?—I don't know. The only proportion I could give would be that out of the 153,000 ratepayers in the burgh, there are about 1780 whose rates are paid to me by the proprietor.

430. Assume that there are many thousands of ratepayers who are monthly tenants from whom you are now getting payment of rates, would there be any greater difficulty, so far as you are concerned, in the balance who are at present yearly tenants becoming monthly tenants, so far as the rates are concerned?—So far as the collection of them?

431. Yes?—No, I would say not. If the landlord was taken bound to pay them there would be no difficulty in collecting them.

432. At the present moment there are thousands of monthly tenants who are paying their rates to you. Do you find any special difficulty or any special amount of arrears in their cases as against those who are yearly tenants?—When you come down to the monthly tenants you come down to a class of tenants who, whether they take their house by the year or by the month, are more likely to be in arrear.

433. Can you say, from your own experience, whether the amount of arrears in the case of monthly tenants is materially larger in proportion than in the case of yearly tenants;—No; but I can say that the class of tenants represented by those is larger, because the lower I go down the greater is the percentage of irrecoverable rates.

434. Suppose the yearly tenants, who are, of course, the better class, were to become monthly tenants, do you see any reason why the arrears in that case should on that account become greater?—I see no particular reason.

435. If the proposed alteration in the law involved more frequent removal, is it your view that would not be met either by more frequent collection of rates or by making the owner liable?—It would not be met in either of those ways. Of course, there could not be a more frequent collection of rates under the present law, because you would need a new survey to get at these new tenants,—I mean to say, that the assessor would require to give me the new tenants, or I would have to go myself to find them. He makes up the roll just now in this way, by sending surveyors all over the area that he is dealing with, and he takes information as to who is the tenant, and the owner, and what is the rent, and all that, and from that he makes up his roll, having checked it first of all with the factors' returns of their tenants. Having checked that, he makes up his valuation roll. After the Appeal Courts have taken place, the roll is certified, and he sends me a copy. Now that roll contains the tenants at the time it is made up, namely, 15th May. If there was to be a collection from another set of tenants, I would need to get that other set of tenants' names.

436. Does that not arise with monthly tenants who remove? You have to get the names of the intermediate tenants?—No; we hold the first tenant liable.

437. Take the case that we were speaking of, a tenant having left?—If he has left I would go to the house; and if I find some other tenant in, I try to find where he has come from. If he comes from another house in the parish, he appears as at 15th May, and I try to make him pay the whole rate; but if he comes from another place, I try to get him to pay a proportion.

438. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You don't follow the man that is on the roll?—I try to do so when I can, but in most cases I cannot get him.

439. (*Chairman.*) The change, if it was made, would merely multiply the number of such cases?—Yes.

440. If the owner was made liable primarily, that would remove that difficulty?—Yes.

441. (*Mr Cox.*) Is the rating from 15th May to 15th May?—Yes.

442. I thought it was from 28th May?—That is the removal term. The valuation roll is made up from 15th May to 15th May.

443. You said that the assessor sent round his men to find out who was still there?—He does not begin till June or the end of May, and all the removals are past then.

444. (*Chairman.*) Are there certain cases at present where arrangements are made with the rating authority under which the owner collects above £4?—That was what I was referring to just now when I gave the 1780 tenants representing rates to the extent of £1000.

445. Can you tell to what amount of rent any of these go?—I would say they are pretty much under £20.

446. But some go near it?—Yes, some of the City Improvement ones go near it.

447. Do you find any difficulty under this arrangement?—No.

448. What allowance do you give in these cases?—To the owners?

449. Yes?—We give no allowance.

450. You give no allowance for collecting the parish rates?—No.

451. We had evidence this morning about 7½ per cent. being allowed?—I think that was for collecting the police rates, if I heard the evidence aright.

452. You have never made any allowance?—No.

453. Are you entitled by law to make an allowance?—There is no provision as to that.

454. Suppose there was a provision, have you any view as to what would be a reasonable allowance?—I have not considered it.

455. That would be a matter of detail?—Yes.

456. Suppose such an allowance were thought reasonable, what items would enter into it in order to ascertain the fair amount?—It is difficult to say. You would have to take into account the trouble that the factor would have in collecting the rates and paying them over. That would be item number one. Item number two would be the risk of arrears, because he would have to pay for every house the full year's rates, and, of course, he would lose by losing tenants.

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457. These would be the two elements?—Yes, and then there would be his trouble and the work with the tenant as well as with me. He would have to work it out with the tenant, and then he would have to come to me and pay the money.

458. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Would it save the rating authority anything?—Yes, because I don't think we would lose so much as we do just now by irrecoverables.

459. (*Mr Binnie.*) What do you lose?—About 1½ to 2 per cent. on the total assessment.

460. But under £20?—I have not worked it out for the individual classes of rents.

461. (*Chairman.*) Take the other suggestion by Mr Dobbie with regard to the expense that would be saved to you. You would have less collecting?—Yes, there would be a good deal less collecting.

462. You cannot put a figure on it?—No, not just now.

463. Have you any experience of the English method?—No.

464. Or any knowledge of it?—Only second-hand.

465. What do you understand generally to be the English practice?—I don't know that I am in a position to tell you even in a general way. I understand roughly there is a very large number of houses let by the week, and month, and quarter. In these houses the rates are paid in the rent, but I understand the practice varies in different cities—at least so I am told. I have been trying to get a little information in view of this Inquiry; I understand that the practice varies in different cities, and I am also told that the percentage allowed to the landlord varies in different places. Then I understand that there is some arrangement—I do not quite follow it from the letter I have got—by which people who may be presumably unable to pay their rates, if they have to pay them direct then they have some way of getting off by applying to Justices of the Peace. I am not clear as to whether these rates are charged against the landlord.

466. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Could you find out the proportion of irrecoverables under £20?—It would be very difficult. I notice in the old return for houses of £10 and under, there was in respect of unlets, statutory exemptions, and irrecoverables—these include more than you wish to know—25,000 out of a total of 82,000 houses of £10 and under. These 25,000 under that category represented rates to the extent of £3285. Between £20 and £10 there were 2873 under that category, representing rates amounting to £833. That, however, includes the unlet houses and all the statutory exemptions. I could not very well tell you the proportion that you ask for.

467. Suppose the owner had to pay under arrangement, you would, as you said, have practically no arrears? Take last year; what would have been the effect last year, if that arrangement had been in vogue, on the question of disfranchisement? How many people who were disfranchised last year would not have been disfranchised if their rates had been paid by the owners?—Last year's total of persons disfranchised.

468. On account of?—On account of the items I will indicate, amounted to 19,669, in so much of the burgh of Glasgow as is within our parish.

469. Were they disfranchised for non-payment of poor rates?—2898 were disfranchised because they were in receipt of parochial relief; and, of course, all in receipt of parochial relief are exempt from the poor rates. 2270 were exempted by the Parish Council from payment of their rates on account of inability to pay, and then there were 14,501 who failed to pay, making up the total of 19,669. That includes all classes, £20 and upwards, and £20 and under.

470. Can you make any suggestion as to the proportion of the 14,501 whose rents were £20 and under?—No, I am sorry that I cannot, but a much larger proportion would be below the £20.

471. Three-fourths?—Yes, there would be that any way. Of course, there are a great many larger houses where the tenant runs off and you get no address.

472 (*Mr Esslemont.*) Can you tell me what proportion of the 14,501 would ultimately pay, although they had not been able to pay within the prescribed date?—Very very few. They are practically all in by the 20th June, all that I can get. They fail to pay because I fail to recover.

473. (*Chairman.*) Would it be safe to say that at all events 10,000 effective voters would have been added to the list?—Yes, and considerably more than that if you take the paupers and those exempted. There are 2898 paupers, and there are 2270 exempted from the rates by the Parish Council, and then there are 14,501 from whom I have failed to recover the rates. Out of the total of 19,669 I expect you would find that it would apply to 14,000 or 15,000 of them.

474. Suppose you put out of sight the paupers, then that would be the proportion. You are talking about the burgh portion of the parish of Glasgow?—Yes.

475. Would it roughly be a somewhat similar proportion in the burgh outside the parish of Glasgow?—That belongs to another collector, the collector of Govan, and I don't know, but I should think so. I don't see any reason why the proportion should not be very much the same. You mean Govan?

476. Yes?—I think it would be very much the same proportion.

477. Is there anything in that calculation, so far as you know, that is special to Glasgow, or would you suppose, without any exact knowledge, that it would apply to Edinburgh and Greenock and other places?—I don't think so, except taking into account the different complexions of the cities. Roughly, it will be about the same.

478. So far as in section 9 of the Bill there is an exemption of imperial taxes, that does not enter into it because these consist of inhabited house-duty—which is not payable on houses under £20—and income tax, which is not payable on incomes of under £160,—we may put them aside?—That is so.

479. I read to you section 7. Are there a large number of dwelling-houses that have small shops attached to them?—Yes.

480. Could you give any idea of the number?—Within the burgh portion of our parish I calculate that between 1400 and 1500 entries refer to houses with shops attached to them at £20 and under. There will be about 500 at £10 and under.

481. Assuming—about which we say nothing—that there is a grievance here, do you see any reason to suppose that the grievance, if it exists, would not apply equally to these houses with shops as to houses without shops?—I do not quite follow.

482. Assume that there is a grievance in the present position of matters in relation to dwelling-houses?—If there is a grievance in the one case there will be a grievance in the other. The difficulty here would be that these houses and shops of £20 are apparently exempted by the Bill, and yet they belong to the very class that I would think the Bill was meant to apply to, because the shop is probably just the front window of the house used as a shop.

483. You notice in the Schedule to the Bill there is an allowance to the landlord in respect of rents over £4, varying as the rent increases, but no allowance in respect of rents under £4. What do you say to that?—I would say that the Bill would require some amendment to meet that. No doubt the reason of that is this: in the burghs the police rates are charged direct to the landlords in houses below £4, but they have probably overlooked the fact that the parish rates are charged direct to the tenants of these houses, and therefore they have not provided for the landlords getting any percentage of these rates supposing the Bill came into force.

484. There is no provision made for the preservation of the right of relief in the case of poverty or inability. What is your experience of that?—I have mentioned that last year we gave relief to 2270 tenants.

485. Who sits upon that?—The Parish Council.

486. A committee?—Yes.

487. How often do they sit?—As often as is necessary. It is very often remitted to me to go over the applicants and weed them out and to put them into classes.

488. Up to what rents have you known remission made?—I have known it given up to £35, and £40 in some cases.

489. Total remission?—Partial. These are houses that ladies take for lodgers, and they are most difficult cases to decide. The keeping of lodgers is often a very precarious business. The house has to be kept up and kept well furnished, but there are not many in number in that class.

490. (*Chairman to Mr Cochran.*) Have you anything to say in regard to what Mr Wood has said?—I would like to emphasise the fact with reference to the question as to collecting the rates at a different time of the year. That has been before the Parish Council on several occasions, and we have decided that it would not at all be the correct thing to do, that we could not afford to do it. It would cost far too much money to collect the rates more than once a year. The machinery is hard enough worked to collect the rates once a year.

491. Would it mean an increase of your staff?—I don't know that it would mean that, but it would be so impracticable that it would be very difficult to work. As Mr Wood pointed out, you would require to get the assessor to make another survey, and, if you collected the rates four times a year, then you would want four surveys. The Parish Council have considered this matter. Then I can give some information about the English working which I have ascertained.

492. We shall be glad to hear it?—I wrote a letter to Mr J. W. Cleland, M.P., and he sent me the following information, which is not his own information, but is in-

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formation from an expert :—"With regard to Mr Cochran's 'first question, workmen's houses in London are, as a rule, 'let by the week at a rent which includes rates and taxes. 'The rent of houses which are let otherwise than by the week 'or month does not, as a rule, include rates and taxes; the 'chief exceptions to this rule are 'flats' and similar suites 'of rooms in block buildings. These are usually let at in-'clusive rents.

"With regard to the second question, a man who has 'received poor-relief during the registration year is dis-'qualified from being entered on the register, and is there-'fore disfranchised, quite apart from the question of 'payment of poor rates.

"The chief statutes dealing with these questions are 'the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act, 1869, the 'Representation of the People Act, 1867, and the Parlia-'mentary and Municipal Registration Act, 1878."

493. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Cochran.*) What is the method of collecting in Glasgow? It is by demand note, is it not?—Yes.

494. Do you have a staff going about collecting?—No, but when there is a warrant granted the officer goes round with it.

495. But up to that point you just work by demand note?—Mr Wood will be better able to speak to that.

(*Mr Wood.*) We get our valuation roll about 1st October, and we then set to work and make up our assessment roll. The collection then commences by people coming to the office and paying on the demand note. In December we send out a second or final notice, and then about the middle or end of January we take out warrants for those that are then unpaid, and we employ a staff of forty or fifty outdoor collectors. The parish is divided up into districts, and these collectors work off the arrears as best they can. In regard to the matter of cost, perhaps I may be allowed to say, in supplement to Mr Cochran, that I consider that if you collected the rates twice a year instead of once, you would practically double the cost of collection, because you would require to have new demand notes.

496. (*Chairman.*) And you would have to add to the staff?—Yes.

497. And to the office accommodation?—No, but you would have to add to the staff and the books. You would require a double staff.

498. (*Mr Esslemont.*) What is the staff doing during the rest of the year? During the period of collection they are very busy?—We begin at the beginning of October to collect money. We are very busy inside taking in the money. By January we have our warrants, and then we begin our outside work, and that lasts till our next collection begins. We have a great many difficult cases to deal with.

499. It seemed to me that, as you required payment by a specific date, and you were working with a certain staff, it should not be necessary to add to that staff if you made the collection twice in the year?—You would have two sets of notices to send out. We don't have a bigger staff than we require at present.

500. You send out these notices within a prescribed period once a year. Now, why should not the same staff do the same work twice a year?—We work our office largely by temporary hands, and the staff is dismissed when the work is done.

501. (*Chairman.*) It would increase your temporary staff?—Yes.

502. And not the permanent staff?—Not so very much. It would increase their work, and it might be better to have the whole staff of a permanent character.

(*Mr Cochran.*) It is right to explain that the warrant is not got till the end of January, and it is not put into force till that time. They have all that time to pay.

(*Mr Wood.*) With regard to the second paragraph about franchise, that is all the information you wish, because under the present Act those people are returned as defaulters; if the owners pay rates themselves, then they would not be so returned, because the rates would be entered as paid, and I could not return them. Now, the question is whether it is contemplated by this Bill in that way to qualify that section of the Franchise Act.

503. (*Mr Howden to Mr Wood.*) Has it never come to your knowledge that your rates come on the working classes at the worst time of the year?—If there is a hardship of that kind then we take the rate in two or three payments.

504. But it is not a general complaint that it comes at absolutely the worst time of the year?—I would not say that it is a general complaint. I have heard the complaint made, but not very frequently. It is not general in my experience.

505. You are of opinion that the arrears would not be less?—They might be a little less, but not very much.

506. The only objection you can take to this matter is with regard to the roll. If you got the roll four times a year from the assessor you could easily collect the rates?—No, I would not grant that. I would require power from Parliament to charge new tenants with the rates.

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507. You would need power to charge new tenants even although there was a new roll made up?—Yes, because the present law is for one roll and one collection. That is under the Valuation Act of 1854. Of course, I would not need that new law if you charged the rates to the landlord; but in that case, as I say, you are nullifying the provisions of section 92 of the Franchise Act.

508. We have got a memorandum signed by the Chairman of the Glasgow Parish Council, the Chairman of the Govan Parish Council, and the Chairman of the Edinburgh Parish Council, and the respective Clerks to these Boards. Is this the opinion of the Glasgow Parish Council?—Yes.

509. Has it been under the consideration of the Parish Council of Glasgow, or simply under the consideration of a committee?—It has been under the consideration of a committee, and subsequently under the consideration of each of the parishes interested.

510. So this is the opinion of the Glasgow Parish Council?—Yes, on the points to which I have restricted my evidence.

511. They have given no opinion on the merits of the Bill?—No.

(*Mr Cochran.*) They did not go into that question.

512. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Wood.*) Does the amount of arrears vary much from year to year?—No, not very much.

513. They will increase with bad trade?—Yes. If you get periods of exceptional depression, then your irrecoverables will go up; but, taking one year with another, the percentage of one year is remarkably near to that of the preceding year.

514. (*Chairman.*) Roughly, what does it come to?—It runs from 1½ to 2 per cent. on the total amount assessed.

515. (*Mr Binnie.*) The figures you gave us were that your total assessment was £506,714, of which you recovered £479,133?—Yes.

516. That is more than 5 per cent. unrecovered?—Yes. There are two items that I mentioned before to be taken into account, the statutory exemptions and the unlet property. The £506,714 is the gross assessment in the roll, and the £479,133 is the money I have got out of it. The balance is not only the irrecoverables, but the unlet property and the statutory exemptions.

517. In the statement you are going to give us, will you distinguish those so that we can see exactly what is really lost?—Yes. I will send in a statement showing the percentage of each for this year.

518. What is the cost of collecting the assessment?—I would need to get that for you. I will send it in.

519. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Cochran.*) I was going to ask you whether, when you were communicating with your friend about the English practice and ascertaining about the houses where the landlords paid the taxes, did you ascertain what allowance was given to them when they compounded for the rates?—No, I did not ascertain that; but I see from the Acts of Parliament that provision is made for an allowance. I did not ask whether that was put in practice or not.

520. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Wood.*) You stated that you took payments to account for rates?—Yes, in some cases.

521. Can you tell me whether that is a general practice?—I suppose it is.

522. You don't think it is general for the collector to refuse to accept payment to account?—No. We try to get the full payment; but if we can only get something, then we take it.

523. I have heard cases where they have refused to accept payment to account?—I have refused myself, because I thought it was a refusal not based on inability.

524. A refusal based on declinature?—Yes, but I am speaking of cases where I felt it was a hardship to ask the whole at one time, and in these cases we have accepted in two or three payments.

525. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Cochran.*) I should like to refer to the Memorandum prepared on behalf of the Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Govan Parish Councils, and I read the concluding paragraph on the second page. (*Reads.*) Is that the deliberate decision of the Glasgow Parish Council on that?—That is the decision of the Adjustment Committee.

526. But this is a Memorandum submitted on behalf of the Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Govan Parish Councils?—Yes; but it was prepared by the Adjustment Committee. Instructions were given by each of the Parish Councils to prepare this Memorandum.

527. But what are the views of your Parish Council on this point?—I cannot tell.

528. Has it never been discussed?—No, this Bill has never been discussed.

529. I am not talking of the Bill; I am talking about the recommendation made by this Committee on behalf

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of these Parish Councils. It is a most important thing?—Yes. This Memorandum was never before the Glasgow Parish Council.

530. Then, why should it be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council?—You told Mr Howden that it had been.

531. (*Chairman.*) Was it before the whole Parish Council?—No; this Memorandum was not before the whole Parish Council. The Memorandum was prepared by the Chairman because they had authority from the Parish Councils to make such a Memorandum, but the Parish Council never saw the details of it.

532. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You are a signatory to that Memorandum?—Yes.

533. In making that suggestion, have you any reason to believe that you were supporting a policy which was agreeable to the members of your Council?—Yes, I had reason to believe it.

534. You think that if it was submitted to your Council it would be carried practically unanimously?—It would be carried, but I cannot say that it would be carried unanimously.

535. It has a most important bearing on the whole question?—Yes.

536. And we should have the views of the Parish Council?—We could only get that if it was brought before the Parish Council. We had instructions to prepare this Memorandum, but the Memorandum itself has never been before the Parish Council.

537. You discuss the Bill in the earlier part of the Memorandum, but this is a conclusion at which you have arrived in which you recommend that all rates and taxes should be included in the rent?—That is the view of the Adjustment Committee. That is all I can say.

538. It has never been formally endorsed by the Parish Council?—No.

539. (*Mr Howden.*) Then this is not the opinion of the Parish Council?—We were authorised to sign it, but it was never submitted to the Parish Council after it was signed.

540. (*Chairman.*) You were authorised to prepare the Memorandum, but it was never actually submitted to the Parish Council?—That is so.

541. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Wood.*) Article 4 recommends that all rates and taxes should be included in the rent. Supposing there was a change made in the law in favour of monthly tenancies, and no change was made in regard to the rates and taxes, so that they were not included in the rent, how would they be collected, and from whom? You would make up the roll as at present, as at 15th May?—Yes, the assessor would make it up. He sends it to me, and I have only that to go upon. I would find a much larger number of people had left their houses when I went to get the rates, and I would lose their rates.

542. If the law was not changed with regard to collecting the rates with the rent, then the monthly tenant would require to be in the house at the date of making up the assessment roll?—Yes.

543. And he would be charged with the whole year's rates?—Yes.

544. I would like you to help me in regard to the question of compounding the rates, assuming that the landlord paid them. I do not quite follow the figures in regard to the extent to which at present the rates are paid by landlords. Am I right in thinking that you told us that 1780 tenants had their rates paid through their landlords?—Yes.

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545. I was under the impression earlier in the day that one witness told us that he himself factored 1487 houses and paid rates for these; and that, with the exception of forty, all the rates were paid, and he himself therefore paid directly to you rates for occupiers in 1447 houses?—I noticed his figures, and I wondered whether they did not include some in the parish of Govan on the other side of the river. I can only speak for my own figures.

546. To enable us to arrive at the cost to the local authority in estimating what might be allowed to the landlord, I think it is most important, and you might give us the figures that Mr Binnie has asked for. I think I am right in saying that there were 14,501 ratepayers whose rates were irrecoverable?—Yes.

547. You said that the bulk of these people were people in houses under £20?—Yes.

548. Take it at about 12,500. Then I see there are 125,000 houses under £20?—Yes.

549. You will notice that that means that, taking houses under £20, exactly 10 per cent. of the rates of these ratepayers are irrecoverable?—Yes. There were a number, however, who had paid part of their poor rates, and these consequently somewhat overlapped.

550. That is where they pay instalments?—They might not pay all their instalments.

551. Do you think that we might take it that the effect of the landlord paying the rates of houses under £20 might effect a saving of 10 per cent. to the collector?—10 per cent. of rates, you mean?

552. Yes?—I don't know that you would be very far out of it, but I have not looked at it from that point of view.

553. 7½ per cent. and 10 per cent. have been suggested under certain data. We want to get the data to see if these are reasonable. It seems to me on your figures that 10 per cent. might reasonably be taken?—Yes, I think so. Then I think you wanted information about the cost of collection. The cost of my department for the year 1904-1905 was £2851, and before that it was £2300. Roughly, it may be taken to run about £3000. That works out to a percentage of about 1 per cent. of the total collected.

554. (*Mr Binnie.*) Would that be doubled, do you think, if you had to collect half-yearly, and would it be quadrupled if you had to collect quarterly?—Not quite, but very nearly. My work would require to be done a second time or a third time.

555. If you collected four times a year, do you think it would be four times as much?—Yes. I think you will find that the cost of collection of rates in England is very much higher than it is here in consequence of that. Of course, I am only speaking from hearsay now.

556. (*Chairman.*) If Parish Councils attach importance to the English practice—and one can quite see that information about a method which has been worked out in England is much better than opinions as to how it would work—we would want to have evidence about that, and we would be glad to have your assistance and the assistance of anyone else to direct us as to how we could best get reliable evidence on the English practice?—I can ascertain from some unions what is the total that they collect, and what is the total cost of collecting, and I would thus get a percentage which might be compared with our percentage.

557. We will consider whether we could get some witness from England. It might be best to get it first-hand?—Yes. You would be much better to get an official, and to examine him.

Mr A. Fyfe and Mr E. Thompson.

Mr Archibald Fyfe and Mr Ernest Thompson, called and examined.

Mr A. Fyfe and Mr E. Thompson.

558. (*Chairman to Mr Fyfe.*) You are the Secretary of the Paisley Tenants Protection Association, and Mr Thompson is a member of the Executive of that Association?—Yes.

559. How long have you been Secretary of the Paisley Tenants Protection Association?—Since the month of June of this year, but I have been in the Executive of the Association since its inception five years ago.

560. What led to that Association being formed?—The Landlords' Association in Paisley at one of their meetings had under consideration a proposal to make the tenants of Paisley send their missives in on 11th November, when they were paying the half year's rent. That came to the ears of the tenants in Paisley, and it consequently caused a correspondence to take rise in the local newspapers. The correspondence got so strong that there was a public meeting called by the Trades Council of Paisley, and there was a committee appointed, of which I was a member. Since then I have continued to be in the Executive of the Paisley Association.

561. How many members are there in your Association?—The total number of members of our Association is small; it is only 622. The obstacle both in Glasgow and Paisley against our getting the number that we should get is the membership fee: were membership gratis, 90 per cent. of tenants in Paisley would join. We get them from all classes. In Paisley, I think we have 16 members of the Paisley Town Council as members of our Association; we have one or two ministers, we have some landlords, who are in favour of shorter lets, and we have members down to the lowest working class. Not only that, but our Society is cosmopolitan; it will admit anyone so long as he or she is a householder.

562. As to the practice in regard to the house-letting in Paisley, are you going to speak about Paisley itself?—Speaking on behalf of Paisley, I not only speak on behalf of Paisley, but also on behalf of 75 per cent. of the electors in Scotland. In 1904 we had a very large meeting, and there were certain delegates who could not come but who sent telegrams.

563. But, taking your own views, you are going to speak specially of Paisley?—Yes.

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564. In the present position of matters, what are the respects in which you think that there is a grievance in connection with house-letting?—There are many grievances; not only one, but many.

565. What, in your view, is the most substantial grievance?—The principal one is that, although we are paid weekly and fortnightly wages, we have to sign for an article four months before we take possession of it; we are bound down to sixteen months, while we can be dismissed from our work on a week's notice,—some can be dismissed on the spot.

566. You observe that these are two quite separate things. You say that one grievance is that they have to sign four months before entry?—That is one grievance.

567. And the other grievance is that the lets are too long?—Yes.

568. The latter grievance would equally remain, although they had not to sign four months before?—Sir, whether you sign or not, according to that deceptive tacit relocation you are the tenant for the ensuing year.

569. But suppose you only contracted a fortnight before the entry, your grievance as to the let being too long would equally remain?—Yes.

570. And, therefore, they are quite separate things?—Yes, certainly.

571. Take the question of the long let first of all; is it your view that the letting for a year should be put an end to?—Yes, that is my candid opinion, and I am positively certain on the point.

572. What would you substitute? You have the periods of a year, a quarter, a month, and a week. What would you substitute?—Monthly and quarterly.

573. Suppose you had monthly and quarterly?—Yes; but although I say that, I wish to be a little more explicit. The working classes wish monthly lets. At the Trades Union Congress they unanimously agreed to monthly lets; but we have come and gone a little with those who want to make themselves a little better than the working men, and they say that they prefer quarterly lets. So we have given in a little, and we have gone the length of monthly and quarterly. We wish also to be in harmony with Mr Cross' Bill, according to which the periodic payment of rent is to be the *legal let*.

574. We are inquiring primarily about the smaller class of dwelling-house, say £20 and under. You say monthly and quarterly lets?—Yes.

575. Coming to the yearly lets; in what kind of case is there any detrimental result at present?—There are several cases that have come under our notice where they have had to pay the rental of two houses, having left one house in order to follow their employment.

576. If a man remained in his house from year to year there would be no drawback?—No, unless the paying of his rates and taxes in one payment in the year, which is a hardship. We have petitioned through our various Societies for Paisley for quarterly collection, but have been told that that would be illegal; we must first get the law for house-letting changed to meet that.

577. If he wished to change in the middle of the term, it is then that the difficulty would arise?—Yes.

578. May I say that there are three causes for the necessity for changing—death, loss of employment, and change of employment?—Yes.

579. These are three possible causes?—Yes, and also a cheaper rent, a better house with more accommodation, a shorter road to work, defects about a house after getting into it, etc. etc. etc.

580. Have you found instances of these three causes in your own experience?—Yes.

581. Take a case of death. What may happen there?—I was speaking to a reverend gentleman in Paisley two years ago. There was a deputation waiting on him, and after we had finished our business we got on to the house-letting question, and he said, "I have one of my members 'just now in my congregation who, while her husband was 'living, lived comfortably in a two-room and kitchen 'house. He died in July, and, as a wise woman, she wanted 'to break up her two-room and kitchen house, and to take 'a smaller house, so that she could live to her income. The 'landlord said, 'You can take a smaller house, if you choose, 'but I will hold you responsible for the rent and taxes of 'this house.'" She could not get it sub-let, and had to complete the year.

582. That comes to nothing, unless you follow it up by this, that the house was not sub-let. If the house was sub-let there would not be any loss. Have you any cases where the sub-let did not take place, and there was resulting hardship, or where such a rent was charged for a sub-let?—I can give another case that we had. Four years ago we had a case in Paisley where a missive was sent to be signed. The husband died before the signing of the missive. The widow did not want to sign for the house, and she said, "Give me time to see about the getting of a smaller house." The landlord gave her eight days' grace. After the eight days she could not get a cheaper house to meet her income, and the landlord said, "If you don't sign I will let your house to someone else," and so under pressure she signed the missive. She stayed in the house for a little while after 28th May, and then a house to her mind turned up, and she took it because the rent suited her. When it came to the November term she could not pay the quarter's rent for the first house, and the landlord pressed her. She said, "I have got no money; I cannot pay you"; and consequently he was going to take her to Court, but two of her friends came and asked if our Association could not do anything to assist her. I got the whole details from them. Her case was taken to the Court in January to make her pay up that quarter's rent; but we got some information, and we appointed two of our Committee to raise a counter-action against the landlord. When the case was called in Court, the landlord stood up and said, "My lord, the case is dropped."

583. But was that a case where she had two houses on her hand?—Yes.

584. Why did she not try to get the one sub-let?—That gives rise to another case, if you will allow me to explain.

585. But just answer that question first. Why did she not try to get the first house taken off her hand by the landlord?—She could not get it taken off her hand when there are so many houses lying empty in Paisley, and all the other tenants in Paisley bound down for a year according to the present law.

586. I am afraid that mere single instances don't come to much. If you could give us information showing that there is a considerable number of cases occurring where people are unable to sub-let, and have to pay, we should like to have them. I would ask you to furnish us with details, if you can, because that is what we want to get at. Isolated cases of hardship will occur in every system. What we want to know is, whether there is any material number of these cases, and we want your assistance in connection with that?—There are several cases of that kind.

587. Could you give us a note—not now but afterwards—of actual cases that have occurred where a person has had to leave, has tried to get the house sub-let, and has failed?—I can give a case in point.

588. But that is a single case; the most heavenly system will have a single case. Perhaps you will give us a list in black and white. It would be quite private?—I can give a case in connection with a sub-let. This was one of the members of our Association who signed for her house in January. As time went on a death took place, and she took another house in a more cheerful street at a rent which was thirty shillings a year cheaper. She took this house, knowing that she was legally responsible for the two houses; and she said, "But that does not matter 'to me; I am not going to stay in the house. Here is a 'cheaper house in a more cheerful street," and she signed for the second house. The landlord said, "You must not 'remove from this house; you have signed for this house, 'and you must stay in it." She even went to the landlord's agent, and was willing to deposit the whole year's rent in the bank, and even to conform to the agreements in the missive, but the landlord defied her to remove. She did remove however.

589. She applied to the landlord to get the house sub-let?—She got a sub-tenant, who quite pleased the landlord, but here was the knotty point: the sub-tenant was willing to take the house at the same rent; but for some reason or other, which I do not know, the rent was to be increased 10s. a year, and consequently the sub-tenant would not take the house.

590. These are instances. If you can afterwards give us any list or detailed note, it would be very instructive?—Is that necessary? Do you doubt my statement?

591. Not a bit. Everybody admits that there are cases; but the whole question is whether or not they are substantial in number, and that is what we want to get at in this inquiry?—They are so substantial in number that the people are crying out very loudly against the system.

592. You must do the best you can to help us. Do you know that in the case of one house-factor in Glasgow, of which we have had information, he has in his missive a condition that, in the event of a person leaving, owing to change of employment, he is to be entitled to do so on one month's notice?—No.

593. In your view nothing would remedy the difficulty except short lets?—That is so.

594. Just take the case I was putting to you of that condition of a right to leave on one month's notice?—That is only an isolated case.

595. Yes. If that were made universal, would it not just have the same result as you are suggesting with regard to a quarterly let?—But that would not be legal.

596. You are not following the question. Suppose that

were made the law, suppose the condition which in that case is voluntary just now were made the law, that whatever the length of let was, in the event of a change of employment, one month's notice should be sufficient?—The people want more freedom of action in regard to taking a house, and it should not be only as regards the change of employment. I met a man last week, and he said, "I got an offer of a house 20s. cheaper." Now, that is not a case of following the employment.

597. You want the right to be made absolute?—Yes.

598. Suppose the right were made absolute, that on one month's notice they should be entitled to change, that would remove the difficulty?—Not altogether. I think there should be a graduated scale for giving notice, according to rental and the way of paying rent.

599. In regard to the other difficulty of the long lapse of time from taking a house in January or February to the entry on 28th May, what is the special difficulty that that causes?—People are made to sign for a thing against their will. They have no desire to sign at that time, but under present conditions they can do no better. We have cases in point in Paisley where two of our members, our last secretary and Mr Pollock, whose houses, because they did not sign the missive on a certain day in January, were let next day over their heads.

600. What length of time before 28th May do you suggest would be reasonable to limit the right to?—I would suggest nothing at all. It is the long let we want abolished.

601. I understand that; but apart from the long let, you also think that having to contract four months before entry in any event is not right?—That is so.

602. How long do you think would be reasonable if four months is too long?—I would put it this way, if a man is paying his rent monthly, then there should be ten days' notice before he starts occupancy; if he pays quarterly, 20 days; if half-yearly, 30 days; and if yearly, 40 days. That is quite long enough to give notice.

603. Do you find that in cases where there has been a sub-let the factors charge something?—Most decidedly.

604. What is your experience in regard to that?—It is a great hardship.

605. But what is your experience?—They first see if they can get a quarter's rent, and if they cannot get that then they want a month's rent; if they cannot get that then they want £1; and if they don't get that then they want 10s., that being the lowest.

606. Supposing a tenant brings forward a quite suitable sub-tenant, and there is no break at all, do they charge anything in your experience?—Yes.

607. What do they charge?—5s. to 10s.

608. And in that case you do not see what loss occurs at all to the landlord?—They should not charge anything at all when they are getting a decent sub-tenant, and sustaining no loss.

609. What is your view and the view of your Association as to another matter connected with the Whitsunday term? Do you contemplate that instead of all the removals being at Whitsunday they should be spread over the year?—Yes, that is what we want. We want the removals spread over the whole year instead of being all on one day or in one week as at present.

610. What would be the principal advantage of that? Take first of all as regards the tenants themselves, what would be the principal advantage?—What clause do you refer to?

611. Clause 15, so far as tenants are concerned?—Just now with this yearly rent, take the building trade.

612. But take the tenants themselves first; we will take the tradesmen afterwards?—At present when people have to remove on 28th May with this yearly let, there may be sickness, and they have to sign for the whole year. If there is sickness in the house, and the house is not sub-let, then the tenant must remove, because, although there is sickness in the house., the doctor's authority does not relieve you.

613. But I was referring to clause 15?—It is quite self-evident when there is such an excessive demand on 28th May. Those who hire out vehicles charge three or four times their ordinary price.

614. Now, we want evidence about that?—I had that myself when I removed from Glasgow to Paisley.

615. What we want is evidence from experience. You can speak from experience?—Yes. I went to a contractor, and asked for a lorry in the morning to remove my things from Glasgow to Paisley. He said, "I can do that, but 'you will have to pay the piper. I have more work 'than I am able to do. If you want me in the morning 'of that day, then you will have to pay three or four 'times the ordinary price."

616. Have you known other cases of the same kind?—Yes, it is a general thing.

617. Suppose the tenant wants papering and painting done, or joiner work, has he to pay more than the ordinary price?—If he does not pay more, my experience is that I have had to wait six or eight weeks on the painter.

618. He has to be bribed, in short, to get it done at once?—Yes, we have to pay the piper.

619. Turn now to the tradesmen, and take the joiner and building trades. What effect have the removals on Whitsunday on them? They are over-pressed then, of course?—Yes. New buildings are rushed for the 28th May, and the tradesmen work as long as it is daylight in the months of March and April up to within a day or two before 28th May. They are paid time and a half for overtime, and the thing is rushed. After the work is finished, these various tradesmen, such as joiners, masons, painters, plumbers, plasterers, slaters, bricklayers, and so on, go idle for weeks. I have two nephews who found themselves in that position, and they got so disgusted that they went away last year.

620. If the removals were not all held at the Whitsunday term, then the work would be spread over the year?—Yes, it would spread the work over the whole of the year, and it would be more beneficial both to the employers and to the employees.

621. And the work would be better done?—Yes, and it would cost the employers less, because they would not require to pay time and a half.

622. What effect do you think shorter lets and more frequent removals would have on the amount of rent payable by the tenants? Would it affect the amount of rent one way or the other?—If we had shorter lets we would have freedom; we would have free trade in house-letting; and consequently, when you remove the block that there is in the way of coercing you to sign, the law of supply and demand being in operation, the exorbitant rentals must come down.

623. Would that affect all the rents from £20 downwards, or would it affect the higher rents?—It would apply to rentals £50 downwards.

624. Down to what?—£4.

625. Suppose all lets were monthly or quarterly, would it lead to forehand rents being demanded?—Not necessarily.

626. At the present moment, in the case of monthly lets, they are largely forehand?—No, it is only where the landlord suspects that the tenant is not decent enough, and has not enough to pay his rent with; but if the tenant has a respectable appearance, then he gets the monthly house without paying forehand.

627. Of course, just now he has the furniture to come and go on?—Yes.

628. Suppose the landlord had not the furniture to come and go on, suppose the landlord's hypothec were abolished, then with monthly lets it would mean a forehand rent?—No, the labourer is not paid forehand.

629. You don't know yourself about the English practice?—I know a little about it.

630. In England is it the case that the rents are largely forehand?—No.

631. That is not your experience?—No. I know two gentlemen in Paisley who have lived in England, and they have paid rents as high as £30 a year, and they have never paid forehanded yet.

632. With regard to the views you have been expressing, what bearing do you think the question of rates and the payment of rates has on this matter?—It would mean a complete alteration on the present system. What clause are you referring to?

633. Clause 6. Do I understand you to propose that with monthly and quarterly lets, the rates should be collected monthly and quarterly?—We don't go in for the present system of paying rates and taxes. The assessor in a town or burgh is able to forecast the approximate amount of money he requires for his expenditure.

634. It comes to this, you advocate the collection of rates quarterly or monthly?—I advocate that it should be at the same time as you are paying your rent, whether fortnightly, quarterly, or monthly.

635. To whom?—To the landlord.

636. Who would pay the rates?—The tenant.

637. To the landlord?—Yes.

638. And then the landlord should be responsible to the rating authority?—Not altogether. I would put it this way.

639. But that is so, is it not? If the tenant pays the rate to the landlord then the rating authority would not collect the rate from the tenant at all?—No, it would be from the landlord.

640. Have you yourself known cases which have been spoken to to-day where, in point of fact, by arrangement the rates were collected along with the rents? We have been told that the thing is actually done?—They do it in Paisley up to £4, and they are able to allow a percentage, —what it will cost. For instance, I know of several single apartments in Paisley where the value of the house is not

much more than £2 or £3, and they charge £4, which gives them a profit of 25 to 33 per cent. for collecting.

641. You yourself do not see any difficulty, if the owner at present pays rates up to £4, why the same arrangement should not apply to higher rents?—There would be no difficulty whatever up to £50.

642. Is it your experience that the views that you have been expressing are generally entertained on the part of the working classes?—Yes.

643. On the other hand, have you or have you not found cases where the working man values the security of being in possession of a house for a year as against his employer, with whom he may have a difference?—No difficulty, so long as you conform to the rules and keep yourself decent and respectable.

644 But that is not the point. Are there certain cases where the employer of labour owns his workmen's houses?—Yes.

645. Have you any in Paisley?—There are a number in the colliery districts and so forth.

646. But not in towns?—There are very few.

647. Take the case of an employer who owns his workmen's houses. If a difference arises between him and his men, and the men go on strike, is it not a great advantage for these men as against their employer, to be in a position of secure tenure of their dwelling-houses?—Yes, we want a new law there, so that employers cannot turn their men out when there is a strike on. There should be a clause to meet that.

648. You think that any change you advocate would require to be accompanied with a clause of that kind?—Yes, certainly. It is required for the sake of humanity.

649. Is it not the case that there are working men who think themselves in a better position because they are yearly tenants, and they rather pride themselves as being superior to those who are monthly tenants? That is said to be the case. Is it your experience?—No, that is not the case. It is the yearly tenants that are agitating for the reform, and the most respectable among them.

650. Whatever change was made, I suppose you would still desire to reserve the right of those who are unable to pay through inability to pay to get remission from rates?—Yes.

651. Whatever measure was passed?—Yes.

652. In your experience does that generally work in a satisfactory manner?—Yes, you mean relieving the poor?

653. Yes?—Yes. If a person is really poor, and has no money to pay, then they make application, and they get exemption after their case is inquired into. There is no difficulty.

654. You have been speaking from the point of view of the tenant. In your view, would the effect that you propose inflict any considerable hardship on owners of property?—Certainly not. I think it would be to their advantage.

655. In what way?—Let me give an example. Where I live just now there are modern houses which remain unoccupied on 28th May, and they will remain unoccupied until the next 28th May. Now, if this shorter letting system were introduced, it would be a benefit to the landlord, because these houses would let on the 28th of any month of the year, while at present they must remain till 28th May of next year. It would be a mutual benefit.

656. In that particular case, how would the change that you propose operate?—The proposed change would operate in this way,—men who just now have a long distance to go to their work would, with a shorter let, take these houses nearer their work on the 28th of any month. At present they must walk the long distance to their work until 28th May of next year.

657 Do you think there is anything in this view that working men being paid weekly or fortnightly, they would really be in a better position to pay their rents if the collection is more frequent? Do you think that is a sound view?—Yes, they would like to pay their rent weekly or fortnightly or monthly, and their taxes also, because they can pay smaller sums a great deal more easily than they can pay larger sums.

658. In your experience, how often is payment made in the case of yearly lets?—Once a year.

659. Are there not cases where the payment is half-yearly or quarterly?—Not that I know of.

660. I am talking of rents, not rates?—I thought it was rates you were referring to.

661. In the case of yearly lets, how many times a year is the rent paid?—Monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly.

662. There are no cases of yearly payment?—Yes. I know of two cases where that position has been taken up.

663. About what rent would these be?—About £20. They take up this position,—"I took my house by the 'year, I pay my taxes by the year, and I will only pay my 'rent once a year."

664. In their case Mr Cross's Bill would produce no effect, because if his Bill is that the period of let is to be the same as the period of payment, then the let would be for a whole year?—Yes, they are taking up that position to show the stupidity of the law.

665. Do you think that when a man changes his employment—say in Paisley to a place just outside the town—he necessarily wants to change his house?—Certainly. Such a man would prefer to take a house outside for the sake of his children.

666. Do you have in Paisley many men who live in town, where their children get employment in the town, and who work several miles away, at places such as Clydebank?—There is a good number.

667. These are cases where they do it voluntarily?—No.

668. But in some cases they do it voluntarily?—Yes, in some cases they do it, and in other cases if they would remove, they would do so instead of taking lodgings or paying railway fares.

669. The limit in Mr Cross's Bill is £20 and in previous Bills it was £15. Have you any view about that?—Yes, in the proposed reform there should be no limit of rental. We have members of our Association who occupy three apartments, and they pay £24 to £26, and others again with large families pay £30 to £32, and being members of our Association they have found fault with the limit. Not only that, but in the discussion in the newspapers various persons have found fault also.

670. What would you suggest as a reasonable limit?—I would go the length of £50.

671. You have a note which I do not quite understand. You think that the Bill or any similar Bill might be applied to such seaport resorts as Rothesay, Dunoon, and so on?—Yes. Mr Cross's Bill in regard to seaport towns is of a permissive character, the tenants are in the hands of the town council.

672. You are referring to the clause about its being optional?—Yes.

673. What you refer to is the optional part?—Yes. I would say that if there is any reform to take place it should apply to all towns and to all dwelling-houses.

674. Without putting it into the hands of the Town Council?—Yes. It should be compulsory by statute.

675. If there is to be a limit you say that it should not be less than £50?—That is so.

676. But you think it should not be limited at all?—That is so.

677. (*To Mr Thompson.*) You have heard Mr Fyfe's views. Does anything occur to you?—There are many parts of Mr Fyfe's evidence where I might have broken in. Take, for instance, removals all taking place on 28th May, where dirty people leave a house and other people come into it on the same day. That house may have been tenanted by some person suffering from an infectious disease, and a new family enters that house without any time for cleaning being provided. Their health and life is consequently endangered, which is an important consideration. I should prefer to have been cross-examined in the same manner as Mr Fyfe has been, because I felt inclined to rise up on certain occasions while he was giving his evidence.

678. But if anything occurs to you afterwards, we will be very glad to have a note of it. If any observations occur to you we will be delighted to have them?—There is another thing in regard to rentals being collected with the taxes or rates. I was afraid it might be your opinion that our Association was in favour of that being all in one account, as it were. Our opinion is not that there should be one account, but that there should be two separate accounts, one for the rates and one for the rent.

679. Why do you think that? Is it in order to bring before the people that they are paying rates, and what these rates are?—It is in order that the ratepayer might know, as at present, what he is being assessed for the different departments in detail.

680. You think that if that was done, it would otherwise remove what has been an objection?—Yes. It would let the rate-payer know exactly what he was paying for rates and what for rent. Our suggestion is that these should be paid to the landlord, the landlord would pay the rates over to the town, and the town might pay over the proper proportion to the parochial authorities.

681. In the cases under £4 where the owner pays—when he collects his rent, does he give any statement dividing the rent from the taxes?—I could not say, I think not.

682. Was there anything else that occurred to you at the moment?—I might say that I have paid monthly and I have paid half-yearly without signing any missive at all.

683. Have you had experience of yearly lets?—Yes. I understood on one occasion that I was taking on a yearly let when I signed for a house, but I was not asked for some four or five years to give my signature again to any further missive. I may say just in this respect, that I

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desired to remove on a certain occasion, having been there for four or five years. I did not know anything about this tacitory relocation business, and I thought I was free to remove at the half term. I gave notice to my landlord that I desired to remove, and he said that if I did so, I would be responsible for the rent until next May. I asked the advice of the Paisley Association of which I was a member, and they were legally advised that I was responsible although I had signed no missive. Now, that was news to me. I got the house sub-let. Since then I have been paying fortnightly rents.

684. To put it in a word—suppose that those who are yearly tenants just now were to be offered the right to retake their houses either yearly as before, or monthly, what proportion of them do you think would choose monthly?—I think the larger proportion of them would choose the shorter let.

685. Would it be much the larger proportion? Do you think it would be more than half?—Yes. It gives the individual a sense of freedom and liberty which he does not possess in the other case.

686. In regard to those who did not choose, what would be their reason for not choosing monthly lets?—I really cannot place myself in their position.

687. Might there not be a certain number who like an absolute security for a whole year?—There may be some who may be so extremely well situated that they may have that feeling.

688. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Fyfe.*) You instanced the case of a property in Paisley, I think, which in your opinion would be occupied to-day if a system of monthly tenancies had been in existence, and you argued from that, that that would be an advantage to the proprietors?—Yes.

689. Do you not see that it would be only an advantage to the proprietor whose house is at present standing empty and it would be prejudicial to the other owner from whose house the tenant was going to remove?—Yes, but the other owner would have twelve times in a year to let his empty house, whereas just now he has only once in the year.

690. You cannot state a case like that and lay down the rule that it is an advantage to the proprietor. It only benefits the individual proprietor. The man who loses the tenant suffers prejudice:—Yes, that is taking the thing in an isolated way.

691. I am taking the case that you put forward, that it would be a mutual benefit?—Yes. If we had this freedom of removing once a month, then the landlord who loses a tenant would likely get another tenant on the 28th of July or the 28th of August. You would have the law of free trade in operation.

692. I think it is rather problematical as to whether the other proprietor would find a tenant?—If his houses are reasonable in rent, and there is nothing wrong with them, then they will let.

693. Of course you are aware that, taking proprietors as a whole, they are against any change?—There are a lot of people in this world who are against any change.

694. If they thought it would be to their advantage you would expect them to be in favour of it?—Yes. I have come across several landlords in Paisley—I would say half a dozen—and at the Conference of our Association several of those gentlemen when we were done said that they would welcome quarterly lets to-morrow. They said it would help them to get rid of undesirable tenants.

695. You have stated that you are in favour of rates being collected along with the rent either monthly or quarterly?—Yes, but there should be two distinct receipts. We wish that the tenants should know the rates that they are paying.

696. You are in favour of that?—Yes. It would be in every way the best method of collecting.

697. You speak here in No. 24 of the position of tenants in poverty who would otherwise be intitled to exemption from payment of rates. Do you not think that under this new system of monthly and quarterly lets, those who are deserving of consideration, so far as exemption is concerned, might not so often get it as they do under existing circumstances?—No, I beg to differ. The one application should stand for a year, and not have tenants running every month or every quarter.

698. Of course, the consideration of appeals only comes up once a year?—Yes, and I would say once a year still. There is no use putting tenants to a lot of unnecessary trouble.

699. You would say that if a parish council or a burgh authority had a case of appeal under consideration, if they considered it to be a deserving one, then it should stand good for a year from that date?—Yes.

700. Of course there is the difficulty of removal to another house. Could you not suppose the case of one tenant stepping into the place of another, the former tenant being entitled to exemption for twelve months?—Might not the tenant who was not entitled to exempton get it?—No, because they are two different names.

701. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In the latest Bill we have the limit suggested for Paisley at £16?—Yes.

702. Have your Association considered that?—Yes. We have met and considered that, and we find fault with the limit of rental. We suggest that it should extend to all rentals, but if they want to have any limit, then we say that it should be £50.

703. Have you any views, either individually or as representing your Association, as to whether the landlord's hypothec should be continued or not?—Yes. With regard to the landlord being held responsible for the rates and taxes.

704. No, I mean with regard to the landlord having a preference over the furniture?—That is a matter of detail.

705. You have no opinion on it?—No, it is a matter of detail.

706. Your Association have not discussed it?—They have considered it, and they don't see why the landlord should have a preference over every other creditor.

707. You raised a point about houses owned by employers. At present with the yearly let the workman is independent for the year. Can you tell us that where employers do own houses like that there is no such thing as yearly lets? It is the case that the tenure ends with the period of service?—Yes.

708. And the eviction follows within forty-eight hours?—Yes.

709. Have you any views as to the grievance that is created by that condition of things—whether it should be dealt with or not?—As to the ending with the period of service, that is the agreement. Forty-eight hours is short enough notice, but it might well exist. Of course when you go into the employment you agree to do that, but as regards a strike there should be a clause that no employer is to evict his employees when a strike is on because of the suffering, especially in winter.

710. (*Chairman.*) Suppose the limit was to be £20, do you see any reason why Paisley should be dealt with differently from Glasgow?—No, I see no reason for it.

711. (*To Mr Thompson.*) Mr Cox has suggested that I should ask you on a point that we asked Mr Fyfe about. We know that in one case in Glasgow one of the factors put it into his missive that if there was a change on account of change of employment during the yearly let, the tenant should be entitled to leave on one month's notice. Now in your view would that remove the grievance or would it not?—I do not think it would.

712. It would aleviate it?—Yes.

713. Why do you say it would not remove it? Is it because it would not give an absolute right?—Yes. There are other things which you have already mentioned.

714. But if it is an absolute right it would appear to be a very reasonable stipulation?—Yes.

715. But it is qualified?—Yes.

716. (*Mr Howden and Mr Fyfe.*) Would you give people the advantage of taking better or cheaper houses,—would you apply it to persons wishing that as well as to persons requiring a new house through change of employment?—Yes.

717. Will you state to the Committee how much the weekly travelling expenses are for workmen?—It depends. Going between Paisley and Glasgow the fare will be about 2s. a week. Further, the taking of meals away from home adds from 2s. to 3s. to the weekly budget.

718. You give the case of a widow in Paisley. Is it not the case that that woman could not shift from her house and she had to stay on in it? You instanced the case that a minister told you about with regard to a party in Paisley where the breadwinner died and the widow wanted to shift to a smaller house and she discovered that the landlord would hold her responsible for the rent. Had she not to stay on with the big rent?—Yes, she had to stay till the next 28th May.

719. You also gave us the case of a sub-let in which the landlord, although he approved of the sub-tenant, actually raised the rent with that sub-tenant?—Yes, and that kept the sub-tenant from taking the house.

720. You have said that the £20 limit is not enough?—It is not enough, because working men in Paisley are paying £25 to £30 where they have sons and daughters working. So the £20 limit is not right. There should be no limit to rental, as there is no limit to rental at present in house-letting.

721. You think it is quite reasonable that a working man should have a four-room and kitchen house when his family grow up?—Yes.

722. (*Chairman.*) What will the rent of a four room and kitchen house go up to?—£30 to £32, and even up to £36 in the case of modern houses.

723. (*Mr Esslemont.*) In the case of a workman whose family have grown up and are bringing in money week by week, it is unlikely that they will all be changing their

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employment at one time?—That is so. But you have the case where the father has a good income, and he wishes to keep up a big style, and if he was going away then the sons and daughters would want to take a cheaper house.

724. But I think the case was one of a workman whose family were grown up and in employment and they required a larger house and they were able to pay for it. The head of the house has to leave the district in consequence of change of employment, but it is unlikely that the whole family would remove with the father because they would have to stick to their own employment?—It all depends on the circumstances.

725. But as a rule?—No, I have known cases where the whole family have had to remove because the father was removing.

726. (*Mr Howden to Mr Fyfe.*) In connection with the case of employer's houses, there was a Bill introduced by Mr Caldwell to give security in the case of a strike?—Yes.

727. And the houses were let according to the terms of the employment?—Yes, that is so.

728. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Fyfe.*) One question about the period of notice for re-letting, I think you suggested that for a monthly let it should be a week?—Ten days.

729. Do you think that ten days is long enough from the point of view of people who want to take houses?—Yes, because that is the law at present, and I think that is quite sufficient. With regard to the question of the sea-port towns, where Mr Cross's Bill makes an exemption——

730. (*Chairman.*) You object to the optional clause?—Yes.

731. What is the peculiarity in sea-port towns?—I have already explained that.

732. You think that if there was any option given, sea-ports in any case should not have the option?—No town should have any option in the matter.

733. That is what I understood. I would like to say, gentlemen, if you could assist us any more as to the number of these cases of hardship, it would be very important. You might consider whether you can do anything more than you have done in the way of giving instances so as to let us estimate the amount.

[Adjourned.]

SECOND DAY.

MONDAY, 10th DECEMBER 1906.

At the Municipal Chambers, Glasgow.

Present:

Sheriff Charles J. Guthrie, K.C., *Chairman.*

Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Bart.
Mr Thomas Binnie.
Mr Edward Cox.
Mr Joseph Dobbie, S.S.C.
Mr George B. Esslemont.
Mr John T. Howden.

Mr Stair Agnew Gillon, *Secretary.*

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Mr Andrew Dryburgh Provand, called and examined.

734. (*Chairman.*) You were from 1886 to 1900 Member of Parliament for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow?—Yes.

735. At that time and ever since you have taken a great interest in the House-Letting question, as we may call it?—Yes.

736. You brought in a Bill in 1890 dealing with the question. Was that the first Bill that was brought in?—I believe so.

737. I observe that that Bill was backed by Mr Baird, Mr Edmund Robertson, Mr Caldwell, and yourself?—Yes.

738. In the Memorandum prefixed to the Bill you say this,—"This Bill is intended to remedy the grievance 'which exists in large towns, more particularly in Glasgow, 'caused by a practice which has grown up of recent years 'of landlords compelling tenants of small houses to enter 'into a letting agreement several months before the term 'day. Workmen in Glasgow and other large towns require 'to move from one part of the town to another in order to 'follow their work, and at present are frequently compelled 'to fix their residence, say, four or five months in advance. 'The law in Scotland requires the landlord to give the 'tenant notice to quit forty-two days before the term day. 'The Bill will not interfere with any voluntary arrange-'ment which may be willingly entered into by both 'parties, but it will prevent either of them enforcing an 'agreement made more than fifty-two days before the term 'day. This leaves both parties ten days in which to agree 'a letting before the 'warning' day is due." Does that Memorandum correctly express what you understood at the time was the grievance complained of?—That was the chief grievance complained of at that time. They also complained of having to take houses for a whole year, but the long dated missive was the chief grievance so far as letters of complaint reached me, and they numbered hundreds. They complained of practically being compelled to sign a missive sometimes in January and sometimes even in December of the previous year for a house that they would not occupy until 28th May.

739. You said that you had received a great many letters. Was the matter also made subject of question at meetings?—We had only one large meeting, in the City Hall, Glasgow, in 1894.

740. In 1890 had the grievance come to your knowledge chiefly through correspondence?—Yes. I may mention that in 1886, the year I was elected, there was a conference held in Glasgow, between the Glasgow Householders Association and representatives of the Landlords and Factors, and then it was an old grievance.

741. What was the grievance that was the subject of discussion then?—The four or five months missive question, as it was called then. The signing of the missive was the prime grievance, and there was also a grievance as regards their inability to obtain shorter lets than twelve months.

742. Your Bill did not propose to touch the latter grievance?—No. The fact is that this Bill was put in after consultation between the four men whose names are on the back; it was not a party Bill at all. As you will notice, Mr Baird was one of the backers of the Bill. It was put in on account of the correspondence received being so contradictory. So many different statements reached me that I suggested a Bill like this being tabled so that we might give every person interested an opportunity of giving their opinion—the *pros* and *cons* in fact of the question.

743. At the same time you say there was also a complaint regarding the long lets?—Yes.

744. What drawbacks was it said that these long lets produced?—The drawbacks were many. The first one mentioned in the Memorandum was as regards workmen: for example, those engaged in building operations, who had to go from one part of the town to another, and were hampered by having a house that they had to take for from fifteen to seventeen months. Another grievance which affected the whole community, but more particularly tenants, was that all the flitting had to be done on one day

in the year, thousands of people being compelled to move on one single day. With all the flitting taking place on one day, they could not get repairs made, and for everything they had done for them they had to pay two prices. They could not manage their removals without great loss, trouble, and dissatisfaction.

745. Did you understand at that time that the feeling on the part of small tenants themselves was unanimous in regard to the purpose of your Bill, shortening the period?—It was not unanimous in this respect that I had communications from a few men who were workmen in steady employment, and they said that they wanted to engage their houses as early as possible: they did not want to wait; but that was because they were fixed, as it were, in one part of the City, and had no intention of ever removing from it, and consequently they would like to take their house by the year.

746. You understood that so far as they were concerned they objected to an agreement for an earlier period being made non-enforcible? They wanted to be in a position to take their houses earlier than your Bill had allowed?—Yes, a few wrote in that sense, but the reason they all gave was that they were in permanent employment in a particular part of the City.

747. What attitude did the landlords take towards your Bill?—Individual landlords and factors wrote that they were quite willing to make changes in favour of tenants, to put forward the warning day, and not to issue missives until sometime in March. Several individual landlords and factors were willing to do that, but the Landlords Association in Glasgow and the Factors Association were hostile. After that—I think it was in 1893, because the agitation was carried on for a long time—I met representatives of the two Associations in London. I thought that we would manage to come to some compromise in regard to it, but I did not succeed. As a body they were hostile, but individually some of them were favourable.

748. Were there any petitions either for or against your Bill?—Yes, I have several.

749. Both ways?—Yes.

750. Do you have copies of these?—No, but I have a list of the petitioners which I will put in.

751. Over what area did you understand the grievance to extend? Your Bill was the first applicable to dwelling houses in Scotland? It was not limited to any area, was it?—No.

752. Over what area did you understand that the grievance extended—was it over the Clyde district only?—Do you mean the complaint?

753. Yes.—It extended all over the west of Scotland, and Edinburgh, Leith, and Dundee. I think I had communications from Perth, and from one or two other towns, and also from Aberdeen, but the grievance was most active in the towns I have named.

754. Chiefly in the Clyde district?—Yes.

755. The next Bill that was introduced was in 1894, I believe, and it was backed by Mr Cross, Sir Thomas Carmichael, Mr Baird, and Mr MacGilligan?—Yes.

756. You did not back any of the subsequent Bills when you were in the House?—No.

757. The Bill of 1894 was a Bill providing that there should be no let up to £15 in burghs for more than one month?—Yes.

758. Do you remember in that same year, 1894, there was a meeting held in the City Hall, Glasgow, on 29th January, at which you were chairman?—Yes.

759. What was that meeting about?—That was a meeting called by Trades Unions here and by myself, so that I could give a report of what I had done in regard to the matter. It was in order to explain to them that I did not think that reform was likely to come through any sort of Letting Bill or Re-Letting Bill, because, while it was easy to set out a clause to do away with the grievance which existed, or largely do away with it, any such Bill would very likely create other difficulties. I came to the conclusion finally that it was better that we should get quit of the law of hypothec to begin with, because it gives unfair control by the landlord over the plenishing of the tenants in houses in towns—indeed, it is confined to houses with not exceeding two acres of ground attached to them.

760. You are talking now of urban hypothec?—Yes, it applies to very few rural houses as compared with urban houses—it is practically confined to urban houses now. Well, I recommended that to the meeting. I explained the difficulties, and they accepted my recommendation and passed a resolution asking me to introduce a Bill to abolish what remained of the law of hypothec, and I did so. I took no further part in putting my name on the back of subsequent Letting Bills that were introduced.

761. You did not again introduce the Bill of 1890 in subsequent sessions?—I don't think we did.

762. You say that you came to think that there would be greater difficulties created by any such measures. What do you mean by that?—It might create difficulties of all kinds. Any Bill of the kind would interfere with the freedom of both parties to a great extent.

763. By "any Bill of the kind" are you referring to a Bill such as you introduced in 1890?—Yes, a Bill of the same nature. Suppose we were to introduce a Bill requiring neither the landlord nor tenant to issue or accept a missive before a certain date, it is true that we would bind the landlord, but in binding one landlord, we might be binding twenty tenants. I thought we had better first get quit of the law of hypothec, which gives the landlord too much control over the tenants.

764. Did you think that while some tenants might suffer by being bound, a good many were being benefited by being secured?—I don't know that they were benefited, but they preferred it.

765. Was not that the view that the minority put before you, that they preferred to be able to secure themselves early in the year?—I divide them into the two classes of contents and non-contents. While the non-contents' case was before me, the contents were satisfied and said nothing, and so I heard from very few of them.

766. There was a substantial number of them, although you did not hear from them?—I really could not say what the number was. They may be numerous, as contents do not complain.

767. In consequence you introduced the Hypothec (Scotland) Bill of 1895, and I notice in the Memorandam prefixed to that Bill you say,—"The law of hypothec in 'Scotland gives landlords far more extended powers than 'the law of distress gives landlords in England, and it has 'always been considered as a grievance. The Hypothec 'Amendment Act was passed in 1867, which limited the 'landlord's power in certain ways, and in 1880 the 'Hypothec Abolition Act was passed, which repealed the 'landlord's right of hypothec for the rent of land exceeding 'two acres in extent and let for pasture and agriculture, 'with the buildings thereon."

768. Of course that was rural hypothec?—Yes.

769. Then you go on, "The law as it now exists, therefore, 'extends only to the contents of buildings and land of 'less than two acres of extent. This landlord's right of 'hypothec places serious limitations on the credit of the 'working classes, and on their control over their own 'property. In the Amending Act of 1867, which limited 'the landlord's power of hypothec in reference to the 'produce of land, there is also an express exemption of ''any household furniture or furnishings, or any agri-''cultural implements.' Agricultural occupiers have 'therefore for many years past been exempted from the 'landlord's right of hypothec over their household effects, 'while other occupiers are still subject to this law, under 'which their furniture, furnishings, and tools are liable to 'sequestration by a landlord immediately after they enter 'on possession of a house as security for rent not then 'accrued, due, or payable.

770. "The object of this Bill is, therefore, to abolish this remaining landlord's right of hypothec." You adhere to that view as setting out the state of the facts in your view?—I understand that this is a correct statement of the legal position we were in at that time.

771. That Bill was backed by yourself, Mr Cochrane, Mr Cameron Corbet, and Captain Sinclair?—Yes.

772. I don't think that the Bill came to a second reading?—No.

773. And it was not introduced by you again after this first time?—I think it was. I tried to get copies from the printers in London, but they told me that it was out of print. I believe it was introduced subsequently, and my opinion is just as strong now as it was then, that the law of hypothec should be abolished.

774. What bearing would abolition of the urban landlord's hypothec have on the question of short lets or long lets in your view: how would it act?—It would bring about short lets.

775. How?—Because the landlord at the present time has the security of the furniture of the tenant. If the law of hypothec were abolished he would have no security. At the present moment, as stated here, the tenant's tools, furniture, and furnishings are liable to sequestration by the landlord the day he enters the house, although there is no rent accrued or due or payable. If the law of hypothec were abolished, then the landlord would have no security at all except what the ordinary landlord has in long lets. He would naturally prefer short lets, a week or a month, and in that way the tenant would have less credit from the landlord. On the other hand, he would have full control over his own property. Of course the effect of abolishing hypothec would be qualified by the supply of houses. In districts where there were many unlet, it would operate sooner than when there were few to let. In the latter, landlords might still be able to maintain long lets.

776. If it had the effect that you anticipate, would you

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contemplate the system of forehand rents?—They have no hypothec in England, and workmen's houses are all let on weekly tenancies up to 8s. a week, and sometimes as high as 10s. a week. Then they appear to jump from weekly to quarterly lets, and they go up as high as even £25 or £26 a year.

777. Payable forehand?—Yes. I can get a complete set of the rules and regulations of some very large building companies in London, Manchester, and Liverpool.

778. You will give these to us?—Yes, I will hand them in complete. The rent is always payable forehand, or in advance, as they say in the south, but it is not always exacted. In England where they don't exact it, they have the same difficulty in getting rid of an objectionable tenant as they have here. The other day they took a tenant's door and windows off in London to get quit of him. In another case the company stopped up the tenant's chimney to make him go away, and in a third case they turned the hose down the chimney, and said that they would wash the tenant out if he did not leave.

779. Will those statistics show the period of warning?—Yes, they will give you all particulars.

780. Will they also show the system of payment of rates?—Yes. Might I mention how they are paid?

781. Yes.—They compound the rates in England under an Act—I have not the name of it—which is optional to both landlord and tenant, but the option is not often exercised. The landlord in England pays rates on all the small houses. To this there are some exceptions since rates have increased.

782. Under what rents?—They are small houses, what we would call flats or small houses. The landlord pays rates even in the case af expensive flats. I have a flat in London, and I pay £350 a year of rent, and my rates are paid by the landlord; I pay no rates of any kind.

783. You reside permanently in London?—Yes, but I always look on myself as an exile there.

784. Can you tell us whether it is the fact that there are complaints in England about short lets from people who would desire the security of longer lets?—I have never heard of any.

785. Is it the case that in England, say in London, Manchester, and Liverpool, the rates are higher than in the Scottish burghs?—I could not say. London is different from any other city, because the rates are not uniform as in other places—there are 28 burghs in London I will hand in an official statement of what the rates are in these burghs.

786. Does it occur to you that, in addition to the abolition of the law of hypothec, there is any other grievance that requires to be separately treated, a grievance either on the part of the landlords or anybody else?—Yes, I think there are several other things in regards to this question. May I refer to them?

787. Please.—There is first the repeal of hypothec. Then I think that the Removal Terms Act of 1886 should be amended, so as to make notice to quit twenty days for quarterly lets, and thirty days for longer lets, up to twelve months. Under that Act at present, notice must be one-third of the time of letting up to four months, making three days for a week, eleven days for a month, thirty-one days for a quarter and forty-two for four months, and of course it is forty-two for every tenancy up to annual tenancies. I think that if anything is done through Parliament to promote shorter lets, so as to bring about weekly lets or monthly lets and make them universal, the landlord should be able to get quit of an objectionable tenant sooner than he can just now. It is not in the interest of the landlord that I am speaking, but in the interest of the rent-paying good tenant. The number of defaulters is not more than 2 per cent. or one in 50, and sometimes that one is a very objectionable person and he annoys the other 49. He can retain possession of his room or house for any period from three to five weeks, perhaps even longer, although he has paid only one week's rent. That is done in England sometimes, and I think we should take care to avoid it in Scotland in any change that is to take place.

788. Your second point is the alteration of the Removals Act of 1886, and your third point is a more expeditious method of ejecting objectionable and defaulting tenants?—Yes, by amending the Sheriff Act of 1838 to enable landlords to obtain possession sooner on short lets. At the present time anything done under that Act is very costly, and it is very dilatory in regard to small lettings. Of course all unpaid rents are bad debts, and the bad debts are spread over the rents of those tenants who pay their rents. At the present time good tenants pay for bad tenants. I refer to the report of the Glasgow Workmen's Dwellings Company and I find that last year their bad debts amounted to £26, 2s. That, of course, has to be recovered from the good tenants, because the rents are arranged so as to give a dividend of 3½ per cent. on the capital outlay.

789. So if provision is made directly or indirectly bringing about short lets, there ought to be as a counterpart the power of more immediate ejection?—Yes, I think so; some reasonable authority should be given to the landlord. Then there is another change that I suggest, namely, to change the legal warning-out day from 4th April to 28th April for yearly lets. That, I think, would tend to shorten the missive term—the missives would not be issued until the month of March. It would have that tendency. Then my last suggestion is to amend the Law of Distress Amendment Act of 1888, making it to apply to Scotland, to exempt tools, trade implements, and personal effects in use from distraint for rent. We have a precedent in the law of hypothec, because, when it was amended, there was an express exemption of any household furniture or furnishings or any agricultural implements. I would extend that English law to Scotland.

790. When was the English law amended?—It was amended in 1888.

791. And there has been no agitation for that being altered since?—Not that I know of. I shall also hand in a copy of this Act. Let me add one word more in regard to that power of distraint on personal effects in Scotland. It sometimes operates very harshly indeed. If you deprive a man of his tools, you then deprive him of his means of livelihood. If you deprive a woman of her sewing machine, you make her at once a destitute person. Although this does not perhaps come within the scope of the remit to the Committee, still, I think it should be dealt with at the same time, if not in one Bill, then in another Bill.

792. Your view is that, if it is found to work successfully in England, there is no reason why Scotland should be in a different position?—There is no reason whatsoever.

793. You were going to get the figures—we may get them otherwise—showing the number of small houses in Glasgow in 1906. I have them here for 1905, but I notice that you say that you will have the exact figures for this year?—I said that, but I do not have them.

794. Will you give us the figures for 1905 then?—I divide the small houses in Glasgow in 1905 into four classes, as follows:—

Houses at £4 and under, . .	2,133
„ between £4 and £10, . .	88,817
„ „ £10 and £15, . .	32,891
„ „ £15 and £20, . .	19,675
Making a total of . .	143,316

There are 26,148 houses above £20, so that that makes the total number of 169,664 dwelling houses in Glasgow.

795. What do you mean by Glasgow? Do you mean the municipal area?—Yes. Of the whole 169,664 dwelling houses there are 143,316 likely to be affected by any legislation, nearly the whole of them.

796. If, as has been said, the houses at £4 and under are all short lets, and about three-fourths of the houses between £4 and £10 are short lets, these would not be affected as compared with the others?—No. The figures given are an estimate I got. I cannot speak exactly, but they agree with the information I received. I may mention that houses at £4 and under are decreasing; there are only about one-fourth as many houses to-day at that rent as there were not so very many years ago.

797. Where did you find that?—In a return by the City Assessor. I will get the exact figures for previous years. These houses are decreasing and people are living in a better-class house.

798. Mr Binnie suggests to me that the old houses are being pulled down and that would tend to bring that about?—Yes, that is so.

799. Do you know, from your knowledge of England, whether there is a great difference of opinion there in regard to the question of compounding rates?—The question of the compounding householder was a burning political question at one time, but that is a long time ago. I am not aware that there is any agitation in regard to it at the present time. It is optional.

800. Take your own case. Do you have any separation between your rates proper and your rent proper?—No. I pay one sum to the landlord.

801. Then you don't know what rates are paid?—No.

802. That is not a good system. Should not an occupier be in a position to know what rent and rates are being charged?—I think it would be better if the separate figures were given. They might be put on one statement.

803. Do you mean monthly or at the end of the year?—I pay quarterly.

804. And you think the tenant should know quarterly?—Certainly. If he paid weekly it would require more clerking to put in a separate statement of rent and rates. This would also be the case to do it monthly; but when you come to quarterly, it should be done. I may mention that with the landlord in England, as with the £4 house

landlord here, his paying the rates is a speculation. The allowance made him for collecting them from the tenants may or may not leave a profit.

805. You have no interest yourself as proprietor of any houses?—None in the world.

806. You are only a tenant paying too large a rent?—Yes. In England they always allow a special discount for compounding, but there is a tendency to reduce it in London; I know. The secretary of one of the companies wrote me a letter on the subject the other day. Rating Authorities have given as high as 20 per cent. and sometimes even 25 per cent.

807. Have you looked at the terms of the latest Bill on the subject, the one that has been before Parliament, under which the term of let is to be equal to the term of periodic payment?—Yes.

808. Would it be open to the same objection of interfering with the freedom of contract?—Before that, might I make a remark with regard to clause 4?

809. Yes?—If the term of let was for a week, then the notice would be a week. In the present law the notice is only three days.

810. But apart from the notice. Take the question of the term of let being held to be the term fixed for the periodic payment: that is to say, if you pay weekly, it would be a weekly let; if you pay monthly, it would be a monthly let, and the same with quarterly and yearly?—For small lets the law as it stands is better than this. When you come to yearly lets, no one would wait a year for his rent.

811. I suppose it would practically bring yearly lets to an end?—Yes.

812. Because there are no yearly payments?—That is so, and it would make the notice much longer than it is, while the object of the Bill, I should say, was to reduce the period of notice as far as small houses are concerned.

813. I think, to sum up, you recommend five changes?—Yes. I recommend the following five changes:—

(1) The repeal of Hypothec.

(2) Amending "Removal Terms Act of 1886," making notice to quit twenty days for quarterly lets and thirty days for longer lets up to twelve months.

(3) To change the legal warning-out day from 4th April to 28th April for yearly lets.

(4) Amending the Sheriffs Act of 1838 to enable the landlords to obtain possession sooner on short lets.

(5) To amend the Law of Distress Amendment Act 1886, making it apply to Scotland to exempt tools, trade implements, and personal effects in use from distraint.

814. (*Mr. Binnie.*) You spoke of allowing the landlord to get easier possession?—Yes.

815. Have you thought of any way in which that could be done?—No. It would be by an Amendment of Sheriffs Act of 1838.

816. You have told us that in England a man has sometimes to destroy his property to get possession?—They have difficulties in the way of getting quit of an objectionable tenant.

817. Have you thought of any easy way?—No. As far as Scotland is concerned, we would have to amend the Sheriffs Act of 1838, which is the Act under which all proceedings are taken.

818. You have not thought how that could be done?—No, I thought it was a question for lawyers or for draftsmen. I am no longer in the House; if I were there I should no doubt have drafted something of the kind years ago.

819. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Do you think that the short period in England depends considerably on the fact that the landlord has no right of hypothec? Do you think that is a factor which has determined the length of lets in England?—I think it is largely so. If we had no law of hypothec here applying to urban lets, then I think short lets would become far more general than they are. So far we have some weekly lets here; but we have a very large number of monthly lets. Weekly lets and fortnightly lets would come if there was no law of hypothec. I may mention that some agents have written this to me. One agent candidly wrote to me and said that for those without much plenishing they let for as short a period as possible; he said that these tenants were law proof; there was no use going to law with them at all, as it would not pay the cost of proceedings if they had no plenishing.

820. (*Mr Cox.*) Do you know the effect of the abolition of the law of hypothec as regards agricultural matters?—No, I don't know the effect that has followed.

821. I don't think there has been any shortening of the tenure as regards the letting of farms?—The letting of a house and the letting of a farm are very different. We let on tacks of nineteen years in Scotland, and they would not shorten that, because the power of the landlord to attach the tenant's furniture and agricultural implements and other things had been expressly excepted. It would not affect the length of the lease at all.

822. Formerly, while the law of hypothec was in existence, the farmer had a very long time in which to pay his rents, and the effect of the abolition of the law was to shorten that time?—That may have been, but I would not occupy the time of the Committee in discussing it. I am a strong believer that illegitimate credit—it does not matter to whom—is one of the worst things that can be enjoyed, as some might say, because it leads to debt, losses, insolvencies, and bankruptcies from the highest to the lowest.

823. (*Mr Howden.*) You said in the course of your evidence that it was vexatious on tenants to have to remove all on the one day. I presume you were referring to tenants of small houses?—Yes.

824. Does the same thing not apply to large houses and business premises?—Yes. Of course it is not so distressing to them as it is to a poor man with a wife and three or four children. They have all their furniture to move in the one day, and perhaps it is a wet day, as I have seen in Glasgow many a time.

825. Still, there would be a considerable amount of inconvenience to business people?—Yes, undoubtedly there would be.

826. Would you favour an extension of the principle that you advocate in connection with hypothec up to personal goods of a tenant, say to about £20?—I would not place any money limit on it at all—I would not mention money. I would exempt the landlord's power in regard to whatever was in use by the tenants to earn their living, and also their personal effects. I believe that in the English Act bedding is also excluded. I think that whatever a person employs to earn his livelihood—the workman his tools, and the woman her sewing machine—should be exempt from the landlord.

827. You would clear the house irrespective of the bedding,—you would leave the bedding and personal effects, which mean clothing and tools?—Yes.

828. Would you take away even the tables or chairs or anything of that sort?—The landlord lets his house and he expects to get some rent and he is entitled to be paid.

829. They usually sell these goods when they take them from the tenant; they put them up to auction?—Yes, they have to.

830. And the net return is not nearly the value of goods?—Perhaps not.

831. It would probably take about three or four times what is received by the sale to replace the goods?—Sometimes it might.

832. That means practically that if a tenant, through no fault of his own, happened to fall into arrears, the landlord could compel him to pay almost three or four times his rent?—No, the landlord would get only the proceeds of the furniture, which is usually less than the amount of rent owing. You also say through no fault of his own?

833. Yes.—Are you aware what landlords say is the cause in the case of the largest number of defaulting tenants?

834. I am aware what some of them say.—It has been stated, probably here, and it is in print in letters to the newspapers so far as Scottish landlords are concerned. There is a statement in the *Glasgow Herald* where the writer says that he knows of no cause except drinking that has made tenants unable to pay their rent. I know the secretary of one of the largest letting companies in London, which has an enormous number of small houses. Sitting in my room, just a week ago, he told me, when he was asked that very question, that the principal cause, almost the only cause, of people being unable to pay their weekly rent was either drink or betting.

835. Have you never heard the loss of employment being given as a cause?—Yes, there are other causes, such as illness and loss of employment, but I am giving the statement made by men of experience on the question. I have no personal experience of it at all; I am only stating second-hand what has been said.

836. You would imagine that representatives of the working class will have some experience of their own class?—Yes, undoubtedly.

837. If they assert that in the majority of cases that is not the principal cause of poverty, their opinion would be entitled to as much weight as that of the persons to whom you refer?—No mere tenant could speak of more than his own case or a few cases that may come before his notice.

838. (*Chairman.*) Mr Howden was putting to you the actual case of a man who through no fault of his own was unable to pay his rent. There are undoubtedly such cases?—Yes.

839. The question is not whether they are the majority of cases are not, but take such a case that does exist?—I was asked if I would still allow the landlord to be able to

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distrain on the tenant's goods beyond what he required to carry on his work, and I would say that if he does not do so, then in a great many cases he won't get any rent at all.

840. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What do you mean by "distrain"? We do not know that word in Scotland.—I beg your pardon for using it. In Scotland we would call it to "poind" or to "attach."

841. Surely. Do you advocate now, as you did then, the abolition of hypothec?—Yes.

842. That is the abolition of the preference to the landlord?—Yes.

843. Coming down to poinding, you are now talking of the ordinary right of an ordinary creditor for rent?—He would have the rights of an ordinary creditor. He has that in England to-day.

844. I do not know whether you are aware of it or not, but in Scotland one cannot poind either working men's tools or wearing apparel?—I was not aware of it. I think I have seen a case with regard to a sewing machine that was taken and sold for rent.

845. On the ground of hypothec?—Yes.

846. If you abolished hypothec under this Bill, your point in regard to distraint would fall?—No. I would do away with the law of hypothec as it is, but then there is poinding for an ordinary debt, and I would leave the law as it is with regard to that, not that I approve or disapprove of it. It is outside the scope of the question that is before this Committee, I think.

847. But if your Bill is carried, that removes the grievance which you think exists under which landlords can attach either tools or wearing apparel?—The Bill abolishing hypothec may have savings in it, as many other Bills have. If it is to interfere with some outside law altogether, then that should be put right.

848. You would be quite content if the landlord's remedies were put on the same footing as those of ordinary creditors?—Yes.

849. So long as he could not attach either wearing apparel or tools?—Yes, anything by which the tenant earns his living.

850. Therefore you would not want to have any restriction on the present law in regard to poinding?—I would not enter into it at all, because it is a very wide subject and quite beyond this question.

851. Your position is that you wish to abolish hypothec?—Yes.

852. In your Bill of 1890 you took the limit of £20. In some other Bills we have had different limits stated. Is it your opinion that a universal limit of £20 would be an appropriate limit all over?—I think so, but of course I have letters from agents saying that workmen hardly ever have a £20 house, and some would limit it to £15. I think it should extend to £20, however, because I believe many workmen have that, and, besides, that the average rent of our working folk is, I think, rising.

853. Would that suggest to you that there might be cases where the limit might exceed £20?—If evidence were given at this inquiry showing that £20 was too low a rate to take to meet the case, it might be that you would go up to £22, 10s., or £25. I have no objection to that at all.

854. In some of the Bills before us a local option clause is introduced. In your Bill of 1890 you have applied it universally to Scotland?—Yes.

855. In your view, as one who has gone into this very thoroughly, do you think any legislation should be permissive in each locality?—I would not like to dogmatise the one way or the other. There might be some places where it might be optional, but I have not thought over that. However, I may mention that I would like to see the legislative changes necessary made as simple as possible. The more complicated the Bill is, the more likely is it to create trouble and dissatisfaction instead of getting quit of trouble.

856. You have told us a lot of interesting matter in regard to the law in England. Can you tell me whether there is any rule in England in regard to exemption of tenants on the ground of poverty? Perhaps you know in Scotland we have a large number who are exempted on the ground of poverty, and we are met with the objection that any compounding which would make the landlord pay those taxes or rates would result in the tenant paying rates which at present he is exempt from. What is the rule in England?—I know that in England there are allowances made. I received a letter about it this morning which I will send in.

857. With reference to the machinery for ejecting undesirable tenants, you advocate a more summary method on the ground of saving money in the way of arrears and getting rid of undesirable tenants?—Yes, in the interests of good tenants. Why, you have not only to get rid of bad tenants in some places, but you have to prevent them coming in. In this report of the Glasgow Workmen's Dwellings Company they mention one district where they have good tenants and they have a number of unlet houses, but they dare not let them because the tenants that would come in would drive away the other tenants.

858. That is one reason why you want short notices of removal?—Shorter than they are just now. In the Removal Terms Act of 1886 they are very short; they are only three days for a week, five days for a fortnight, and eleven days for a month. It is not the short notice so much,—giving notice is one thing and getting possession is another.

859. If short lets were universal, would that not result in a more summary ejection of undesirable tenants and also a saving of arrears to landlords?—They would get the rent in advance in most cases. Some companies in England exact the rents from weekly tenants in advance, but others do not.

860. We are told by some witnesses that one reason for advocating universal short lets is that the landlord would have less arrears and would be more easily able to get rid of undesirable tenants?—I should think that that result would follow.

861. This might result from universal short lets?—Yes.

862. In 1890 you brought in this Bill to shorten the period of notice, and as you say in the preamble to it, your Bill was that notwithstanding any missive it was not to be binding unless within so many days of Whitsunday?—That is so.

863. That is interfering with contracts of course?—The object of the Bill was to get the *pros* and *cons* from every person interested in the question. It was a trial Bill, I might say, because after I got all the particulars I came to the conclusion that it was very unlikely that we could substantially reform the grievance by a mere letting Bill. As long as hypothec was in the hands of the landlords, as long as they had that control over the plenishing of the tenant, a letting Bill would be inoperative to a large extent.

864. Are you in favour of the proposals contained in Mr Cross's recent Bill?—No, Clause 4 makes the law worse for the tenant than it is now.

865. But the general principle of the Bill is to make tenancies continue during the period of payment?—You make it worse for the tenant, and you would have no long tenancies at all. You would not have a yearly tenancy under that clause, because no landlord would wait a year for his rent. Besides that, we have spoken of tenancies for a year, but there are many tenancies in Glasgow for many years, and this clause would mean that you were to pay so many years' rent at one time.

866. (*Chairman.*) It is under £20?—Yes, I had overlooked that there is another clause that limits the rent.

867. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do you think that if hypothec was abolished and a short period for notice of re-taking instituted, that would meet the present grievances?—It would meet them largely. I do not mean to say that what I recommend would be perfection, but what I recommend I think should be done, and then we would see what takes place in a year or two,—we would see how it works. I think if you induce landlords and tenants somehow to come to some arrangement whereby they can remove all through the year, as they do in England, you would save us this terrible state of things which takes place on 28th May of each year.

868. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You said that when you introduced this Bill in 1890 you had representations from interested parties in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leith, Dundee, and I think you mentioned Aberdeen?—I think I had one or two letters from Aberdeen.

869. Do you recollect whether those representations from Aberdeen were for or against your Bill?—They were for the Bill.

870. I am not sure if I understand your position in regard to hypothec. Do you wish to have the law of hypothec completely repealed or only partially repealed? I ask that because, as I read your Bill, it provides for the complete repeal, but I gather to-day that you only favour partial repeal?—No. I mention in the statement of which you have a copy that it applies now only to urban lets. That was a mistake—it applies chiefly to urban lets; it still applies to houses in the country, but the number of rural houses to which it applies is very small as compared with the number of those in towns. I would abolish all that remains of the law of hypothec; I would take away the power of the landlord over the plenishing in country places as well as in towns.

871. You would give him no preference over another creditor?—No, none whatever.

872. You wish to amend the Act of 1888 and to excempt tools, trade implements, and personal effects. Would that be in the case of every creditor?—No, I refer to the landlord. I think Mr Dobbie said that if the Hypothec Bill had been passed as it stands it would have affected all creditors. The usual savings might be put into the Bill so that it would only affect the landlord.

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873. But don't you see that would be placing a disadvantage on the landlord as compared with another creditor? Would that be fair?—Not at all, he has given his house on credit, as a tailor might give a coat on credit.

874. I do not think you follow me?—The landlord has this advantage; he can say, "I want payment for my house in advance."

875. As the law stands at present, the proprietor of the house has the security of the effects as against his rent. You wish to have that removed?—Yes.

876. But you do not wish to place him in any worse position than any ordinary creditor?—No, he can sue for what the tenant owes him.

877. Then, in that case, you would not exempt his tools and trade implements?—Yes.

878. Would you exempt those in the case of an ordinary creditor?—That would be an extension of the law not contemplated at all just now. I said to Mr Dobbie that I had not thought that out, but that would be a very, very wide extension of the law.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) Might I say that my present impression is that the law does not exempt wearing apparel and tools.

879. (*Mr Esslemont.*) But Mr Provand covers trade implements and personal effects. He said he would not allow anything to be attached that was material to the tenant in earning his livelihood. Take the case of a woman who lets her furnished apartments. How would you deal with that? If you take away her furniture, then you take away her means of livelihood, just as if you take away a sewing machine from a dressmaker?—The landlord can sue for the debt the same as any other creditor, but he could not take her furniture.

880. You wish to exempt these things in the case of every creditor?

(*Mr Dobbie.*) I think that is the point.

(*The Witness.*) I did not want to put any money value on.

881. (*Mr Esslemont*). I think you quite agree that if hypothec is abolished the landlord will seek some other form of security, either in the form of a cautioner or by demanding forehanded payment?—Very likely he will.

882. But notwithstanding these possible eventualities, you think it is desirable to have the law done away with?—Yes.

883. Do you think that shorter lets would lead to more frequent removals?—I could not say, but I am sure that they would lead to removals being spread over the whole year instead of all being nearly on the one day.

884. Would that not involve some difficulty in the collection of rates?—Yes.

885. You have no suggestion to make to us as to how that could be best overcome?—The Glasgow authorities settle with landlords as regards houses at rents of £4 and under, and I think Mr Henry, the assessor, in a report made some years ago, said that that might be easily carried up to £10. In England it applies to all rents. Landlords can make arrangements here with municipalities just as they do in the South.

886. As a matter of fact, in Scotland they do as regards houses of the smallest class?—Yes, up to £4 in Glasgow.

887. You seemed to agree that the slumping of rates and rents was rather an objectionable thing, that the occupier in these circumstances was really not aware of what the cost of administration was?—It would give more work to separate them with very short lets, but it would be quite easy with quarterly and yearly lets. I take my house by the year and I pay quarterly. I have nothing but just the quarter's rent on my statement, but it would be quite easy for the landlord to set out the rates which he paid out of that.

888. (*Mr Binnie.*) In reply to Mr Dobbie, I think you said you wished the landlord to be placed on exactly the same footing as an ordinary creditor?—Yes.

889. An ordinary creditor, if a person does not pay when payment is due, can at that very minute cease to give any further credit?—Yes.

890. Would you propose that a landlord should be able to give his tenant no further credit by there and then turning him out of the house?—I am in favour of limiting his credit.

891. But answer this question. Are you in favour of the landlord being allowed to turn a tenant out of the house if he has not paid his rent on the day when it is due, to turn him out there and then?—On that day?

892. Yes?—No.

893. Then you do not place the landlord on the same footing as the ordinary creditor?—It is not quite possible to do so.

894. But is it not a very great difference, that in the one case the ordinary creditor can without notice cease to give credit—that is the position of the ordinary creditor?—Yes, he may do so.

895. And you propose that the landlord should be required to give notice to the tenant, the rent running on in the meantime, and at the end of the notice should be required to take somewhat expensive legal proceedings in order to get quit of the tenant. Is that placing the landlord on the same footing as an ordinary creditor?—No, but the landlord need not place himself on the footing of an ordinary creditor. A tailor supplying a coat can get payment in advance, and a landlord letting a house can also get paid in advance.

896. Can a tailor not get paid for a coat before he delivers it?—Sometimes he does, but sometimes he does not.

897. But take the large warehouses in Argyle Street, of which there are so many?—You mean the shops that sell ready-made goods?

898. Yes.—The customer pays at the time he gets the goods.

899. And the same with the baker?—Yes.

900. And the grocer?—No, there is too much credit given there.

901. Is it very large in proportion to the amount of the business?—My authority on the credit question is the Inspector General of Bankruptcies.

902. And all those who give credit come to him?—Yes, in the end.

903. Their number must therefore be comparatively small?—There is a considerable number.

904. But comparatively it is very small?—Yes. The precise positions of an ordinary creditor and a landlord must always differentiate in some way.

905. Would you propose to give the landlord any advantage for the disadvantage which every person admits he must be put to?—It is all in the rent. When he buys a piece of ground or leases it, and is going to build his house, he calculates all these risks—they are all in his business. It is the very same if he buys the house. I might as well be asked if I would place all merchants on the same footing as myself. I buy goods and do not get paid for twelve months, while another man gets paid within two or three days. It is impossible to put everyone on the same footing, but it is quite possible to prevent any person having undue advantages over his debtor. The law for centuries has been made by landlords, and at one time the debtor was the slave of the creditor. In suggesting that the law of hypothec should be abolished, I am suggesting that there should be taken away what I think is an unreasonable power on the part of the landlord as at the present time.

906. He had an undue advantage?—He has it now.

907. And you propose to put him at an undue disadvantage?—By no means. He can measure his disadvantage in his rent. He knows the risk, and he asks his tenant to pay for it.

908. Whether he calculates it or not, this disadvantage does exist?—All risks exist.

909. But this special disadvantage exists?—There are special disadvantages in every business.

910. (*Chairman.*) Are you giving your evidence on the footing that short lets would increase the rents or would have no effect on the amount of rents?—It would operate in two ways. In the first place, if you have tenants on weekly lets and coming in and out frequently, the repairs, painting, papering, damage to locks and other things, would all have to be put right oftener than if the house was let for a year. On the other hand, if the loss of rent was less, the landlord would have a smaller amount of bad debts to spread over the rents of those who pay.

911. What do you think would be the net result, balancing the one against the other?—I think the average rent might be slightly greater.

912. You referred to Mr Cross's Bill as having the effect of bringing yearly lets to an end?—Yes, within the £20 limit.

913. Do you think it valuable that it should be possible for a man who prefers it to have a yearly let under £20?—I would give as much freedom of contract as I possibly could, always taking care that landlords and tenants are placed so as to be capable of contracting on a fair level.

914. Do you think it right that if a man wants to have security of tenure for a year in a house under £20 he should be able to have it?—Yes, I think so.

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915. (*Chairman.*) You are a solicitor in Glasgow and a Bachelor of Laws of the University of Glasgow?—Yes.

916. You have been Law Agent of the Glasgow Landlords Association, Ltd., since the year 1891, and I think you were appointed secretary in the year 1903, in which position you still act?—Yes.

917. You have been authorised to give evidence on behalf of the Association?—Yes, and also Mr McBain.

918. You have known about the movement with regard to the letting of small houses since it was first heard of?—Yes.

919. You have examined the series of Bills that have been introduced into the House of Commons?—Yes.

920. You have heard a good deal of the evidence that has been led before this Committee?—Yes.

921. Will you tell us about the Glasgow Landlords Association. When was it originated?—I think it was originated in 1862, and it was incorporated in 1897.

922. Its objects were generally to watch over the interests of landlords in connection with any questions that might arise affecting heritable property?—Yes. The objects of the Association as stated in the memorandum are as follows:—"To take into consideration all or any matters affecting 'heritable property; to procure the removal of all fiscal 'and other burdens upon such heritable property of an 'oppressive and inequitable character; to originate and 'promote improvements in the law relating to heritable 'property, and to support or oppose alterations thereon, and 'to effect improvements in the administration thereof; to 'advise and assist members of the Association, or others, 'in questions as to owners' rights and liabilities in rela-'tion to heritable property; to aid members, or others, 'pecuniarily, in litigating questions of importance; to 'collect and diffuse useful information on all matters 'affecting heritable property," etc.

923. How many members do you have?—There will be about 400 members.

924. Have you any notion as to the value of the property they will represent?—It must be very extensive, because we have some of the biggest owners in the city as members of our Association.

925. Do your members include persons owning property of all kinds?—Yes, there are a great many small owners,—owners of a single house or a tenement, for instance.

926. Has this question that we are considering been before the Association from time to time?—Yes. I think it first received attention in 1890. There had been at that time an agitation on account of the early issue of missives for renewal of the yearly let.

927. And there was a Bill introduced by Mr Provand?—Yes.

928. What position did the Association take up in regard to that?—They disapproved of any restrictive enactments by Parliament with reference to heritable property. They were quite willing to have the issue of missives deferred if it could be arranged amongst the owners and house factors generally in the city.

929. Was it felt by the Association that whether it should be dealt with legislatively or not, there was a grievance in connection with that?—I think it was generally felt among house owners and factors that the early issue of missives was to some extent a grievance. It is an unfortunate time of the year for people to make up their minds as to whether they are to take their house or not—it is so early.

930. What do you mean by "so early"?—It is in the winter, and it is not a pleasant time in which to search for houses or to select houses.

931. In your experience, has the early date become earlier within recent years?—I think probably it has moved a little earlier. So far as I understand the practice in Glasgow, the factors send out their missives for the tenants to sign about the middle of January, and I think the question as to re-taking remains open until Candlemas, by which time the landlord expects his answer. In former times, I believe the re-taking of houses was considerably before January—it was often as early as November of the previous year.

932. Then the tendency has not been to make it earlier, but rather to make it later?—If you go back very far, then that is so.

933. What is the reason, in your view, for the period being so long before the term of entry?—One of the reasons is the long period required for warning away a tenant.

934. You start with the forty days, which takes you back to 4th April to begin with?—Yes.

935. And if you shorten that, then, naturally, without any alteration, there would be a shortening of the earlier period too?—Yes; in fact our Association has advocated the alteration of the law in that respect.

936. If there was any alteration it would need to begin at that end?—Certainly. We think it is quite unnecessary, because it entails notice of a period amounting to fifty-three days before the actual removal term, 28th May, and that is absolutely unnecessary. I had instructions from the Association this year to draft a bill on this subject, and I hand in a copy. (*Hands in.*)

937. To what extent did it limit the forty days?—That the warning-away notices should be twenty-one days before the removal term.

938. That would be 7th May?—Yes.

939. Instead of 4th April?—Yes.

940. Was there ever a proposal in Glasgow that you know about to do this voluntarily?—Yes, it has been mooted in our Association, and also in the Association of House Factors.

941. So far as you know, has any resolution ever been passed?—I don't think so. There have been conferences between the two Associations, but we were never able to obtain a unanimous consensus of opinion on the subject.

942. Have you ever had conferences with associations from Edinburgh or other towns on the subject?—I don't remember any.

943. In some other towns it is the case that they have voluntarily shortened the period?—Yes, there is a system of that kind in operation; I think the date is 15th March.

944. If a Bill such as you have suggested passed, what would be its effect on the day for taking houses?—I think that factors would not issue their missives probably till about the end of February.

945. Have you considered the question of that being dealt with by legislation?—The matter has been very often discussed in the Association. The arguments advanced against it were that one could not reasonably limit the letting of new property to a certain period, or restrict unlet property, property that was at the time unlet, to such a period; whereas, on the other hand, if you did not do so, you were subjecting the owners of other property to a distinct disadvantage as regards letting facilities.

946. Have you seen the Bill prepared by the Partick Town Council which seems to provide for the contingency of new property?—Yes.

947. Clause 3 says that it shall not be lawful to let, prior to 15th March of any year, "but this shall not prevent an 'owner from letting at any time any new property not 'previously occupied"?—Yes, I was pointing out the disadvantage that such a clause as that would subject the owners of other property to.

948. That clause would protect the interests of the new property, but to the disadvantage of property that was let at present?—Yes, and seeking to be re-let.

949. That is an objection both to Mr Provand's Bill of 1890, and the proposed Partick Bill?—Yes.

950. Is there any other objection that occurs to you?—No, I don't think there is.

951. You have no objection except the general one, interfering with freedom of contract?—Yes. It seems to me to do less injury than any other proposal would involve.

952. You think, if your Bill were passed, it would operate in that direction without any further legislation?—Yes, I think so. I may explain, with regard to the Association being unable to come to an arrangement with regard to arranging the issue of missives,—there are a large number of the owners outside the Association, and there are house factors for such owners, and it was practically impossible to get them all to see eye to eye in regard to the time. Perhaps one house factor or house owner, anxious to have his houses let, would continue to issue the missives as at the present date, and that would be very unfair to those under the voluntary restriction.

953. You have referred to many owners being outside your Association. Do all owners within your Association work by means of factors, or do any large number of them factor their own property?—I think a lot of owners of small properties factor them themselves, but where there are large masses of property, they are almost entirely managed by house factors.

954. Substantially, are the interests of factors and landlords in this question identical?—I think so.

955. Except that of course anything that made more trouble would be to the advantage of the factors?—If they got additional remuneration that would be so.

956. Now we have talked of Mr Provand's Bill of 1890. There was a Bill introduced by Mr Cross, and backed by others, in 1894, which came to this substantially, that there should be no letting up to £15 in burghs for more than one month?—We decidedly objected to that, because it would have deprived the tenant who desired to have a yearly let of the possibility of arranging it. It interfered with the freedom of contract in a most important matter.

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957. Did the same objection in principle apply to the subsequent Bill introduced by Mr Cross in 1898, which was to the effect that any tenancy that was under £15 should be terminable at the four terms in the year, May, August, November, and February, by three months' notice?—Yes, I think that was accompanied by some exception in regard to lets arranged for more than a year, so its effect also was to interfere with freedom of contract to take a house by the year.

958. But, apart from the academic principle of non-interference with freedom of contract, can you say whether it is found that there are a substantial number of tenants who value the security that the yearly tenure gives them, even although they may be under the burden, on the other hand, of being bound for a year?—I think there must be a very large class of tenants who value security of tenure. It is the experience of members of our Association, and I think I may also say of members of the Association of House Factors, that the system of yearly lets is highly valued. It must be the case, because in many cases family arrangements depend so much on the security of tenure of houses. For instance, there may be a case where a family has arranged to keep lodgers or boarders or anything of that kind, or where there are sick members of the family, and many other things that one can imagine. Then of course in seaside resorts and country places it is absolutely necessary that the tenants should have secure tenure of their houses, otherwise how could they let for the Easter season or the summer season?

959. Have you ever heard of there being a demand by yearly tenants that the tenure should be changed into a monthly tenure—I mean individual instances—and where they have been refused?—No. I have no practical experience. Mr McBain, who is a witness from the House Factors Association, might be able to speak to that.

960. On the other hand, if a person is secure for a year, he is bound for a year. Have your Association considered the grievance of working men who have to leave for one reason or another, or desire to leave, in the middle of a term?—Our experience, I think, is that it only exists to a very inconsiderable extent—perhaps three or four per cent. of the amount of lets are cases of that kind. In many cases it is no hardship to the man, because he is able by arrangement with his factor or owner to have the premises sub-let.

961. Of course there must be some cases of that kind?—Yes. A man who has taken his house for a year in Glasgow may get work in Barrow-in-Furness. He just goes to the factor and says, "Will you arrange to sub-let the house," and the factor acts as his factor in the matter and charges a small commission.

962. We are anxious to know the extent of such cases, and we have been intimating that all along to both sides, because it is one thing to say that the grievance exists and another thing to prove that it is substantial. We are anxious that both sides should do their best to give, not merely their opinions, but facts as regards it. Does the extent of it depend to some extent on the part of the town that you are dealing with? Take the centre of Glasgow, would you have as much occasion to remove between terms there as, say, at Govan?—I could not answer that question; it is a matter for practical men. Of course another element in the matter is that working men to a large extent prefer to live in the centre of the town on account of its attractions, its facilities for shopping, its amusements, and so on. That was brought out to a large extent by the recent Glasgow Housing Commission. I have conversed with working men travelling to Clydebank, and these were the reasons they gave to me for staying in the town. They can travel between this and Clydebank for 1s. a week.

963. Have you any statistics in regard to the percentage of removals between terms, or shall we get those from Mr McBain?—I think Mr McBain will be able to give them. I have no statistics on the subject.

964. We would like to get all that kind of thing in the way of statistics that we could. We would also like to know of those removals between terms involving sub-lets, what proportion are prior to the date of entry, between that and the day of taking?—Yes, you mean between Candlemas and Whitsunday?

965. Yes, and what balance is between Whitsunday and subsequent to Whitsunday?—I think there will be some evidence submitted by the house factors.

966. They will tell us what happens in the case of sub-lets and the amount of money the original tenant has to pay?—Yes.

967. That brings us to the present Bill before the House originally introduced in 1904, assimilating the period for payment to the period of tenure. What is the view of your Association with regard to that?—They object to it because it extinguishes the yearly let in connection with houses at £20 and under.

968. It does not profess to do so?—No, but it does so by a necessary consequence, because no landlord will let a house with the rent deferred for twelve months, and I take it that no tenant will assume the tenancy of a house with the whole year's rent payable in advance.

969. Is there any case in Glasgow of a tenant under £20 paying yearly?—It must be a very rare case. The rents are usually collected quarterly.

970. While theoretically it would admit of yearly lets, practically it would not?—That is so.

971. Would it also practically exclude half-yearly lets?—Yes, it would practically entail quarterly or monthly lets.

972. Quarterly or under?—Yes.

973. And in your view would that be objectionable to a number of people who wanted to take longer lets?—I think so, undoubtedly.

974. And would those be people of the class most deserving of consideration because they were the most provident working men?—Yes. I think the men who prefer yearly lets are careful men, men who are getting on in their trade and desiring to have fixity of tenure in their houses.

975. Perhaps this is more a question for a practical man, but in the cases of working men with houses under £4, they are either men who are not provident, or men who have had some misfortune of some kind?—Yes, I presume they are of the casual class.

976. But not invariably?—No, but to a large extent they are.

977. There might be illness of course?—Yes, quite.

978. That is your general view of the Bill. Suppose that Bill were passed without any amendment of the law of hypothec, what do you think would be the effect of there being no lets except quarterly, monthly, and weekly—would it involve forehand rents?—If the law of hypothec were done away with?

979. No, if it remained?—It might not involve forehand rents.

980. And if the law of hypothec were abolished?—I think most certainly there would be forehand rents or the adoption of a system of caution for rent; there would be either the one or the other, and probably both.

981. This may be also a question for a practical man, but your Association may have considered it; in your view would the substitution of short lets for long lets probably or certainly involve higher rents?—I think it would.

982. Why?—Because there would be a greater amount of repair required for such premises. Premises are less cared or by a monthly tenant than by a yearly tenant. Then there would also be broken periods when the house was unoccupied, and there would still further be the additional cost of collection of rents. It seems to me also it would probably affect the easy obtaining of loans of money over property. It would deter bond-holders, because they prefer houses where there is assured occupancy for the year and not houses where there is a fluctuating occupancy; they prefer houses where the repairs are likely to be less costly, and also the cost of factorage and other matters less. It might tighten the lending market.

983. Have you found any distinction in the rates between loans over monthly houses and loans over yearly houses?—I don't think they are so popular.

984. But is there any higher percentage in the one case than in the other?—I cannot say that there is.

985. Suppose you are correct—of course it is disputed—that the shorter tenancy would involve higher rents, I suppose you would say that those who are in favour of the shorter tenancy on the footing that there would be no rise in rents, are proceeding on a wrong basis?—I think so.

986. It may be that a working man might be in favour of shorter lets if the effect was not to raise his rent, but he would not be in favour of them if they meant higher rents?—That is so. It is a matter more for a practical man than for a lawyer.

987. But that would be an important element for us to consider, whether it would result in larger rents or not?—Yes. I don't know if you are going to ask me about the question of hypothec or not.

988. Yes, I will take it now. What do you say about it?—I have already said that if the law of hypothec be abolished, then the owner would either have forehand rents or he would have a system of caution. Mr Provand referred to the law of England, and he said quite properly that there waa no law of hypothec in England, but I thought he meant to infer that there was no law of sequestration for rent in England. He talked of destraint as if it was a remedy which conveyed no preference to the landlord. Now that is distinctly not the case. The landlord in England has the same preference, with some exceptions, for his rent as the landlord has in Scotland.

989. What is the view of your Association with regard to the proposal to abolish urban hypothec?—It depends to a

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large extent on what is done in regard to an amendment of the law of ejection. With the present law of ejection we could not afford to lose the law of hypothec.

990. Do you mean with the slowness of the present procedure?—Yes, the dilatory nature of the system.

991. If you had an improvement in that way, would the landlord suffer in the end, suppose hypothec were abolished and they substituted the payment of rent in advance?—Not with the small class of houses up to £15; I don't know that the landlord would suffer much if he had forehand rents and the system of caution, but under the present law of ejection, if a man has failed to pay a month's rent, then the landlord must serve a removal notice on him which takes effect eleven days before the termination of the present let if it is monthly, and when the end of that period comes the landlord has to apply to the Burgh Court or the Sheriff Summary Court for ejection. Before he can get rid of his tenant another period of a fortnight or three weeks elapses. All that time the tenant has command of the landlord's house without having paid a shilling of rent for the greater part of two months.

992. Suppose the case comes before a magistrate who is not soft-hearted, what is the shortest period in which a man in arrear can be turned out?—The Court sits twice a week, on Tuesday and Friday.

993. But take the shortest time, the very best?—You could get a summons on the Friday and get the tenant in the Court on the Tuesday—that is assuming you had already given the notice to remove—and you might get him out in three days.

994. Suppose he exercised his right, by payment of 6d., of lodging objections, how long would you take to get him out?—When a tenant enters appearance in that way, he generally makes a lot of statements about the condition of the house and perhaps the difficulty he has had in regard to his work and getting money to pay his rent, and the indulgent magistrate might continue for a week.

995. But suppose he does not,—how long does it take to lodge objections?—A tenant just enters his objection a day before the Court, say on the Monday or the Tuesday morning, probably on the Monday, but as a rule you do not get the tenant out for about ten days after the Court.

996. This difficulty is rather due to the indulgence of the magistrates than to the law itself?—Of course that is one point we object to. The magistrates are not lawyers, they are probably men with very charitable and kind hearts, and perhaps they do not consider the whole bearing of the question. They are really punishing the good tenant.

997. What is your suggestion to remedy that?—The other consideration I had in my mind was one that is independent of the procrastinating nature of the proceedings. Under the law as it is at present you must wait till the expiry of the month before getting rid of your tenant. Notice must be given in a monthly let for one-third of the period unless the landlord and tenant have made a special bargain. While it is possible to arrange a special bargain, it is very seldom done, and therefore the normal rule of the law is that the tenant cannot be got rid of till this month has expired. Now we look at it in this way, it is an essential provision, an essential character of the tenancy that the tenant should pay his rent, just as it is that the landlord should provide the premises. If the landlord does not provide the premises, then an action of damages is raised against him; whereas if the tenant does not pay his rent he is in possession of the premises. Now we hold that he is a squatter and technically the landlord has a right to turn him out at his own hand. It is advisable, however, that a warrant should be got from the Court in a regular manner to eject him; but we maintain that if the rent has not been paid, such a warrant should be capable of being got within perhaps five or six days after the failure to pay rent, and in that case the landlord will have command of his premises.

998. Will you have coupled with that except on caution or consignation of the rent?—Yes. I can give statistics as to the number of ejections in the Burgh Court. There are two Courts in Glasgow, the Sheriff Summary Court under the Sheriff Courts Act of 1838, which applies to rents not exceeding £30 in premises let for less than a year. The Burgh Court has a procedure by use and wont, and applies to monthly lets, I think entirely. The Burgh Court is the more popular of the two, probably because it is less expensive. I have ascertained from the Sheriff Clerk the number of ejections in the Sheriff Summary Court, and I find that for the last year for which the returns are available, 1904, there were 2078 as against 9917 in the Burgh Court. Of these 9917, 7736 defenders entered appearance to be heard.

999. Although ejection was granted against them all in the end?—Yes. There were 20,887 services in the Burgh Court. I asked the Town Clerk to favour me with the meaning of these figures, what became of the difference between the 9917 and the 20,887, and he said that a very small proportion, a score or so, would be dismissed. (*Reads Town Clerk's letter.*)

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1000. Does that appear to you to show that the most of the defences were simply for the sake of the delay?—Yes, purely to obtain delay. There was no substantial defence in almost any of the cases.

1001. You do not think that the remedy you propose would be unduly severe?—I do not think it would if the tenant were to consign his rent or find proper security for it, or leave the premises,—I think he has a very fair choice of alternatives. As regards the procedure in the Burgh Court, we have frequently had occasion to lodge complaints with regard to the delays in ejecting tenants and continuations which were granted, and some years ago we presented a petition to the Sheriff of Lanarkshire and the Sheriffs-Substitute in regard to a similar complaint that arose in the Sheriff Summary Court.

1002. What power had they to alter any procedure?—We found, for instance, that when an ejection process came into Court the tenant perhaps made statements that the house was insanitary, or he alleged something against the house, and the Sheriff would continue the case for inquiries; he would also make inquiry into the state of arrears of rent, and if he thought that the tenant had been unfortunate he would continue the process. Now we pointed out to the Sheriff that the object of the process was not to obtain recovery of the rent—which is practically abandoned by the mere fact of bringing the process of ejection—but to recover possession of our premises. The prayer of the petition is to put out the tenant, and not to recover the rent, and we hold that the only relevant consideration in such a process is that the landlord has given the proper notice and desires to recover his property.

1003. Did the petition to the Sheriff and the Sheriffs-Substitute produce any effect?—Yes. We had an interview with the Sheriff Clerk after that, and he assured us that the Substitutes would do all in their power to obtain regularity of procedure.

1004. That cannot have come to much, apparently, because you still continue to go to the Burgh Court?—The Burgh Court has attractions in regard to economy. I hand in a copy of our Memorial to the Sheriff and Sheriff-Substitute, and I would refer you to page 5 of that Memorial. (*Hands in and reads from Memorial.*)

1005. Apart from the question of cost in the Sheriff Court, have you anything to say in regard to the administration there being too lax, or are your observations confined to the Burgh Court?—I think the objection applies more to the Burgh Court process, but of course the objection to the process before we can get the tenant into Court is equally applicable to both—that is to say, the state of the law.

1006. What about the cost of these proceedings?—I understand they run from about 7s. to 12s.

1007. In which Court?—In the Burgh Court.

1008. And how much are they in the Sheriff Court?—I think about 15s.

1009. Do you know whether your view in this matter has been supported by any other bodies?—Yes. Two Commissions on the question of the Housing of the Poor have sat in Glasgow, one in 1891, appointed, I think, by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and the other two or three years ago, initiated by the Corporation. Both these Commissions have reported strongly in favour of the simplification and cheapening of the procedure to obtain ejection. They take the view that the delay which occurs is to the prejudice of the good tenant who is paying his way; the loss which the landlord sustains is put on the rent of those who do pay.

1010. If it is said that you can stipulate that if the rent is not paid the tenant shall remove on forty-eight hours' notice, have you found that the Burgh Court has disregarded that stipulation?—Yes. They are not naturally familiar with a missive containing such a clause, and they are very apt to disregard it. Some of the magistrates have taken the view that forehand rent is not due at all, and they won't grant an ejection petition where the rent is forehand.

1011. That would be at the end of the period for which the rent has been paid?—Yes.

1012. So your view is that, whatever alteration is made in regard to the length of lets, it ought to be accompanied as a counterpart with this change in the law of ejection?—Yes, I most decidedly think so. Mr Cross's Bill makes no provision at all for an amendment in the process of the law of ejection. Our Association prepared forms for missives containing a clause to terminate the lease on non-payment of the rent. I think we were told by the Sheriff Clerk that if a missive containing such a clause were used and if the proper clause were put into the ejection petition calling attention to it, ejection would be granted in conformity with it, and we therefore prepared

petitions in that sense, but we do not find that they have been extensively used. They are troublesome to fill up.

1013. Have they been given effect to in the Burgh Court?—Yes, I think they are given effect to sometimes, but not usually.

1014. They are difficult to apply in practice?—Yes, because they are out of the usual routine. Law agents do not practise before the Burgh Court, and probably the point involved has never been explained to the magistrates.

1015. This grievance exists apart altogether from any of the Bills we are considering? It exists with things as they are at present?—Yes.

1016. If these Bills were passed, however, it would extend the area of it?—Yes, it would throw additional pressure on the Burgh Court, and it would lead to some confusion in the getting rid of tenants and the putting in of new tenants.

1017. That is on the assumption that any of these Bills would lead to more frequent removals?—Yes.

1018. If shorter lets did not involve that, you would be no worse off than you are now?—No.

1019. If they merely spread the removals over the year instead of crowding them all into Whitsunday, you would be no worse off?—No.

1020. Do you think that assumption is well founded, that shorter lets would produce as a net result more frequent removals?—I think the adoption of such a system would lead to an unsettled state of mind on the part of tenants, and they would be changing about from street to street, where they thought they could get a more advantageous house.

1021. Apart altogether from loss of employment?—Yes.

1022. They are to a certain extent anchored at the present moment?—Yes.

1023. In your view that would be an element that would weigh, not with the best class of tenants, but rather with the more unsettled?—Yes.

1024. In short, do you think, looking to the best class of working men, there is any substantial grievance at all just now?—I do not think it can be called substantial.

1025. Except in the case where there is loss of employment or illness or change of employment?—Yes.

1026. And you think these cases are comparatively few?—Yes, with the exception of those cases I do not think there is any disadvantage at all.

1027. You do not deny that in such cases there is of course a great drawback?—That is so.

1028. You think it is just an incident of the system?—Yes, it is an incident of the system. There would be other drawbacks under a system of tenure as in England.

1029. We will come to that afterwards. In your view it is very important for us to ascertain whether this grievance applies to a large number or only to a comparatively small number?—Yes.

1030. And that is a question of fact?—Yes, entirely.

1031. Since you have mentioned the drawbacks to the English system, will you tell us what you mean?—The grievance, I understand, which is felt in London and big centres of population, is that the prevalence of short lets enables the landlord to eject his tenants whenever there is an influx of inquirers for houses in a particular district. For instance, in an industrial centre where there is a large immigration a landlord may go round to the tenant and say, "I am offered a shilling more; will you give it to me?" If the tenant says, "No, I won't," then the landlord says, "Then you go out at the end of the week." I know from correspondents in England that this grievance is considered to be a very serious one.

1032. If that be a correct statement that you have been informed of, do you think that it would also apply to Scotland?—I think that in a large centre like Glasgow there would be some danger of abuse of that kind occurring.

1033. But it would be chiefly in London?—Of course we have a large influx of foreign populatiou in our colliery districts and Hamilton and so on.

1034. Jews and Poles?—Yes.

1035. What about the Gorbals?—There is a large Jewish population there.

1036. That is also a question of fact that we ought to get put before us first hand?—Yes. I can only say that in the abstract it seems to me a most dangerous thing to deprive a tenant of such security of tenure as he has under the present system. It would be very serious if a tenant were liable at a month's notice to leave his house, and then no sooner settled in his new house than he has to leave it. He is thus put to the expense of two or three flittings which are proverbially worse than a fire.

1037. If the desire for shorter lets is entertained in the view that that difficulty will not arise, that again would be a false basis?—Yes, I do not think such an assumption should be made.

1038. Have you any other view to suggest to us in regard to the English system, any other drawback? I am merely on the short let. There is in security of tenure. There is no other, is there?—No.

1039. What about this,—would it not be a great advantage to have a change which would spread the removals over the year? What do you say to the present fact, that the enormous proportion of removals are all at one time?—It must not be assumed that all these removals occur on 28th May. Very often they occur within a week either before or after that date. Sometimes by arrangement with the landlord a tenant may be allowed to stay a day or two on, and in some cases he goes out voluntarily a day or two before. No doubt, however, there is inconvenience.

1040. And there is great pressure?—Yes.

1041. And there must be great discomfort resulting?—I think it is chiefly in obtaining men to do the removal work.

1042. And in the higher prices that have to be paid for the removal work?—No, I do not know that higher prices are charged for removal work than the normal prices.

1043. Is there not also this, that there are a number of trades which are over-pressed at that time, with the result that there is want of employment at other parts of the year?—I don't know about that. I know that a painter gets a great deal of contract work to do for his factor that he cannot possibly undertake all at once, and probably it may spread itself out for a couple of months after the term. He is not expected to do the work right away.

1044. If it be the fact that there is very great inconvenience and discomfort and loss arising from that cause, has your Association no suggestion to make that would go to spread removals over the year?—I am afraid not. The Whitsunday Term has become so popular.

1045. Why is that as against the November Term?—I suppose it is because it is spring; it is a more genial time of the year and a better time to remove one's effects.

1046. Is there much removal in the November Term?—No, very little.

1047. So there is practically just the one Term in the year?—Yes, that is what it is, one Term in the year.

1048. What about the pressure in finishing houses at that particular date? Does it not keep many trades very busy up to that time and then they are slack afterwards?—That is with regard to the building of new properties?

1049. Yes?—Of course the aim of the builder is to have his property ready for occupation at Whitsunday.

1050. And they are hurried up for that purpose?—Yes, undoubtedly that must be so.

1051. That has the double effect of making great slackness in the later months and of rather deteriorating the work that is being hurried up?—I think the Dean of Guild looks after the quality of the work. There is no difficulty there.

1052. But the slackness is a fact that has to be faced?—Yes, I think among masons and joiners there is a slacking off after Whitsunday for a few months.

1053. Apart from Clause 4 of the Bill, I see you have an observation to make as to Clause 6?—Yes, we think that Clause 6 is a badly framed clause.

1054. That is the one about the Removals Act of 1886?—Yes.

1055. What is wrong with it?—It makes a new system of warning away for houses in Glasgow, let at rents of £20 and under. The Removal Terms Act prescribes one-third of the period for lets of four months and under, but this clause provides a new warning-away period for premises let under a month—that is, practically a weekly let—and it provides that the notice to terminate such a let must be seven days. Now the Removal Terms Act makes the notice three days, which we think is a reasonable period. The notice under the proposed clause is too long for a weekly let. Then it leaves the law of the Removals Act to apply to houses up to four months, and then it applies the Removals Act to lets beyond that also, so that a removal notice in a let for a year would be actually four months.

1056. Instead of what?—Forty days. In a six months' let the notice required would be two months.

1057. That is a matter of drafting that could easily be adjusted if the main provisions of the Bill were passed?—Yes. The important thing is to have the law of removal uniform, because if it is not uniform it causes great distraction among those who have to work the machinery of the law.

1058. Is it a general principle that you would apply to the whole question, that it is very desirable in burghs to have the system uniform?—I should think so. It is very distracting to have different removal terms in different towns. That must be felt by people who want to buy property in various centres or to lend money on property.

1059. Does that apply to the proposal of the Bill to differentiate between different towns, Edinburgh and Glasgow being £20, and certain other burghs being £15

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and under, and other burghs being £10 and under?—I think that would all lead to confusion.

1060. What do you say about Clause 9, which deals with the payment of assessments?—The proprietors object altogether to the principle of farming-out the rates to them. They think it a most dangerous principle to be adopted, and they object to it because it thrusts on them an invidious duty. We think that the assessing body should collect their own rates and not cast on the proprietor the odium of collecting them. Then there is an additional point, namely, that it is apt to disguise from the tenant the fact that he is paying rates at all, and it creates the class of irresponsible voter which exists to such a large extent in England, and which perhaps is responsible for what has recently happened in West Ham and Poplar.

1061. On that point two answers suggest themselves to one who has no opinion on the matter—as I have none—the first being that the system exists at present in regard to houses let at £4 and under, and, second, that we have been told of a number of cases where, by a voluntary arrangement between landlords and rating authorities, the system obtains in rents above £4 without any resulting friction or difficulty. Now, what do you say to these two points, taking first of all the point with regard to houses under £4?—Of course that is only a very trivial thing, because houses under £4 are getting so scarce now. According to the returns for 1905-1906, there are 2045 houses of £4 and under in Glasgow, 92,132 between £4, 1s. and £10, 33,844 between £10, 1s. and £15, 20,808 between £15, 1s. and £20, 21,408 between £20 and £50, and 5041 at £50 and upwards, making a total of 175,278. So, if the proposal of compounding the rates were adopted in regard to all houses under £20, it would involve 148,829 houses out of a total of 175,278, which is about three-fourths of the present ratepayers. It seems to me to be a very drastic and dangerous proposal.

1062. What did you say the number of houses at £4 and under was?—2045.

1063. I see Mr Provand gave us that last year the number was 2133?—Yes, they are declining. That is a well-known fact.

1064. Can you tell us whether, in the case of these houses, the landlord gets a note of the rates in regard to each house?—Yes, it is served upon him.

1065. That is done and he charges accordingly?—Yes, he adds it on to his rent.

1066. But does he get the rate applicable to each house?—No.

1067. Suppose a man has a tenement?—It is calculated on the tenement.

1068. How does he, in point of practice, work it out?—I don't know. I suppose he makes a division amongst the tenants and an estimate of his own trouble and probable loss, and he adds a slump sum to the rent sufficient to cover it.

1069. You do not know whether, when he collects his rent, he makes any separate statement to the tenant?—I am quite sure that he does not do that. The tenant knows nothing about what he is paying, whether it is rate or rent.

1070. Do you know whether, in the case of these voluntary arrangements, the tenant knows what he is paying?—I do not think he does.

1071. Has this position of yours received the support of any authorities, commissions, or otherwise?—As to the compounding of rates?

1072. Yes?—The recent Commission on the Housing of the Poor in Glasgow, in one of their findings, found that the compounding system should be applied to houses at rents not exceeding £6, instead of not exceeding £4. That was the utmost extent to which they went. I shall send in a copy of that Report.

1073. You might also give us the composition of that Housing Committee and tell us to what extent the Corpoartion of Glasgow were represented on it?—Yes.

1074. Was the recent Royal Commission on Local Taxation confined to England and Wales?—No, that Commission extended to Scotland as well, and there is a Special Report for Scotland.

1075. What did they say about it in the Special Report for England and Wales?—They condemned it on principle, but they could not find any way to get rid of it. I find the following on page 51 of the Final Report for England and Wales, 1901:—"The system of compounding has been 'frequently condemned on the ground that those who have 'the right to vote for the election, or become members of 'Local Authorities entrusted with the raising and expendi-'ture of money derived from rates, should pay rates 'directly themselves.

"We entirely concur in this view, and we think that it 'is most desirable that all classes of the community should, 'as far as possible, be made liable to personal payment of 'rates, in order that they may appreciate directly the effect 'of economical or extravagant administration.

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"But, however desirable in principle it might be to 'abolish compounding, it is generally agreed that the 'practical difficulties of collecting and enforcing payment 'from the large numbers of the poorest classes in the large 'towns who are weekly tenants and frequently moving 'from one tenement to another, are insuperable. This 'view has been endorsed by officials of Local Authorities 'in large boroughs, and some of them have suggested that 'the limit of rateable value below which compounding is 'allowed should be slightly raised. Witnesses of this 'character have also expressed the opinion that the same 'system of compounding should apply to all rates subject 'to composition, though the adoption of the system should 'remain optional with the Local Authorities.

"We concur in the suggestion, which has been made by 'a number of witnesses, that compounding should be 'allowed in the case of all rates where the rateable value of 'the hereditaments does not exceed £10, in localities other 'than London and Liverpool, in which places we think 'that the limit of rateable value named in the Poor Rate 'Assessment and Collection Act, 1869 (London £20 and 'Liverpool £13) should not be disturbed.

"We think that greater simplicity would result if the 'two systems of composition for rates, namely, those under 'the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act, 1869, and 'the Public Health Act, 1875, were made uniform, although 'we think that the option of adopting the system of com-'pounding should be left to the Local Authorities con-'cerned, as at present." That is preceded, I think, by a statement of the law with regard to compounding on page 50.

1076. We can refer to that?—Yes.

1077. In your view, is Clause 9 a necessary part of Mr Cross's scheme, or might the principle which he desires to have confirmed in Clause 4 not be carried out without Clause 9?—My Association think that if the assessing authorities were to collect the rates quarterly themselves, that would lead to a more frequent adoption of quarterly lets. At present the annual collection of assessments lends a bias to the yearly let, because the tenant in the property when the rate becomes due is responsible for the yearly rate.

1078. Would you see any difficulty in that being carried out apart from the extra expense it would throw on the rating authority?—There seems to me to be no difficulty in the abstract. They already collect the gas accounts three or four times in the year without any difficulty.

1079. Who do that?—The Corporation as the gas authority or the gas commissioners.

1080. The Parish Council people only collect once a year?—Yes. The Glasgow rates, with the exception of the gas, are only collected once a year. The gas account is called a rate, and it is collected three or four times in the year.

1081. You heard it suggested last day that it would involve an additional survey. What do you say to that?—I cannot answer that question.

1082. You cannot answer this question as to whether it would involve a change in the Valuation Acts?—It might require some change in the Valuation Acts or the Local Acts.

1083. You heard it also said that the Parish Council people had no power to exact the rate except from the tenant who was there at the beginning of the let?—Yes, whereas of course with regard to the municipal assessments in Glasgow, they have power to rate whoever is found on the premises. I do not know that they would require any change in Glasgow, because they would come down on the tenant in occupation. In regard to the poor or school assessment, some alteration might be required in the existing law.

1084. Do you see any objection to the intermediate suggestion of raising the £4 to £6?—No, I do not think so. Practically the £6 house corresponds to what was a £4 house when the Act was passed.

1085. But your Association are against compounding at any higher rent?—Yes. We proceed here on the question of principle and also in regard to the special provisions of Clause 9. We know of the friction which already exists when a landlord collects the rate. Under the Glasgow Act of 1866 the landlord has to collect the stair-lighting rate of 10s. imposed on the tenant. The rate is collected by the Corporation from the landlord, who collects it from the tenants and gets a rebate of 20 per cent. for guaranteeing and collecting the rate. On two occasions when the Glasgow Corporation has promoted Provisional Orders to obtain a new lighting rate they have denounced the present system, on the ground that the tenant complains of the imposition of the stair light by the landlord, that it is not fairly divided, and things of that kind, and it leads to a great deal of friction. We say we would be very glad if they would collect this themselves from the tenants and save us from the odium, but they have not seen their way to do it.

1086. Do many people not think that that is a part of the policing of the town?—Yes. They have tried to get it put on the general occupiers' rates twice, but they have been defeated. We hold that it is applicable to the user of the house.

1087. You think that the same difficulty would arise with the school rate or the poor rate or anything else?—Yes, there would be a good deal of odium cast on the landlord and it would be made use of at the municipal elections or parish council elections.

1088. Have you heard that any difficulty of that kind has in practice been experienced in England? Have you noticed that there has been any evidence to that effect given before any of the Commission?—With regard to the ground?

1089. No, with regard to landlords finding that it introduces an awkward element between themselves and their tenants. You have not seen that in any of the Commissions' Reports?—No, it is objected to in England on the ground that it leads to irresponsible voting. There is another objection, that the landlord receives too much in some cases; he receives 15 per cent. in many cases for collecting the rate, and he receives an additional 15 per cent. for guaranteeing the rate. These are two things that must be kept in view. If he merely collects the rate, then he requires a commission for his trouble and expense; but if he has to guarantee the rate, then that is quite another thing, and he requires another commission, another rebate. I can give information from the Glasgow Police Accounts for 1905–1906 as to the amount of loss which the Corporation themselves sustained in the case of rates levied on property under £10. In the year 1904–1905 it was 26·01, and in 1905–1906 it was 25·98. It has gone down slightly since last year. About the time of the City of Glasgow Bank failure they lost as much as 45·21. Now that table shows the average of rents under £10, but it does not show the loss of rates between £4 and £7, which will be considerably larger.

1090. What bearing has that on Mr. Cross's schedule?—That schedule of rebates is perfectly preposterous. This would entail a large loss.

1091. An actual loss?—Yes.

1092. Have your Association considered what would be fair percentages to replace those if such a measure were passed?—No, they have not come to any finding upon that point.

1093. You referred to the tenants not knowing what rates they were paying. Do you see any reason why the landlord should not state on his notice for collection the rate and the rent separately?—It would be very difficult for him to do so. There are probably about a dozen rates collected by the Glasgow Corporation of one kind and another, such as police rate, parks and galleries rate, Diseases of Animals Act rate, and dozens of others. Each of those would have to be specified and divided up into twelve parts if you collected monthly, or four parts if you collected quarterly, and it would involve an enormous amount of clerical labour and book-keeping.

1094. It would not merely be labour, but it would be skilled labour?—Yes. The calculation of these fractional parts would be a very difficult process.

1095. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Why not slump the occupier's rate?—If it was merely slumped it would not be so difficult.

1096. I don't think that any ratepayer looks through the amount he has to pay for public health and so on?—If you look at the assessments you will find that each rate is specified separately.

1097. Yes, there is a multiplicity of them, but you don't put it to us that any individual ratepayer calculates all that?—I say that the ratepayer ought to know what he is paying for each thing.

1098. The notices don't bear that on the face of them?—Yes, they do.

1099. That is not the case in every city?—It is the case in Edinburgh, I know.

1100. (*Chairman.*) If it be thought important, as some people think it is, that ratepayers should be in a position to check what the Corporation is doing, then you think that is necessary?—Yes, most emphatically so. I have a specimen of the demand notice issued by the Glasgow Corporation, and it specifies police, sanitary, statute labour, public health, sewage, parks and galleries, municipal buildings, registration of births, registration of voters, valuation of lands, etc. etc., each given separately. I will send in a copy of that demand notice.

1101. As an illustration take libraries?—Yes. That is a very important point.

1102. If the different rates were slumped together, the ratepayer would not know what was being spent on such an object as the libraries, about which there is great difference of opinion?—That is so. The amount is not fixed till August or September, and the landlord would not know from the month of June what the rate was going to be, and he would have to make a guess at it.

1103. What would he do in June, July, and August?—He would have either to put on the same rate as last year, and when he came to know what the actual assessment was, he would have to put on a bigger proportion for the remaining months.

1104. Or he might have to take off a certain amount?—Yes, but as things are going at present he would very seldom have to take anything off.

1105. (*Mr. Howden.*) Is that not assuming that you are still continuing the yearly let?—No.

1106. (*Chairman.*) No, if it is to be monthly, the first payment would be in June, and he would not know the amount of assessment till August?—That is so.

1107. (*Mr. Binnie.*) If there were removals in August, you might have been charging too much to the men who had removed, and you would have no opportunity of rectifying it when they were away,—That is so.

1108. (*Chairman.*) Then there is the other point about the relief of poor tenants. There is nothing said about that in Mr. Cross's Bill?—No. I do not have the figures with regard to the relief of poor tenants, but I know it is carried out with great clemency by the Glasgow Corporation, and a great many people are relieved from payment of rates.

1109. Even in the case of people paying rents above £20?—Yes, special cases, perhaps a widow keeping boarders, or something of that kind, and the apartments not having been occupied, or misfortunes of that kind. That system of course would have to end.

1110. Why? Would what is contained in the clause proposed by the Burgh of Partick not meet your point?—Yes, that is so if the tenant remained in the premises for twelve months, but if he left and went to another landlord, how would that landlord get exemption in his dealings with the Corporation? I don't see that that meets that difficulty.

1111. It would not meet that case?—No.

1112. (*Mr Binnie.*) Would there not be a difficulty in requiring a separate class of entries for each such case in the factor's books?—Yes. There would require to be a system of entries in the factor's books for each of those cases.

1113. (*Chairman.*) There is no such arrangement now?—No.

1114. The factor has nothing to do with it?—No. Of course that clause would not deal with the poor rates.

1115. Does it not? Why not?—It might. Of course it is a personal matter between the tenant and the assessing authority. The Board, in regard to the poor rates, judges in each case what tenant is entitled to or deserves relief.

1116. You don't say that it would affect the chance of the tenant getting relief, if in point of fact it had been actually paid by the landlord to start with?—Not if any machinery could be devised to let the landlord give effect to it; but I don't see how that can be carried out. I made special inquiry about it in England, and I know that it is not carried out there.

1117. Theoretically, is there not a system of the same kind in England?—Not where there is compounding. I made inquiry from a correspondent of mine who has special information on the subject, the Secretary of the Liberty and Property Defence League in London. He says: "There is no exemption of necessitous tenants under 'the compounding system. The rate being levied upon 'the landlord, the particular circumstances of individual 'tenants cannot be taken into account. Whatever arrange-'ments are made for recouping the landlord are between 'him and the tenant alone, and if a tenant is so necessitous 'that he cannot pay the landlord, the latter must lose the 'money exactly in the same way as he has to lose if the 'house is empty. The practice of the assessing authorities 'remitting the rates in the case of poor tenants who pay 'direct, exists here as in Scotland, but it would appear 'to be necessarily excluded by the very nature of the 'compounding system."

1118. There is a practical difficulty in carrying it out?—I suppose so.

1119. Does that apply to England generally, or only to London?—To England generally, wherever the compounding system exists.

1120. Suppose there was compounding, in regard to the allowance to be made, do you think that the Corporation's loss would be greater or less than the loss of a private proprietor?—I think that the Corporation's loss would be less than that of a proprietor, because they can collect in a much more summary process than the landlord can; they can get a warrant for diligence against a whole mass of defaulting tenants in one summons without citing the tenants at all. They simply serve a second demand note, and if the rate is not paid they put the defaulting tenant on the sheet which they submit to the Sheriff.

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They get a general warrant and they can enter his house five days afterwards and poind his goods. Their process is preferential to the landlord's hypothec.

1121. But would there not be this to counterbalance it, namely, that the landlord, in collecting the rates monthly, would have fewer arrears than he has just now in the case of long tenancies?—Possibly. There is a considerable demand for quarterly collection.

1122. Apart from the tenure?—Yes. I noticed that, at the recent election, a great many candidates stated that they were in favour of quarterly collection of rates.

1123. On what ground?—To make the payment of the rates easier for the poorer classes. It is easier to pay four small sums than one large sum at one time.

1124. I suppose that is the reason why, in regard to rents, even in the case of an ordinary tenure you may have the collection monthly?—Yes, or quarterly.

1125. Is it the view of your Association that that element of the desirability of having frequent collection can be carried out apart from the length of tenure altogether?—Yes, quarterly collection is carried out in various towns in England and in some parts of London.

1126. Quarterly collection of what?—Rates. We made inquiry some years ago, and we got returns from a considerable number of towns in England and Ireland.

1127. Do you see any reason why it should not be done here?—I do not see any objection to it.

1128. And the advantages would be obvious?—Yes.

1129. What have you to say with regard to Clause 10?—Before leaving Clause 9 there is the question of franchise. The compounding system would enfranchise whatever body of electors are disenfranchised at present through the non-payment of the rates. That would affect the burgh franchise, and if the poor and school rates were also affected it would effect the Parliamentary franchise.

1130. (*Mr. Howden.*) Do you think that undesirable?—I think it undesirable that those who do not pay the rates should have a voice.

1131. But in this case they would pay the rates?—But I object to those that would not pay.

1132. They would be ejected from their houses if they did not pay?—I do not see why they should not be.

1133. They would not be on the roll if they were outside their house?—They might remove to another house, and at the next election they might combine their two qualifications.

1134. (*Chairman.*) If it resulted in rates being got through the landlord without loss to him, then there would be nothing unreasonable in their having the franchise?—If they all paid their rates.

1135. If the result of compounding is, as some say it would be, namely, that rates would be got through the landlord which at present are not got at all, and these were got without loss to him, then there is no reason why they should not have the franchise?—But there would be a large class who would not pay the rate or the rent.

1136. You are assuming that the landlord would have to pay in a number of cases where he would not recover?—Yes.

1137. And you think that in those cases they should not be enfranchised?—That is so. It seemed to appear from Mr Wood's evidence that it would enfranchise 14,000 people in Glasgow.

1138. To the extent to which these people were made to pay rates, it is quite right that they should be enfranchised?—Yes.

1139. If you are wrong in the assumption that they would not pay rates, then there is no grievance?—That is so.

1140. We come now to the optional part of the Bill, Clause 10?—The optional part is, I think, a weakness in the Bill, and, at the same time, it is difficult to see how it could be made compulsory upon all burghs in Scotland. In places such as Bridge of Weir, Kilmalcolm, Dunoon, Rothesay, they must have a yearly let in order to enable them to sub-let their houses for the holiday season. They must have a yearly let, and therefore it would be most inequitable and a great hardship if they should be compelled to have merely quarterly or monthly lets. On the other hand, if you have an optional system you create a great deal of confusion, because one burgh may adopt the Act and another may not, and there would be no reciprocity for exchange of houses between these two burghs if they were contiguous. Then, with regard to houses in landward districts which are thickly populated and are lying round burghs, if the burgh adopted the Act the county portion of the district would not have a responsive system; it would have the old system of yearly let, and if a tenant desired to remove to the country at any other term than the Whitsunday term he might not get a house. Then it is also an objectionable feature that one community might adopt one section of the Act alone and another community might adopt another section. One community might adopt Clause 4 and not Clause 6, dealing with removal.

1141. Or Clause 9?—That is so, the same with Clause 9. It would lead to an inextricable deal of confusion.

1142. It is not at all an unfamiliar thing to have an Act which is optional?—No, the Burgh Act itself is optional in some respects.

1143. Did that introduce great confusion?—There are certain clauses in the Burgh Act which you must adopt if you adopt a portion of it.

1144. But you don't require to adopt them all?—No. But there was a certain chain of clauses that you had to adopt if you adopted any.

1145. And that has not led to any difficulty, say, as regards investing money?—No.

1146. You don't think that there is any analogy between the provisions in the Burgh Act and the provisions in this Bill?—No.

1147. Do you know of any other Acts that are optional?—There are some clauses in the Housing of the Working Classes Act that can be adopted in that way.

1148. Is the Public Health Act optional?—No, I think not, but some clanses are, clauses dealing with water supply and things of that kind.

1149. I think I have asked you about the Partick Bill already?—Yes.

1150. Clause 4 is somewhat like what you propose. "The period of warning away shall be and is hereafter 'reduced from forty days prior to Whitsunday to the period 'of thirty days?"—The Partick Bill seems to apply to the letting of all premises without limit at all. I don't think the period of warning away should be reduced in respect of business premises.

1151. Is it not limited?—No. It extends to the letting of more than dwelling houses.

1152. You would propose to limit it in what way?—I thought it applied to business premises.

1153. No, it is dwelling houses?—I agree with the principle in Clause 4, but I would go further.

1154. You would leave it applicable to dwelling houses of all rents?—Yes.

1155. (*Mr Howden.*) On page 6 of your Precis you say that in the case of parties having to remove between terms, it is usually easy to arrange with the factor to relet the house, and if that is done, the tenant is relieved of further liability for the rent. What do you mean by that?—If a factor gets a suitable tenant in place of the one who wishes to remove, and if he accepts him as such, then the old tenant is practically relieved of further liability.

1156. Is this sub-letting form which I show you correct?—Those forms vary in different offices, but as a matter of practice, while the old tenant is still responsible to the full extent, the cases in which he is actually made so liable are very rare indeed.

1157. He is legally responsible?—Yes, if the landlord pleases.

1158. You referred to the loss of rental in periods of broken lets. Does that refer to rent in the aggregate, or is it only in individual cases?—What I mean is that premises would remain unoccupied for various periods throughout the year.

1159. But the tenants would have to secure house accommodation somewhere else and they would have to pay rent where they went?—It is quite possible, but there might be broken periods to a greater extent in one house.

1160. The tenants could not possibly live without a house in such a city as Glasgow?—I cannot answer that question, but I know tenants often go into lodgings for a time.

1161. Further down in your Precis you say that in course of time the rents of these houses would increase, so that, even assuming your previous statement is correct, it would right itself in the long run?—But I say that this may not come into operation until the existing proprietors have suffered severely. It is quite impossible, when the house market is against the proprietor, to add anything to the rent, but in the course of time the supply of that kind of house would be diminished, fewer people would invest money in it, and the market would turn more in favour of the proprietor; there would be fewer of these houses in existence, and, therefore, the rents would tend to become higher to recoup the owner.

1162. Can you tell us what principle landlords and factors adopt in fixing rents?—I suppose they take what they can get.

1163. Just so; they take what they can get. So they will be taking as much rent out of their property as they possibly can get in the meantime?—I suppose so. It depends on the law of supply and demand, like everything else.

1164. You told us that foreigners coming into the country had a tendency to raise rents, and you instanced the case of the Poles in Lanarkshire, and incidentally the

Jews in Gorbals. Has the influx of Jews in Gorbals raised rents in that locality?—I have no information on that point.

1165. Why did you state it?—Excuse me, I did not. I said there were districts in Glasgow where there was a large immigration from the outside, and where, if there were short lets, the landlord would have an opportunity of raising the rent.

1166. You said by inference that the immigration of these men had a tendency to raise rents?—I do not think so.

1167. I am sorry if I misunderstood you. You said in reply to the Chairman that the Dean of Guild Court inspectors looked very well after slipshod work in the building trade?—I think they do.

1168. What control have they over the furnishing of the house inside, the woodwork for instance?—Do you mean as to the age of the wood?

1169. Or the workmanship?—They have full control over the thickness and dimensions of planks and beams; they have control over the walls and construction of houses generally. I do not know about these technical matters, however.

1170. The stability of the house is the only thing that is taken into consideration by the Dean of Guild?—There is the sanitary equipment.

1171. Otherwise there could be a considerable amount of scamping of work in the finishing of a house?—I do not know. I am sorry to think that any joiner would scamp his work.

1172. If it was a matter of rush he would have to do as he could?—I suppose if a workman is overtaxed he cannot give the same attention to the work, and the landlord must pay for it later on.

1173. Does this rush at the term time not increase the cost of construction of buildings?—I do not know; I hardly think so.

1174. Even in the case of repairs?—No, I do not think so.

1175. It is quite general for men at that season of the year to work overtime?—I am not aware of that at all.

1176. Will you take it from me that it is the case? Painters usually work a great deal of overtime at that time of the year?—And they will be paid for it.

1177. Time and a half?—And that is very good for them.

1178. Who pays for that? It must add to the cost of the construction?—I suppose it falls on the landlord, and he may not be able to get it out of his rent.

1179. You told us there was no increase of the rental. Who pays it then?—If the landlord cannot get it added to his rent then he bears it himself. It depends on the supply and demand whether he can get it on to his rent or not.

1180. You said there was no increase. Now it is evident that there must be an increase if overtime rates are paid on the job?—My idea is that the landlord makes his contracts with his tradesmen and there is no more increase in a contract in one period of the year than in another.

1181. Someone must bear the loss in connection with the overtime?—The master tradesman may take it off his profit for all I know. I cannot answer that question.

1182. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Could you give us your view as to how you think the present law of hypothec would operate in the event of shorter lets becoming universal. Would the present law of hypothec be workable under which the landlord has a preference for the current rent? How would it operate if houses under £20 were as a rule let monthly,—would it be workable at all?—I do not see how it could not be worked.

1183. You think a landlord would be entitled to follow the furniture from one monthly house to another?—He would be entitled to get a warrant. In small houses up to £10 the hypothec is not of much importance.

1184. You heard Mr Provand say that if short lets were common hypothec would practically fall into disuse?—I do not think that would be the case. If it was abolished, I think it would lead to advanced rents with a caution for the rent.

1185. If hypothec was not abolished and short term lets became common, would it not lead to confusion with reference to the competing rights of different landlords who would have an hypothec for three months after each period. What I am puzzling about is this,—would not any change in the law in regard to short lets require to be accompanied by some modifications of the present law of hypothec?—Yes.

1186. To make a practicable Bill?—Yes, that is to say, if monthly lets became universal in regard to houses at rents up to £20.

1187. There would require to be some change in the present law of hypothec in regard to the duration of it?—Possibly there might have to be some restriction in regard to the right of carrying back.

1188. (*Chairman.*) Why?—If a tenant were moving about from one house to another and then on to a third house, it would raise very complicated questions as to the rights between the landlords.

1189. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Yes, that is the point. What period would your Association suggest as suitable notice in the case of six monthly tenancies, or three monthly tenancies, or one monthly tenancy? You object to Mr Cross's proposals. Could you give us any help in suggesting what might be more appropriate periods?—I have stated my views already with regard to yearly lets. With regard to half-yearly lets, which of course are few and far between, I would say probably about one month.

1190. And quarterly?—Perhaps a month or twenty-one days.

1191. And monthly?—A week or ten days.

1192. You have gone very exhaustively into the question of compounding the rates. Speaking with the knowledge that you have, do you think it is practicable to recover rates directly from tenants in the case of universal monthly lets. Take even quarterly collections, which you advocate. Would that put the burden upon the proper shoulders in the case of monthly lets?—I don't anticipate that monthly lets would preponderate; I think quarterly lets would preponderate, and I think it would do fair justice in such a case.

1193. If changes were frequent, there might be cases where the tenant in possession when the roll was made up might be saddled with at least three months' rates?—Yes, there might be such a case.

1194. That would not be so aggravated as in the present system, when he is liable for a year's rates?—He is liable for a year's rates at present.

1195. The ideal system would be to have a monthly collection of rates?—Yes.

1196. Coming back to compounding, you know that the Glasgow Corporation lose 26 per cent. of their rates?—Yes.

1197. Have you any indication as to the proportions of parish and school rates that are lost?—No, I have no information upon that point. I think Mr Wood gave some information about that, or he was to supply it.

1198. Take the Partick Bill; the difficulty is what you have indicated in regard to the exemption clause. How would it operate, seeing that the Corporation gets its rates from the landlords direct? Assuming the change to be made, and that the tenant, where he could show good cause for getting exemption, applied to the Corporation, who already had the money in their pocket or held the landlords responsible for it, the tenant should be entitled to get direct from the pocket of the Corporation the amount which he has paid to the landlord. What is the objection to the tenant applying to the Corporation, pointing out his condition and asking the Corporation to give him re-payment direct of the rates applicable to his dwelling house?—After the assessing period was past?

1199. Yes?—That is not an impossible idea. It might be feasible.

1200. (*Mr Esslemont.*) I think you said that what you describe as the better class of working men prefer yearly tenancies?—Yes.

1201. And I suppose I may take it from you as representing the house proprietors that all your clients prefer to have that better class of men as tenants?—There are members of our Association who have the smaller class of houses and members who have the better class of houses.

1202. But every proprietor who has a good tenant of that kind wants to keep him?—Yes.

1203. How would it prejudice either party if monthly tenancies were substituted for yearly, if you accept the situation that it is desirable in the interest of the proprietor that the tenant should remain because he is a good tenant,—how would it prejudice either party?—Of course if the tenant desired to remove oftener than he does at present, it would make a difference to the landlord.

1204. But you say that the better class don't want to remove; they prefer the yearly tenancy?—Yes.

1205. And that is a desirable class of tenant to have?—Yes.

1206. How could it prejudice either party if monthly tenants were substituted for yearly tenants?—The tenant would not have the security of tenure that he has at present.

1207. What object could the proprietor have in trying to get rid of a good tenant?—He might want to put in a friend of his own. Cases of that kind do occur sometimes. Or he might want to get a bigger rent. It would depend on the state of the property market at the time.

1208. On the other hand, the tenant would have the whip hand of the proprietor, because if the city became rather over-built, he would be in a position to demand a reduction of rent. So you see the benefit would be reciprocal?—That is so, but I think that a working man of that kind would prefer to have his let definitely assured

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to him for a year rather than to have the mere probability that he will be entitled to stay on for twelve months.

1209. I am not quarrelling with what you said; I believe it is the case that the class to which you refer prefer the yearly tenancies, but I could not see how you would be prejudiced in the event of such a provision coming into effect. As to the question of frequency of removals, you said you thought that there would be more frequent removals?—Yes.

1210. And additional repairs required?—Yes.

1211. And you came to that conclusion from the experience you have gained in connection with existing monthly tenancies?—That is the experience of members of our Association.

1212. Do you not think that these are caused to some extent by the class of tenants who occupy these monthly houses?—To a large extent it is the case that a tenant of a lower class is not so careful with the property.

1213. And is it not due to another cause, viz. that these weekly and monthly houses are chiefly in the older class of property, which is more or less in a state of decay?—Yes. The monthly lets probably are an inferior class of property.

1214. And they would still require a large amount of repair, even if they had good tenants?—Yes, but a monthly tenant does not take so much care of the house as a yearly tenant.

1215. You would not be justified in coming to the conclusion that if the system became general the cost of repairs would increase in the same ratio?—I would prefer to leave that question to practical men, as I am not sufficiently conversant with it.

1216. What is the Burgh Court?—It is the old Court of our Royal Burgh. It used to have the jurisdiction over small debts.

1217. Who is the presiding magistrate?—There is a Bailie along with the Town Clerk as his assessor.

1218. Not a Justice of Peace?—No, it must be a magistrate.

1219. (*Chairman.*) Has he jurisdiction over the whole modern municipal area?—Yes.

1220. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You said you were in a way fairly treated at the hands of this Court?—The magistrates try to do their best, but they are not trained judges.

1221. They are not lawyers?—No.

1222. Why do you resort to that Court so frequently and not go before the Sheriff, who is a lawyer?—I think it is cheaper.

1223. But if you don't get justice, why do you go there? Am I not right in assuming that this consideration which is shown by the magistrates is also shown by the sheriffs?—Not to so great an extent.

1224. It cannot be to so great an extent, because you don't go to the Sheriff so frequently as you go to the other Court?—I think it is on the score of expense. The Burgh Court is cheaper.

1225. But if you went to the Sheriff Court with the same proportion of cases, you might have as much grievance at the hands of the Sheriff?—Personally I don't think either system ideal.

1226. I think you take the view that the Schedule of Commission proposed by Mr Cross in his Bill is quite inadequate?—Yes.

1227. You were present and heard the evidence of Mr John McFie?—Yes.

1228. Do you remember what he said on that point?—Did he say he collected the rates himself?

1229. Yes, he said that in certain cases he collected the rates, and he was asked what discount he was allowed, and he said 7½ per cent.—I must say that I don't know how he does it.

1230. He was asked if it was adequate, and he said that it was.—I don't know how he does it.

1231. He said there were only five cases in which he collected the rates, Kinning Park, Govan Street, and South Wellington Street, and they were chiefly one-room and kitchen houses.—These are very good districts.

1232. He is allowed 7½ per cent. He was asked if he thought that was sufficient to cover the cost and he said, "We have to be satisfied."—I think a factor who uses the option of collecting the rates does so in a good district where he can make a good bargain in regard to the rates.

1233. He said that if he had 7½ per cent. all round he would do very well.—Taking the Glasgow Corporation figures, I cannot understand how he can work it at 7½ per cent. The returns of the police rate show a loss of 26 per cent.

1234. (*Mr Howden.*) Is that on the total rental or is it irrecoverable?—It is irrecoverable.

1235. They do not pay rates on unlet property. Is that not included in that 26 per cent?—No, it is loss on the amount assessed. The number of occupiers is 88,824; the number paid is 66,486; the number unpaid is 23,338, showing a percentage of unpaid, 25·98.

1236. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You said that in your opinion the system of compounding of rates would cause friction between tenant and proprietor?—Yes, I think it would be a most unfortunate system.

1237. You will recollect that Mr McFie was asked the same question—"272. *Q.* Do you find that it makes any 'difficulty in the way of friction between you and the 'tenants when you are collecting the rates as well as the 'rents? *A.* Not a bit"?—Of course Mr McFie may have had a very fortunate experience, but I know what the result is of such collection of tenants' rates as the landlord does have in Glasgow, and it is not encouraging.

1238. In short, you say that your experience is quite contrary to that of Mr McFie?—Quite.

1239. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) I suppose the allocation of the rates to particular houses, if the landlord had to collect them, would not be so difficult if they were assessed as they are now separately? You said it would be a very intricate thing to find out what the rates were if the rates were assessed on each separate house as they are at present. The question is whether these people should pay them or pay them through the landlord?—If there was a demand served on the landlord and the landlord had to pay—

1240. Served on the landlord for each of his individual houses?—The Bill provides that the landlord shall state the proportions in his receipts.

1241. But I mean to say that the same thing shall be done for him by the rate-collecting authority. The local authority would send him a demand for each separate house.—Yes, if it was worked that way it would be easier.

1242. It would dispose of most of the difficulty?—It would not dispose of the difficulty as to the calculation of next year's assessment. The landlord would be assessing without knowing what the rate was going to be.

1243. I was not asking about that. There is one thing, and that is about the probable number of people who would be enfranchised although they did not pay their rates. You told us that ejections were granted against 9900 people in the Burgh Court and 2078 in the Sheriff Court, making about 12,000 altogether. I suppose none of these people would be more likely to pay their rents if they had to pay rates as well?—No, I think there would be probably much the same result.

1244. And we can calculate from that that about 12,000 people would remain on the roll as electors who had not paid their rates?—Yes.

1245. (*Mr Binnie.*) Would you refer just for a moment to what you said regarding the relief of poor tenants from their assessment? Do you see any way of getting that done unless the tenants remain in the house for a whole year?—No, I cannot see any way by which it could be made to work unless the tenant was in the whole year.

1246. Because they would apply for relief of the whole assessment charged against the house?—Yes.

1247. And if they removed from that house immediately after getting relief, the house would still be relieved, although it was occupied by a tenant quite able to pay the assessment?—Yes.

1248. And then the tenant going into another house would require to pay the poor rate or other assessment for the house to which he had removed?—Yes, that is how it would work.

1249. (*Chairman.*) How does it work now, getting relief for the whole year and then shifting the next month? It is merely extending the area of the difficulty; there is the same difficulty at present?—I think it must be in respect of one house that he has been assessed. He has his notice which he brings with him.

1250. For the previous year?—For the current year,—somewhere in the course of the current year.

1251. Then he shifts?—In that case he might come into a house where the rate had not been paid and he would be liable for it. He would have to get relief for it too.

1252. This would not introduce any new difficulty, but it would extend the area?—Yes.

1253. (*Mr Binnie.*) Then you spoke of removals causing repairs, and you were asked if that was not largely caused by careless tenants. Can a removal, however carefully it is carried out, be carried out without causing some damage to a house?—It cannot fail to do some injury to the house. Injury is always done by the mere removal of the furnishings, carrying things down the stairs and destroying the plaster, and then there are marks of men's hands on the paper.

1254. The Chairman asked you a question which you never answered and that was as to the shortest possible period for an ejectment?—I think if it was on a Friday you might get the ejectment enforced on the following Tuesday. That is the shortest period in which it can be done.

1255. Before you could get that, the tenant would be in arrears with his rent?—Yes, he would probably be two

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months in arrear if it was a forehand rent,—he would be in arrear for the previous month and also for the month in course. I am assuming that he fails to pay his forehand rent for the month and you take him into Court and another month has begun to run.

1256. And before you could get him out there would be something like six weeks during which he had occupied the house and paid no rent?—That is so.

1257. Would that be about the minimum?—Yes, I think so.

1258. There would be six weeks' rent lost?—Yes.

1259. And the cost of the removal. You said there were 9917 decrees which would cost from 8s. to 12s. If you take them at 10s., then that gives £4958?—Yes.

1260. Then in the Sheriff Court you said there were 2078 decrees, which at 15s. would be £1558?—Yes.

1261. You said there were 20,887 summonses, although there were only 9917 ejections?—Yes.

1262. So there were about 11,000 summonses that did not go the length of an injection?—Yes.

1263. What would these cost up to that point?—They would cost 1s. 6d. for the summons and 1s. for the service at any rate,—say 2s. 6d.

1264. Would that cover it?—I think you might make it 3s. to be sure.

1265. I just wish to get it from you?—I would put it at 3s.

1266. So that is £1650?—Yes.

1267. So these ejections cost, according to this calculation, £8166 every year to the landlords besides the loss of rent?—Yes.

1268. And the lost of rent is not only on those who are actually put out under decree, but on those who left voluntarily after receiving the summons, a certain number of the £11,000?—Yes.

1269. So probably there were 15,000 tenants left without paying their rents?—Yes.

1270. You think the average of that would be six weeks?—Yes.

1271. What would you put the average rent at?—10s. a month.

1272. That would be 15s., and it would make £11,250?—Yes.

1273. So the landlords in this case lose £11,250 of rent and they have to pay £8166 of expenses under the present cumbrous system of getting quit of bad tenants, being a total loss of £19,416?—Yes, say £20,000. I think that is pretty like what it will be.

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1274. And all that must be added to rents and paid by good tenants because of the undue consideration that is shown to bad tenants?—Yes, I am afraid that is so.

1275. (*Chairman.*) We have had evidence about the Glasgow Improvements Department Houses. Does it occur to you that there is any difference in the conditions of these houses from ordinary working men's houses that would make evidence of their experience inapplicable in the ordinary case?—I think their position is entirely special, because they select their tenants so carefully. They cream the tenants, and in the new houses at cheap rents they get the best selection.

1276. That would require to be considered?—Yes. I think Mr. Menzies said in his examination that his experience was somewhat special.

1277. They have caretakers?—Yes, that is another point.

1278. We have had some information, although no evidence, as yet, about the Workmen's Dwellings Company?—They select their tenants also and they have caretakers.

1279. They would be rather comparable to the Corporation Houses?—Yes.

1280. (*Mr. Dobbie.*) In regard to this question as to the loss through non-paying ratepayers, is this 26 per cent. of the total amount of the rate, or is it 26 per cent. of the number of ratepayers?—It is 26 per cent. of the amount assessed; the percentage unpaid is 25·98. 23,338 is the number of unpaid, and 89,424 is the number of occupiers. I am sure it is the amount unpaid.

1281. (*Mr. Esslemont.*) Can you tell us the gross amount assessed on rentals of £10 and under?—Over £4 and under £10, the net sum imposed in 1905–1906 was £69,542, and the amount collected was £51,730.

1282. That is nothing like a shrinkage of 26 per cent.?—Yes, it is; it is over 25 per cent.

1283. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Is that irrecoverable at the date of the closing of the accounts?—They call it outstanding, but it appears in the Police Accounts every year or practically the same amount. Some years ago our Association and the House Factors Association went into the question with regard to the English law of distraint and made a comparison with our law of sequestration. We drew up a statement which was revised by an English solicitor. (*Hands in statement.*)

Mr A. Stewart and Mr J. Marr, jun.

Mr Archibald Stewart and Mr John Marr, Jun., called and examined.

Mr A. Stewart and Mr J. Marr, jun.

1284. (*Chairman to Mr Stewart.*)— You are President of the Partick and Govan House Factors Association?—Yes.

1285. How long have you been President?—Over five years.

1286. How long has your Association existed?—Five years.

1287. (*Chairman to Mr Marr.*)—You are a member of the Partick and Govan House Factors Association?—Yes.

1288. (*To Mr Stewart.*) What led to your Association being formed?—Its object was to protect the landlords' and factors' interest.

1289. What are you yourself?—I am a house factor in Glasgow, Govan, and Partick, with an interest in Clydebank.

1290. Have you yourself got under your administration a number of the houses of the class we are dealing with here at a rental of £20 and under?—Yes, I have 2500 in Govan and Partick under £20.

1291. And in Glasgow?—I have 800, and my son factors seven or eight hundred in Clydebank.

1292. (*To Mr Marr.*)—What is your experience?—I have 1000 houses under £10, and 1000 between £10 and £15.

1293. Where?—All in Govan.

1294. (*To Mr Stewart.*)—Do you have with you any of the missives that you yourself employ?—No, but I can send that in.

1295. (*To Mr Marr.*) You produce the missive that you employ?—Yes, I produce a missive which we employed in 1887, which has a special clause in it.

1296. (*To Mr Stewart.*) Do you speak for your Association?—Yes.

1297. Your Association have considered this question?—Yes, we have had it before us.

1298. When was that?—Recently.

1299. Have you had it before you on previous occasions, or has it only been in connection with Mr Cross's Bill?—In connection with his Bill.

1300. In your view, and judging from your experience, is there any difference between the conditions in Glasgow and the conditions in Govan, Partick, and Clydebank, or may they be looked upon as practically the same?—Practically the same for that class of tenant.

1301. Do you not find that in some parts the shifting population is larger than in others? Take the centre of Glasgow, for instance, as compared with Govan; are they pretty much the same?—Yes, the difference in percentage is very small.

1302. What about the system of having missives as compared with verbal lets? How old is that in your experience?—I think the missives will be, roughly, thirty years old.

1303. How long have you been in business yourself?—Forty-one years in February next.

1304. When you began business were missives known?—No.

1305. What was the system then?—I collected for seven years from the tenants myself, and I went round at Candlemas term. They expected a call then and they expected to be asked about the next year.

1306. It was all done verbally?—Yes, and I put merely yes or no in the collecting book.

1307. That applied to whatever period of tenancy it was?—They were mostly all let by the year at that particular time.

1308. Can you give us any idea what percentage would be let by the year, as compared with shorter lets? Would 90 per cent. be let by the year?—Yes, I would say so at that time.

1309. So the system of shorter lets has gradually come in?—Yes.

1310. Has it gone on progressively,—are there more short lets now as compared with the old days?—In Partick and Govan, we have very few monthly houses. Tenants, when they fail to get relief from poor rates and burgh rates, prefer to risk taking their houses by the year, so very few tenants are now monthly, either in Govan or in Partick.

1311. Tenants of houses under £4 of rent are all mouthly or weekly?—They are all monthly, but there are very few of them.

1312. With regard to rents between £4 and £10, what percentage of them do you think would be monthly?—Not above one-third in Govan and Partick.

1313. Not above 25 per cent.?—No.

1314. Let us see that we are at one. With regard to

rents between £4 and £10, not above 2 per cent. will be monthly ?—That is so.

1315. 75 per cent. will be yearly ?—Yes.

1316. Are you talking apart from the number of rooms altogether ?—They mostly all live in one-room and kitchen houses and houses of single apartments. Within the last ten years perhaps they were all room and kitchen houses from £7 upwards, but of course with the new buildings and all the new sanitary requirements the rents have gone up very considerably.

1317. Take one-room houses ; what is the rent in Govan and Partick ?—For monthly houses it is £6 or £7 a year in the older houses.

1318. Is that for one room ?—Yes.

1319. Then what will the rents go to for one room and kitchen ?—The older houses are under £10. And the

1320. And the newer houses ?—They run up to £15.

1321. For one room and kitchen ?—Yes, and they have a bathroom and hot and cold water.

1322. They have no bathroom in the older houses ?—No, there is generally a closet on the stair landing.

1323. What proportion of the houses let between £10 and £20 are let monthly ?—Hardly any. I don't think I have one.

1324. Are all your houses let either monthly or yearly ?—Yes.

1325. Have you any let quarterly ?—No.

1326. Or half-yearly ?—No.

1327. Or weekly ?—No.

1328. When do you send out your missives ?—I generally have to send them out when I hear that other factors are before me.

1329. What is the earliest you have ever sent a missive out within recent years ?—About 16th January.

1330. Do you not have cases of people, when they take their houses in Govan, wanting to know about houses for the next term ?—They are always calling, and wanting houses in a particular place.

1331. But you have never sent out a missive earlier than about the middle of January ?—No.

1332. What about other people ?—At one time 2nd February was the period for the return of these missives. They were sent out about 28th January, two or three days before we were round, but, when I learned that other factors—more from the city here—had their missives out before me, I had just to set to and send out mine. That would lead up to this grievance that the tenants complain of, that they don't know when they are to be called on to see if they are to stay on or not.

1333. Have you had any consultation at any time with a view to coming to a common agreement among your Partick and Govan factors ?—No. We had a meeting in Glasgow along with the landlords, and I opposed coming to an understanding among ourselves, because I wanted then that we ourselves should get a Bill promoted to shorten the period.

1334. Why did you oppose doing it voluntarily ?—Because I was satisfied then, and I am satisfied now, that it would never work.

1335. Does it not work in Edinburgh ?—It might.

1336. We are told that 15th March is fixed there ?—I cannot speak definitely, but I am told that it is not working properly.

1337. You know that the Partick people have suggested a Bill to amend the system of house letting in Scotland ?—Yes.

1338. What do you say to their proposal that, "It would 'not be lawful prior to 15th March to let any dwelling 'house," etc. ? (*Reads clause.*)—This clause as we have amended it leaves us, we think, with a free hand. We can let for the year from a Whitsunday term to a Whitsunday term, and if we have anything new or unoccupied, we can let it any time for a shorter period or on a longer lease, for thirteen or fourteen months, as the case may be. We look upon this as really relieving us from any difficulty in letting.

1339. With the amendments that you are going to speak to immediately, do you think that would meet the objections to the present system ?—That is my strong opinion.

1340. In your proposal, would you leave the rating and voting systems as at present ?—Yes. It would interfere with hardly anything.

1341. You know that there are and must be cases where men who have taken a house, let us say at Candlemas, lose their employment, let us say in April, and they are bound to the following May. Now, is there not a grievance apart altogether from this yearly system of taking a house ; is there not a grievance of their being tied for the whole sixteen or, as you would propose, fourteen months. What is the view of your Association about that ?—I think we meet that pretty freely, and I think we are pretty unanimous. We believe that, generally speaking, landlords and factors would be quite pleased to have it ; that all yearly tenants under £15 of rent, paying their rents monthly, should, if leaving the district on account of change of work, be relieved of their house, viz. by giving one month's notice of removal, and quarterly paying tenants by giving a three months' notice, provided that they can give a certificate that they have to leave the district and that taxes should only be paid by us for the amount of rent received from such houses. I think that would cover it, and it meets the view of Mr Cross's Bill very closely.

1342. You see there are two differences there from Mr Cross's Bill. In the first place, you propose to make it only applicable to rents of £15 and under, while Mr Cross makes it applicable to rents of £20 and under. In the second place, you introduce the condition that it was only to be if they give a certificate that they have to leave the district, whereas he makes the right absolute. Now, those are the two leading distinctions between his proposal and yours. What do you say first as to the limitation to £15 ?—We think that most working class people are living in houses below £15.

1343. What are the people that live in houses above £15 ?—They might be foremen. In good times riveters were sometimes earning £1 a day, and they might take more expensive houses.

1344. Have you not a great many workmen whose families are wage-earners and who are able to pay more than £15 of rent ?—I have always found that the most of working men, even with pretty large families, were confined at one time to houses below £10, and I would say that there are very few now in houses exceeding £15. Of course there are exceptions.

1345. Would a £6 house now represent a £4 house ten years ago ?—No.

1346. Twenty years ago ?—Twenty to thirty years ago.

1347. What would a £10 house in the old days represent now ?—£12 or £12, 10s.

1348. And proportionately ?—Yes, it would depend on the accommodation.

1349. How many members are there in your Association ?—Between 20 and 30.

1350. What property will they factor among them ?—Nine-tenths of the property of Patrick and Govan is in the hands of factors, and they are mostly in our Association. Of course they don't attend regularly.

1351. With regard to the other and more important question, you propose to limit the right to those who can give a certificate that they have to leave the district. Why do you propose that limitation ?—There are so very few requiring to leave the district. Just now we have a great many empty properties, perhaps over 20,000 houses between Glasgow and the suburbs. These houses are cleaned out and papered and painted. A tenant who is in a house for two years or less, finds another house that is clean and tidy, and as his own house requires cleaning, he prefers just to cross the street and to leave me. Now, we don't like that. We don't want a tenant to be leaving one side of the street in order to get a clean house on the other side of the street, but we want to help, and we are helping new tenants going to Clydebank or Greenock, and we do all we can to ease them of the rent that is left behind.

1352. Suppose a man does not leave the district, but his wages are reduced or he loses his employment altogether ; should he not be in the same position as a man who leaves the district, perhaps to get bigger wages ?—If I had a tenant in that way who has been paying me £10 of rent and he cannot afford it now or he is sick or out of employment, and he wants to get into a smaller house, then I think he should be relieved by giving a month's notice. I would allow that if he could give a proper reason for it. That is the reason we propose a certificate if a man is leaving one shipbuilding yard in Partick and going to another in another place, then he can get a letter from his foreman which would be quite satisfactory to us.

1353. Would you not be willing to introduce the other condition, viz. that through reduction of wages or loss of employment they are unable to pay the rent ?—Yes, I want to meet them.

1354. At the present time, what is your experience with regard to the number of cases of removal between terms ?—I do not have the exact number, but, as near as can be, it is 2 or 3 per cent. I can send in the exact number. In Govan and Partick we have 2486 houses under £10.

1355. How many houses do you have under £20 ?—I can get that. I can give the exact number of these that require to remove, and I will send it in. I am only including cases where they are let yearly—and they are mostly all let yearly with me in Govan and Partick—and where they have to leave and they give me authority to let their houses.

1356. Do you know what amount of rent within the last year has had to be paid by the principal tenant owing to the sub-tenant being uaable to pay. There would be a number of cases of sub-letting last year ?—Yes.

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1357. Where the sub-tenant was good for the money, the principal tenant would have to pay nothing?—That is so.

1358. Suppose that the sub-let did not cover the whole period, then the principal tenant would have to pay for the period that was not covered. Or suppose that the sub-tenant proved unable to pay, then the principal tenant would have to pay?—Yes.

1359. Have you the means of finding out to what extent the principal tenant in the result has had to pay for the house he was not occupying as well as for the house he was occupying?—Yes, to within a few pounds. It is in the books in the office, but it will take a little time to get.

1360. Are you yourself one of the biggest factors?—I have a good deal of property to factor.

1361. Could you get it done by any of the other factors?—Mr M'Michael and Mr Madden are here.

(*To Mr M'Michael and Mr Madden.*) We want to find out the extent of the grievance. We know there are some cases where it must happen. We want to know if it extends over a large area and if it amounts to a considerable sum. It would be very important if you would look into the question and find out from your books some statistics such as we are getting from Mr Stewart, viz. the amount of loss to the principal tenant through sub-lets.

1362. (*To Mr Stewart.*) If they are leaving, what do you do?—I do the best I can. I make no charge if they are leaving the district.

1363. And what do you do in other cases?—I have taken authority to let, and I do all I can to let for them.

1364. Do you not make a charge?—Yes.

1365. How much?—5 per cent.

1366. Suppose short lets come in in place of yearly lets, do you think that will have any effect on raising the rents?—It is sure to.

1367. Why?—I have brought with me a circular which was issued in 1894 by the Partick Landlords and Factors Association.

1368. Why was this circular issued?—The Commissioners of Partick sent a circular to us that we were to be charged with the assessments on all short let houses, on all houses not let by the year.

1369. You mean you were to be charged for rates?—Yes, for the burgh rates. So we had a meeting and we agreed to this circular being sent to all our tenants, showing the effect it would have, and for the first year or two we acted on this circular. We thought it a great grievance that widows and other poor people getting off from the rates should be taxed, and I sent my clerk round the tenants and asked if they would risk taking their houses by the year and getting relief, and they all agreed to it.

1370. It is summed up in the fourth last paragraph:—"We would like also to point out that, in the event of all 'houses under £15 being monthly lets, and power given to 'the Commissioners and others to charge Owners all the 'Rates and Assessments, Occupiers will have their Rents 'increased over and above the amount of such Rates and 'Taxes from 5 to 10 per cent. to cover loss. The whole 'thing is in your hands; if you are willing that this new 'idea of the Commissioners should be carried out, do not 'blame the Owners or their Factors, but blame your 'Commissioners and yourselves for the increase of rent." In point of fact, were they raised from 5 to 10 per cent.?—Yes.

1371. And after that you sent round to see what they proposed to do?—Yes, if they would take their houses yearly and get relief, and they all agreed. There is no monthly tenant in Partick that I have but would be willing to take his house by the year.

1372. You limit it to houses under £15. Would it be the same thing if you took houses from £15 to £20?—Yes, but there are very few houses above that where there are many changes.

1373. Suppose that the yearly tenants were to get monthly lets without any increase to their rents, what do you say then?—They would require to get a large percentage off.

1374. No. What I mean is this, if you made the yearly tenants an offer to give them monthly tenancy without any increase of rent, would not a great many of them avail themselves of that offer?—I do not think so, because they look on monthly tenants as a very inferior class.

1375. There is a certain sentiment?—There is a strong sentiment.

1376. Suppose you offer them monthly tenure, but with a substantial increase of rent, what would they say to that?—They would prefer to remain as they are.

1377. That is what they said before?—Yes. They have no great desire in my experience to change, but they feel aggrieved at the missive system.

1378. This was in view of the Commissioners making you rate-collectors?—Yes.

1379. Apart from making you rate-collectors, suppose that element did not enter into it, but suppose a Bill were passed doing away with long lets, would there be an increase of rent even then?—Yes.

1380. But not to this extent?—I would rather think so. It would depend very much on the amount that we would be allowed off for collection of the rates, but whatever the loss would be, it would surely go on the rates, and it would increase the rates as well as the rent.

1381. You know that there has been a considerable agitation in favour of short lets?—I know that that is so, so far as newspapers are concerned, but there has been no great agitation among my tenants, and I have a good many.

1382. I suppose there is that feeling among some of your tenants?—There are odd tenants here and there.

1383. As regards those that have that feeling and desire, do they appreciate your point, namely, that it would involve higher rents, or are they proceeding on the assumption that the rents would not be raised?—I expect that they are proceeding on the assumption that they would still be sitting at the same rent.

1384. I suppose you know that the proposal is that the owner should pay the rates?—I understand that is so.

1385. What do you say to that?—I would be very much against it.

1386. Why?—It would entail a great deal of trouble.

1387. Suppose you got a sufficient allowance, would you be against it then?—Yes, thoroughly.

1388. Suppose you got a fully sufficient allowance, what objection would there be then?—My objection is to have the two to collect—I object because of the difficulty.

1389. But the more work you get the better for you if you are fully paid?—Yes, if I am fully paid.

1390. Assuming that you are fully paid, do you think it would introduce any element of friction between you and the tenants?—It would produce endless confusion between tenants and factors. Of course if the Bill is passed we will have to work it.

1391. It works with houses under £4. Why should it not work with houses above £4?—Under £4 they are the poorest of the poor and we put so much rent on, but there are so very few of those; I do not think I have half a dozen.

1392. Apart from that, you object to the proposed allowance in the Bill as being inadequate?—Yes.

1393. Is it inadequate under each head in your view?—Yes.

1394. Why do you say that? Is that from your practical experience?—I cannot say that as regards practical experience of rates, but we see it published in the papers as regards the Corporation.

1395. Do you think you would require more or less?—I think we would require the whole loss of the Corporation to cover our loss.

1396. You would have to collect the rates?—That is what we object to.

1397. You would need enough to cover the loss of rates not recovered and also the cost of collection?—Yes. We would require to keep a larger staff.

1398. Suppose the Glasgow Corporation loses 26 per cent., you would require that plus the cost of collection?—Yes, we would require 30 per cent. roughly.

1399. Do you find a difficulty in the method of ejecting defaulting tenants?—Yes.

1400. Have you found that all along?—Yes.

1401. What Court do you go to in Govan and Partick?—The Sheriff Court.

1402. You have nothing to do with burgh courts there?—No.

1403. In the Sheriff Court, is it a question of expense or delay that you object to?—Delay. The rule in the Court just now is that the tenant must be a month in arrears and we must claim ejection because he is in arrears.

1404. You have no weekly tenants?—No.

1405. In the case of a weekly tenant, he would be just a week in arrear?—I would expect so. We require to give nine or ten days' notice before we can ask for an ejection. Then it takes four or five or seven days before it is heard in the Court, and then the Sheriff generally allows them time to remove.

1406. The sheriffs seem to be as bad as the burgh magistrates?—I do not know what to think of it just now, because we understood that if we gave a tenant notice at the end of his tenancy we could then apply for an ejection, but the rule is that we must say that they are in arrears.

1407. Why do you not make a condition with your tenant in black and white that if they are in arrears they will go out?—We cannot enforce it.

1408. In point of fact, with amonthly tenant, before you get him out, how much rent do you generally lose?—Not less than two months.

1409. And the law expenses?—Yes.

1410. I see you sum up the views of your Association?—Yes.

1411. Are these your views personally as well as the views of the Association?—Yes.

(1) We think the freedom of contracts between landlord and tenant in Scotland should not be interfered with, but if altered it should be as little as possible.

(2) That yearly lets should not be entered into before the 15th day of March.

(3) That the warning away of tenants be thirty days before the Whitsunday removal term day.

(4) That the poor who at present are being relieved from poor and burgh assessments would thus continue to be so relieved.

(5) That yearly tenants, at £15 and under, paying their rents monthly, should, by giving one month's notice, be relieved of their houses, provided they are leaving the district, and quarterly paying tenants one quarter's notice.

(6) That taxes be only charged on the amount of rent received from such houses.

1412. (*To Mr Marr.*) I think we may now ask you about the points to which you are going to speak in addition to what Mr Stewart has said to us, and I first ask you about the missive that you have handed in. I see it is dated 2nd February 1887. Was that in your father's time?—Yes.

1413. Have you succeeded him?—He is still in the business, but he is unwell and he could not come here to-day.

1414. What is the extent of your business?—We have about three thousand houses altogether.

1415. Where?—Practically all in Govan.

1416. I notice in this missive, which is dated Candlemas, 2nd February 1887, this clause, "In the event of my 'having to leave Govan and its neighbourhood, on account 'of my having had to find employment elsewhere, the 'house is to be taken off my hand at the end of any quarter 'during the currency of this let upon my giving one 'month's previous notice to that effect, and upon my 'paying up all rent then due along with the proportion of 'stair gas and the water rates applicable to my house." Is that substantially what Mr Stewart has proposed on behalf of your Association?—Yes.

1417. What led to that?—I am not sure, but there must have been some agitation in 1887.

1418. Was this the first of it?—Yes. We used it from 1887 to 1891, and then we dropped it because it was practically a dead letter. One of the proprietors objected to it and said he did not see why we should put that clause in when other factors did not have it in.

1419. You never found any drawback from it?—No.

1420. Was it taken advantage of at all?—Practically not at all.

1421. Were there any cases?—There may have been one or two, but very few.

1422. Were there cases where, if the clause had been extended to cover reduction of wages or loss of employment, it would have been taken advantage of?—I do not think there is much in that at all.

1423. Have you found cases of that kind?—No.

1424. Suppose you had a case of that kind?—As a rule we meet the tenant in every way. A tenant comes to us now and tells us that he may have to leave the town on account of his work, and we agree to let him off if he asks us.

1425. Have you had cases of tenants doing that where you have been unable to get a sub-tenant and where the principal tenant has had to pay?—Very, very few. £20 a year will cover that easily.

1426. Do you not find that sometimes there may be an interval during which he has to pay?—Sometimes there is a little of that, but not much. I think £20 to £25 will cover that.

1427. Out of what rent?—Up to £15.

1428. But what will be the total rent payable by the tenant under £20?—We have over 2000 paying up to £15, but I cannot tell the total.

1429. Roughly?—We have 1000 paying about £8. It will come to over £20,000.

1430. And you think there is no loss owing to change?—There is practically no loss.

1431. Do you not think there will be a certain number of tenants who would like to change, but who, being tied at the present time, never come to you at all, and you never hear of them?—There are a few people who, seeing new houses round about, would like to get them, but they do not want to run the risk of two rents, and they do not come to us. There is not much of that.

1432. Do you agree with Mr Stewart that if yearly tenants had the option given to them of monthly lets, it would not be largely taken advantage of?—I am sure it would not. We have only sixty-three monthly tenants in the whole of our district.

1433. Why do you not have more?—Because we charge them 15 per cent. on the rental, on account of us being held liable for the rates. We are liable in all short lets, and, wherever possible, we make them into yearly tenants. We prefer to have nothing to do with rates.

1434. Suppose a tenant says, "I want to be a monthly tenant, and I am quite willing to pay what you ask," what would you charge?—15 per cent. of a rise on his rent.

1435. Have you found cases of that kind, where a person said, "I don't care"?—I do not think so.

1436. What would that be on a £10 rent?—£11, 10s.

1437. Is that the result of calculation?—We have all along charged 3s. in the £.

1438. What are the elements that entitle you to put that on?—The burgh rate was about 10 per cent., and we add on another 5 per cent., making it 15 per cent.

1439. Does there enter any element of additional repairs or anything of that kind?—No.

1440. Is it this way, that out of 15 per cent., 10 is for the rate, and 5 is for the extra rent?—Yes, and loss sustained through empties.

1441. Give us the items making up the 5 per cent.?—It is merely for loss. It does not pay us.

1442. The 5 per cent. is really for loss?—Yes.

1443. Do you not find in Govan, as elsewhere, that at Whitsunday there is great difficulty owing to all the removals being at that time?—There is bound to be a little, but not very much. I have not heard many complaints. A big number flit before that.

1444. Into empty houses?—Yes, and new houses. Still, there are bound to be a great number removing on the term day.

1445. You have very few removals in November?—Practically none.

1446. And between times?—Practically none.

1447. Would it not be an advantage to spread the removals over the year?—If it could be done it would not be a disadvantage.

1448. It would be an advantage to everybody, builders, factors, and everybody else?—I do not think there is so very much advantage in it so far as builders are concerned. They work all the year through.

1449. Do you not find that there is a slack time after Whitsunday?—There is a little, but not very much.

1450. How long would it last?—The builder has no sooner finished his property for May than he begins to think where he is to build for other tenants. He never stops, as a rule.

1451. Do you know that they have strong views on this matter?—I believe that is so.

1452. How do you account for that?—When they build houses for August or November or other terms the houses often stand empty because there are no tenants to fill them—the tenants cannot get away from us or from the other factors.

1453. You have no suggestion to make to bring about a system of spreading the removals over the year?—I would have no objection to quarterly lets if the rates could be arranged.

1454. (*To Mr Stewart.*) Do you agree in that, if the rates could be arranged?—I would prefer to leave the lets as they are just now.

1455. (*To Mr Marr.*) Why can the rates not be arranged?—Because the burgh authorities do not wish to make quarterly collection of rates.

1456. They are wanting to get the owners to collect the rates?—Yes, but why should the owners collect them?

1457. I suppose it is the interest of the burgh authorities to get them to collect the rates?—Yes, most assuredly. It would pay them.

1458. But only if there was an insufficient allowance made to them?—Yes.

1459. If the allowance were sufficient, would it matter to the burgh authorities?—Not much, except as regards saving labour and putting it on to the factors and rent collectors.

1460. (*Mr Howden to Mr Stewart.*) I notice in your circular, you tell us about the percentage of men who desire to remove between terms. You say that the percentage is 2 in houses under £10, and 2½ in houses from £10 to £15?—That is so. That is as near as I could make it up.

1461. That would mean that of the better class of workmen's houses more would desire to move?—They would have occasion to move. You will find that there are more removals with the larger rents than there are in comparison with the smaller rents.

1462. It would be a decided advantage to a man if he could manage to give up his house by simply saying that he wanted away on a certain day, and got away?—No one would suggest that he should get away without notice. I think we have covered that pretty well by allowing a monthly tenant to get away on a month's notice and a quarterly tenant to get away on a quarter's notice.

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1463. But that is not the law?—But I want it made the law. I would be quite pleased to have it made the law.

1464. Only in so far as they are shifting to suit their employment?—Yes.

1465. If there was a better house to be got, and if they thought they should remove in the interests of their family, what then?—The line must be drawn somewhere. I would consent in the case of a man in ill-health, living in a dear house and not being able to pay for it: he should be relieved and be allowed to go into a cheaper house; but I do not think I would see my way to agree to a man crossing the street to a new house with all the sanitary improvements, and leaving his dirty house for me to clean. No, I would draw the line somewhere.

1466. How would your principal view your statement? Would the landlord not be inclined to hold you responsible, as factor, for the rent?—Not if it is passed into law.

1467. You say that is your practice in the meantime, that you would not hold them responsible?—I say just now that in the case of a party who through stress of work is going away to England, for instance, I make no charge for any trouble I am at. It is seldom that we charge anything at all for any loss of rent.

1468. (*Chairman.*) But you are entitled to do so?—Yes. I have to take authority from the man before I can let his house at all, and we make the smallest charge we possibly can to deserving tenants.

1469. (*Mr Howden to Mr Marr.*) You say you dropped this clause from your missive after having put in it for five years, from 1887 to 1892, and you say there were very few who took advantage of it?—That is so.

1470. Seeing that you still hold the opinion that that should be in, why did you withdraw it?—I have already explained that; I said that we dropped it because the tenants did not take advantage, and also because one of our proprietors objected and saw no reason why we should put it in when other factors did not have it.

1471. It was because of the landlord putting compulsion on you?—Yes.

1472. Might I suggest to you that at the time you dropped this clause, early in 1892, property was becoming more plentiful in Govan?—I cannot go back so far and talk with confidence about 1892. I have only been for thirteen years in the office.

1473. Previous to that, when Govan was on the boom and houses were scarcer, you would have absolutely no difficulty in re-letting your property?—That is so.

1474. But when there was a plentiful supply of houses it would work the other way, and your houses might stand empty?—Yes.

1475. Had that no bearing on the dropping of the clause?—None whatsoever. It did not cause us to drop it.

1476. But at the present time?—I would put it in certainly. As I said before, any tenant coming to us and wanting three months' option will get it.

1477. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Marr.*) With reference to this 3s. per pound that was put on to the tenant's rent, can you tell us the local rates payable by tenants?—2s. 2½d. At that time it was 2s. or 1s. 11d.

1478. And you charged 3s.?—Yes.

1479. That was to cover the cost of collection?—No, it was to cover the loss. It does not cover it.

1480. You put the loss at 20 per cent?—No, I put it at 5 per cent. on rent.

1481. (*Mr Binnie.*) 5 per cent. on the rent, but 50 per cent. on the rate?—Yes, that is so.

1482. (*Mr Dobbie.*) So supposing you had compounded with the burgh for the whole of the tenants' rates all over on houses under £20?—I cannot speak to that. We have no monthly lets above £10.

1483. What sum do you think you would require to recoup you for any loss?—I think that if there was 30 per cent. added on, we would not be in pocket. I think we would lose more than we do at present. We have details to show what we lose at present. The rating authorities have more power for collecting their rates than we have. Many a tenant pays his taxes when he does not pay his rent, because the rating authorities have power to make him pay. A man with a wage of £1 a week can be arrested for taxes, but we cannot touch him, and he knows that.

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1484. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You don't suggest that there might be a loss of 50 per cent. in the collection of rates?—I know that now we prefer to get a tenant to pay his own rates than to pay us 3s. in the pound.

1485. You don't wish us to assume that, in collecting these rates, for every 10s. you collect, you would lose 10s.?—No, but there is another item: we are liable for loss where a house is empty for five or six months.

1486. Although there was such a wide difference between the view expressed by Mr McFie and by you——?—I don't understand how he does it.

1487. (*To Mr Stewart.*) There is one other question in connection with this circular that was issued in 1894. In the second last paragraph you appeal to your tenants to consider whether under present circumstances they would not be better to be annexed to Glasgow, more particularly those who were paying under £10, and you said that tenants paying these rents in Glasgow were taxed at a greatly reduced rate. Will you kindly explain what the difference is in Glasgow as compared with Govan and Partick as regards rents of £10 and under in as far as the imposition of rates is concerned?—They have a little more than a half to pay in Glasgow. In Govan and Partick there is no differentiation at all.

1488. You mean in Glasgow all the burgh rates and rates of £10 and under are——?—1s. 1½d. when the others are 2s. 3d.,—it is about that.

1489. (*Chairman to Mr Marr.*) You said that you knew cases of people who paid rates and did not pay rents. These won't be cases of provident working men?—They are men who won't pay anything if they can help it. They know that they have got to pay their rates, and they know that we cannot arrest them for their rent.

1490. Suppose the landlord has to pay primarily and recover from the tenant, in those cases he would not recover?—No.

1491. He would not recover either the rates or the rents?—He would recover neither of them.

1492. (*To Mr Stewart.*) Have you ever known cases of that kind?—It is known.

1493. Even above £4 of rent?—Yes, below £10.

[Mr John Marr at a later stage handed in the following statement, giving details in connection with the number of houses, etc. sub-let.]

Only houses situated in Govan at rents of £15 and under per annum are taken into account. The year 1905–1906 was an average year with me, and details are taken from the books for that year. The number of sub-lets was 2·7 per cent.; of those nearly one-half were signed during the period between signing the missive and taking occupancy of the house at May term. Of the total number of sub-lets, viz., 2·7 per cent., only about one-half were on account of change of employment or want of work. The majority of the other half should be put down to tenants merely desiring a change of house in the same district. Houses let monthly at £10 and under per annum only amount to 5·8 per cent., and I have no houses at a higher rent let monthly. All my other houses are let by the year. Last year I had only four tenants who had to pay me for honses which I did not manage to sub-let, and the total amount paid by them amounted to £14, 13s. 6d. I also find that house letting in Govan was not on the boom, as suggested by Mr Howden, at the time when we had the special clause in our missives, but instead of that house letting was very far from satisfactory, and my father thought that the insertion of that clause might assist him in the letting of the houses. As I stated in my evidence, he found that it was not at all taken advantage of.

Mr G. Carson, Mr C. Ross, and Mr R. Davies.

Mr George Carson, Mr Charles Ross, and Mr Richard Davies, called and examined.

Mr G. Carson, Mr C. Ross, and Mr R. Davies.

1494. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) You three gentlemen represent Glasgow Trades Council?—Yes.

1495. (*To Mr Ross.*) What is your position in the Glasgow Trades Council?—I am Ex-President of the Glasgow Trades Council. I was President for the last two years up to November.

1496. What is Mr Davies's position?—He is a member of the Trades Council. Mr Carson is the secretary.

1497. (*To Mr Carson.*) How old is Glasgow Trades Council?—Forty-eight years. It was founded in 1856.

1498. It consists of 250 delegates representing 137 trades unions and branches of trades unions?—Yes.

1499. (*To Mr Ross.*) It is called the Glasgow Trades Council; what is its area?—Its area is Glasgow, but branches of any trade applying from Partick or Govan are admitted to our Council. We do not circumscribe them in any way, but there are very few outside the Glasgow area. The Lanarkshire miners are represented on our Council.

1500. The area is Glasgow and district?—Yes.

1501. What occupations are included in the membership?—Every conceivable trade, labourers, and all the various leading trades.

1502. They are employees of one kind or another?—Yes.

1503. There are no masters in the Council?—No.

1504. Is it growing in numbers?—Yes. The membership

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of the 137 unions is about 50,000, fully three-fourths of whom are householders in the city.

1505. What do you say their rents range from and to?—In some cases they are above £20.

1506. Up to what?—I would say as high as £25. Of course the general rule is anything from £12 to £16.

1507. That is about the average?—Yes.

1508. Have you many members going down to the lowest rents,—have you any below £4, for instance?—I would not think so. The casual labourers would be the lowest.

1509. You include foremen as well as workmen?—Yes, in some societies.

1510. There is no exclusion of foremen?—Some societies do exclude foremen, but we have nothing to do with that.

1511. The work of the Council is to deal with all matters pertaining to the interests of its members?—Yes.

1512. Among these matters that you have had to consider, is the question that we have to deal with here?—Yes.

1513. How long ago is it since it came before you first?—It was before my time.

(*Mr Carson.*) I cannot recollect the time when we had not it before us, but in my *précis* I have put it in at twenty-five years. I can tell you that some eighteen years ago we formed a Tenants Defence Association, arising out of a public conference. Mr Swanson, the accountant, was secretary at that time.

1514. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) At first, what was the form of the grievance that you considered?—The grievance at first was the long term of lets, being tied up to a house,—precisely the same grievance as there is just now.

1515. The original grievance was not the mere length of time between the taking of the house and the term of entry?—Not quite.

1516. From the first the other question—because they are not exactly the same—the other question of the long lets was always before you?—Yes.

1517. Who brought that forward first of all? Was it from any particular district, or area, or trade?—No, it was just the members of the Council themselves who were instructed to bring it up originally, having found out the hardships that resulted from being tied by that particular time.

1518. By the particular time you mean a year?—Yes.

1519. Apparently there has never been the question of half-yearly lets,—it has always been a year on the one hand or either a quarter or a month on the other hand?—Yes.

1520. Has there been any suggestion of a weekly tenure?—We have talked about that, but there is not a very strong feeling in favour of it.

1521. It is between a year on the one hand and either a month or a quarter on the other hand?—Yes.

1522. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) Have you approached any corporations on the matter or taken any action in that way?—Yes. The Glasgow Corporation has been approached by a deputation from the Trades Council, and we have also approached candidates for Parliament. It has always been a standing question in Glasgow.

1523. You have also convened conferences of representatives from trades unions and other organisations interested in the question, and three years ago you convened a public conference on the subject?—Yes.

1524. Is it the fact that on all these occasions, deputations to the Council and conferences, there was considered not merely the question of the long time between the taking and entry, but also the question of long lets?—Yes. It is sixteen or seventeen months. That is the way it is put.

1525. What are the hardships that in your view are involved in the present system?—The present system of house letting is that of yearly tenure, and practically all tenancies terminate on the 28th day of May of each year. Formerly forty days' notice was required on either side to terminate a tenancy. At present tenants receive their missive about the middle of January, and they are required to return the same in eight or ten days, otherwise the tenancy is considered ended. Then in my *précis* I give our reasons for seeking alterations.

1526. In regard to what you have said about the present system,—you say the present system of house letting is that of yearly tenure. Below £4 the present system is weekly or monthly?—Yes.

1527. Between £4 and £9 or £10 it is partly monthly and partly yearly?—Yes, I believe that is so. There is not a big proportion of monthly lets.

1528. But you have some of them?—Yes.

1529. Above £10 it is practically all yearly?—Yes.

1530. Some of those you represent are yearly tenants?—Yes. If I may put it this way, I would say that the best of people live in yearly houses. There is a certain amount of stigma attached to a monthly house at present, and our people are generally above that.

1531. There will be exceptions among some of your labourers? They will be monthly tenants?—Yes.

1532. We now come to the reasons for seeking alterations, and I see that the first reason you suggest is that the termination of nearly all tenancies on the 28th of May causes great inconvenience and much extra expense?—Yes.

1533. That arises for the reasons you go on to give—the demand for vehicles for removal purposes at that time being greatly in excess of the supply, and the price charged being several times what it should and would be under ordinary conditions?—Yes, that is so.

1534. Do you speak there from actual experience?—Yes.

1535. There is such a pressure that the people who do the work are able to charge what they like?—Yes.

1536. You are not blaming them?—No, it is a case of supply and demand.

1537. Then you also say that so many removals taking place all at the same time creates a demand for labour of various kinds, and people have either to wait or pay excessive prices?—Yes, that is so.

1538. We would like to know about that. We have been told that more is not charged for painting and papering and so on and other work, but it may involve waiting?—Yes, and of course that is loss. Take the case of a man who keeps lodgers,—he cannot get into his house and he cannot get the house done up.

1539. If they choose to wait, then they won't have to pay more?—I don't say they pay more, but if they want it done then they have to do it themselves or wait until the factor's tradesmen are prepared to come, and so the people do get the things done themselves, small things.

1540. What do you find in point of practice is the latest time that a tenant has to intimate? If he gets his notice well on in January, when do you find he is bound to return it, otherwise the tenancy is considered at an end?—It is now about the end of January. When I was first a householder it was in February. Now it is anything after 28th January. The date is always named, and it is usually before the end of January.

1541. Suppose a man wants to break his tenancy, does he find that he can do it without loss?—No, he cannot possibly do it without loss. That is the general practice and we can give instances. Take the case of a small house and you have got to leave, perhaps owing to your employment; you go to the factor and state your case to him, and if you have a tenant to suggest he will inquire if he is suitable, and if he is suitable he will give a sub-let; or he may advertise for a sub-let and put up a board which he charges you for. I think the usual charge is 5 per cent. I have paid that myself.

1542. Do you know of cases where, although the factor did his best, as of course he would, he failed to get a sub-tenant?—Yes.

1543. And where the principal had to pay either the whole of the balance or the part that was applicable to the period not sub-let?—Yes, I have known instances where six months' rent has been paid in addition to the quarter's rent already paid.

1544. You don't consider that the failure to find a sub-tenant is due to any slackness on the part of the factor. It is his interest to get it sub-let?—Yes. It is an incident of the system of yearly let.

1545. It is the system that is wrong, and it is not the fault of the men that work it?—That is so.

(*Mr Davies.*) We also think that the power which the law gives the landlord to enforce that puts a very excessive power in his hands. I have a case written down of a man in Rothesay who took his house in the beginning of the year before 28th May. He wanted to get away from this house, but the factor deliberately refused to accept the sub-tenants he found, who were good tenants. The factor refused to sub-let the house himself. The man went to Greenock, and he had to pay the rent of his house in Rothesay for twelve months, and also the rates.

1546. (*Chairman to Mr Davies.*) What was the factor's motive?—I only give it as an instance of what the present state of the law allows the factor to do. The case is written down and signed by the man himself with all the particulars.

1547. Whether that is a common case or not, you instance it as a case that is a possible case owing to the state of the law?—Yes, and there are half a dozen cases or more similar to that.

(*Mr Carson.*) We have a good many more.

1548. (*Chairman to Mr Davies.*) I would not think that it would be common, because it is to the interest of the factor to get a tenant?—The interest to the factor is to get his rent. If he has a tenant whom he knows can be made to pay, then he always sticks to him.

1549. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) Suppose a sub-tenant is got, what do you find the factor's charges to be?—5 per cent.

1550. On the full rent?—Yes.

1551. On the unpaid rent? Suppose it was in the middle of the term?—That is a different thing, and I

could not say about that. I am not sure of that point. What I referred to was being sub-let for the whole year.

(*Mr Carson.*) He usually charges for the rent to be paid.

1552. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) Do you find practically any difficulty from a rejection of sub-tenants put forward by the principal tenant, or are they generally approved of?—I could not say for that. I know in one particular case I brought forward a tenant and he was refused without any sufficient ground, I thought. At the same time the house was sub-let.

1553. In what circumstances do you find that a man wants to leave his house after he has taken it. Of course there is change of employment, but that does not exhaust the reasons for wanting to change?—No.

1554. Suppose a man loses his employment, or his wages are reduced, or he becomes ill and wants to take another house—there are all these things as well?—Yes, and something might happen to his family.

1555. Have you found this, that the necessity to change arises not only after entry, but between taking the house at Candlemas and the period of entry?—That is so.

1556. Have you found many of these cases?—Yes. The spring of the year is very often a changing time.

1557. Is there any reason for that?—Some particular trades change more in the spring than they do at other seasons of the year.

1558. What kind of trades?—Painters and tailors and so on, and of course the building trades are always changing: their men are never long at any particular job, unless it is a big building like the one in which we are at present.

1559. Do you find that sometimes a factor may insist on the remaining portion of the rent being deposited in bank?—Yes.

1560. Or he insists on caution being found?—Yes.

1561. I think you said that you could give us instances. Can you give us a list without going into particular cases?—Yes.

(*Mr Carson.*) Yes, and some very bad cases they are.

(*Chairman.*) Of course these names won't be published.

1562. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Carson.*) Are all these cases occurring this year?—No, some of them are last year.

1563. They are all quite recent? Yes. Of course, we could give plenty of them, but we think a few typical cases is quite sufficient.

1564. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) That is rather questionable. Would this be possible, that out of your membership, or out of any section of it, you could ascertain how much last year was actually lost by principal tenants moving, and the rent not being paid in full by sub-tenants?—It would be difficult to get it, but we might manage it.

1565. We are told by factors that, although it is perfectly true that there are such cases, there are very few, and we are told that the total amount lost in their experience owing to that cause during the year is so and so—trifling amounts. Now, we would like you to face that evidence, and it would be very important if you could give us any details from your point of view. The trouble about typical cases is to know whether they are typical of a large number or a small number. You will consider it?—We will, but it is very difficult. All the work we do is a matter of love, and it is very difficult for us to spend money on it, but we think we could get a great many cases. We cannot say that the percentage is so very great, but still we could get quite a number.

(*Mr Ross.*) Of course that is not our chief point in the objection.

(*Mr Carson.*) No, not at all.

(*Mr Ross.*) One of the chief points is that a lot of people have to refuse suitable employment through being tied to a house. The loss, therefore, cannot be stated in cases.

1566. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) You say there are so many who never go to the factor at all, because they won't take the risks?—That is so.

(*Mr Carson.*) They rather put up with inconvenience to the end of the term and then they remove.

1567. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) You cannot of course give statistics as to that?—No.

1568. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) It is said that, suppose a man does shift his employment, it does not necessarily involve shifting his house, because, owing to the increased train and tramway facilities, he can travel to and from his work. What do you say to that?—It is quite true that within Glasgow and suburbs people do avail themselves of these facilities and they do not shift. Even to some of the places round about Glasgow the railway gives workmen's trains. I would give one case that I know of, the case of a blacksmith who is a brother-in-law of my own; he was down with appendicitis and was thrown out of work. When he got better he got suitable work in Milngavie. His house was up at Alexandra Park, and he got a train to Milngavie for 1s. a week. The coming out from a hot shop at night and getting into a cold train would soon have killed him, and he had to give up his house and get another house where he was working, and he paid a full six months' rent.

1569. I suppose it is true that there are a number of men who, whatever changes were made in the tenure, would continue to travel?—Yes.

1570. Their families may find employment better in the city and the men travel for instance to Clydebank?—Yes.

1571. But there are a large number of others who would prefer to change their houses?—Yes.

(*Mr Carson.*) And there is a further number who may remove from the east to the west, probably two or three miles. Now they may have families who work in the town. They would desire to change to the west to suit their employment, and it would equally suit their families to travel from that point. There are hundreds of people in that position.

1572. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) On that point we have had evidence in regard to a proposed Bill by the Partick Town Council, and also by the Partick and Govan Factors Association, which would amount to this, that in the case of yearly tenants under £15 of rent paying their rents monthly, if they leave the district on account of change of work they should be relieved of their houses by giving one month's notice of removal, and in the case of quarterly lets giving three months' notice. That is a clause which has been proposed to us to meet the case of men changing on account of their employment. In your view, would that be sufficient, or do you want to have an absolute right?—We want to have an absolute right. We do not consider that sufficient.

1573. Would that clause not meet the greater number of the better class of men? Take your own members; when they change they do so generally when they are changing their employment?—Not always; there are the families to be considered as well. Probably a man might shift for his family's sake, independent of his own sake; something might turn up to suit them. A very important thing is this, that you have a family for instance living in the east end, and you have a boy leaving school and getting into some big work in the west; now the father, for the health of his boy, might want to take his house away to the west, because it is not good for boys to be carrying food,—it is best for them to come home for their food. Now the father would shift his house for them.

1574. And that clause would not cover such a case?—No.

1575. Before we come to the next point, will you tell me this? You have spoken about their being bound by the yearly tenure. Is there any other view in the minds of some of your members that, while they are bound on the one hand, they are clear on the other of a lengthened period during which they cannot be disturbed?—Yes.

1576. What do you say to that view?—I say that is the ideal system of letting. The tenant ought to have fixity of tenure and he ought to be able to terminate at a month's notice.

1577. He would have the option, but the landlord would not?—I say that the landlord has no right so long as the tenant pays his rent and keeps his house in good order.

1578. The ideal system would be to have yearly tenure with a right to give notice at one month?—Yes.

1579. Would you make a distinction between the case where he paid monthly and the case where he paid quarterly,—in the one case to terminate monthly and in the other case to terminate quarterly?—I think a month is long enough, whatever way he may pay.

1580. Why should not the landlord have an equal option? Why should it all be on the one side?—Because he has not the expense of flitting.

1581. Would that not involve this hardship, that the landlord, on letting for a year, might do a good deal for the house, that he would not do with a monthly tenure, and, then, owing to some perfectly proper cause, the tenant might throw it up in a month after entry, and leave the landlord to have to do more for a new tenant?—If the house is in good order one tenant coming in would not do much harm to it.

(*Mr Carson.*) As a matter of fact, the landlord won't do it under these circumstances. That is our experience.

1582. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) But if he gets a year, is he not more willing to do the repairs and other things than he would be in the case of a monthly let?—I have not found that. I quite admit that there are many good landlords, while there are others that are not so good. I went into a house myself, where a room had been painted perhaps two or three months before the term day, and, of course, the landlord quite properly refused to do it over again. I could not find any fault with him, although, at the same time, my wife desired that the room should be re-papered. There are some landlords who are very fair.

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1583. But you do find, I suppose, that there are a considerable number of your members who value security?—We cannot say that. They are willing to take the risk of the insecurity that has been suggested in order to have the freedom of giving notice to leave their house, say, at a month.

1584. I quite understand that there are those who take that view, but are there not others who are more impressed with the other view?—(*Mr Ross.*) The only way we can answer that is that at all the meetings, and all the times I have heard the matter discussed, I have never heard any objection as to terminating the present system. The only difference of opinion was how far certain proposals were to meet the grievance. I never heard any man say that there was not a grievance.

1585. And there would be no reason for a man keeping silence, if he had the other opinion?—No.

(*Mr Davies.*) I can speak from experience of both the English system and the Scottish system. I think that the feeling of security of tenure, which has just been mentioned, is just the same in England as it is in Scotland. In Scotland there is an enormous amount of flitting on the 28th of May of every year. With the weekly lettings of the English houses, there is just as much security of tenure as there is with the Scottish system. The people continue to live in the same house,—my own father lived fifty years in the same house in England.

1586. (*Chairman to Mr Davies.*) What town is that?—I lived in Leicester for eight years, and I have lived in Cardiff for a great many years, and in other places also. My experience is that the tenants stay longer in their houses with a weekly tenancy if the house suits them than they would with a yearly tenancy. There is a rush here to change houses, because all the houses are changed on 28th May. I hold the opinion that a weekly tenancy would keep the tenants in the houses and would give quite as much security of tenure as a yearly tenancy.

1587. It is your view that there would not be as a net result any more removals in the course of a year if there were shorter lets, but the removals would be spread over the year?—Yes.

1588. You do not think that the total number would be increased?—I do not think there would be as many.

1589. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) What do you say to that?—I think I corroborate that—I do not think there would be as many. When the letting season comes on in Glasgow there seems to be a fever among the women. If the flitting was spread over the year, then they would not shift so much as they do at present. We do not ask monthly lets for the purpose of shifting every month.

1590. What is your view as to the effect of short lets on the rents? Would you expect that they would be raised or would they remain the same?—Personally I do not think it would make any difference. The landlord at present gets as much rent as he can squeeze out of the tenants. He does not base his rent on what the property cost. It is a question of economics. If he can get £13 for a house that he is at present letting for £12, then he will take it. But we are prepared to risk that in order to get this privilege, because it would be a saving in the end to the general body of workers.

1591. It is the general view of your Council that it would not raise the rents?—That is so.

(*Mr Davies.*) We think it would be an advantage to the proprietor or the factor to do this. Under the present system, if a house is not let on 28th May, the chances are greatly in favour of that house being vacant for a full twelve months and the rent being lost for that house, whereas, if the terms of letting were shorter, the factor would have the opportunity of letting that house much more readily than he would have under the yearly tenure.

1592. (*Chairman.*) There would of course be an increased cost of factorage if there were short lets and if that led to more frequent removals.

(*Mr Ross.*) Of course we deny that there will be more frequent removals. We do not think that there will be as many.

(*Mr Carson.*) We believe there will be less, but they will be spread over the year.

1593. (*Chairman to Mr Carson.*) It has been suggested that one reason for so many lets being in spring as against November is that it is a more suitable season. Do you think that there is anything in that?—I do not think so. I would prefer to remove at the end of the summer season.

(*Mr Ross.*) It is very unsuitable because it is a very busy time and a very awkward time to flit. I know it is the most awkward time for me to flit.

1594. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) That is because they are so much engaged?—Yes, but they are very busy, apart altogether from house letting.

1595. Are they not just as busy at the November term?—No.

1596. Why not?—Trade is not so busy. The painter is not so busy in November as he is in May, and also the tailor.

(*Mr Carson.*) Then there is this fact to be remembered, that the weather is better towards the end of the summer season than it is in the spring, in Glasgow particularly.

(*Mr Davies.*) Not only that, but the whole trade, from the workman's point of view, I mean the work available for the workman to do, gets less towards the winter. April, May and June are the busiest months of the year for workmen.

1597. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) The other point you take up is the irregularity of employment in the building trades that the present system produces. Do you think that is a necessary incident of the present system?—Yes.

1598. And one that would be largely modified if shorter lets came in?—Yes.

1599. Are you speaking from actual experience?—Yes.

1600. What do you call the building trade?—The masons, joiners, plasterers, painters, slaters, and ever so many more.

1601. It applies to them all?—Yes.

1602. How long does the busy time caused by this present system last? When does it begin?—What we refer to here as the cause of irregularity of employment is the rush for the term.

1603. When does it begin?—The houses have to be ready for May and the mason has to rush up to let in the joiners, and the joiner has to rush up for the plasterer, and he has to be rushed to let in the painter—we know all that takes place. It causes overtime rates to be paid. Representatives of the building trades will give evidence; they will go more into the technicalities of the question.

1604. You take the same view as they do?—Yes, we realise the force of their views.

1605. Do you find it results in a dull period after the rush is over?—Yes.

1606. And there is then want of employment?—Yes.

1607. How long would you say that it is after 28th May until they begin to be busy again?—As far as I can speak, the dull time will last two months at the very least.

1608. What are you yourself?—I am a tailor.

1609. And what is Mr Carson?—A sheet-metal worker.

1610. And Mr Davies?—He is connected with the Municipal Employees Association, and he has worked for years in the building trade.

1611. Do you find there is any effect on the work in the way of not being so well done through having been hurried?—We hear statements to that effect and also to the effect that there is danger to life and limb through tradesmen coming on to a job that is not at a properly advanced stage, and there are cases where accidents have been caused.

1612. Do you find there are practical difficulties owing to the employment being all at the same time in the way of getting the houses cleaned from the sanitary point of view? Do you think there is anything in that?—Yes, the painters and so on cannot come to get the house done up as they are too busy.

1613. And the plumbers?—Yes, and the others. With the changing that takes place there is an extra demand for their labour.

1614. During that intervening period the house might not be in a satisfactory sanitary condition?—That is so.

(*Mr Davies.*) It is quite common for people to bundle all their furniture into one room, and live themselves like pigs almost for six weeks, because they cannot get their walls whitened and cleaned.

1615. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) We are to have first-hand evidence with regard to the system in England and Ireland. Are you aware of any difference in the conditions which would make the English system inapplicable here?—No, none whatever.

1616. (*Chairman to Mr Davies.*) Do you agree in that, Mr Davies? Are the conditions of work so similar that evidence as to what happens in England would be useful if not directly applicable to Scotland?—There is absolutely no difference in the way they earn their livelihood in England, Scotland, or Ireland,—the method is practically the same.

1617. And what about the amount of rents in the one country as compared with the other?—I have lived in London, Cardiff, Leicester, and other places, and I find that the rents here in Glasgow, taken per room, are from 25 to 30 per cent higher than in any place I have ever lived in in England.

1618. For the same accommodation?—Yes.

1619. Similar sized rooms?—I will give an illustration. I lived in Leicester in what is called a six-roomed house—a house composed of six rooms and bathroom, and I paid 7s. per week rent for that house. The rates were compounded, and I paid no rates. It was a most excellent house, with a passage and reasonable sized rooms. The ceilings were eight feet high; here they are eleven feet. I am now living in a house of three rooms in practically a

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slum, and I am paying £16 a year rent, and about £5 a year rates and taxes.

1620. Are the rates generally larger in England than they are here?—Wherever I have been the rates are higher than they are here. They are 3s. 9d. here, as compared with about 7s. 3d. in Leicester, and 6s. in Cardiff.

1621. In any case where you had experience, did you know what rates you were paying through their being separated in the landlord's notice, or were they all slumped in the rent?—Wherever I have lived in England, they have always been compounded, and the rent has not been detailed.

1622. So you did not know what you were paying?—I did know.

1623. How?—Simply because I knew how much the rates were.

1624. From your own private knowledge?—Yes.

1625. But you did not know so far as it was intimated to you by any notice?—No, but I believe that every working man who has any taxes at all knows the amount, and the rate per £ off the rates.

(*Mr Ross.*) A low rent makes a high rate per £. For instance, if the rents are lower in Leicester, and the town requires the same amount of money as is required in Glasgow, then the rates are higher, but they are not higher in the total sum.

1626. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) Suppose that short lets were introduced, is it your view that that would make a difference in the way of collecting the rates? What do you say to that?—Of course that is a point that we have considered. There are always a great many working men have that prejudice, that the factor ought to have the collecting of the rates. We see that the town could not collect the rates monthly, and we are quite prepared that the landlord should do so, and he should state how much is for rates and how much is for rent. We get that already as regards the stair gas—he states on the receipt how much is rent and how much is stair gas.

1627. Why could the town not collect the rates quarterly?—We have no objection to that.

1628. They could collect the rates quarterly, or the landlord could collect them in the first instance. As far as you are concerned, you do not care which it is?—No.

1629. So far as you are concerned, it would be a matter between the landlords and the authority if the landlords did collect the rates?—Yes.

1630. It would lie between them to fix what would be a fair allowance?—Yes.

1631. Your view would be that the landlord should get a fair allowance whatever the percentage was?—Yes.

1632. I suppose you have had Mr Cross's Bill before you?—Yes.

1633. What do you say about it so far as it meets your views?—The Council did not approve of the details of Mr Cross's Bill; they merely approved of the principle of shorter lets.

1634. What would you desire to substitute for that Bill?—We desire a Bill that would give us monthly lets.

1635. A Bill that would make any let for houses below a certain value beyond a month illegal?—Yes.

1636. Not enforcible?—Not enforcible.

1637. There was a Bill introduced by Mr Cross in 1894, and I would ask you whether it would meet your view or not. This Bill was to the following effect,—no dwelling house of a less annual value than £15 of yearly rent situated within a burgh shall hereafter be let for a longer period than one month, any law, custom, or agreement to the contrary notwithstanding?—The rent is too low.

1638. Your view is that longer tenancies are desirable, provided the option is given only to the tenant,—or do you think that that is too ideal to be practicable?—That is my ideal of a system of letting.

1639. But it is rather more ideal than what you would expect to get?—Yes.

1640. What I have indicated to you, apart from the £15, would be substantially what you advocate?—Yes.

1641. What do you say to the value?—I would say £25 or £26. That would cover most of the workmen's houses.

1642. As distinguished from employers?—Yes.

1643. But including foremen?—I don't know if it would include some foremen. They have higher rented houses than that; but, generally speaking, £25 would do.

1644. Then I understand that the view that was expressed in the earlier Bill of 1890, which merely made a lease that was entered into before fifty-two days before the term day not enforcible, would not in your view affect what you look upon as the main grievance?—No.

1645. It would be a good thing so far as it went?—Yes, but it hardly touches the question.

1646. Have you had any experience of men being turned out of their houses during a strike, in the case of houses owned by employers?—Yes.

1647. Are there many cases in your district where the houses are owned by the employers?—Not in Glasgow. I believe there is something of that kind going on in Dalmuir district, but, generally speaking, there is little or nothing of that kind in Glasgow.

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1648. So it is not a question that affects you?—No, it applies principally to the country districts.

(*Mr Carson.*) It is merely confined to the country districts.

1649. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Ross.*) You say that this grievance has been ventilated a good deal and that questions in regard to it have been put almost invariably to candidates for Parliament?—Yes.

1650. What view has been taken by members of Parliament in regard to this question, irrespective of party altogether?—They largely give their sympathy and promise their support. Irrespective of party they have agreed to a change.

1651. They recognise that a grievance exists?—Yes.

1652. And so far as they are concerned they are willing to do what they can to promote legislation to do away with the grievance?—Yes.

(*Mr Carson.*) It is only the other day that a member of Parliament admitted that the grievance was quite apparent and there was only the question of remedy.

1653. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Ross.*) We have been told by parties representing factors and proprietors that this system of short lets is really not wanted by the majority of the working class in this district. What do you say to that?—That is not true. I don't know where they get their ideas from. The desire for shorter lets is very prevalent. I have never heard anyone speaking against it at any conference.

1654. We were told to-day by a factor that, so far as he was able to judge—I think he spoke on behalf of the Partick district—there would not be more than 3 per cent. of the tenants who would be in any way benefited by this proposed change?—We would always have liberty. We are not asking monthly lets for the purpose of shifting every month. We merely want liberty, so that we should not be tied to a house for twelve months or sixteen months, and unable to go to any better employment that might be offered to us.

1655. If only three men out of every hundred wanted to change, you would not say that it was a proper thing for Parliament to legislate on the subject?—No. Of course people don't go to factors and complain about the system of letting, because they know it is hopeless. They come to some other place to complain.

1656. This particular witness gave us some facts. He told us that the Commissioners of Partick resolved to collect all rates from proprietors where the houses were let for a shorter period than one year, and the proprietors made up their mind that, if that obligation to collect rates was to rest on them, they would have to raise the rents, and they raised the rents 15 per cent. This factor said as the result of that practically all the tenants in the Partick district preferred to take their houses by the year?—These things are introduced for a purpose—they are done for a purpose—and thoughtless people might be intimidated by them, but we know better.

(*Mr Davies.*) That is a reasonable position for that factor to take up. If the method you described was introduced and the result was a rise of 15 per cent. in the rents, then that was a very serious matter for the working people. If it had meant an increase of 15 per cent.—which we deny—it would be very serious for all the working people in Glasgow.

1657. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Davies.*) It is only fair to state that of this 15 per cent., 10 per cent. represented rates—the rates on the occupier at that time amounted to 2s. in the £—and the other 5 per cent. on the rental was to cover the risk and cost of collection of rates. When they compounded, the rents were raised 3s. in the £; of that 2s. was the amount of rates for which the proprietor was responsible, and the other 1s. in the £ represented what the proprietor thought was required to cover the risk and cost of collection of rates?—In England councils allow a percentage to the landlord for the collection of the rates, and that 5 per cent., in my opinion, was an imposition.

1658. That is not my point. There is this fact put in evidence before the Committee, that where tenants found that this change of system resulted in their having to pay 15 per cent. additional—it really amounted to 5 per cent. additional—they preferred to give up their monthly lets and take their houses for the year?—(*Mr Carson.*) That might be the case so far as Partick is concerned, but I think we would be prepared to prove from the membership of the people we represent, that they would not give up under these conditions, because it would correct itself by and by. We are perfectly satisfied of that. We have not attempted to get a fact of that sort, but I think we could get it from the various organisations we represent.

1659. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Ross.*) It has been stated by

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factors and those representing house proprietors, that under a system of monthly lets it is very difficult to get rid of a bad tenant—a man who won't pay his rent—and they practically lose a minimum of six weeks' rent in addition to the cost of ejection before they get rid of him. Would you have any objection to urge against the process of ejection being simplified and shortened?—Certainly not. We are not here to defend bad tenants.

1660. You have no objection to any change in the law so far as the process of ejection is concerned?—No.

1661. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ross.*) What my friend refers to is the fact that the landlord at present has to go to Court and complain that the rent is in arrear and get warrant to evict. Supposing a suggestion be made that the landlord did not require to go to Court, that it was quite enough to show the Sheriff Officer that the rent was not paid to entitle that officer to go and evict the tenant, say on twenty-four hours' or forty-eight hours' notice,—would that meet with the approval of your Council?—No, that is too summary altogether.

1662. How far do you think the legislature might go in altering the present system in regard to ejection. Under the present system it takes about six weeks to get rid of a tenant who has failed to pay his rent. The suggestion is that that ought to be expedited?—I agree with that, but not in such a summary way as you put it at first. I think it could be arranged to get the law simplified—say fourteen days if he is found to be a bad tenant.

That is what we have now, fourteen days.

(*Chairman.*) It means three weeks or a month in addition to the four weeks of arrear. You commence to take proceedings, and it is four weeks generally before you get him out.

(*Mr Howden.*) It comes to between six or seven weeks altogether.

(*Mr Binnie.*) About two months.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) That includes the month of occupancy?

(*Chairman.*) Yes.

(*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ross.*) Notice is given at the expiry of the month, and it may run to fourteen days or it may be three weeks. However, I take it, Mr Ross, your Council would not be parties to any procedure which would enable a landlord to turn out a tenant without getting a warrant from some magistrate or some sheriff?—That is so, we would insist on that.

1663. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Davies.*) You told us about your English experience, that you paid 7s. a week in one city?—Yes.

1664. Could you tell us upon what rent the landlord paid rates for your house?—I believe there was 20 per cent. deducted from the actual value, and the rates were put on that.

1665. There must be some system under which a real rent is taken as the basis?—There is a deduction on the actual rental value of, I believe, 20 per cent. for that assessment.

1666. That would suggest that 4s. in the £ is taken off in respect of the rate being embodied in the 7s. a week?—I am not quite certain of that.

1667. Then I see in your note that you say that in England, in monthly lets, the rates are collected every six months?—Yes, the usual way is every six months.

1668. Do you think that that would meet the requirements of your Council?—I think if the rates are compounded and the landlords pay the rates, six months would be all right. They should be compounded in the lower rented properties and the landlord should collect them and receive a certain percentage for collecting them.

(*Mr Ross.*) I may say that the collection of the rates all in one sum once a year has been a grievance in Glasgow for a long time. It would be far better if the collection were made four times a year. That is not a question that we thought you wanted to hear about, and I merely say that the workers in Glasgow want to pay the rates oftener than once a year,—they would rather pay them four times a year.

1669. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ross.*) They would rather do that than twice a year?—Yes. They are certainly against the present system.

1670. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Davies.*) You spoke of all the rates being compounded in connection with low rented houses. The Bill before us does not deal with imperial taxes or with parish rates. Is it your view that the whole of these rates and taxes should be compounded?—That is my personal view, that up to a certain rental the rates should be compounded with the rent. Of course, if the rents were paid monthly, the rates would be paid monthly.

1671. Including in your view parish rates and poor rates?—Yes.

1672. Do you think it essential that there should be a distinction brought to the notice of the tenant showing how much was taken as rent, and how much was taken as rates?—My own view is that it is not at all essential. In England, the workman does not bother about it at all. I have had about eighteen years' experience of workmen in England, and I never heard one ask to see what proportion of his payment was rates and what was rent. But he knew what the rates were, how much they were in the £, and he knew that a certain proportion of his payment was for rates.

1673. Is that your answer to the objection we sometimes hear that the workman who did not pay rates directly would have less interest in keeping a check or watch on municipal expenditure? You think he would get the knowledge and be quite as anxious to keep down expenditure, whether he paid the rates directly or paid them through the landlord?—Yes, he would be just as anxious to keep them down.

1674. Do you have the view that the landlord might be tempted to add to the rent something more than the rate, something more than the proper share?—No. I stayed in Leicester for some years and I took an interest in the financial position there. The landlords there did not do that. I do not think that in England the landlord does increase the rent simply because he has to collect the rates. The rent of the house in my opinion is fixed by what he thinks he can get from the tenant for the house, and what the current value of the house is.

1675. Another trouble is in regard to the exemption which obtains in Scotland on the ground of poverty. Were the landlord to pay the rates direct and recover a slump sum monthly from the tenants, how would you consider that the present exemption in favour of tenants who were too poor to pay rates might be continued?

(*Mr Ross.*) Just as it is now. They could make application to the authorities, and the factor would get instructions from the rating authority not to take the rates from so and so.

(*Mr Carson.*) That is the system just now. The people who desire to be relieved from the rates wait at the Municipal Chambers, and if they prove that they are unable to pay their rates, then they get a note to satisfy the collector when he comes that their rates are to be cancelled for the time being. That could be obtained quite easily, and the note, instead of being handed to the collector, might be handed to the factor when he came round, and he would get credit for it.

1676. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ross.*) We have had evidence about the question of hypothec. Have your Council any view on that question?—We are against the law of hypothec. We do not consider that the landlord has any right to a preferable claim, any more than the grocer. We do not put that forward in our evidence.

(*Mr Carson.*) We are not strong on that point.

1677. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ross.*) But is that the view of your Council?—Yes. We do not think that the landlord should have a preference over and above any other person.

1678. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Ross.*) Speaking of this compounding of rates, have you considered the difficulty in connection with the matter in this respect, that you would have to begin paying your rates along with your rent monthly from 28th May, and the assessments are not levied at that date?—Yes, we have considered that, but we do not think that that would be an insuperable baarrier to the Committee. They will get experts before them, no doubt. What we say is that, what can be done in England can be done in Scotland. There is no difference in the conditions.

(*Mr Binnie.*) The point from which the start is, is that the 28th May is to disappear, so you see the landlord would commence to charge them the rates along with the rent after he has been served with the notice charging them, and he would know exactly what to charge.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) But the rates at present run from May to May.

(*Mr Binnie.*) They could be altered.

1679. (*Mr Howden to Mr Davies.*) How many men at one time in your experience have had to shift from one work alone in Glasgow? There were a number of men who had to shift at a particular work. Can you say how many there were?—Between twenty and thirty men were required at the sewage works at Dalmuir, and they had to pay their train fares up and down, and to buy food. The cost of going up and down between the works and their houses, and the cost of taking their food out, had to be taken out of their wages, and it was a very serious loss. This expense of travelling from the house to the work occurs in thousands of cases. If the men could shift their house, then this expense would not be there, and they would be so much better off.

1680. (*Mr Howden to Mr Ross.*) But to come back to the law of hypothec. Is it not the case that the Glasgow Trades Council would like to see those who are unfortunate enough to be sold out, protected to some extent against absolute pauperism?—Certainly.

1681. It has been suggested that tools and wearing apparel should be exempt from seizure?—Yes, the Trades Council take up that ground, and they say that these things ought to be exempt.

1682. But even above the tools and wearing apparel and bedding, is there anything else that the Trades Council think should be exempted in order to protect the home?—Yes, a certain amount of necessary furniture should be exempted.

1683. Could you put a sum on it which you imagine would be a fair thing?—No, I am not prepared to put a sum on it. I don't know that we went very closely into details. I have heard £20 mentioned.

1684. Would you apply that law to all creditors?—Certainly.

1685. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Davies.*) You have just spoken of thirty men who removed to Dalmuir?—They went to work there.

1686. And they had to travel?—Yes.

1687. How long have these works been opened?—They have been opened some two years now.

1688. And have they all removed to the neighbourhood of the works?—Most of them.

1689. Some of them prefer to travel?—Yes. Some are recently employed—they are continually changing their men there. Some that were originally employed have left the work and others have been taken on in their place.

1690. You know that a very large number of men employed beside Dalmuir do voluntarily travel every day, thousands of them?—I believe that is so.

(*Mr Carson.*) Messrs Beardmore have fixed up a big work there, and they are building property to which most of their people will shift, but in the meantime they have to put up with it till they are accommodated.

1691. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Carson.*) How many years have Singers' people been down there?—Over twenty years.

1692. And how many of their men travel every day?—In proportion to the numbers there are not very many. When they went down there originally, the works were not so big as they are now.

1693. But how many do travel?—Some hundreds.

1694. Is it not some thousands?—Taking in the shipbuilding and engineering places down there, it will be some thousands.

1695. A good many thousands?—Yes, a good many.

(*Mr Ross.*) Yes, there are a good many.

(*Mr Carson.*) There is not sufficient accommodation in Dalmuir yet.

1696. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Carson.*) There are a number of empty houses?—But it is only recently that they have been built.

1697. (*Mr Howden to Mr Carson.*) Is it not the case that there was a dearth of houses in Clydebank up till about two years ago, and people could not get houses down there?—That is quite a common thing up to recently. I have not been inquiring recently. That will correct itself shortly.

(*Mr Ross.*) It proves that people do not want to shift. People are not migratory.

1698. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Davies.*) With regard to the compounding of rates in England, and your experience there, you say that those people know what the rates are. In your experience, have the rates ever made themselves felt in the rent,—has there been a case where there has been a sudden rise in the rates, and rents have gone up in consequence?—Not where I have been living. As a rule I should say that the rates rise very slightly at a time,—a penny or twopence in the £ each year,—and it does not make an immediate difference in the rents. The experience in the towns has been that houses which years ago let for 4s. are now let for 6s., and the houses that were let for 6s. are now let at 7s. and 7s. 6d. That is because of competition among tenants for the houses,—the landlord has raised the rent in consequence of that. The landlord secures his full rent in addition to the rates.

1699. Any question of the difficulty of forecasting what the rates for a year were likely to be, would be a very small question, so far as the case of the individual tenant went. There would not be a difference of more than a penny or twopence or something of that sort?—That is so. It is very rare that rates are raised more than a penny or twopence in a year in any burgh that I know of.

1700. (*Chairman to Mr Ross.*) At the present time, in the case of monthly lets, are many of them forehand?—I understand the rule is forehand.

1701. If the present yearly lets became monthly, would you contemplate that the payment would be forehand?—Probably it would.

1702. And you do not fear that?—No.

1703. You think that is a reasonable arrangement?—It is not a great grievance anyway.

1704. If the law of hypothec were abolished, I suppose that rents would be all forehand?—I suppose the factors would do so for their own protection.

1705. But you are not afraid of that?—No.

1706. You are prepared to take any risk of that?—Yes.

Mr George B. Craig, called and examined.

1707. (*Chairman.*) What is your business?—I am the General Secretary of the Operative Masons Trades Union.

1708. How long have you occupied that position?—For eleven years.

1709. I think the full name of your Union is the United Operative Masons Association of Scotland?—Yes.

1710. Where is its centre?—45 Montrose Street, Glasgow.

1711. What area does it embrace, or does it cover Scotland generally?—Yes.

1712. Where is it chiefly to be found?—In all the large towns. It has seventy different branches in Glasgow and all the surrounding district here. It goes as far north as Wick and as far south as Hawick and Stranraer, and it extends from the east to the west.

1713. How many members, roughly, do you have?—At the present time we have something like five thousand members.

1714. Have you been increasing?—No, we have been decreasing these last two years.

1715. What is the highest you have ever had?—Slightly over twelve thousand.

1716. Have you had this question that we are now discussing before you as an Association?—It has not been directly before the Association, but it has often been discussed in our branches.

1717. Has it ever been discussed by the Executive Committee, whom you represent?—Yes.

1718. How many are there in that Committee?—Nine.

1719. Do they represent the different parts of Scotland?—No, they represent just the immediate centre. If the Executive was shifted to Edinburgh it would represent the immediate centre there.

1720. In the view of your Association, does the present system involve any grievance so far as you are concerned?—Yes, as a trade.

1721. You are not speaking to-night of its effect on working men but its effect on the building trade specially?—We have approached it from both points of view,—first from the point of view of the building trade, and secondly from the point of view of our members as regards the letting of houses.

1722. Taking it in regard to the building trade, what is involved in the present system that you object to?—Shifting in the May term and also in the November term—but not near to such a degree as in the May term—causes a rush of work at the May term and prior to it, so as to have the houses ready for the letting season at 28th May. The consequence of that is that I believe that work is to a certain extent scamped and buildings are rushed up in a way which should not be allowed. Besides, it is the cause of bringing a large number of men into a centre such as Glasgow, and there is not the amount of work there that they might expect which would give them fair or steady employment.

1723. Over the year?—That is so. No doubt there is sufficient to employ them at the time they do migrate, but immediately after the May term there is a corresponding decrease, which throws the men on the market again.

1724. For how long before the May term are they fully employed?—About the end of January and February and March.

1725. For about four months?—Yes, February and March especially, because the rest of the other tradesmen have to follow the masons. Other work going on in the summer time is not in such a big hurry, except in the case of houses that they want to get ready for the November term.

1726. Are there many removals at the November term?—No. Most of them are simply people moving into a new house, and they get into a yearly let after the first half year.

1727. Suppose that removals were spread over the year, would it put more money into the pockets of your people, or would it merely enable the work to be better and more conveniently done?—It would enable the work to be better done and more evenly spread over the whole year, and that would be beneficial to all parties.

1728. The present system does not result in work not being done which would be done?—No.

1729. Have you anything to add in regard to the building trade?—No, there is nothing I can say in addition to what I have already said.

1730. In regard to other trades, such as joiners and plasterers, do they all come on after you?—They all follow after us. In my own experience of the building trade, I have seen buildings where the men were all being crowded together, wanting to get finished, the one above the other, and that involved more danger in the way of accidents than there would have been if they had been spread out a little more.

1731. Does the Dean of Guild Court not prevent that scamping of work that you have referred to?—No doubt the Dean of Guild Court has power to that effect. The building goes on if the plans passed by the Dean of Guild Court are satisfactory, but in my opinion they have scarcely sufficient inspectors to see that the plans are being carried out in their entirety. I have only seen a Dean of Guild Court inspector once or twice at the work, but other times you will get them more often.

1732. Experience shows that it is not sufficient?—That is so.

1733. In regard to the builders, as working men they are, I suppose, in the same position as other working men with reference to the question before us?—Yes.

1734. They are affected in the same way as the others are?—Yes.

1735. Are they at all specially exposed to having to shift their employment more than any other working men?—I believe so.

1736. More than joiners, for instance?—Yes.

1737. Or plumbers?—Yes.

1738. And may they have to go great distances?—Yes, and much more frequently.

1739. Are masons local to the same extent as some other classes?—They are local to a certain extent, but they are a very migratory lot from the fact that jobs are spread over the whole countryside.

1740. Is there a section of them that systematically go to contracts in other places as compared with a section that only do local work?—Yes. There is a certain proportion of them that you would think were inclined to follow country work wherever they could get it.

1741. Are these family men or are they generally unmarried?—They are mixed.

1742. In your experience, does it frequently happen that between terms a mason will get an advantageous job elsewhere?—Yes.

1743. Suppose it is a hospital, or some such building, how long might a job like that last?—It depends upon the nature of the job going up.

1744. But take a hospital?—It might take two or three years. There is one in Paisley that has been going on for the last two years.

1745. Suppose a job was to take two years, would a man necessarily want to change his house?—A good many of them would, for the sake of the time on the job, if it were not for the fact of their being tied to their house, so that very often they cannot leave.

1746. On a short job lasting some two or three months a man would not want to shift?—No, it would not be worth his while.

1747. But it would be with a job extending anything over six months?—Yes; it would not be worth his while shifting for less unless some other circumstances cropped up.

1748. Do you find that there are men who, even although they shift from a job in Glasgow to a job on the outskirts, still want to retain their houses on account of their families being at work in Glasgow?—If a man had a family working in Glasgow, he would put himself to inconvenience more or less to suit his family, but if he had no family he would much prefer to move and go to that new district.

1749. Would you expect that if short lets were substituted for yearly tenancies, the total number of removals in a year would be larger?—I do not think so.

1750. They would be spread over the year?—Yes, that is all the difference there would be.

1751. Do you find that the men who move are not merely unthrifty men, but the good class are exposed to the same necessity in some cases?—That is so.

1752. In your experience, is there much evil resulting from this,—have you had any experience of this kind, that a principal tenant has to leave and a sub-let cannot be got, and he has had to pay the balance of his original rent?—I have no personal experience of that, but it has very often been repeated to me by others who have known the like of that and it has been common talk very frequently.

1753. Have you found that, owing to removals being all at one time, the expense is largely added to?—Yes, I know that myself.

1754. How does that arise?—From the very large number of people who remove on 28th May. You cannot find ways and means of getting removed without paying extortionate prices for a lorry or a van, or whatever means you require to shift with. The rate that is charged per hour is very much in excess of the ordinary rate at any other time of the year.

1755. In your Association, do you not find that while there is a body of opinion wanting shorter lets, there is also a body of opinion from persons that value the security of long tenure?—Not with my Association, because our trade is rather a shifty one, and that same feeling does not exist that might, no doubt, exist in another trade where they had more steady employment than what we are accustomed to.

1756. In point of numbers, how do you compare with other trades?—Favourably.

1757. For instance, are there more masons than joiners?—No, there are more joiners than masons.

1758. There will be more masons than plumbers?—Yes, I believe we will come next to the joiners in numbers so far as the building trades are concerned.

1759. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Do masons follow the same contractor much?—Not a great many of them. Each contractor has a certain few men, who more or less go with him all over the country, but it is more the custom for a contractor going from Glasgow to Edinburgh to take probably half a dozen men with him and employ the rest locally.

1760. Does he give any allowance for travelling to the half dozen that he takes?—He may give them an allowance for travelling or lodging money.

1761. Is that a usual arrangement?—It depends greatly on the state of trade. One may have more than another in that direction.

1762. It depends on the value of the men to the contractor?—Yes.

1763. (*Mr Binnie.*) Are the Glasgow masons pretty much a class by themselves?—Yes.

1764. And they stick by Glasgow and its neighbourhood?—No, not necessarily. They are forced to go out into the country in the event of trade being busy there.

1765. But as a rule the Glasgow mason sticks by Glasgow?—Yes, if he can find sufficient work in Glasgow.

1766. And he gets employment not only in the centre of Glasgow, but in the north, south, east or west, wherever the building is?—Yes.

1767. Has that led to the fact that masons more than most trades live as near the centre of the town as they can so as to be convenient for the different outlying parts?—That used to be, but the system is now being changed. You will get certain sections in all parts of the town now ready to go further out in the direction in which they are.

1768. They are now branching out in the directions where the building is?—Yes, where the building is likely going to be.

1769. Are there many jobs that continue so long that a man would consider it worth his while to change his house just to be near the job?—I am sorry to say there are not many, but there have been.

1770. But in the ordinary course?—In normal times there are quite a number of jobs going on outside and inside the city where men who come in from other centres and who want to get into the city have to go into lodgings. The same applies to men who are in the city and who are wanting to go out to the country.

1771. These jobs continue so long that they would consider it worth their while to have two removals, one to the place where the job is and one from the place?—It does not follow that they are to come back to the city immediately the job is finished, because the man may go for one job and ultimately stay there.

1772. I thought you were referring to large jobs like hospitals?—Yes, that is the kind of job that a man might shift to, for one job alone, and then come back to the city.

1773. Do you think they would shift and have two removals?—Quite a number would do so.

1774. (*Chairman.*) Can you give me a notion of what it would cost a working man to remove, let us say, from Glasgow to a place twenty miles away to build a hospital?—Personally, I removed from Greenock to Glasgow, and it only cost me some 10s. to 12s. coming by rail.

1775. You are a married man?—Yes.

1776. With children?—Yes.

1777. What did it cost to remove all your furniture?—That was the lot; from house to house, from Greenock to Glasgow, it cost me 10s. to 12s.

1778. Had you to pay a lorry from your house to the train?—No, the Railway Company collected and delivered it.

1779. And that was all it cost you?—Yes.

1780. And you got no special favour?—No. Then there was another removal that I had in Glasgow here, which I was able to accomplish in about two hours, and it cost me 10s.

Mr G. B. Craig. 10 Dec. 1906.

1781. How far had you to go?—From here to Buchanan Street, about four hundred yards.

1782. That was at a Whitsunday term?—Yes, 28th May.

1783. Was the other removal at Whitsunday?—No, I think it was at the end of June or the beginning of July when I came from Greenock.

1784. If it had been the May term, how much more would it have cost?—I do not know.

1785. It would have been more?—No doubt.

1786. (*Mr Howden.*) You say you are in favour of the abolition of the term days as they at present exist. I take it that that applies to all classes of property?—Yes.

1787. Further on, you point out how a mason, being affected by the weather, even when he is away from home, does not earn as much as pays his lodgings. Have you known of cases of that kind in your trade?—Yes, I have known quite a number of cases, especially in the winter season, when a lot of masons are idle on account of stress of weather. I am personally well acquainted with one of our members, who is at present a householder in Kilmarnock. He is working at the present time in Glasgow. He would be up here to-day to see about starting his work, and if this weather should continue, he will be at a loss to know whether to go back to Kilmarnock or to stay here. If he remains here to the end of the week and the frost gets harder, then he has not worked for his keep. Now that frequently takes place all over the country. I had some experience myself, when working at the trade.

1788. You spoke about the cost of your removals. The most of the carrying of your material, irrespective of the hire of the lorry, would be done voluntarily by yourself and your neighbours?—Yes.

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1789. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Of course the members of your Society are paid a standard rate of wage?—Yes.

1790. Is the rate agreed on between your Society and the Association of Masters?—Yes.

1791. Is there not some rule in regard to an increase in the rate if the men go to the country?—There used to be, but I am sorry to say that it is abolished now.

1792. Is it not the case that that is so in many trades?—I cannot speak for trades other than my own.

1793. Does it exist in any other part of Scotland?—In Crieff, which is about the only place—and there are only about twenty or thirty masons there all told—I believe that if they go a certain distance outside the town they are entitled to lodging money or train fares. Now that system used to exist in Glasgow, but it has been abolished years ago, since the facilities for travelling have improved to what they are now. I believe that is the cause of that being done away with.

1794. I knew a case in Gourock where a contractor attempted to get past that regulation by engaging the men at the job instead of engaging them at his own workship, and I know that that was very much resented?—A contractor takes very few men with him, and he allows them something over their weekly wages, but then another man may go from home to the job and get started there, and he would get nothing, although the other men that the employer took with him are getting more.

[Adjourned.]

THIRD DAY.

TUESDAY, 11th DECEMBER 1906.

At the Municipal Buildings, Glasgow.

Present:

Sheriff Charles J. Guthrie, K.C., *Chairman.*

Mr George B. Esslemont.
Mr Thomas Binnie.
Mr J. T. Howden.
Mr Edward Cox.
Mr Joseph Dobbie, S.S.C.

Mr Stair Agnew Gillon, *Secretary.*

Mr J. M'Michael and Mr H. W. Madden. 11 Dec. 1906.

Mr James M'Michael and Mr Henry Wilson Madden, called and examined.

1795. (*Chairman to Mr M'Michael.*) You are President of the Association of Property Agents in Glasgow, Ltd.?—Yes.

1796. (*To Mr Madden.*) You are Vice-President of the same Association?—Yes.

1797. (*To Mr M'Michael.*) You have been a house factor and property agent in Glasgow for some time?—Yes, I have been in practice for upwards of twenty-five years.

1798. Your firm of James M'Michael & Son has carried on a similar business for fifty-eight years?—Yes.

1799. The Association of House Factors and Property Agents in Glasgow was instituted in 1875?—Yes.

1800. Its object was to improve the position and promote the interests of the house factors and property agents in Glasgow and neighbourhood, and to give expression to their opinions as a body upon all questions bearing upon their profession?—Yes.

1801. What do you include in "neighbourhood"?—Govan, Partick, Airdrie,—the towns lying immediately contiguous to Glasgow.

1802. What number of members do you have in your Association?—100.

1803. Has your membership increased?—Yes, and it is gradually increasing.

1804. Does it include most of the largest house factors?—With one exception the largest house factors are all members of our Association.

1805. Among these are there a large number who have to do with the smaller class of workmen's dwellings as well as the others?—Yes, it embraces factors attending to all classes of property.

Mr J. M'Michael and Mr H. W. Madden. 11 Dec. 1906.

1806. You cannot give any notion of the value of the property factored by the members of your Association?—No, I could not do so. There are the like of railways and large hotels and large warehouses excepted, so that would reduce the rental value; it would make the amount managed by the factors look small. There is an immense amount of property managed by owners or companies which is excepted from the property that comes under factors.

1807. Take workmen's houses under £20, what proportion, roughly, would you suppose of that property was factored by factors as distinguished from property owned by the workmen themselves, or factored by proprietors?—Fully 80 per cent. of it will be factored by factors.

1808. Take your own experience: your firm manages property including a large number of houses under £20 of rent?—Yes.

1809. We are inquiring here into what is called the smaller dwelling houses. Does that term accurately describe the houses in your view?—Generally speaking, my idea of a small house is a house of two rooms and kitchen and under. When you come up to three rooms and kitchen, I think that can hardly be included in the term, "smaller dwelling houses."

1810. But you have houses of £20 which are not small in the sense of the number of rooms?—That is so.

1811. Going up to how many rooms?—Three and four rooms, and where you have attics you may have six.

Mr J. M'Michael and Mr H. W. Madden.

11 Dec. 1906.

1812. Can you tell me how many houses your firm manages under £20?—About one thousand.

1813. And under £10?—About two-thirds are under £10, and the remainder are between £10 and £20.

1814. Have you any below £4?—No.

1815. Then it is between £4 and £10 that there are two-thirds?—Yes. Houses under £4 have been extinct within the last four years,—any that we had.

1816. We are told that the number is diminishing every year. Is that your experience?—Yes, we used to have a number, but we have none now.

1817. Take houses from £10 to £20. What class of people generally occupies them?—The better class of tradesmen or thrifty people, warehousemen, shopmen, clerks, and those engaged in business generally and as servants in the community, postmen and others, and joiners.

1818. These are increasing in number as compared with those below £10?—Yes.

1819. And they always will increase?—Yes.

1820. How would you describe those between £10 and £4?—They might be what you would call the smaller class of tradesmen, labourers, unskilled workmen, and people who are perhaps not very provident.

1821. If you are considering workmen's dwellings properly so called, is £20 a fair limit?—Yes, I think so. It is perhaps a little to the high side; but taking it as a dividing line, it is a pretty fair one.

1822. It has been said that when you come to £20, you come to the foreman class?—Yes, between £15 and £20 you are rather above the tradesman; you are more among people engaged in mercantile work, shopkeepers and so on.

1823. That is borne out by the fact that the inhabited house duty is not charged on houses under £20?—Yes, but where the value of the house is worth more than £20, it is seldom that it is reduced below that for that reason.

1824. But if the theory is not to charge house duty on ordinary working men, then £20 is a fair limit to take?—Yes.

1825. Take the tenure, how are houses under £9 usually let?—They are let from month to month as a rule.

1826. Houses under £4 are always short lets?—Yes, unless country houses.

1827. Take houses between £4 and £9, what proportion of these in your experience are let monthly?—Our experience is about 50 per cent. I know that some factors have about 75 per cent.

1828. And other factors will have less than 50 per cent.?—I don't think they will have much less. You may take it as varying from 50 to 75 per cent.

1829. The 75 being monthly and the 25 yearly?—Yes.

1830. Where there are monthly lets, are they forehand rents?—Yes. They begin forehand, but unfortunately they do not always keep it up. We have a great many houses let at about £8, old dwelling houses, let yearly, but these are coming more into monthly houses now.

1831. Taking the houses generally, between £4 and £9, is the number of monthly lets increasing and the number of yearly lets diminishing, or is it the other way, or are they stationary?—I think they are pretty much the same as before. I don't think there is much difference.

1832. There is no tendency one way or another?—No.

1833. Does a clerk go round and collect the rents?—Yes.

1834. Is that the invariable practice with factors as distinguished from tenants coming to your office?—Yes.

1835. They don't come to your office till there is a grievance?—We have a number who have come up regularly with their rents. They are provident people, and they make a point of coming to the office and paying their rent.

1836. Why?—Because they wish to have the thing paid and settled, whereas there are a great number that you have to look up and press for payment.

1837. Have you any system of cautioners?—Just in exceptional circumstances.

1838. To what extent do you rely on the law of hypothec?—Entirely.

1839. But not if you get forehand rents. If the tenant pays you forehand rent regularly, then it does not matter to you?—It is generally because he has not got furniture that we ask a cautioner.

1840. But suppose you are getting forehand rent, you neither want the law of hypothec nor a cautioner?—No.

1841. Is it only where you are not getting the forehand rent paid regularly that you look to the furniture at all?—The man begins paying forehand rent. We look to the furniture as a means of remedy if he does not keep it up.

1842. But so long as he keeps it up, it is a matter of indifference?—We have no debt then.

1843. If the law of hypothec were abolished, would that mean that the forehand payment of rent would be insisted on?—Yes, generally speaking.

1844. And in that way you have your remedy?—Yes.

1845. It might happen that you would have to insist on forehand rent when it might be hard on the tenant owing to temporary circumstances?—Yes.

1846. At present you can give a certain indulgence when there is furniture there?—Yes, if we see that the house is furnished in keeping with the style of the house, we don't trouble about it.

1847. Do you think that the existance of the law of hypothec is a drawback to the tenant?—No, I think it is a protection to him.

1848. Are houses above £9 of rent usually let from year to year?—Yes.

1849. From Whitsunday to Whitsunday?—Yes.

1850. Have you any Martinmas to Martinmas lets at all?—No.

1851. Have other factors any?—Not that I know of.

1852. Why not?—Because there is no removal term at Martinmas. No persons seem inclined to leave then, besides, the rates are all levied from Whitsunday to Whitsunday, and it introduces liability if you remove at any other time.

1853. What number of lets above £9 are short lets in your experience?—Above £10 we have only four.

1854. Out of how many?—About 300.

1855. What about the four, how have they arisen?—Probably we were not very sure of them and we wanted to have a control over them.

1856. They have not arisen through good tenants saying that they wanted monthly lets?—We never had a tenant that asked that.

1857. Have you never had the case of a thoroughly satisfactory tenant who said, "I am not sure about my 'remaining; I may have to change in the middle of the 'term and I want a monthly let"? You have never had that?—No.

1858. Have you known of it?—It may arise occasionally, but it will be very seldom.

1859. Must there not be many cases where a man contemplates getting a better place in the middle of the term,—but you have never had that occur?—We have had them speaking of it. There may have been cases where they have said that they would like to have their houses taken on short lets, but we would tell them that they would require to take it by the year and get it sub-let afterwards. It may have happened, but it has been very seldom. We have had cases where we wanted the tenants to take houses on a short term and they would not do it.

1860. What kind of case would that be, would it be a satisfactory tenant?—Where a proprietor wanted his houses to be let from month to month for certain reasons, and they objected to it.

1861. Why?—Because they did not want short tenure.

1862. Was it sentiment?—No, it was just for protection.

1863. Was it not the one class of tenure being associated with a more thrifty class than the other?—Not in this case.

1864. That might tell in some cases?—Yes, it does tell. In the general run of cases it is sentiment, but in this particular case it was tenure.

1865. That was the case of a first-rate man?—Yes, a good man. In fact, after we let the houses by mistake by the year, we were asked by the proprietor to approach the tenants, and one of them refused to enter the house at all, and we had to cancel the let; he said he would not stand in the way of our letting it to another party.

1866. Was that a man with children and working in the immediate neighbourhood?—I don't know. It was just a matter of tenure that was the reason.

1867. (*Mr Howden.*) Would not the reason be this, seeing that most of the houses in Glasgow are let on a yearly let, if he was turned out between terms, there would be extreme difficulty in the way of getting a proper house?—I fancy that would be one of the reasons. His tenure would be uncertain, and people want to know if they are going to be asked to leave.

1868. So as to have a reasonable chance of getting another house?—That is so.

1869. (*Chairman.*) It is your interest, of course, to keep a good tenant if you can?—Yes.

1870. Now, in regard to the system of taking houses, when do you personally send out missives?—For houses under £20, we send out no missives. When the clerk calls for the quarter's rent, he just asks them if they are remaining on for another year, or if they are going to remove.

1871. When does he call?—He may begin to call perhaps on 2nd February, and it may be ten days after that before he is round them all.

1872. To what extent do you collect monthly or quarterly?—On monthly lets we don't ask them if they are remaining; they go on on tacit relocation.

1873. But what I want to know is this, whether you have tenants who pay quarterly as well as tenants who pay monthly?—Yes.

1874. Are the quarterly payments made by yearly tenants?—Yes, they are all yearly tenants.

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1875. Is there any system in Glasgow under which yearly tenants pay monthly?—Yes, we have some.

1876. Why in the one case and not in the other?—It is just a matter of precaution, so that we might have the person better under control.

1877. Their wages being paid frequently, it is easier for them to make frequent payments?—Yes.

1878. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You say that your yearly tenants pay quarterly. Is that universal?—With small rents it is almost universal.

1879. With what limit?—Practically from £20 downwards you may say that the great bulk of them are quarterly. There are a few half-yearly, but these are diminishing, and it is now becoming more universal to have quarterly payments.

1880. (*Chairman.*) Are the monthly payments diminishing also?—No, I think there is a tendency to increase them.

1881. For yearly tenants to pay monthly?—Yes.

1882. Which do you think is the best system?—We would prefer quarterly payments.

1883. Why?—Because it is less trouble.

1884. I think you said that your clerk went about Candlemas?—Yes.

1885. When does he require an answer?—By that time they are generally prepared with their answers. Many of them say, "Well, I cannot give an answer to-day; I will give it next week," and we have no hesitation in waiting.

1886. In the ordinary course, is the matter settled one way or another by the end of the first week in February?—Yes.

1887. The contract is coucluded if the man is to stay on?—Yes.

1888. Is there any writing about it?—The house is let verbally by arles; we have no missive.

1889. Why have you no missive when other people have it?—We find that it is a great deal of unnecessary trouble.

1890. Which is the ordinary practice in Glasgow?—I think the missive predominates, but a great many take by arles too.

1891. Have you not fouud a difficulty when you had no missive?—We have had a few cases, and when we find there is to be a question, and the house is one that will let easily, we let the matter drop and let the house to some other person, as there is no loss and it saves trouble.

1892. (*Mr Howden.*) But you have a missive for the start of the tenancy?—Yes.

1893. (*Chairman.*) Have you a copy of it?—No, but I will send one in.

1894. (*Mr Howden.*) Have you any books?—Yes. We have monthly books.

1895. (*Chairman.*) Have there been to your knowledge complaints in Glasgow in connection with the house-letting system?—Yes, I am cognisant of there having been, but I have not received many complaints personally.

1896. Are you in active charge of your business?—Yes.

1897. Have you any partner?—No.

1898. And if your subordinates had any difficulties they would come to your knowledge?—Yes.

1899. About what have you heard of complaints?—I have had a few, especially within the last few years, that it is a hardship being obliged to take houses so far beforehand, but there have been very few complaints.

1900. Is that in Glasgow, or does it apply to the Clyde district generally?—My experience is more in regard to the centre of the city, but I understand it applies generally to the Clyde district.

1901. From what class of tenants have you heard these complaints, about what rents?—Recently they have been as many from tenants up to £50 as from tenants below £20.

1902. (*Mr Howden.*) What answer do you usually give to these tenants?—I have tried to contrast the system that we have with what I have learned from friends about the English system. I was letting a house of between £30 and £40 to an English gentleman, and he said, "It is 'absurd asking a tenant to take his house sixteen months 'before the expiry of the let." "Well," I said, "it is not 'sixteen months, it is only four months, because we are only 'asking a four months' warning. In England you would 'require to give six months' warning"; and he said that that was so.

1903. Is that the law or the practice in Scotland?—It is understood that it is the practice.

1904. It is understood that it is the law?—The law is that a tenant does not need to give his answer,—if he says that he won't give his answer till forty days before the term, then he takes the risk of our finding another tenant.

1905. (*Chairman.*) For how many years have you heard such complaints? Has it been during all your time?—Individul cases have arisen during the whole time of my experience in business, but it has become more a question before the public within the last ten years, one might say.

1906. Have you also come in contact with complaints about the length of tenure?—No, we have had no complaints.

1907. So far as you remember, you have had no applications from yearly tenants to be allowed to renew on a short tenure?—No, with this exception, that probably now and again you may have one saying, "It is possible that I 'may be leaving town in the course of the year. Will you 'let the house for a short period?" In some cases where they have taken their house on for the year they have asked it to be sub-let.

1908. Take the case of a tenant who, on being asked at Candlemas what he is going to do and he says, "I 'cannot tell, I don't know how I will be situated and I 'refuse to give an answer one way or another." How do you treat his house?—It would depend on circumstances. In trying to oblige tenants we have sometimes lost tenants.

1909. You hold yourself entitled in that case to let over his head?—Yes, we have sometimes held on when he would be uncertain, and we have found that we had just held on to our own disadvantage.

1910. (*Mr Howden.*) But in most of these cases, the tenant would still remain?—Perhaps in the most of cases, but a number take advantage to provide for themselves at our expense.

1911. If it had been general, you would have been at no disadvantage?—I don't understand.

1912. If the term had been shorter, you would have been at no disadvantage?—You mean with quarterly lets?

1913. Yes?—Things would be on an entirely different footing then.

1914. (*Chairman.*) What is the reason, in your view, for this yearly period before entry being taken?—All landlords are obliged to warn away their teuants and the warnings must be served forty days before 15th May. In order to have all your arrangements made and know what tenants to warn out and have these warnings served, you require to have all your answers in and houses decided upon within a reasonable distance of the 4th April.

1915. Has the tendency been to make the period for retaking earlier than it used to be, or later?—Somewhat earlier, perhaps a week or a fortnight earlier.

1916. When did that arise?—Within the last ten or fifteen years.

1917. Does that depend on whether the district is one which is growing or diminishing and the demand growing or diminishing?—The tendency would be more where it was growing. Of course where it is diminishing the landlord's interest is not to excite his tenant too much.

1918. But where it is growing, of course there is competition?—Yes, he is getting requests in for houses, and before he can answer them he must know what houses he is to have on hand.

1919. How early have you known a tenant wanting to get arrangements made for the following term?—They begin to inquire about the November term.

1920. What do you say then?—We say that we will take a note of their name and let them know.

1921. How early have you ever known a tenant being forced to re-take in your experience before May?—I don't know of anyone before the middle of February.

1922. Have you not had a case of this kind, of a very eligible tenant coming in the middle of November and going to a less eligible tenant in December and saying he must make his arrangements there and then?—No, my own feeling is against that. I quite understand it being done in some cases, but my own experience is against it.

1923. It would only be done in the case of an unsatisfactory tenant?—It would be according to the disposition of the man, I would say.

1924. Take the case of a tenant who does have to change, how many do you find that you have of such cases in a year?—Those who wish to have their houses re-let?

1925. Yes?—I think about 3 per cent. of our houses let.

1926. That is those who wish to have their houses sub-let and have come to you with that request?—Yes.

1927. I suppose there may be others who would like to get a sub-let, but who don't want to run the risks that would attend it?—As against that we have a number who have no necessity to leave, who have got reasons other than absolute necessity, so if you put the one against the other, I think you may put it at 3 per cent.

1928. That is the number that actually come to you?—Yes.

1929. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Actually leaving?—Yes.

1930. (*Chairman.*) May you have others who come and are told by the clerk, "You are running a risk here; you had better stay"?—A great many come, and if we say, "You have to pay 5s. for letting the house," they say that they won't pay it, that they will stay where they are. We put on that 5s. as a preventative, because it prevents

people wanting to give up their houses with slight excuses.

1931. You say that many come to you?—Some, not a great many.

1932. Can you give any idea of what the percentage would be?—I don't think it would raise another per cent.

1933. You are talking of houses under £20?—Yes.

1934. What is your experience in that matter in connection with houses above £20?—There are a few cases of sub-let.

1935. As many proportionately as under £20?—No.

1936. Is that because those in houses under £20 are men whose employment is of a more shifting nature and they therefore have more occasion to change?—Yes, changes in the family affect the family more drastically than they otherwise would do.

1937. Take a mason; I suppose his work involves a comparatively frequent shifting?—In a case of that sort the man goes to the country and the wife and family stay at home.

1938. If the contract is a long one, then he may shift the home?—Yes, he may, but the family are suited in Glasgow and the conveniences in Glasgow are such that it is better for them to keep on their house in town and for the husband to take lodgings,—it is better to do that than to shift the whole family.

1939. In your 3 per cent., can you give any notion of what proportion of these will give up between taking their houses and the term?—About one-half of them—that is, before the Whitsunday term.

1940. That is to say, in the four months you have as many as in the succeeding eight months?—Yes.

1941. How do you account for that?—I would fancy Whitsunday being the term when there is a great impetus put on, as it were; those who require to remove for any particular purpose would move previous to Whitsunday. During the rest of the year you have just those who are under necessity to remove and they must go at all costs.

1942. But how do you account for so many re-taking their houses and then evidently doing so under a mistake, because they give up their houses within four months?—There are some that deliberately take their houses, and then try to throw them up.

1943. What is their motive?—To secure a house.

1944. (*Mr Howden.*) If they could be better suited they would naturally want to shift?—Yes. I have known cases where they have actually taken a house and then they come in and try to deny liability through the wife having taken the house, or something of that kind.

1945. (*Chairman.*) The reason being they wanted to shift, because they preferred to?—We have had cases of their doing it actually, deliberately.

1946. But such cases will be rare?—Yes.

1947. What does it cost a man to give up a house? Suppose there is a sub-let got at once, would you take the 5s.?—That is for a room and kitchen house. For two rooms and kitchen we charge 7s. 6d., and in some cases we charge 5 per cent. on the rental.

1948. In respect of what?—Trouble in re-letting, looking out for a new tenant. It is as much trouble to look out for a new tenant for the one leaving as for the landlord.

1949. Have you had cases where a sub-let has not been immediately got, and the principal tenant has had to pay although he has left?—Very few.

1950. Can you give any idea how many principal tenants in the course of the year have had to pay either through no sub-tenant being got at all, or they had to pay through there having been no sub-tenant for a portion of the time?—I don't think it would come to 2½ per cent. on the rental value of the houses sub-let. That is the only way I can look into it, just taking a sort of average. For years we had no cases of rent being lost, but this year we have had three, and last year we had two. I fancy that that is owing to the very bad times we have had.

1951. Was that where you lost the rent altogether, or where the principal tenant had to pay?—Where we asked the principal tenant to pay.

1952. What amount did this come to?—Last year it was £5.

1953. From one man?—No, two men.

1954. And the year before?—Nothing.

1955. There would be nothing like 2½ per cent.?—I am even including in that 2½ per cent. cases where the tenants not only did not try to get their houses sub-let, but they did not pay for the time they lived in the house themselves.

1956. But take *bona fide* cases of tenants leaving for one reason or another, and after they have left still having to pay the whole balance or a proportion?—Within the last ten years I do not think we have had £10 paid by tenants.

1957. A year or altogether?—Altogether.

1958. Do you think you are singular in that matter, or is it fairly applicable to factors generally?—It is fairly applicable to factors generally.

1959. You have discussed this question in the Association itself?—The question of letting generally, yes.

1960. In the Association or in the Council?—Both in the Association and in the Council.

1961. Are the members unanimous on the matter?—They are practically unanimous as to some change being necessary, but they are not unanimous as to the methods.

1962. Are they unanimous in this, that the only change they consider unnecessary is in regard to the too early period for warning out in the one case, and re-letting in the other?—Yes.

1963. Are they unanimous in thinking that there is no necessity for an alteration in regard to the law as regards length of tenure?—That is the feeling.

1964. In considering the matter, have you had in view the English practice, and have you obtained any information in making up your mind on the English practice?—We have not gone into it, but the impression is that it is English people who have practically been at the bottom of this agitation.

1965. If the thing was good it would not matter who it was. In England the system generally is one of short lets?—Yes.

1966. And in Scotland the system is one of long lets?—Yes.

1967. You have not any special means of informing yourself of the results in England?—No.

1968. Or whether there are drawbacks in England?—We have heard that there are objections to the system.

1969. What views have you arrived at in regard to the question of sending out missives?—You mean as an association?

1970. Yes?—The idea is that the letting might be delayed till, say, the middle of March or the end of February, and the warning away might be changed to the end of April.

1971. We had evidence from one gentleman who suggested 7th May, twenty-one days before the 28th May, for the warning out?—That would hardly do. It is too close to the busy time of flitting. I think the end of April is late enough.

1972. In Edinburgh they have adopted 15th March?—So I understand.

1973. Have you heard that it has produced any trouble or practical difficulty?—I understand it is not working so well as they anticipated it would.

1974. If you took the warning to the end of April, when would you propose that the missives should be sent out?—In the end of February or the beginning of March.

1975. Does the one in your view have a distinct bearing on the other, the warning and the sending out of the missives?—Certainly.

1976. And the nearer to the term you put the warning, then you would pospone further the sending out of the missives?—Yes.

1977. You said there was a difference of opinion as to how it should be carried out. What is that difference of opinion?—Some want it by legislation, and others would rather that it was brought about indirectly.

1978. Voluntarily?—Yes.

1979. As in Edinburgh?—Yes.

1980. What is your own view?—My own view is that I don't think it matters much as to whether houses are let on short lets or yearly lets.

1981. But in regard to the missive question?—I think it is too early.

1982. But do you think the alteration should be made voluntarily or by legislation?—It should be voluntary.

1983. Would not legislation have the advantage of putting everybody on the same footing?—Yes, that is so.

1984. And if it was voluntary there would be some who would not carry it out?—Yes. Of course it is just the same reason as has led to recent legislation generally, that there are always one or two who oppose a measure and who benefit by the others conforming to it.

1985. There are factors outside your Association?—Yes.

1986. If there is to be an alteration, would it not be better that all should be in the same position?—I have no objection, but I think we might be able to work it independently of legislation.

1987. If there was to be legislation, have you considered any form in which this later sending out of the missive could be remedied?—Do you mean as to how we would make it known?

1988. No, if there was to be legislation. You have seen a Bill putting the matter into shape, viz., the Partick Bill?—Yes.

1989. Would it carry out your view?—Yes, the Partick Bill would.

1990. "It shall not be lawful prior to the 15th day of March to re-let any dwelling house for the year," etc. (*Reads clause.*) That qualification would be just?—Yes. That has always been the stumbling block, what was the

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man to do who had an empty house or a builder who had a new property. By that Bill he is at liberty to let unoccupied houses, but not to approach a tenant who is already in occupation.

1991. To do so would be to interfere with freedom of contract?—Yes.

1992. So a mere objection of that kind would apply to that equally as to a Bill enacting short tenure?—Yes, it would be a question of degree.

1993. What do the factors think about the undoubted fact that there is only one period in Scotland for removing, resulting in a great congestion and a good deal of practical difficulty? That is a pity, is it not?—Yes, it is a disagreeable fact.

1994. And it results in considerable expense, which would not be found if the removals were spread over the year?—Do you mean to tenants?

1995. Yes?—I think that very often things are done in a rough and ready way by the contractors; they are done in a way that they would not be done in if there was more time.

1996. And is there not a difficulty in the way of getting houses cleaned? May it not also involve that a tenant may have to go into a house that may have been in possession of a bad tenant and it would take a considerable time before it was cleaned?—That would occur in a quarterly let in the same way. Of course a proprietor does not want his house to stand empty.

1997. But if you had the removals spread over the year, the persons who might be employed to clean the house would not be overwhelmed with work and would be available?—Yes, they might not have to wait so long.

1998. That being a desirable object, the proposal that you make about the system of missives would have no effect in curing that evil?—No.

1999. And the proposed measure for short letting would?—It would distribute it certainly over three letting terms. I do not think there would be many removals in the winter term.

2000. You have no suggestion that would tend in the direction of removing what is apparently an admitted unfortunate circumstance?—As an association we do not make any suggestion in that line.

2001. Have you any suggestion that would tend towards spreading removals over the year?—I see no other thing than quarterly lets.

2002. (*Mr Howden.*) What do you say to monthly lets?—We always find that monthly lets as a rule deteriorate a property.

2003. (*Chairman.*) They would spread removals just the same as quarterly lets?—Monthly tenants are open to come and go as they like just now. They are at no disadvantage just now.

2004. If there was to be that advantage in Mr Cross's proposal and in the proposals of other people, is the only drawback that occurs to you in connection with the short let the insecurity of tenure?—No, I come later on to the question of taxes.

2005. Does it come to this, that the compulsory enactment of short lets would, in the first place, in your view deprive a tenant who wanted a long let of the chance that he ought to have of getting one, and, in the second place, it would introduce such practical complications connected with rates as to form a very serious obstacle?—Yes.

2006. In the third place, do you think the result of short lets would be to raise the rents or to affect the rents?—We have no data to go on, because the thing would be so universal then that it would quite alter the present circumstances.

2007. Then you are not prepared to say that on the whole, changing from a yearly tenure to a quarterly tenure, for instance, would affect the rents?—In some cases I think it would, and in other cases I think it would depreciate the property to a certain extent, where the landlord was put to more expense through these removals, so that anyone purchasing would give a less number of years' purchase for the property, or in order to recoup himself he would require to raise his rents.

2008. Would that not rather be in the case of a monthly let as distinguished from a quarterly let? Supposing a yearly tenure was changed into a quarterly tenure, would there be that result?—The tendency of short lets is to give undesirable tenants more opportunity of getting into a property. When you come to quarterly lets, there would be more likelihood of undesirable tenants getting in among decent yearly tenants. In many cases I think it would tend to deteriorate some properties which can be kept very respectable just now.

2009. But you have no experience to enable you to reduce that to the test of experience?—No, further than that we have had cases where we have had to cease letting yearly, and have had to let monthly, and we have found that there was more expense. But there was also another element, and that was actual deterioration in the neighbourhood. It would affect the whole community if the thing was spread. That is the only experience we have had, isolated cases where there are other elements probably at work.

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2010. Has there been any experience that would be a test, such as a proprietor resolving to change his yearly tenure for some reason or another into a monthly tenure? Have you ever had a case of that kind?—I have not known a case where the tenant would like it.

2011. Have you ever known it done?—Not further than this case that I spoke of.

2012. And there were exceptional circumstances there?—Yes, it was in the London Road, where we let houses monthly that had formerly been let by the year, and where we previously always got very respectable tenants. Circumstances obliged us to let the houses by the month, and it quite changed the character of the tenants.

2013. The neighbourhood had altered?—Yes; that was evident from the fact that we were not able to get them let yearly.

2014. We have been told about property belonging to the City Improvements Trust, and also about property belonging to the Workmen's Dwellings Company. Do you think these are fairly comparable?—No, they are special.

2015. Why?—Because they make their houses so attractive that they can pick and choose their tenants. They have caretakers and they work on different lines from an ordinary factor, who has just to take the general floating population. Then, so far as I am aware, no landlord would let his property to yield the same return as the City Improvements Department does.

2016. (*Mr Howden.*) You referred to monthly tenants getting among yearly tenants, and that that created a bad impression. How do you do when a bad tenant gets in beside yearly tenants for some time? Are you tied to that bad tenant for the whole time?—Yes.

2017. If you had monthly lets then you would be able to get him out more, easily and more quickly?—Yes, but there would be a greater number, and I think the greater number would do more harm than the benefit we would receive from the liberty of putting them out.

2018. (*Chairman.*) Would the system of shorter lets add materially to your work?—Speaking generally, I think not.

2019. If you get a man for a year, you just make inquiries once about him?—Yes.

2020. If you were having frequent changes in the year, you would need to make inquiries about every tenant, but you would not anticipate that the factors would be entitled to a bigger percentage if there was a change from the one to the other?—I do not think there would be many more changes than there are just now. That is my own opinion.

2021. They might be spread more over the year, but there would not be many more changes?—That is so. I think that calling on a man in February and asking if he wants to change his house has a good deal to do with the flitting. If you left him alone he would not think of flitting.

2022. You referred to the security of tenure not being the only question, and you said that there were other difficulties about rates. What are these?—I think the principal difficulty is making the landlord liable for the rates, making the landlord a rate collector. I do not think he should be asked to undertake that work.

2023. Is he not a rate collector just now?—Only to a very small extent.

2024. In regard to houses under £4?—Yes.

2025. Have you any experience of arrangements in certain cases between landlords and rating authorities?—No.

2026. (*To Mr Madden.*) Have you?—No.

2027. (*To Mr M'Michael.*) We are told it is sometimes done. Are there many cases?—A few.

2028. You have no practical experience of the question?—We had in Partick, but we have not got that property now. We had some tenements in Partick where the burgh rates were imposed on the owner.

2029. How did it work?—The rates came to 2s. in the £, and we put on 3s.

2030. The other 1s. being for what?—To cover the loss.

2031. And the factorage?—No, that is the loss on unlets and non-payments, and we found that it just worked out clear.

2032. For how long did that go on?—For six or seven years.

2033. And you think it was a fair experiment without any special conditions?—I think so. Of course it was a class of property that I do not think the rating authorities ever got one half of the rates out of, with all their trouble to collectors, and yet they saddled the proprietor with

paying the rates in full over the counter, and they did not allow a sixpence of abatement to cover loss.

2034. They allowed nothing?—No.

2035. So far as they went it was a clear advantage to them?—Yes.

2036. And so far as you went it was neither the one nor the other?—It made our rents look very large.

2037. But you made nothing by it?—No.

2038. So far as the tenants were concerned it cost them the extra 1s.?—Yes.

2039. Then the only people who made by it were the burgh authorities in Partick?—Yes.

2040. (*Mr Howden.*) Did that 5 per cent. cover all the loss?—It is not 5 per cent.; it is half of the rate.

2041. Did the extra 1s. cover the whole loss?—Yes.

2042. (*Chairman.*) Why did it not go on?—The property was sold and we lost it.

2043. It is the case that the burghs have an option in that case to collect through the owner?—Yes, that applies to houses let for less than a year, no matter what part of the year. If you are letting a house from Martinmas to Martinmas, they would hold you liable. For any period other than from 28th May to 28th May they hold the landlord liable for the rates.

2044. In that case, what was the let?—Monthly.

2045. Have they exercised that power in many cases?—In a good many cases. The Burgh of Johnstone had it in the Court of Session, and it was held there that the rating authorities were entitled to payment from the landlord.

2046. Why have they not done it in all cases if the advantage is so great to them?—Because of expediency, I suppose.

2047. Did you find there any difficulty in the way of friction, and the tenants objecting to pay rates to you?—They objected to pay what we charged, and they made a protest.

2048. But they had no objection to paying merely the rate? We have been told that some factors think it would introduce great friction between factors and tenants if the factors had to collect the rates, apart from any addition. Do you think there is anything in that?—I do not think there would be what you would call friction if you were allowed to collect the rates in a slump sum with the rents.

2049. Without specification?—Yes, without specification, merely stating that their rent was so much including the rates.

2050. Why?—There are a great many tenants, even respectable people, who look upon a rate as a thing that is an imposition, and if they can escape paying it they will do so, and will not think that they are doing anything wrong. They will tell you, "I am quite willing to pay the rent, but as for paying the taxes, that is another thing."

2051. Suppose you had the other system, that the rating authorities give you a sufficient allowance to cover losses and trouble, would there be any difficulty, so far as the tenants were concerned, in your collecting the rates?—Not if we were allowed to put it in as rent and take it as one sum—if we had not to collect it separately.

2052. What do you say to the other system suggested, that if you had short lets the rating authorities might make short collections. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

2053. Quarterly?—Yes, I understand they do that in London.

2054. Of course you do not kuow what alterations that might involve on other Acts of Parliament, such as the Valuation Acts?—No. Of course they make surveys during the year. By the last Valuation Act they have been able to put on tenants who have entered between times, and they make surveys during the year to rate those who have gone into empty houses.

2055. That is a question of detail?—Yes. Of course Scottish landlords have a different view from English landlords, because they pay a very large rate direct to the authorities. Ten per cent. of the gross rental is paid to the rates, and seeing that they pay their own share to the rating authorities, it is rather hard to make them collect the other share.

2056. Suppose there was an allowance to be made, have you considered whether the allowance in Mr Cross's Bill is sufficient?—It is quite inadequate.

2057. If it be the fact that there is a loss in the case of the Corporation collecting, a loss of some 26 per cent., do you think it would be less or more if the factors collected the rates—taking houses of £10 and under?—They would require to allow the landlord a rebate for empty houses. As it is they charge rates on all houses occupied at Whitsunday, and some houses may stand empty for months in course of the year.

2058. (*Mr Binnie.*) Your experience in Partick in the house you mentioned was that, if you had only charged the tenant the net two shillings that you paid, you would have required to have got another shilling?—That is so.

2059. Otherwise the landlord would have lost one shilling?—Yes.

2060. So that is 50 per cent. in that particular instance?—Yes.

2061. (*Chairman.*) You said you thought there would be a difficulty if the rates had to be specified as collected apart from the rents?—Yes.

2062. If it be right that an occupier should know what he is paying, and if it were necessary to bring that about to specify them separately, do you think that would be a difficulty?—He gets that at present when he receives his assessment paper, and he sees what he is charged assessment on. Just now we pay the water rates on rents under £10, and we add the water rate and the stair gas to the rent and make it one sum.

2063. You do not specify them?—No.

2064. (*Mr Howden.*) Is it usual to do that?—Yes, with rents under £10.

2065. But there are some exceptions?—I do not know if there are.

2066. But it is not essential that it should be done?—No, but it is a convenience.

2067. (*Chairman.*) And above £10?—They are very often collected separately by the landlord.

2068. So it can be done if it is thought desirable under £10, as above £10?—Yes.

2069. (*Mr Binnie.*) But it is the Corporation that gather the rates from the tenants of houses above £10?—The water rates on houses above £10 are collected by the Corporation, but under £10 we have to collect them, and we are allowed a commission of 25 per cent. in the case of houses under £7 and 15 per cent. in the case of houses under £10 and above £7.

2070. Suppose you have a slump sum covering both the rate and the rent, in the case of the rent you can exercise your hypothec?—Yes.

2071. In the case of the rate you cannot?—We can in the event of their being slumped.

2072. Is that under the Burgh Police Act?—Under the Small Debts Act. You will find that in Sheriff Lees book.

2073. In your notes you point out that rates and taxes are not covered by the landlord's hypothec?—That is so.

2074. But you explain that when they are slumped you can exercise the landlord's hypothec?—Yes.

2075. So you have a better remedy than the Corporation has when they are slumped?—Yes, the rates and the rent go together.

2076. Suppose you collected the occupiers' rates under a compounding system, would it increase your clerical work?—If we had to give separate details?

2077. Yes?—I think it would.

2078. But not if it was slumped?—I think not, because all the payments would go together. We collect the stair gas just now.

2079. Do you collect the stair gas in all cases?—Yes.

2080. You do not see, from your point of view, any reason why, if thought desirable, the Corporation should not arrange for a quarterly collection of rates?—That is so. They are the responsible authorities, and they should do their own work.

2081. In many cases of working men getting paid from time to time, the oftener the collection the more likely the rates would be paid?—Yes, it is not so hard upon them.

2082. Now, what about the system of tenants getting relief from payment of rates on the ground of poverty? Do you think that that in any case should be conserved?—Yes, I think so. As it is just now, I understand that anyone in receipt of parochial aid is relieved of his police assessment by showing his card.

2083. And so far as you know the system is a proper system?—Yes.

2084. And it is not abused?—No, we have a number of people in small houses who get relief from the parochial authorities.

2085. Suppose the proposed change were made, would there be any reason why, even though the proprietor paid primarily, the tenant should not still get relief?—Where they remained in the house for the whole year they could make a claim through the landlord, and the landlord could recover it and repay it to them.

2086. (*Mr Binnie.*) Or they could apply direct to the authorities?—Yes.

2087. (*Chairman.*) Summing up the matter from the point of view of the Association, I think you suggest certain remedies?—Yes. (1) Shortening by statute the period of notice before Whitsunday, from forty days before the 15th of May to thirty days before the 28th of May (the removal term). We are unanimous about that. Then (2) the quarterly collection of rates by the Local Authorities, both Corporation and Parochial Board. We are unanimous about that. And further (3) it is suggested by a number of members of the Association to adopt

legislation on the lines of the Bill drafted by the Partick Landlords and Housefactors Association.

2088. That is a point on which there is a difference of opinion?—Yes. Some wish legislation, and others think it might be done by each member acting on his own account.

2089. But they all think that the arrangement is a desirable one?—Yes.

2090. (*Mr Esslemont.*) I think you said from your experience there is no desire among tenants of houses of £20 and under for shorter lets?—That is so. My experience is that the people are quite willing to go on with the present system.

2091. I think you went further, and said that in your opinion the agitation was fermented by English immigrants?—I think they have a great deal to do with it. Letters in the newspapers have bulked more largely than any personal interviews that I have had with people.

2092. You are of course aware that this question has been ventilated both at municipal and at the parliamentary elections?—Yes.

2093. And candidates and members of Parliament representing all parties have recognised that there is a grievance, and they have undertaken to do what they can to secure legislation to remedy this grievance?—I do not think that the fact of members of Parliament undertaking to do certain things actually shows that the grievance is worthy of account, because they very often promise these things without any knowledge of the circumstances.

2094. That would not be true as regards some of the gentlemen who have interested themselves in this question?—There may be a few of them, but a great many of them do not know the working of the question at all.

2095. Do you suggest that in connection with Mr Cross?—I do not think that his Bill is at all suitable.

2096. You said that you thought that the warning-out period had a very direct bearing on the question of missives?—Yes.

2097. And re-taking of houses?—Yes.

2098. I did not quite follow that. Will you be so good as to explain it to me?—We require to send in a list of our tenants who are removing on 28th May to a sheriff officer, so that he may warn them out of their houses, and these warnings must be all completed before 4th April. Now, in order to have that list complete, we must have a week or two to see our tenants and get their answers. When we know those who are leaving on 28th May, we make up our list and send it to the sheriff officer for the warnings to be served. You are compelled by law to send a formal warning.

2099. You never trust to the tenant removing without warning?—We have had bitter experience of trusting to that.

2100. I think you admitted that from removals taking place practically all on one day, there was considerable inconvenience to tenants and risk of damage to their effects through the hurry and scurry of the removal and so on. I suppose the same thing is true to some extent in regard to the property; it also suffers damage through removals?—Yes.

2101. So if the removals were distributed over the year there would be a material saving both to the tenant and to the proprietor?—Yes. Of course we are speaking in ignorance of how the shorter lets would really affect the habits of the people. The habit of removing on 28th May is so engrained that I am afraid you might have that congestion for years to come.

2102. You are against a universal system of monthly lets?—Yes.

2103. But you would favour a system of quarterly lets accompanied with a quarterly collection of rates?—Provided the landlord was not made liable for the rates.

2104. You would favour it with that qualification?—Yet.

2105. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You may have already explained it to the Committee, but perhaps you will be good enough to tell me this: assume there is to be a change in favour of short lets, what period of notice would you as a practical man think would be desirable?—A month; I would give a month's warning to a quarterly tenant.

2106. And what would you give to a monthly tenant?—Ten days.

2107. I think Mr Cross suggested a week in the case of monthly tenants?—It is held to be one-third of the period for which the house is let, and I think that is quite convenient.

2108. Ten days in monthly lets and a month in the case of quarterly lets is what you would suggest?—Yes.

2109. As to the view taken by the sheriff that where rates are slumped with the rent, it is treated as one contract for a rent on the footing of the landlord making certain payments?—Yes.

2110. Have you any view with reference to a clause in this Bill making the measure optional to different areas,—giving a local authority the right if they thought fit to adopt the Bill?—That would defeat the objects of the Bill. It is only recently that a Bill was introduced to make the universal terms of removal 28th November and 28th May. Previously the dates of removal varied in different burghs and counties; thus, the date of removal in Dumbarton was 15th May, while it has always been 28th May in Glasgow; so that a tenant, formerly, coming to Glasgow from Dumbarton had to store his furniture for about a fortnight before getting possession of his house.

2111. If there was to be a change, you think that it ought to apply to all the different areas?—Yes, to the whole of Scotland if the working man is to have the benefit, because what is the good of freeing him from his house if he cannot get a house in the place that he is going to?

2112. What should be the limit in the event of there being such a Bill passed,—what would you advise as the limit for a working man's house?—I think the limit of £20 is a fair enough one. It might be a little less. There would be certain anomalies under that Bill. Take a tenement with two room and kitchen houses, with rents up to £22. Very often the top flat of a tenement of that sort is rated at £19. So you would have this tenement divided, the top flat with quarterly tenants, and the other flats with yearly tenants.

2113. The Bill suggests that different burghs may have a different maximum, Paisley £16, Glasgow £20, and so on. Do you think that that is at all necessary?—I do not think so.

2114. You mentioned what I think is a very difficult part of the proposed scheme, namely, the question of the exemption on the ground of poverty. Do you think it practicable to have any method under which tenants would get the present exemption, except in the case you gave Mr Binnie of the tenant staying in the particular house for the whole period? Would it be practicable to have some kind of arrangement under which a tenant staying six months in one house and paying to the landlord the six months' portion of rates along with his rent, going to another house and paying to the new landlord along with his rent the six months' portion of rates there,—assuming that he was entitled to exenption—could still get the benefit that he enjoys at present?—The only way would be to apply at the end of the year and to show that he had paid his rent and that the rent included the rates.

2115. It might be by certificates from more than one landlord?—Yes.

2116. (*Chairman.*) If the rates were collected quarterly there would not be so much difficulty?—No.

2117. (*Mr Howden.*) You say in your precognition that the agitation for shorter lets has extended to tenants of houses over £20?—Yes.

2118. That would show that some of these people at least have a desire for shorter lets also?—I put it down to selfishness on the part of the tenant wanting to serve himself. He had entered into a bargain and wanted to break it.

2119. He wanted to shift between terms?—Yes.

2120. Do you see any objection to extending such a Bill as Mr Cross's to such tenants as those? These, I presume, will be the better class of tenants that you have very little difficulty in getting your rents out of?—Yes. There might be some system where a person would take a house for a year or on a lease, and he would give six months' warning when he wanted to leave before the Martinmas or Whitsunday term.

2121. Why would you take a six months' warning?—Because a house of that sort is not so easily dealt with as a small house, and to get a new tenant in is a very expensive matter.

2122. You have told us that one-third of the let is the usual period for warning out?—In yearly lets it is only forty days, but it must be served before the Whitsunday term. You could not deal with a large house on the same terms as with a small house, because there is very much more at issue,—the standing empty is a very serious matter as compared with the standing empty of a £10 house.

2123. But it is to obviate what you consider to be a grievance, namely, people having to remove all together on the 28th of May. Do you see any reason why a tenant of a £25 or £30 house should not take his house from September to September, instead of them all taking their houses from 28th May to 28th May?—The date of warning might be modified so that they might remove at the August term and the February term as well as the May term, but a landlord with a large house would require a longer notice than a landlord with a small house.

2124. Is there any reason for taking the 28th of May as the absolute removal term?—Anything else would be an experiment.

2125. Would that not apply to business premises too?—No, I think not.

2126. Why?—Because you must have some security as to your tenure, and the great bulk of business premises are let on leases.

2127. My point is not that you should do away with the lease, but that the tenant should have the privilege of taking premises on a lease from any particular date as at entry,—that is to say, he might not enter at May, but he might enter at August or November, and the term of lease should expire at that time of the year. You do not see any objection to such a system as that?—Yes, the objection to that system is the taxes. The taxes come in wherever we turn.

2128. But suppose there was a quarterly collection?—That would remove a great many of the objections that are before us just now. What makes this letting question very important is the collection of the taxes. If a tenant comes in at Whitsunday and remains in till August and then runs off, and you again let your house in November, the prospective incoming tenant will say, "I won't take that house until you free me from the taxes," because the City take the person they find in the house.

2129. That does not apply to poor rates?—No, these are looked upon as a personal debt.

2130. (*Chairman.*) I think you were to put in some missives?—Yes, I hand in a missive and a monthly book.

2131. I would ask you to look at Article 6 of Mr Marr's missive, dated 1887, where you will see the following:—"In the event of my requiring to leave Govan and its 'neighbourhood on account of my having had to find 'employment elsewhere, the house is to be taken off my 'hand at the end of any quarter during the currency of 'this let upon my giving one month's previous notice to 'that effect and upon my paying up all rent then due 'along with the proportion of stair gas and the water rates 'applicable to my house." What do you say to that as a reasonable suggestion?—That is leaving on account of work?

2132. Yes.—I think if it was limited to that there would be no great objection to its being carried out, but they would require to show that it was owing to necessity that they were going, and not merely because of a whim.

2133. Would you extend it to loss of employment necessitating the taking of a cheaper house, or should it be limited to leaving the district for other work?—Really, I do not think that the difference between any house that they would take and the house they were occupying would come to very much. I do not think it would be a vital matter, a man wanting to shift from an £18 house to a £15 house.

2134. The real point is that you would object to any clause of that kind if it gave an absolute right?—Yes, because I think it would be abused. The landlord would be bound, while the tenants would not be bound.

2135. (*Chairman to Mr Madden.*) Would you tell us about your business? You have been in business for upwards of twenty years, and your experience has been principally of dwelling houses?—Yes.

2136. At present you have under your charge about 800 houses, the rents of which are under £10?—Yes.

2137. From what to £10?—From £4 to £10.

2138. Have you anything under £4?—No, and I have very few at £4.

2139. Are these all let monthly?—Yes.

2140. The tenants can remove on giving ten days' notice under the Removals Act?—Yes.

2141. You have about 350 houses the rents of which are under £10 like the others, but they are let yearly?—Yes.

2142. In these cases the rents are payable quarterly or half-yearly?—Yes.

2143. Have you many payable half-yearly?—Not a great many, but a number do pay half-yearly.

2144. Some factors have told us that they only collect quarterly and monthly. Is that usual?—No, I have a good many that pay half-yearly.

2145. Is that the better class?—Yes, and it applies also to houses of £10 and £20 in the case of pensioners, annuitants, and a great many respectable people with small incomes such as that; these pay half-yearly.

2146. You have charge of over 700 houses at rents between £10 and £20?—Yes.

2147. Are all these let yearly?—Yes, without exception.

2148. And the rents are payable quarterly or half-yearly?—Yes.

2149. Do you concur with the evidence that Mr M'Michael has given in reference to the grievance and the complaints that you have found from tenants relating as they do to the too long period?—Yes.

2150. And not relating to any question of short lets as against long lets?—No, none.

2151. Mr M'Michael has explained that while he is in favour of the period being shortened, he thinks it should be done by a voluntary arrangement. What view do you take?—I should be very glad if it was possible, but I do not think it is human nature. It must be done by legislation, to put every man on an equal footing.

2152. Do you think that they should all be on an equal footing, and that could only be brought about by legislation?—Yes.

2153. And if there was to be legislation, you think the clause suggested by the Partick landlords and house-factors would fairly well carry it out?—Yes, but I take exception to the paragraph affecting new property.

2154. What is wrong with that?—I think that they should be put on the same footing as yearly lets, from 14th or 15th March, new as well as old.

2155. What would you do with property that was ready in February? Would it have to stand?—They could let it to 14th March of next year, or they could let it for fifteen months, from February to Whitsunday following.

2156. Suppose it is ready in December?—Then let it from December to Whitsunday, and from Whitsunday on.

2157. Unless you had this clause, would not letting from December to Whitsunday be prohibited?—I do not think so.

2158. Suppose the property is ready in January, if you enact that, it would be still possible to let for a short period and then let from Whitsunday?—Yes, or let it for the fifteen months right on.

2159. Do you think that the clause as framed would give an undue advantage to new property?—Yes.

2160. With that exception you agree with it?—Yes.

2161. Do you agree that there is a great practical difficulty due to the question of rates?—Yes. There is no desire on the part of the respectable portion of the community for short lets.

2162. But suppose short lets were to be enacted, do you agree with Mr M'Michael that the question of rates introduces a great practical difficulty?—Yes.

2163. What do you say to the suggestion that that may be got over by the Corporation collecting quarterly?—That might overcome it. That is the only feasible way I can think of.

2164. But you object to the matter being put into the hands of factors to collect the rates along with the rents?—Yes, I don't wish it.

2165. You cannot, any more than Mr M'Michael, tell us from practical experience of the working of that system, how it works?—Do you mean with the rates and rents?

2166. Yes?—I have only one instance, and that was in Kinning Park before Glasgow swallowed it up. They charged me with the rates there on all the houses let at 8s. 6d. a month, and I never got a single cent from the tenants.

2167. What was the net result?—I had to pay all the burgh rates on that property.

2168. I don't suppose it was a large amount?—Yes, it was. It amounted to nearly £20 for that block.

2169. Does it come to this, suppose the rates are collected quarterly direct from the occupiers by the Corporation, you don't see any practical objection to quarterly or half-yearly lets instead of yearly lets?—No, I don't see any real objection. I don't think it would be in the interests of the tenants to have them, because under our yearly system just now, if a tenant who is a respectable and clean person takes a house for a year, we are always willing to meet him in the way of papering and painting and doing up the house. Now, if we anticipate four such doings-up in the year, it would be a serious matter, and it would resolve itself into the English system, where you get four walls and do your own papering and painting. I don't think it would be in the interest of the tenant.

2170. A tenant for the year has two advantages: he has security of tenure, and he has a good deal done for him that would not be otherwise done?—Yes.

2171. I see that you limit the statement in your proof to quarterly and half-yearly lets. Suppose they were monthly lets, the objection you have just stated about the tenant not getting much done for him would be emphasised?—Yes. I have 800 monthly lets, and these, with few exceptions, have nothing done for them in the way of keeping the house clean and water-tight—I mean there is nothing done in the way of papering and painting. If they were decent tenants you may give them some paint to put on and some paper to hang, but they are not treated in the same way as a yearly tenant.

2172. Do you find that a yearly tenant, being secure for a year, will do something for himself and will put on paper for himself if he is a handy man, and will do other things that he would not do if he was only there for a month?—Yes, sometimes a handy man will do that.

2173. Would the same man do it with a monthly tenure?—I don't think so.

2174. Have you not found cases where a man had to remove, say for change of employment, and the result was that he was considerably out of pocket, because he had to

pay your charge and the rent for the proportion of time that elapsed before the sub-let took effect?—It is not often that he is out of pocket in such a case as that. Very often we get a house sub-let, because it is in his interest to get it sub-let, and he looks round and generally finds a tenant for us.

2175. Is it a common thing for a new tenant to be presented by the principal tenant?—Yes, quite common.

2176. Is it more common than your finding a sub-tenant?—I don't know, but it is a very common thing.

2177. Mr M'Michael gave us evidence of actual results. Could you say how far you agree with him so far as he talked of the amount actually paid in his experience in a year by sub-tenants not being got?—During all the years I have been in business, I have only one instance of that.

2178. How long have you been in business?—Twenty-four years. This year there was a case in Eglinton Street. I warned the people there that the house would not sub-let.

2179. Did they come in the middle of the term?—No. They took a house between Candlemas and Whitsunday last—they came before Whitsunday—and the change was into a different house in the same property. I warned them that I feared that their house would not sub-let. It has not sub-let, and they have had to pay the rent.

2180. How much?—£19, I think.

2181. Were they removing into a higher priced house?—They were going from the top floor to the first floor.

2182. They would have less of a stair to climb?—Yes.

2183. And you warned them that there might be a difficulty?—Yes.

2184. Do you say that in all your time you have never had another case of net loss to a removing tenant?—I don't remember a single case.

2185. There are many cases where they have had to pay your 5 per cent. or whatever it was?—These are regulated by circumstances. As often as not I do not charge a single fraction. If the tenant is removing through loss of work or poverty, I charge nothing, but if he is improving his condition I charge 5 per cent. We are usually controlled by circumstances in these cases.

2186. Suppose Mr Cross's Bill was passed, and suppose you had quarterly lets, you would still of course have the same grievance, although to a less extent, of a man in the middle of the quarter wanting to leave?—Yes, at least I anticipate it would be the same.

2187. Do you think, if the English system were introduced, and we had monthly lets all over, you would then have a grievance of the opposite kind, viz., men complaining that they could not get security of tenure?—I am afraid our Scottish nature is different from the English in regard to that. Our people want to know where they are to be for some time. Judging from my experience, they would want fixity of tenure.

2188. Under either system there must be individual cases of hardship?—There is bound to be more or less hardship in all cases.

2189. Suppose you had monthly tenure enacted and nothing more, you might have the case, I suppose, of a tenant going in in anticipation that he was to remain there and doing his little improvements, and then the landlord turning him out next month?—Yes.

2190. You say in regard to the number of sub-lets, that you have had requests to make you put it at 4 per cent. of your tenants under £20 rental?—Yes

2191. For how many years is that?—Ten years.

2192. What is your district? Is it the centre of the town?—No, it is chiefly in the outskirts, Crosshill, Gorbals, Partick, Govan, Renfrew, Springburn, etc.

2193. Have you both increasing and decreasing districts?—Yes.

2194. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Madden.*) With regard to the case that you cited—the only case in your experience of twenty-five years—I think you said it was a case of a tenant removing from one set of apartments to another in the same house?—Yes, in the same tenement.

2195. And it took place immediately before Whitsunday last?—At Whitsunday last.

2196. Did you in these circumstances hold the tenant liable for both sets of apartments?—Certainly.

2197. Although the house into which he removed was unlet at Whitsunday last?—There was no doubt that it would have let, because it was one stair up and there were people after it. It would certainly have let.

2198. I thought that under the present system you had all your houses let three months before Whitsunday?—All the houses were re-taken for the year, but there was a tenant one stair up who wanted to remove to another part of the city, and I undertook to sub-let her house. She said that she had a person who would take it, but the tenant on the top floor had asked for this house, and had put his name down for the first change downstairs. When they heard of this house they immediately came and wanted to take it, but I warned them that there would be great difficulty in letting their house three stairs up. I said that I could let this house, which was one stair up, but if they took it they would be responsible for both houses.

2199. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Madden.*) Have the house factors any grievance in regard to the present system of ejection that you would care to mention to the Committee?—The present system is rather unwieldy and expensive. The ejections are generally taken through the Burgh Court here. To commence with, you have to give ten days' notice to a tenant that you are going to eject, and then you take proceedings which take other seven days or so if they put in an appearance and an objection, which they generally do now; the presiding magistrate, if he is there—sometimes he is not there, but an official is in his place—gives them ten days to remove again. So really, after losing one or two months' rent, it takes almost another month before you can put them out, and it costs about 10s.

2200. I raised that point to know whether you could suggest a remedy that might become operative?—Shorten the period. I don't object to give the tenant ten days' notice in the first instance to remove, but if he does not remove at the termination of the ten days, then present a petition and get decree immediately to eject.

2201. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr M'Michael.*) I see the following sentence in your condition of letting: "Should the rent 'fall into arrear, the tenant to remove on receiving three 'days' notice." Following on that, do you still require to go to Court and get the warrant to eject?—The magistrates do not give effect to that. The tenant, by paying 6d. at the Town Clerk's office in lieu of lodging answers, gets ten days for removal.

2202. So a condition like that does not help you to any extent?—No, they don't give decree on that.

2203. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Madden.*) Have you any houses above £10 let monthly?—Yes, one.

2204. As against some 800 let under £10?—Yes.

2205. Do you find that the class of tenants under £10 are usually an inferior class of tenants?—No, you get all sorts. We have some under £10, the most respectable people in the city. We have artisans and respectable young tradesmen in single apartments at about £7, and in two or three years you find them in £50 houses.

2206. Have you any experience of houses standing empty in the latter part of a yearly let without any attempt to get a sub-let?—No, none. I have no experience of that, and I have never heard of it. I don't think any factor would do that.

2207. The factor has no interest if he gets the rent?—As a man he has an interest to save his tenant; he has an interest as a man.

2208. You have something like 2000 houses under £20. Do you require in many cases to exercise your right of hypothec?—Sometimes, but not often.

2209. In how many cases out of 2000?—If I take an average of years, I don't think I will have half a dozen in the year.

2210. A suggestion has been made to abolish hypothec. Would that operate harshly against factors and proprietors?—I think so. I don't object to your doing it if you put me on the same footing as a seed merchant or a butcher or a baker, or anyone else, "If you don't pay your account 'by the end of the week, then I will not give you anything 'more till you pay it. If my rent is due and you don't 'pay it, then I will turn you out."

2211. Upon ten days' notice?—No, upon no notice. The shopkeeper does not require to give notice. Why should the landlord?

2212. We need not discuss that. In your experience half a dozen cases represents the number of times annually where you require to exercise the right of hypothec?—That is the outside number.

2213. Another suggestion made to the Committee was that in any event tools and wearing apparel might be exempt from the landlord's preference?—Yes.

2214. You have no objection to that?—No. That is tools of trade? I think that they and wearing apparel are already exempt. You cannot sell these.

2215. Assuming that they are not exempt, you don't have any feeling on that?—No.

2216. (*Mr Howden to Mr Madden.*) You referred to the Partick Bill, and you said you did not agree with the terms of that Bill so far as it affected new property. We have heard something about the difficulty in getting bonds on small properties. Do you not think that if you objected to any man putting up a property and then letting it, it would seriously affect the bonds on that property when he had no tenants to go into the property?—No, because everyone would then be on the same footing.

2217. You miss the point. The property may be ready for bonding and the builder would be anxious to secure a bond. Is it not the case that a man more readily lends money on property when he knows that there are tenants going into it than otherwise?—Yes.

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2218. Would such a clause as that in the Partick Bill act against the interests of the builder?—I don't think so, but I do not grasp your point. I stated that if the house was ready for occupying in December, then you could let it from December.

2219. But you could not let it from Whitsunday?—No, not until 14th or 15th March.

2220. You also spoke about factors being pretty anxious to oblige their yearly tenants by doing repairs. That would not apply if the tenants were monthly?—That is so.

2221. When do factors usually do repairs on property, or when do they usually promise?—I am afraid they are always promising, but the usual time is immediately after they enter the house.

2222. Or in the case of tenants that are staying on, it is just when they re-take their house?—Yes.

2223. Sometimes factors forget their promises on these occasions?—I have heard of such cases.

2224. If a tenant had liberty to come to you every month to get these repairs done, the tendency would be that they would be done?—They come every month; I don't hinder them.

2225. If they had some power over you, then they would get the repairs done?—It is mutual. Some factors might say, "If you are not satisfied, then you can leave."

2226. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Madden.*) You were asked about hypothec, and you said you had only had to exercise it about six times in the year. Do you think it was an advantage to you in other cases besides these in which you had actually to enforce your rights? Did any tenants pay because they knew that you could enforce it?—Yes. These six cases that I have instanced were not six cases where I exercised the full right—that is to say, where I sold. I sold two last year. These were cases where I sequestrated as a threat, and it had the desired effect. I don't care about selling.

2227. But even in cases where you did not go the length of sequestrating, then do you think that the hypothec was an advantage to you?—Yes.

2228. In regard to the letting of new houses, I understand your position is this, that you would not object to builders letting the new houses for any term up to the following Whitsunday; if their house was ready in November they could let from November to Whitsunday?—Yes.

2229. And if they were ready in February, then they could let from February to Whitsunday?—Yes.

2230. Probably with a promise that the tenant could sit on?—Yes.

2231. If they were ready on 15th March, they could let from 15th March to the Whitsunday in the following year?—Yes, that is my position.

(*Mr M'Michael.*) I think there was some question as to the ejections, as to why we preferred the Burgh Court to the Sheriff Court. One reason I may state is that in the Burgh Court you can have six petitions on the one form, and that makes it cheaper. The factor can take out the ejections in his own name. When going before the sheriff, you require to give the proprietor's name, and the petition must be signed by a law agent.

2232. (*Chairman to Mr M'Michael.*) It is the question of cost?—Yes, and it is not so easily managed, because in many cases the property is held by trustees, and the factor may not have their individual names. The Sheriff won't take the form unless the names of the trustees are given. That is the reason the Burgh Court is run after.

2233. (*Mr Esslemont.*) So you prefer the magistrates with all their weaknesses rather than go to the sheriff?—Provided that they were a little more just to us.

2234. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Madden.*) Assuming short lets were universal, am I right in thinking that your difficulty in regard to new buildings would disappear?—Yes, that is so.

Mr J. S. Lang.

Mr J. S. Lang, called and examined.

2235. (*Chairman.*) You have been a member of the Partick Town Council for eight years?—Yes.

2236. You yourself are a writer in Glasgow?—Yes.

2237. Has the question that we are considering here been before the Partick Town Council?—Yes, from time to time, and latterly at the end of February and March of this year.

2238. Was it considered by the Town Council?—It was considered first by the Parliamentary Bills Committee and afterwards by the Town Council, who approved of the actings of the Committee on the subject.

2239. You are here to give the views of the Parliamentary Bills Committee approved by the Town Council?—Yes.

2240. Was there any difference of opinion in the Town Council, or were they unanimous?—The decision was unanimous. There were a few opinions expressed, but there was no amendment to the approval of the minutes moved.

2241. How many are there in the Town Council?—Eighteen.

2242. Do you have any representatives of the working class?—We are all representatives of the working class.

2243. But are there any working men in the Town Council?—There are two specially who pose as Independent Labour Party men.

2244. You have all parties in your Council?—Yes.

2245. The area of Partick is 1006 acres, and it has an estimated population of over 65,000?—Yes.

2246. That is an increase of some 11,000 since the last census?—Yes.

2247. The assessable rental of the burgh for 1906–1907 is £337,110, and the assessments levied from occupiers for the year 1906–1907 amount to 1s. 10⅝d. per £, and upon occupiers to 8⅝d. per £?—Yes.

2248. At the present rates that gives a revenue of £44,805?—Yes.

2249. Your population is a mixed one consisting of the working classes and residential classes?—Yes.

2250. Look at your total as at 21st November?—This is a table dividing the houses into one apartment, two apartments, three apartments and four apartments and upwards.

Of one-apartment houses there are . .	2455
Two-apartment houses . . .	6642
Three-apartment houses . . .	3428
Four apartments and upwards .	2593
Making a total of . . .	15,118

2251. You have told us how the population has increased 11,000 since last census. Have the whole of these differen sizes been increasing proportionately, or have some been increasing in larger ratio than others?—It is a general increase. The houses erected between 31st March 1901 and 21st November 1906 were as follows:—

One apartment	168
Two apartments	1971
Three apartments	796
Four apartments and upwards .	402
Making a total number of . .	3337

2252. Out of which nearly 2000 are two-apartment houses?—Yes.

2253. That is where the big increase has been?—The totals compare in the same ratio. There are 3428 three-apartment houses out of a total of 15,118.

2254. (*Mr Binnie.*) But the one-apartment houses are not increasing in the same ratio?—That is so.

2255. (*Chairman.*) The number of unoccupied houses of all sizes in the burgh was how many?—12,294, of which—

210 were of one apartment;
568 were of two apartments;
294 were of three apartments; and
222 were of four apartments and upwards.

2256. What aspect of this question has been chiefly before you?—We have dealt with the question in all its aspects, but the difficulty we, as a Town Council, see is in the rating question.

2257. Assume that the proposed changes were made from yearly lets to short lets, have you directed your attention to what would happen in that case so far as rating is concerned?—I would almost require to take it in the order of my notes, in case I overlook something.

2258. But to what extent does that affect you? You have the general burgh assessment and the general improvements rate? Are these the two things?—The principal rate is the burgh general assessment. Notice of that rate is sent out in the month of October. Our assessment rates are made up in September, but of course before the assessment is imposed the Town Council has got to consider what assessment will be put upon the burgh, so that during the year, about the month of August or July, we consider the requirements of the different departments and find out what rate has got to be imposed so as to cover the expenses of these departments.

2259. You are under the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892?—Yes.

2260. You have got no separate Act?—We have no special Act.

2261. The assessor having made up the valuation roll in

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the end of May or the beginning of June——?—First of all, let me say that the assessor who makes up the roll is not a burgh official. The assessor who makes up the roll is the assessor of the county of Lanark, and we have got to accept his roll when it is ready. We cannot expedite the making up of the roll in any way. It is made up in this way: in the month of May the factors give the returns to the assessor of the county. The assessor of the county makes up the roll, and he takes four months to do it. We do not get the roll until the end of September or the beginning of October, so till then we cannot tell what the valuation of the burgh is.

2262. You would have to consider what the rate was going to be in the previous month of August?—Yes.

2263. You assess in September, according to the valuation roll then supplied to you by the county assessor, and, as we know, the owners of premises let at a rental of £4 and under are assessed for occupiers' rates as well as for owners' rates, what deduction do they give for such assessment?—Ten per cent.

2264. Is that under the Act?—Yes, it is under Section 344 of the Act.

2265. Then they have relief against the occupier?—Yes.

2266. In practice, is it your experience, as we have been told by witnesses, that there is no distinction made by the owner when he collects the rent; he does not specify so much for rates?—I cannot speak to that.

2267. Where premises are let for a period less than a year, whatever the rent may be, are owners liable in addition to the occupiers under Section 345 of the Act?—Yes, the owner is liable as well as the occupier.

2268. But in your practice in Partick, do you charge the owner primarily?—No.

2269. You do not exercise the power that you have?—No. Of course if the place is unlet we have no occupier to serve the rate upon, and as it is returned as unlet, we do not charge the owner with the occupier's rate.

2270. Suppose the premises are let for less than a year at a rent above £4 and they are occupied, who do you charge?—The occupier.

2271. You have power under Section 345 to charge the owner direct?—Yes, if it is let in shorter periods than a year.

2272. You do not exercise that power?—Yes, we do exercise it.

2273. I thought you said that where the premises were actually let for less than a year you assessed the occupier direct?—No, we assess the occupier because we do not know for what period the house is let. The place is returned on the roll as let to A. B., and we assess A. B., not knowing whether he is there for six months or a year.

2274. Can you not find that out?—Yes, with a little trouble, and we do find it out during the year.

2275. Is the law in this position, that if you chose to inquire in any particular case and found that the let was for less than a year, then you could charge the owner direct?—Yes.

2276. But you do not make the inquiry and you do not do it?—As you will see on page 4 of my notes, we do make inquiry, but we do not have a staff to make inquiry at every house in the burgh. We accept the assessor's roll as we get it.

2277. Why do you make inquiry in these cases and not in others?—Because these are lets for less than a year, and it is in the lets for less than a year that we send to the factor and ask him to fill in the details on a statement. He does so and returns it to us.

2278. You only got fifty last year?—Yes.

2279. There must be many more than that?—That is fifty factors, fifty returns, but there might be ten times that number of individual cases.

2280. Take the cases where owners in Partick are liable for occupiers' rates and give us the enumeration of them. In the first place they are liable under £4?—Yes.

2281. In all cases?—Yes.

2282. And above £4?—They are liable under Section 346 where the premises are occupied for a part of a year only. That includes several things: (1) where the houses are incomplete at the date of the roll being made up and not appearing in it but subsequently let during the year; (2) the subjects on the roll returned as empty but subsequently occupied during part of the year; (3) houses let during part of the year to one tenant and during another part to another tenant, both holding under leases for less than a year; and (4) subjects let for a year or longer and only occupied for part of the year by one tenant and for another part of the year by one or more tenants.

2283. Take the second case, subjects on the roll returned as empty, but subsequently occupied during part of the year. How does it come to your knowledge that they are subsequently occupied during part of the year?—There are two rolls made up; there is a supplementary roll which is made up between January and March.

2284. When do you get it?—We get it in April.

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2285. And it is from that that you get the information?—Yes. We assess under that again on all names appearing in the supplementary roll.

2286. So you get two rolls, the original roll and the supplementary roll?—Yes.

2287. Are there not cases where the subject might be let for a part of the year without that appearing in the supplementary roll, namely, for the part of the year subsequent to the supplementary roll being made up?—There might be.

2288. And they would escape?—Yes, unless the factor gave notice.

2289. It has been decided in the Sheriff Court that under Clause 345 the occupier as well as the owner must get a notice of the assessment imposed for which owners are also liable?—Yes, in order that the occupier may be made liable.

2290. May I take it that the only cases where occupiers are paying rates directly or indirectly without knowlege of what the rates are, are the cases of houses under £4?—Yes.

2291. In every other case they know what is being paid either directly or indirectly through the landlord?—Yes, that is so. The occupier in every case gets a notice.

2292. And if that is a desirable thing, it is being done except in the case of those under £4?—Yes.

2293. Under Section 346 power is given where premises are occupied by different occupiers during the assessing year to assess a new occupier, although his name does not appear on the valuation roll for the period of his occupancy, and the owner for the rest of the year?—Yes, that is where there is a change of tenants. Last year the number of cases dealt with under that section was 607.

2294. If the net number of removals increase, then that number would increase proportionately?—Yes.

2295. Suppose the net number of removals was the same, but they were spread over the year, would that number increase also? You might have more removals in the sense of being spread all over the year and not all at one time at Whitsunday?—Yes.

2296. But the total number in the end might not be greater?—That is so.

2297. If that were the case, then this number of 607 would not increase?—No.

2298. It is only if the total number is larger that it would increase?—Yes.

2299. How do you work the provisions under Section 343 of the Act of 1892 for relief on ground of poverty or inability to pay?—There are two courts held during the year, one on the principal roll and the other on the supplementary roll. There is a remark upon the assessment notice drawing the attention of the ratepayer to the fact that he may appeal. When they do appeal they are asked to attend this court, which sits for two days as a rule at a time, and their case is inquired into. Particulars as to their poverty, etc., are entered in a schedule, and they are either relieved in whole or in part, or relief is refused. I may say that in my experience there is really no deserving case that is refused relief.

2300. (*Mr Esslemont.*) This schedule is prepared before the Court sits? It is lodged by the appellant?—Yes.

2301. (*Chairman.*) And the relief may be on all the assessments?—Yes.

2302. Or it may be partial?—Yes. We sometimes relieve to the extent of one half.

2303. To what extent do you grant relief?—The number relieved for the year 1905–1906 was 726, representing a rateable value of £726, 13s. 4d.

2304. That did not represent net loss?—Yes, it represented net loss.

2305. A good many of the people would not have been able to pay it. I expect none of them would have been able to pay it. At least we must assume that.

2306. Otherwise they would have no right to apply?—That is so.

2307. Or if they paid it, it would have been with great hardship?—Yes.

2308. There were 726 applications?—Yes.

2309. Now, under £4 there is no right to apply?—No because we assess the owner.

2310. Why is there no right to apply? I know it is according to the Act, but it looks as if these would be the people more than any others that ought to get relief?—But we don't assess them.

2311. However, it is according to the Act. Take the cases that you have spoken to, where above £4 the owner pays for one reason or another, are there any applications for relief in these cases?—Some of these may appeal. There are no owners that appeal under this section.

2312. But are there cases where the owner pays and where the occupier comes with a petition for relief, or are they all cases where the occupier is rated direct?—They are all cases where the occupier is rated direct.

2313. There would be nothing to prevent your entertaining an application from an occupier where the owner had paid the rate?—The time for appealing would be past before he could do that.

2314. Look at the cases you mention where the owner in the case of partial loss has to pay; would it be past in all these cases?—Yes.

2315. (*Mr Binnie.*) You said you had two courts, one of them being after the Supplementary Roll?—On the Supplementary Assessments.

2316. And these are for lets less than a year?—Yes.

2317. Do you not hold the landlord responsible in those cases?—Yes, he is responsible.

2318. You entertain appeals for relief from poor tenants in those cases?—We do.

2319. (*Chairman.*) Would not people be in a position to appeal when the owner had paid primarily for them, where he is assessed primarily?—Yes, where he is assessed as well.

2320. You have had no cases, you think, where the occupiers, have appealed in these circumstances?—There might be cases.

2321. But you don't know how that stands?—The Town Clerk, Mr Donaldson, tells me that there are many,—that is to say, the occupiers get assessment notice as well as the owner, and, therefore, they all appeal if they wish to be relieved.

2322. The average number of premises let by owners for less than a year is how many?—381, with a rental of £2444.

2323. That includes not only monthly lets, but premises let for part of a year only?—Yes.

2324. Do you anticipate that if the law was altered to make the period of letting of houses dependent on the period of payment of rent, there would be a large amount of additional work falling on the rating authorities?—We believe there would be,—there could not help being a large amount of additional work.

2325. What would that result in?—Very considerable expense.

2326. And it would result in additional assessment on account of the additional expense?—Yes.

2327. What would the additional expense be caused by? First of all, there would be an increase of the staff?—Yes.

2328. And second?—Practically the increase of the staff would be the principal thing, but in addition to that, we do not have machinery in the rating Acts and the valuation Acts for the statutory returns,—we have no means of checking the returns. Then, in addition to that, there is of course the loss of assessments through frequent removals. Then there is one very important matter, and that is the interference with the Town Council's calculation of the amount of assessment required to meet the actual expenditure of the year. I might explain that by saying that the returns from the landlords would only show monthly lets—we could not tell whether we were going to get a whole year's taxation from the tenant or not, and, therefore, we could not calculate how much the valuation was to be and on what we could assess.

2329. In your view, if this change were made, what statutes would it affect? It would involve an alteration in the Valuation Act?—Yes, and the rating clauses of the Police Act, at least.

2330. Those are the two?—Yes.

2331. You gave as the first reason for the additional expense, the increase of the staff. What part of the staff?—The whole burgh collecting staff.

2332. And the clerking?—Yes.

2333. You say there is no machinery for the statutory returns. Of course, that is not a fatal objection. It is an objection going to the necessity for devising new arrangements?—Yes.

2334. You said that there were no means of checking the returns. That again is a question involving additional arrangements?—Yes, all these might be met by additional arrangements.

2335. This proposed Bill could not be passed of itself without involving other changes in order to make the thing work smoothly and fairly?—That is so.

2336. Suppose quarterly lets were to be substituted for yearly lets, do you see any difficulty in the collection of rates being quarterly?—Yes, a great difficulty. In the first place, we have no power to collect them except once a year.

2337. Suppose you got power?—Then the difficulty would be this, as I have stated, that the roll takes from May to September to make up, and, therefore, you have got at least four months when you don't know what the rate is going to be, when we do not have the roll and cannot assess.

2338. Would it involve a revision of the roll quarterly?—It would involve four rolls instead of one, which would be impossible, if they took four months to make up one roll.

2339. Would it involve any other difficulty beyond expense?—Of course, I am looking upon that as an actual impossibility.

2340. That would be for the valuation authorities to do?—Yes.

2341. And not for you?—No.

2342. If they could do it, you would get your roll as you get the single roll now?—Yes.

2343. There are no rates collected except yearly?—That is so; they are all collected once a year.

2344. Is there a further difficulty on account of the annual valuation being put in the valuation roll?—Yes.

2345. What do you exactly mean by that?—We do not know what the rent is to be for the year, because, if the houses are to be let only by the month or quarterly, we do not know whether it will be so much a year or not. The assessor puts in the annual rent, and not the monthly rent.

2346. At the present moment there are quantities of houses let by the month; Why, because these are increased, should any new difficulty arise?—There are comparatively few let by the month, but when one-third of the whole population of our burgh are to become monthly tenants, then it does raise a great difficulty.

2347. It would only increase in degree a difficulty that exists at present?—Yes, but to what we think an insuperable degree.

2348. What about the rental being collected along with the rates?—There is a difficulty that strikes us, and that is, that, if the landlord is to be responsible for the rates of the tenant, he does not know between May and September what rate the Town Council is to put on the house, and therefore he cannot collect anything from his tenant.

2349. Unless by estimate, which might be too great or too small?—Yes, the chances are that it would be very much too small.

2350. (*Mr Howden.*) Do your taxes vary very much?—No, they are rather going back.

2351. They are practically stationary?—I don't say that. There might be a difference of 2d. in the £ at any time.

2352. To what extent has your assessment varied?—It has varied over 1d. this year.

2353. Has it increased?—No, it has come down within the last two years.

2354. Are you talking of owners or occupiers?—Occupiers.

2355. You gave the rate at 1s. 10⅝d. What was it last year?—1s. 11$\frac{7}{10}$d.; and the year before it was 1s. 9¼d.; the year before that 1s. 6½d.,—it rose from about 1s. 5d. in 1901 to 1s. 11d., and now it is down to 1s. 10d. The reason of the rise was 2d. which had to be put on the occupiers to help Glasgow to pay for the Clyde purification scheme.

2356. Does it strike you that there is any other difficulty except the one you mention in the landlord's collecting the rates?—Not from the landlord's point of view.

2357. He has that difficulty in rents under £4 at present?—Yes.

2358. He has got to make an estimate?—Yes.

2359. There is never a rebate claimed by him?—No.

2360. Suppose the landlord was to collect the rates, would you anticipate that he would receive an allowance for you for trouble and other losses?—Yes.

2361. At present does he get any allowance?—He gets 10 per cent. under £4.

2362. Have you any case of voluntary arrangements being made in regard to lets above £4?—No, I know of no voluntary arrangements being made.

2363. Have you power to make any voluntary arrangements?—No.

2364. Suppose the suggested change is carried out, what effect do you think it would have on the rents?—It would no doubt tend to raise the rents.

2365. Only if you gave an insufficient allowance to the landlord?—No matter what allowance we gave.

2366. Suppose you give the landlord an allowance that would cover his trouble of factorage and his losses, there would be no increase of rents then?—He has to put something on for the chances of loss, but of course that brings us to the next question, the question about the percentage that we are to allow him, which is a serious matter for the rating authority.

2367. I was taking it that the percentage was sufficient?—Taking it that it was sufficient, theoretically it should not raise the rent.

2368. And you think it would be a very important question what allowance should be granted?—Yes.

2369. If, for instance, instead of the allowance that Mr Cross puts in his Bill, it was to be doubled or trebled, as some factors suggest, then that would alter the whole complexion of the proposal?—Yes, instead of being a gain to us

it would be a loss to us. In fact, whatever it is, I look upon it as an additional loss to what we have already from reliefs.

2370. Has there been any experience in Partick in this matter? In 1894 was there an experiment which you think suggestive?—Yes. We understand that the Partick Landlords' Association sent out a circular raising their rents and blaming the Town Council. The Town Council were only acting under the Act of 1892 by charging the owners with the rates. That showed that the rents were raised for another cause. This is a much greater thing, and it would certainly tend to increase the rents further.

2371. In that case the charge was very much more than any such allowance as is proposed in Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

2372. Have you looked at the allowance proposed?—Yes.

2373. What do you say to it?—I do not know that I am competent to judge on the amount of the allowance, not being a factor, but I understand that they say that instead of 7½ to 10 per cent., it will be twice that at least. 7½ per cent. does seem a small percentage to cover contingencies.

2374. Suppose this change did take place and it became necessary to choose between frequent collection of rates by the rating authority and compounding, which in your view would be the better system?—Compounding. I think there is only one conclusion as to that.

2375. Subject to the allowance being properly settled?—Yes.

2376. In the evidence which you are giving, are you proceeding on the assumption that the number of removals in the year would be increased?—Yes, I cannot help saying that, because the number is considerable when there is no Act of Parliament justifying it—I mean to say, that if a tenant knew that he was entitled under Act of Parliament to leave whenever he liked, he might feel inclined to leave far oftener, whether out of thrawnness or necessity, I cannot say.

2377. Suppose, as it is suggested, owners are made liable up to a rent of £15, what amount of rental would that affect in Partick?—£100,046. If the rates were charged on rents up to £16, then the rental affected would be £106,702, practically one-third of the whole assessable rental.

2378. If the limit were raised to £20?—The rental affected would be £150,866.

2379. In addition to the rating question, are you prepared to speak for the Town Council on the general question of short tenure as against long?—Yes.

2380. What is the view of the Town Council on that, the present system as compared with the proposed system?—The general view of the Town Council is that the present system is satisfactory, and that there is no call for a change such as is contemplated by the Bill.

2381. From what knowledge do they form that opinion?—Just from their knowledge of the district.

2382. Have they had this matter brought before them by any deputation or resolutions at public meetings or anything of that kind?—The Town Council as a body have not, but in reference to that I might state that during the last eight years, I myself have had to fight three times for my seat, and on no occasion has this question of the remedies proposed by Mr Cross's Bill been brought before me. I was never heckled on any such question.

2383. I suppose you have been well heckled on other questions?—Yes. I infer from that that there is not the demand for it that some would wish us to believe.

2384. Does your constituency include any workmen's dwellings?—Yes, I should say that two-thirds are working class voters.

2385. Have you yourself known cases where there has been a grievance felt through men having to leave, and being unable to get a sub-let without loss?—During my time I have known of two such cases. One was a case where it was a larger house—a house of £75; and the other case was a case of a smaller house, which I think would come under the £20, where the tenant had to go to England.

2386. What happened? Did it result in loss to him through impossibility to sub-let?—I cannot tell about the sub-let, but he had to pay the rates. We let off the tenant of the larger house because he had taken a house in another part of the burgh, and he was not an occupier under the sense of the Act, although he had taken a house.

2387. Would you expect that there were many cases where a man had to pay the rent, owing to no sub-let being got? You would have appeals from such a man on the question of his having to pay the rates when he was himself not occupying the house. Suppose a man has to pay a proportion of rent because no sub-let can be got, he would also have to pay the proportion of rates?—Yes.

2388. If these cases happened often, you would expect that you would have men coming to you, appealing to you for relief?—Yes, if there were many of these cases, we would have heard of them.

2389. But under the statute, would you be entitled to consider such a case? There must be inability to pay before they can get relief?—Yes. If there had been such cases as you refer to, I think we would have heard of them, because we get complaints of all sorts.

2390. You would have no power to give him relief?—No, but, of course, the tenants and ratepayers don't always know that.

2391. In Partick, have you many residents who work outside?—Yes, a great many. In fact, the people live down there because it is central, and they can work in Glasgow or Dalmuir or in the district.

2392. *Vice versa*, have you people working in Partick and living outside?—Yes, a great many live in the Cowcaddens district, and use the Subway, which is a very quick means of transit.

2393. Have you many who do it by choice and voluntarily?—I think so. Partick is a very salubrious place; the death rate is only 12 per thousand, and I am not surpised at seeing a large population there.

2394. How long has that gone on?—Ever since I can remember.

2395. Do you know of men who for years have had their families resident in Partick and they themselves working at Govan and Clydebank?—I do not know, but I know this, that there are very few of the good class of ratepayers in Partick who change. I know that for the last eight years there have been the same inhabitants in some of the working-class streets. There have been very few changes among men with families, men working in the shipyards, not only in Partick but in Clydebank and Yoker. I could point to men living from year to year for the last ten years in the same locality.

2396. The facilities for travelling have improved very much?—Yes.

2397. (*Mr Binnie.*) What do they pay to go to Clydebank?—1½d.

2398. How much a week?—About 6d. a week, I think.

2399. (*Mr Howden.*) I think it is 1d. each way?—Yes, it will be 1s. a week. They take the cars more than the trains now from Partick.

2400. (*Chairman.*) In regard to the register of voters, would you anticipate a difficulty in making that up if this change were carried out?—Yes, I would.

2401. Arising from what cause?—If a man's rates are not paid by the 30th June he is disqualified from voting. Now it strikes me that the occupier of a £15 house would be dependent on his owner paying his rates for him under the new proposal. If this owner does not pay the rates for him, then he will be disfranchised. There is a doubt as to whether, if the occupier does not pay his rates, the owner will be disqualified from being put on the roll because some of his rates—the proportion payable by the tenant—are unpaid. Again, how can you decide who is to be put on the roll at all, because they are only monthly tenants? A tenant may never pay a year's rent.

2402. All these difficulties suggest this, don't they, that there would require to be special provision made apart from the provisions of this Bill?—Yes, I merely wish to suggest these difficulties, because I think someone could more competently speak to this point than I could. Before I go on, may I mention that the supplementary assessment is now a statutory requirement under the 1903 Act.

2403. What is the section?—Section 60.

2404. Was it introduced by the Act?—It was. Then I also want to make sure that I was clear about what I meant by real value; I think it is on page 5, the fourth paragraph of my *précis*. The value that the owner gives at the beginning of the year cannot be properly stated, because he does not know what his actual rental is to be if it is going to be a monthly let. At the present time he gives the value for the year, but if the lets are to be weekly or monthly, his rent may be 5s. the one week; it may be empty for the next week; it may be 6s. the following week, and 4s. 6d. the week following that. It is impossible for the landlord to give a true estimate of what the value is to be, and that is a difficulty that is sure to be met with.

2405. Unless the monthly let goes on as it did before?—Unless it does.

2406. Now, in regard to the loss of assessments in Partick on rents between £4 and £15, take last year, 1905–1906?—Last year the arrears were £504, and relief on appeal and paupers £516.

2407. Then has that been going down or up, taking 1903-1904?—Going up regularly. There was £377 loss, and relief on appeal and paupers £392. Of course I take it that the increase is commensurate with the increase in population.

2408. I see that you say the owner is to pay rates

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and the occupier cannot appeal under Section 343 for relief on the grounds therein allowed?—Section 343 is the only right they have just now for appeal, and there is no provision for any suggested alteration for conferring the right on a pauper, or rather on an impecunious person, to get relief.

2409. That would involve modification of the Police Act?—Yes, but if they did not get a right of appeal, of course it would be a serious hardship on the poor at any rate.

2410. Could you give, roughly, in regard to the loss of assessments, the percentage of the total assessments?—We collect 98 per cent. of the assessments in Partick and lose practically 2 per cent.

2411. (*Mr Binnie.*) But divide it into those below £10?—I have not had these figures made out.

2412. You will not relieve tenants above £10?—Oh yes, up as far as £20 sometimes.

2413. Could you give us a statement of how much you lose under £15 and how much you lose under £10?—I could get these particulars and send them in, but those, say, up to £20 and above £20 are very often widows letting lodgings or educating children.

2414. (*Chairman.*) Often going up to £30 and even £35?—I quite believe that.

2415. Now, suppose that the present system applicable to rents at and under £4 were made applicable to rents up to £15, what would be the result of that from your point of view?—Do you mean with the deductions for collecting?

2416. Yes?—It would be another heavy loss to us. It would be a loss, taking the allowances in the Bill. Above £4 and under £7, the valuation is £8675. Taking the assessment on that, it would mean a loss of £62.

2417. Brought out how?—By taking 7½ per cent. above £4 and under £7 of assessments. Above £7 and under £10 it would cover £28,786 of valuation, equal to £2751 of assessment at 5 per cent, £137, 10s. Then, taking £10 to £16, it would cover a valuation of £68,934, or an equivalent assessment of £6606. That at 2½ per cent. would be £165 if the rental was £6 to £20. The amount that would cover would be £44,164 more, representing an assessment of £4232 at 2½ per cent., £105, 16s.

2418. But why do you say that would be a loss? That is an allowance merely to cover loss which you at present sustain?—That is true; but no, we don't sustain all that loss just now.

2419. The allowance is on the footing, isn't it, that it is to be equivalent to the loss you sustain?—As a matter of fact we certainly lose those that are relieved on appeal, but it would be an addition, and I don't believe that any great part of those in arrear would still pay. I believe we would still lose a certain amount of arrears, a certain amount of relief on appeal, and in addition this percentage to the factors.

2420. Suppose the owners collected instead of you, you say there would be still loss that you would have to bear?—I think we might assume that there would still be a loss.

2421. How would that arise—through owners failing to pay?—No, through owners being unable to collect from their tenants.

2422. But you make them pay whether they collect or not?—True, but not if a tenant leaves his property and goes away. I mean, under the new system, if a tenant went away without paying his rent, we could not claim the rates from the owners.

2423. Then do you consider that the whole of that would be loss, or only a proportion?—A very large proportion.

2424. Would you expect that, if the proposed alterations were made, the result would be forehand rent?—I believe so.

2425. Do you think that would be any drawback to the working man?—No, I think it would correct itself.

2426. In what way?—In the first month, of course, there would be a difficulty, because the tenant would have to pay practically two months in one. I think it would correct itself afterwards. Of course, on the other hand, I do not believe that the large class of the respectable tenants would like to be asked to pay forehand rent.

2427. Then I understand the Council are of opinion that, as far as the question of the length of time between the taking of the houses and the entry is concerned, there is a grievance there, but that that is not limited to tenants under £20; it is a general grievance?—That is so. The Town Council thought that this Bill of Mr Cross's did not touch the real question, which was the missive question—that is, the period when they must declare that they are taking the house.

2428. And do the Council think that is a matter that should be left to the factors to arrange voluntarily, or that it is a proper subject for legislation?—They thought it was a proper subject for legislation.

2429. In point of fact, they prepared and have handed in a suggested Bill to meet that grievance?—They did.

2430. Was the Bill approved of by the Council?—Yes.

2431. Involving two things in the fourth clause—the shortening of the period of warning from forty days before Whitsunday to thirty days?—Yes.

2432. And, in the second place, dealing with the interval between the taking of the house and the term of entry?—Yes.

2433. And I see that you propose the thirty days should run from the 28th of May in your fourth clause. When you refer to Whitsunday, do you mean the 15th or the 28th of May?—The 15th of May is our understanding.

2434. Then it is reducing it from forty days prior to Whitsunday to thirty days?—Yes.

2435. So that we are at one about that. It is at present 4th April, isn't it?—Yes.

2436. What would this bring it to?—To the 14th of April. Of course I would like to say in regard to this Bill that this is merely a skeleton of our suggestion, and if there were any alterations suggested, we would be quite ready to consider them. We are not putting this as a hard and fast line, but as a principle on which we might settle the question.

2437. Whether it should be thirty days prior to 15th May, or thirty days prior to 28th May would be a detail?—Yes. I see also the preambles to most of the previous Bills on this question have all dealt with that inconvenience. I will just quote the preamble.

2438. You are referring to the Bill of 1890 of Mr Provand?—Yes, and Mr Cross's Bills of 1894, 1895, and 1897. (*Reads from preamble of 1894 Bill.*) That is really our view, and we think it is emphasised even by the present state of affairs going on ever since year by year.

2439. But you thought that preamble should lead, not to the remedy of the 1894 Bill, which was to prohibit any longer let than for a period of a month, but to the remedy of the 1890 Bill, which was to shorten the period between the taking of the house and the term of entry?—Yes, as also stated in the memorandum attached to the 1890 Bill.

2440. You think that that was a real grievance in 1890 which has not been diminished since, but has increased?—Yes, rather the reverse.

2441. You don't see from any point of view, the burgh's, the landlord's, or the tenant's, any sufficient answer to that being redressed?—No.

2442. And it would be no drawback to anybody?—That is so. In that way it would affect both the £50 houses and the £15 houses.

2443. You have heard evidence here that the practice in Scotland of simultaneous removal at the Whitsundy term instead of being spread over a year is productive of considerable inconvenience and hardship; you agree in that?—Well, I would not like to express an opinion for or against, but I know this, that new houses are now finished for periods other than the term. It has been stated that the houses are all made ready for the term. The builders in Partick finish their houses for all periods of the year. They don't specially work for the terms; they just try to get them finished, and they are as a rule fairly well let even at mid-terms.

2444. It is the case that the majority of removals take place on 28th May?—There is no doubt about that.

2445. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Is it the opinion of your Council that the present system of assessing and collecting rates once a year ought to be maintained?—Yes.

2446. You have not come to the conclusion that that system involves considerable hardship on the wage-earning classes?—No, we know that there is a hardship on the wage-earning classes being asked to pay all at once.

2447. That is the very point?—Our objection to that at the present moment is, first of all, that we have no authority to deal with it in any other way than we are doing. In the second place, it would cost very much more to collect it quarterly or monthly or any other way.

2448. Do you recognise that it is a hardship?—I do.

2449. And that some action should be taken in order to mitigate that?—Well, I would not like to commit myself for the Council, because at the present moment the Council are considering the question. I would not like to say whether we want to mitigate that hardship or not.

2450. It would scarcely be creditable to your Council if they recognised the hardship and they were not prepared to meet it as far as possible?—No, it would not.

2451. Then you say in your *précis* here that you think a more frequent collection of rates would involve great expense?—Yes.

2452. Now, do you think that is the case?—I am sure it is the case.

2453. How often do you collect your gas accounts?—We have nothing to do with gas accounts. Glasgow collects the gas accounts.

2454. How often do they collect them?—Three times a year.

2455. Do you think it would cost them less if they only collected once a year?—No, I think they would lose money by it.

2456. If they would lose money by descending from the collection made three times a year to once a year, doesn't that rather involve the possibility of a gain, as far as the collection of rates is concerned, if it were more frequent than once a year?—Our loss of 2 per cent. is so infinitesimal under the present arrangement, that I do not think we could lose any less.

2457. I think you must be singularly fortunate in collecting 98 per cent. of your assessments. We have been told here, I believe it is a fact, that on rentals of £10 and under the Glasgow Corporation lose 25 per cent?—Yes.

2458. But you are not in a position to say what the percentage of loss is in Partick under £10 and under £15?—No, I will hand that in.

2459. (*Mr Dobbie.*) On the same point that you have not the figures for £10 rents, you have on page 7 figures showing the relief on appeal and the arrears on £15 rents?—That is the loss.

2460. The relief on appeal of course includes more than £15 rents. The irrecoverables on rents between £4 and £15 are £504?—Yes. By the way, I made a mistake. The relief on appeal is also under £15, as stated here.

2461. Under £4 you have got £387 of rental?—Yes.

2462. And the rate upon that is a mere trifle, under £40?—Yes.

2463. So, even adding that £38 or £40 to the £504, that would give us the loss on rents under £15 at something like £540?—Yes.

2464. And I see that is under 6 per cent of your total collection?—Yes.

2465. Your total collection, you tell us, is £44,000?—Yes.

2466. And as Mr Esslemont has reminded us in Glasgow, we were told the loss upon rates under £10 rents was 26 per cent.?—Yes.

2467. But in Partick at present the loss on rentals under £15 is only 6 per cent?—Yes.

2468. What I want to get at is, if you can tell us, assuming the limit in the Bill for smaller houses is £20, would the fact show that the loss is less than 6, and what could you make the loss to be, do you think? I take it less at the £20 limit than at the £15.—Yes, it may be. I will have a statement made up and handed in showing the correct percentage of loss.

2469. Does the schedule to the Bill indicate what might be allowed in the event of compounding being agreed to?—Yes.

2470. Then what is the staple industry in Partick?—Shipbuilding and engineering.

2471. Could one call that a fluctuating population?—It is not a fluctuating population.

2472. If we get trade representatives to tell us that in Partick it is quite a prevalent custom for the employees in shipbuilding yards to migrate from place to place, that would not tally with your experience?—No, I would be very much surprised to hear it. As I stated earlier, I know of the better class of workmen, hundreds of them, who have lived in Partick for the last ten years at least to my personal knowledge.

2473. Come to another clause in the Bill. As you know, a suggestion is made that in Glasgow the limit should be £20, and in Partick £15. Have you considered that suggestion, and can you explain why there should be any difference between the two places?—No, I would certainly suggest, from my own point of view, because we have not discussed that point as a council—we have dealt with the general question—that the lower limit is the better.

2474. Do you think it should be universal, or would you have different limits in different areas?—No, I think it should be universal whatever the limit is.

2475. As you know, there is something approaching local option suggested in the Bill. Would you have each area given the right to determine whether or not the Bill should apply to that area?—No, I think that is a very bad clause.

2476. I should like your assistance on this vexed question of rating. Assume that there are to be quarterly collections, that would necessarily infer, wouldn't it, four different rolls?—Yes.

2477. How do you make up your roll just now in Partick?—It is made up by the assessor for the county of Lanark. Partick is in the county of Lanark, and under the Acts the county assessor makes up the roll.

2478. What does your assessor do?—We have no assessor.

2479. What is the population of Partick?—65,000.

2480. If you had an assessor in Partick whose duty it was to make up the valuation roll for burgh purposes, would that not minimise very much the objections you have to the quarterly collection?—I don't know the difficulties the assessor may have. I do know this, that at present the county assessor has an immense amount of work to do for Partick. Not only has he to prepare the roll for the valuation, but make an individual survey of the burgh so as to check his roll.

2481. There could be machinery laid down including the appointment of a local assessor. Subject to that being done, is there any insuperable difficulty in the way of having a quarterly collection?—No, I think it would be all a matter of machinery and expense.

2482. Of course upon a quarterly collection there would be injustice to some extent in respect of removals between each quarter?—Yes.

2483. If monthly lets became common, then, while the injustice might be minimised, it would still necessarily exist in the case of removals between the dates of each of these removals?—Yes.

2484. I take it that just now the valuation roll and also the assessments are made up giving the names of the tenants at a particular date in the year?—Yes.

2485. And that accordingly that name is the name of the party liable as occupier for the year's rates?—Yes. May I interpose here with regard to whether an assessor of our own would remedy matters. The difficulty would still exist in regard to financing the burgh—that is, in knowing what our rates were to be. We know it just now from the annual roll. We would not know it from the quarterly roll.

2486. As you explained, there is not much fluctuation in your total annual expenditure?—No.

2487. In regard to the supplementary roll, I gather from the answer you gave one of the Committee that there were cases where, notwithstanding that the proprietor paid rates, the tenant could still on appeal get exemption?—That is so. That is to say, the notices are sent out and the tenant may claim exemption. If the tenant gets exemption, of course the owner does not pay the rates.

2488. You mean, then, that there are cases, not where the landlord pays the rate, but where the landlord is liable to pay the rate?—Yes.

2489. And only in that case can there be exemption given to the tenant?—Under the supplementary roll, yes, because they are all individual cases where the landlord is responsible failing the tenant.

2490. You invite both to pay. The tenant can either pay or appeal for exemption. If the tenant pays, good and well; if he appeals for exemption, good and well; if he does neither, the landlord is forced to pay and does pay, but in that case there can be no exemption given to the tenant?—Yes.

2491. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You said you had two Appeal Courts?—One when the main assessments are sent out under the big roll, and the other when the supplementary roll is made up between January and March.

2492. At the second Court you don't deal with any appeal which would properly have come before the previous Court?—We may do that. We do, but of course the majority of cases are under the principal roll.

2493. (*Mr Howden.*) You have been eight years in the Partick Town Council?—Yes.

2494. What was it that induced the Partick Town Council to take in hand the preparation of what they call the House Letting (Scotland) Bill—your own Bill. What induced them to take into consideration the house letting question at all?—We were asked to consider the Bill introduced by Mr Cross. We did so, and came to the conclusion that there were things in it that did not suit us, and that in addition to that the real grievance had not been touched by the Bill. We hold that the real grievance was, being asked to take houses early in January for the May following. That is to say, practically eighteen months ahead.

2495. Who was it that asked you to take Mr Cross's Bill into consideration?—We considered all public Bills that were introduced.

2496. It was simply in the course of business?—Yes.

2497. You say that in eight years you went through three contests, and have not been asked a question in connection with this vexed question?—That is so.

2498. Does that also apply to Parliamentary candidates?—I know it does not. At last election one of the Parliamentary candidates was asked if he was in favour of Mr Cross's Bill, and the meeting would not listen to his answer. When he said "No," and went on to explain why, the meeting would not listen to him. My own feeling is that the public generally do not know what Mr Cross's Bill is; that the public generally think it is a Bill for doing away with the missive system. It has always been referred to as a missive question, and the public, I think, don't understand that the Bill does not deal with the missive question at all. That is my own private opinion.

2499. Then it would not be on the merits of Mr Cross's Bill that the audience were so intolerant?—No, it was

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because they did not rightly understand what Mr Cross's Bill was.

2500. But probably they knew there was some difficulty in connection with house letting?—Oh yes, that is what I say.

2501. Consequently this question has been more or less before the public of Partick?—For years.

2502. But in your opinion it does not apply to shorter lets, simply to the missive?—Yes.

2503. That is your opinion?—Yes.

2504. (*Mr Binnie.*) Would you look at the figures at the top of page 8. You have given there the loss, haven't you?—Yes, that is only referring to percentages.

2505. Then you have promised to give us your own actual loss?—Yes.

2506. And could you give it to us in the same way over again?—You mean the present loss, yes.

2507. Then you have spoken to the cost of collection, which should be greatly increased if the assessments were collected quarterly. Would you tell us what is the present cost of collection?—I could not exactly say. About £700, I am informed, embracing the collecting of the assessments and the sending out of notices.

2508. Officers and collectors and all notices and everything?—Yes.

2509. You said that would be very largely increased if the collection were made quarterly. Could you form an idea of what the increase would be?—I could not. Of course it would mean increase of staff, increase of printing, and so on.

2510. Can you form an idea of what the increased cost would be?—I could not say offhand. The chamberlain suggests a half more.

2511. Mr Wood, for the Parochial Board, said it would just be four times?—But of course his district is so much the greater and his rental is so much larger. That may be the difference.

2512. That would make no difference?—Oh no, it should not make any difference, because it is a proportion.

2513. Perhaps you will think this over and let us know, when you have time to think over it, when you are sending in those other figures?—Yes.

2514. Then you propose that the warning away should be thirty days before the 15th of May?—Yes.

2515. Is there any reason why it should not be reduced to something like twenty-one days before the 28th of May?—No reason from the view of the Town Council.

2516. Is there any objection you can see from the point of view of a tenant?—I can see no objection.

2517. The tenant knows before being warned away that he has not got his house taken for the following year; isn't that the case?—That is so.

2518. Your warning away is simply a legal formality to make sure that there is no mistake?—Yes.

2519. Would it be a hardship to anyone to reduce the warning away to, say, twenty-one days?—I do not think so.

2520. If you had then in that way reduced the warning away, deferred it to, say, the 7th of May, is there any reason why the letting term should not be postponed still longer than your Bill proposes?—No reason.

2521. Your Bill proposes the 15th of March on the assumption that the tenant is to be warned away on the 14th of April?—Yes, I see no special reason for limiting it to the 15th of March.

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2522. You could with equal convenience to all parties defer the letting term to the 1st of April if the warning away were deferred to the 7th of May?—Quite conveniently.

2523. That would still further reduce the time?—Yes.

2524. You raised a difficulty about the collection of rates quarterly, which does not appear to me as great as it seemed to be to you. You said the only person responsible for the rates is the person whose name is on the roll?—Yes.

2525. Would it not be quite simple—there must be alterations if there are to be quarterly collections—to make it, say, the person responsible would be "A. B." or the present occupant?—Well, you see we require machinery for that. We require to give, under the present law, a notice assessing someone.

2526. Undoubtedly you would need four notices if you collected it quarterly?—We cannot just now assess an unknown person.

2527. No, but you can have a Bill making the person responsible for the assessment "A. B.,"—that is, the occupier at the beginning of the year or any person occupying the house in the course of the year?—Yes, then we would require to get the name of these different occupiers. Are you referring to four different rolls?

2528. Collecting the rates quarterly with whatever survey is needed in order to make that possible. You do have additional surveys just now in order to get those, but not in every part of the year; you told us that?—Yes, that is so.

2529. Well, you would require to make a similar survey in order to know who was responsible for the quarterly assessments?—Our difficulty is that such a thing would be almost impossible.

2530. In what way?—Because at the present time the year's roll takes at least four months to make up—that is, between May and September—and it would be impossible to have another roll made up. Each roll would overlap the other, and if each roll took four months to make up, we would never get to any finality.

2531. Does the supplementary roll take four months?—No, but there is a very small number. There are perhaps about 400 names altogether.

2532. It would be the same if you had it quarterly?—I don't think so. It would require to be a complete roll, a roll and a survey made over the whole district.

2533. But you require to do that for the supplementary roll?—Yes, but to a very, very small extent.

Well, we will leave it there.

2534. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Does this £700 you speak of as the cost of collection include the amount paid to the assessor for the preparation of the roll?—No, it certainly does not include that.

2535. (*Mr Dobbie.*) How much do you pay under the county rate towards the assessor's salary and the preparation of his roll?—I do not know what the county rate is as applicable to that, as the rate includes several things, such as registration of voters, etc. The Burgh Chamberlain is to give evidence later as to figures, and the tables I have been asked for will be produced by him with a correct note of the present cost of collection of rates.

Mr J. B. Wills.

Mr J. B. Wills, called and examined.

Mr J. B. Wills.

2536. (*Chairman.*) You are a house factor and carry on business in Glasgow? You are a life member and an ex-president of the Association of House Factors and Property Agents in Glasgow, and a life member and director of the Glasgow Landlords' Association?—Yes.

2537. You are here to express your own views as distinguished from any views of the Association?—Yes.

2538. You have had thirty years' experience of the management of all classes of property and have always had a large number of tradesmen and labourers as tenants?—Yes.

2539. How many tenants have you at the present moment under your charge?—3355.

2540. Running from what rent to what rent?—From £4 up to £150.

2541. In regard to the rents under £4, are these in the hands of factors?—Yes.

2542. None of the factors who have come here seem to have had charge of houses under £4 rent?—I had a lot, but they have all been demolished by the City Improvement Trust, and I am left with something like three or four.

2543. But you have had experience in that class?—Yes.

2544. Are you yourself in personal charge of your business? Do you come in contact with tenants directly?—Yes.

2545. So in that way you have opportunities of knowing their views?—Quite.

2546. Have you taken an interest in this house letting question during all your business life?—Yes.

2547. And have you been associated for twenty years with different efforts that have been made to better things?—Yes, that is to say, I wrote to Mr Provand when he started the question in 1890, and I had an interview with him, and I have taken a critical view of all the Bills that have been presented since.

2548. Were you cognisant of the memorandum which Mr Provand prepared and prefixed to his Bill?—Yes.

2549. We have had two views stated, the one that the real grievance is the length of time between the date of taking the house and the actual entry, and the other view that the real grievance is the long let. What, in your experience, is the grievance that is chiefly complained about?—The long let.

2550. Is the other also a grievance?—Yes, it is the present grievance.

2551. And does the other apply not merely to working men's houses, but to houses of higher rents?—Yes, in a modified degree.

2552. The question of long let is a working man's question?—Yes.

2553. There is no agitation for short lets among people paying £100 or £200?—No, they want very long lets.

2554. How do you reconcile that view of yours with the fact that in the original Bill and in the original memor-

andum the only thing referred to is the contract of entering into a long agreement several months before the term day, and nothing is said about long lets at all?—At that time that was the present grievance put before Mr Provand.

2555. Was it the only grievance?—The only one put forward at that time, and they thought at that time that by putting forward the date of letting something would be gained to begin with.

2556. But even then the other question was to the front?—Yes.

2557. When you say it was a grievance, were there meetings about it, or was it a matter you found out by personal contact with tenants?—There were meetings occasionally.

2558. Were any M.P.'s heckled about it?—Not at the early time.

2559. In regard to the remedy for the grievance, is it your view that that could be done apart from legislation, or would it involve legislation?—It necessarily involves legislation.

2560. Why?—Well, one factor would endeavour to get the advantage of another by getting in before him. Decidedly we should all be put compulsorily on the same footing.

2561. Is it the fact that it has been proposed in Glasgow that the factors should agree, but that they have never done so?—Yes, we had a meeting of the House Factors and Landlords' Association, at which they both agreed that this early letting was the grievance. The Factors' Association had a meeting afterwards, and they passed unanimously the resolution that this was a grievance, and the next resolution that came forward was that this should be remedied by legislation, and the vote was equal. The chairman refused to decide and the matter was left over.

2562. Now, in regard to short periods of let, of course houses under £4 have no interest in that. Houses between £4 and say £10 are interested because a proportion of them have yearly lets?—That is so.

2563. And all householders between £10 and £20 are not interested, because practically they are all yearly lets?—Yes.

2564. But that applies between £4 and £20 more or less?—We have no yearly lets as low as £4.

2565. In your experience, how do you stand in that way between £4 and £10? What is your proportion of yearly lets and short lets roughly?—Under £10 one apartment houses 75; two apartments under £10, 649. That is a total under £10 of 724 let yearly. Then of two apartments above £10 and under £20 there are 363; three-apartment houses above £10 and under £20, 449; in all, of houses from £10 to £20 there are 812.

2566. (*Chairman.*) Can you tell us, Mr Binnie, what is the percentage of houses yearly and monthly?

(*Mr Binnie.*) He has given us only the number, I think, of yearly tenants between £4 and £10. He has not given us the monthly tenants?—Yes, next column, page 4.

2567. (*Chairman.*) Yes, there is a table. One-apartment houses at £20 and under, 890. Of these 75 are yearly lets and 815 monthly?—Yes.

2568. Then of two apartments, 459 of these are under £10; 649 are yearly, and 447 are monthly lets. Then two-apartment houses above £10, there are 363 yearly lets; and those of three apartments from £10 to £20 are 449. Tell us, Mr Binnie, what is the proportion of yearly and monthly lets under £10 with one apartment?

(*Mr Binnie.*) It is over 90 per cent. monthly.

2569. (*Chairman.*) Take two apartments under £10, what is the percentage monthly?

(*Mr Binnie.*) It is about 40 per cent.

2570. (*Chairman.*) Then the others are all yearly. Do you suppose, Mr Wills, that that is the ordinary proportion? Is there anything special in your houses?—No. I think you will find it generally to be a fair representation of other factors.

2571. You have no quarterly lets?—No.

2572. (*Mr Binnie.*) Just look at those figures. The two-apartment houses above £10, 363; you have forgotten to carry that to your total, and so that makes a mistake?—No the three give 1459 houses.

2573. (*Chairman.*) There are the three figures entering into the 1459. Have your monthly as contrasted with your yearly lets been increasing or diminishing statistics?—Pretty stationary.

2574. There is no tendency one way or another?—The tendency, if anything, goes towards monthly lets. There are certain properties which we will not let monthly.

2575. But it is not very marked?—No.

2576. What, then, in the question of these yearly houses, is the grievance in your view that the tenants have?—Well, their situations are uncertain and they don't want to bind themselves for such a long period to a house with much uncertainty about their work, and they feel that they are in a measure handicapped.

2577. Has that any special relation to your particular class of tenants, or would it apply generally? Your tenants are no more shifting in their occupation than ordinary working men?—No.

2578. Why do you say that? Is it from personal experience of tenants?—Yes, I know most of my tenants.

2579. Have you found tenants coming and wanting to remove after they have taken the houses? Can you give us a notion of what percentage of sub-lets you have had on an average of three years on the houses let yearly at £20 and under?—4⅓.

2580. Of which 53 per cent are under £10, and 47 per cent. from £10 to £20?—Yes.

2581. Can you tell me how many of these sub-lets have taken place between the taking of the house in February and the entry in May as compared with those after May? Just abont a half.

2582. That seems to be the general experience?—Yes, just about a half.

2583. How does that come about?—In a great many cases people at such an early date are afraid to lose their houses and they take them, and very often they come afterwards and say that they took their houses because they did not want to be thrown out, but that they had got work elsewhere or had some other reason, and then we said we could not take it off their hands but would be quite glad to sub-let.

2584. Does that involve that if the law for alteration that is proposed were made to shorten the period between the taking of the house and the entering, a number of these sub-lets would not need to be arranged?—I think not.

2585. If a half of them are in the first four months and you reduce that to two months, then a lot of these cases would disappear?—Some of them would—a good many.

2586. Of the 50 per cent. that you find between taking the house and the term of entry, can you give me any notion of how many will be in the first two of the four months, as compared with the last two?—No, I could not do that offhand.

2587. Would more be in the last two?—I think they might be pretty equally divided.

2588. Because, if they were, and if you shortened the four months to two, you would get rid of 25 per cent.?—I think they would be about equal. I have had a good many cases, I daresay, altogether, possibly a dozen from first to last, of lets entered into say to-day, and then three days afterwards a call comes from the tenant, who asks to be allowed to give it up, as he has lost his situation.

2589. Can you tell me of this 4⅓ per cent. In how many cases was there any ultimate loss to the principal tenant?—25 per cent. on the number of sub-lets have lost. I have given you a table.

2590. That is your supplementary table. You produce a table showing the ultimate loss to the principal tenants in the three years, from 1903 to 1906. That does not include, does it, the charge that you made in the way of factor's fees?—No, that is purely rent.

2591. That would fall to be added?—Yes.

You have not added it up.

2592. (*Mr Binnie.*) The tenants paid £89, 2s. 1d., and the loss was £21. I suppose what you mean by a tenant paying is the sub-tenant?—No, it is the principal tenant who has to pay for the loss at the time of letting.

2593. What is the second loss?—There is no second loss in that.

2594. (*Chairman.*) But the last column?—The first column is just the gross rent, and the second column what the tenant actually lost.

2595. (*Mr Binnie.*) And what is the third column?—What the proprietor lost.

2596. (*Chairman.*) It is the second last column that is the important one for us. That comes to how much.

(*Mr Binnie.*) £89, 2s. 1d. is the net loss by the tenants.

2597. (*Chairman.*) In addition to that, what would they each have to pay to you, do you think, on the average?—I charge them really the rate that I charge the proprietor, sometimes from 3 to 5 per cent., depending on the class of house. For instance, from £10 to £20 3½ per cent., and under that 5 per cent. Of course there are a great many we don't charge at all.

2598. But you in all these cases do your very best to have no loss at all, or to minimise the loss as far as you can?—Yes.

2599. May I take it that these tenants were all of them or almost all of them satisfactory tenants?—Yes.

2600. Can you give me any idea of the proportion in which they left for work elsewhere?—No, I could not differentiate, but that is the main reason.

2601. It will also arise from loss of employment?—Yes.

2602. Or wanting to take a cheaper house?—Not so much that. What we do is to endeavour to point out to them that all the difference in the rent would not cover the removal expenses and other costs.

2603. It is generally change of employment?—Yes.

2604. There will be cases of death?—Oh yes. That case of 394 Duke Street, where the sum was £13, 2s. 6d., was the case of a lady who died between the taking of the house and the Whitsunday term. The house did not let all year. The trustees had not only to pay the balance of her rent up to Whitsunday, but the whole ensuing year's rent.

2605. Why had sub-lets not been got in these cases?—They were got. These are the results of sub-lets.

2606. Why was a complete rent not got—why was there a balance the tenant had to pay?—The sub-tenant paid.

2607. But you say there was a net loss in these cases to the principal tenant. Now, if there had been a sub-tenant for the full period paying the full amount, there would have been no loss?—No.

2608. But it arises from the failure on your part to get a sub-tenant for the full period?—Yes.

2609. In other cases from the sub-tenant that was got failing to pay the principal tenant?—I have not had any cases of that kind.

2610. It was from an indefinite period?—Yes.

2611. You think that in these cases there was a real hardship to the principal tenant?—There would have been to have kept that.

2612. In the result they had to pay these sums; there is the hardship and the grievance?—I think so.

2613. Suppose you had, instead of a yearly let, a quarterly let, you would still have, although in a less degree, similar cases? You can conceive a case where a person requires to leave within a month, but that would be such a rare thing it is not worth taking into account.

2614. Is the present system generally, in your experience, administered by factors as well as it can be?—Yes.

2615. And the fees they seem to charge, if the system is to be kept up, seem a natural incident to it?—Oh yes; I cannot work for nothing.

2616. In addition to the actual cases of sub-let that you have to do with, you think there are many others, in which, but for the risks that a man runs, they would change the house?—Yes, I know that.

2617. What kind of cases are these?—Here is a man with a family, and he has got a situation say in another town and wants his family with him. He comes to you and says, "Will you take the house off my hands." You tell him you will sub-let it with pleasure. He says, "Will I be liable for the rent?" "Oh, yes, you will." "For what time?" "Oh, well, I would rather go myself and just wait," and he goes himself without his family and goes home perhaps for week ends rather than take the risk of having two houses on his hands.

2618. So he is involved either in the cost of lodgings if he stays away or in the cost of travelling?—Yes.

2619. And apart from cases where people come to you, there will be those, I suppose, where they know the risk that they would run and don't even come to you?—Oh yes.

2620. You think it is not fair merely to look at the actual number of sub-lets, but also at the cases where men would change if they had the chance?—I do not think you can overlook that.

2621. If that is a real grievance, you say the mere alteration of the date of re-letting would not substantially affect that?—It would not touch it at all. It is not a question between sixteen months and fourteen months.

2622. It would merely touch it in this way, that the sub-lets in the first two months of the sixteen would then disappear?—Yes, that is always a problematical quantity.

2623. When you talk of a short period of let, what do you mean, monthly or quarterly? Do you think that quarterly would be a fair arrangement as compared with monthly on the one hand and yearly on the other?—Oh yes, I think so, and I think quarterly would be a very fair arrangement.

2624. Better than monthly?—Yes, I think it would be preferable.

2625. And in regard to the question of the rates about which you are going to speak, it would be easier to arrange that if quarterly?—Yes.

2626. Would you expect, supposing a different system were introduced, that there would be many more frequent removals on the whole or merely that they would be spread over the year?—I don't think there would be many more on the whole. There might be at the start, when the thing was new, but in two or three years it would settle itself. It is costly for a Scotsman to remove.

2627. For a Scotsman?—Well, he has his plenishing and has usually a well-furnished house, and it is costly for him to settle down in another house.

2628. Then everybody seems to be agreed that the present system of removals, being practically confined to Whitsunday, is unfortunate. Do you take the same view?—Yes, strongly.

2629. If a remedy can be got, do you think the one proposed could meet it?—I do.

2630. Do you concur with the other witnesses as to the loss and hardship due to the flitting being all in one rush?—Yes. You never can overtake that within a week or ten days.

2631. Have you any flitting at November?—No, I have no intermediate lets except monthlies.

2632. How do you account for that?—Well, they are taken yearly.

2633. Has that some connection with the rates being yearly?—No. They are taken yearly in January and run from Whitsunday to Whitsunday.

2634. Why not from Martinmas to Martinmas?—It is the custom.

2635. Your view is the same as we have heard from others on that with regard to the difficult question of rates. Suppose you say that the term was quarterly, do you suggest that the landlord should collect the rates or that the rating authorities should, instead of an annual collection of rates, make a quarterly collection?—Quarterly collection would be least objectionable. I would rather have the Corporation collect the rates.

2636. Why?—It keeps any friction away, and I think, generally speaking, the tenants would take a greater interest in taxation if they paid the rates directly. They would feel it more acutely.

2637. You concur with other factors that it is desirable not to mix up the landlord with rates if it can be helped?—Yes.

2638. Also if the landlord collects the rates along with the rents, the tenant may never come to know what rates he was paying?—That is so. There is no doubt they would be served with notices just as they are now.

2639. If there were quarterly collections?—I should say so.

2640. What if compounding of rates were gone in for, would they not be served with notices?—No.

2641. Have you yourself had any experience that is helpful in this?—I have several properties where the houses are mixed, say single houses about £5, 10s., with rooms and kitchens from £8, 10s., and in these small houses I have included the rates with the rents.

2642. By arrangement with the rating authorities?—No. They will not allow you anything unless you take a full tenement.

2643. Then the burgh authority allows you?—7½ per cent, I believe, but I have no experience of that.

2644. What do you do then?—I say the rent is so much, including rent and rates, say 11s. 8d. a month. The people ask no more. They know that that clears them for everything. They have got it all off their heads. I just collect the notices from them and pay the rates.

2645. Do you charge anything in addition to the amount of rates for your trouble?—Yes, I put on 25 per cent. for trouble and loss.

2646. Do the tenants know that?—They have their notices delivered to them personally, and if they just compare them with their rent they would find it out. The balance would be the rent.

2647. (*Mr Binnie.*) Do you state separately what the rent is?—No.

2648. Or when they take the house, what the rent is apart from the rates?—No, I say the rent is 11s. 8d. a month. You have nothing else to pay.

2649. (*Chairman.*) Supposing it was brought to their notice that you were charging for your trouble, would they be satisfied then?—I think so. For instance, in connection with the stair gas, it is well known amongst the majority of the tenants that we charge 10s. per burner and that we get 25 per cent. for collection and repair.

2650. Apart from rates, do you think that short lets would have an influence in raising the rents?—No, I don't think so. That is to say, if there were a greater number of tenants than houses it would, but that is just supply and demand. That in itself would not have any effect whatever. The rents might come down rather than rise, because houses were more numerous.

2651. If, on the other hand, the rating authorities are going to collect and the lets were quarterly, would that involve a quarterly collection?—A quarterly let would mean a quarterly collection of rates, I think.

2652. Would it be a benefit for tenants who are paid at frequent intervals that they should pay their rates?—I think the shorter payments would be better for working men.

2653. You think that that would be quite worth while even though it cost the rating authorities a considerable amount of money?—Yes, they would save considerably by that.

2654. In the end?—Yes, it might cause them some trouble.

2655. Are you of opinion that others with the right of appeal on the ground of poverty should in any case be preserved?—Certainly.

2656. What is your view, then, this being your view generally on Mr Cross's Bill as meeting the situation both in theory and practice?—I think it is the only proposal that has been made that really meets the situation. I cannot see any way that it does not meet it.

2657. I notice you say in your statement that "the 'principle of Mr Cross's Bill leaves to parties the complete 'freedom in bargaining subject to their confidence in each 'other as to terms of payment." Is that so in the end? Wouldn't the result of it be that there would be no yearly lets at all, because there are no yearly terms of payment. It would bring yearly lets to an end?—It would, unless we specified with each other to allow the rent to run for a year, which the landlord would not do. It would bring yearly lets to an end automatically.

2658. And would result in either quarterly or monthly rents?—Yes, or half-yearly. We have lots of people whom we are quite willing to trust for half a year.

2659. But there is no such thing in practice?—No.

2660. Do you think it would then result in not coming into existence?—It might with regard to the better class.

2661. Some of the ones who are now yearly would become half-yearly, and in that way the idea of security of tenure would still be given effect to?—Yes. We have a great many tenants who have half-yearly incomes, and these half-yearly incomes suit the half-yearly rents, and of course it would be all the more so if they paid it quarterly if it came quarterly, but we let it to them half-yearly on account of that.

2662. Have you heard of what is put forward, that the letting to certain classes of working men for security of tenure can be given effect to by half-yearly lets in Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, the whole measure of tenancy depends on trusting a man.

2663. I understand at the same time that while taking the view you have expressed as to short lets, if that is not given effect to you concur with other factors that the minor proposal about reducing the period between the taking of the house and the entering it is a good thing?—I think it is necessary to have that legalised apart from the other question.

2664. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Look at your table on page 4. You have in houses of two apartments in 649 cases yearly tenancies, and in 447 cases monthly tenancies. Now, are the monthly tenants just as good a class as yearly?—Generally speaking they are.

2665. Do you find in your experience that the houses occupied by these monthly tenants require more repair than those occupied by the 649?—Yes, there are more removals.

2666. Therefore more repairs?—Yes, more or less.

2667. But that is not due to the quality of the tenant?—It is just the tear and wear. You cannot get them to be as careful as you would be of your own.

2668. You say, I think, that looking all round among your tenants, you don't think that there is a disposition to remove unless it is necessary?—That is so. They don't do it for fun.

2669. They recognise, as I have heard it said in the North, that three removals are as bad as a fire?—Quite so.

2670. As to the number of removals, I see you take an average of three years and put them at 407, a little over 12 per cent. on the total number of houses factored by you. You think if the proposals in Mr Cross's Bill were given effect to that percentage would be materially increased?—It would, for the first year or two, but it would not be afterwards.

2671. As to the present period for warning out, do you see any objection to that being altered?—None whatever.

2672. What do you think is a sufficient period?—Twenty-one days before the 28th.

2673. (*Mr Dobbie.*) How do you explain the fact that there are more removals among monthly tenants with two apartments than the yearly tenants?—They are of a more migratory nature and some of them remove to be near their friends. There is a multitude of reasons why monthly tenants do remove. There is no one special reason that could be given.

(*Mr Binnie.*) They have very little to remove.

2674. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You said they belong practically to the same class. Between the two classes is there any distinction between the yearly tenant and the monthly tenant?—Take the houses under £10 on a gradient. You come from £9, 19s to perhaps £6, 15s. Very well, when you come nearer to the £6, 15s class, you are amongst a lot of labourers whose work is continually changing. They are in Govan to-day, Partick to-morrow, Parkhead next week.

2675. That is, that while on the figures we have, the yearly and monthly under £10 look pretty much the same, as a matter of fact in detail monthly ones are more commonly found at a lower rate than from £7?—Yes.

2676. That is quite a good explanation. Then, about compounding, are you in favour of the landlords paying the rates, or do you prefer that the tenants should pay them?—I prefer that the tenants should pay their own rates, but I would not object to compounding.

2677. I see, in your view, their periods of let would necessitate the inclusion of the payment of rates with the rent. Do you think that is so?—Absolutely. If you want the monthly lets, certainly the rates must be included. There could be no further way out of it, but with quarterly lets I do not see why there should not be quarterly collections and payment direct. I would not object to the other.

2678. A suggestion has been made that quarterly collection of rates would necessitate four different rolls. You, speaking as a house factor, might tell us whether you think it would be practicable to collect the existing rates by four instalments from the tenants in the option of the tenants?—Yes, I think so, and I think it ought to be; there was an agitation for that same thing, that they might pay their rates in instalments in two or three or four payments. Supposing a man's rates came to £1, it should be in his option to pay four times 5s. each time as he got his wages.

2679. The difficulty against that is that, with shorter lets, there might be more differences among the tenants, and it would be rather hard to recover from one tenant, say for quarter four quarters' rates. Would you, as a practical man, think it feasible that the house agents should have the duty upon them to intimate to the collector each roll in the course of the year, to enable three supplementary rolls to be made up of new occupiers from whom the remaining instalments might be collected?—I do not know that we would be unwilling to do that. It is not a difficult thing to do.

2680. Not if your removals are 12 per cent. overhead?—No.

2681. If the factors or proprietors intimated each removal as it came within their knowledge to the local authority that local authority could make up the supplementary roll?—I would not say, "as it came to their knowledge," but we could do it at periodical times.

2682. Say quarterly?—Yes.

2683. Assuming there were to be quarterly collections, it might be practicable, you think, to ensure that the collections each quarter would be made from the new tenants, provided that in the middle of each quarter, say, the proprietor or house factor had sent in a schedule of the changes since the last quarter?—It is quite practicable, but it would cost us some trouble.

2684. Do you think it is necessary, assuming that compounding was adopted, that the tenants should know how much is being paid by them for rent and for rates respectively?—Yes.

2685. Is it practicable?—Yes, they could serve with notices as they do now, all the same.

2686. But, as Mr Binnie pointed out, if you let a house for a slump sum, the mere possession of a notice does not indicate to the tenant what the real rent is unless the tenant has come to you and found from you what the real rent is to be. If you let a house and say, "You are to pay so much, including rent and rates," the mere fact that the tenant knows the rates are 2s. a £1 does not tell him what, without the rate and outlay or trouble to the factor, he would get the house for?—If he gets the notice that his rates are, say, 10s., and he notes that his house is £5, 10s.——

2687. How does he know that?—He can be told the rent of his house.

2688. You said when you let your house——?—Oh yes, people generally know by asking what the rent is.

2689. Would you tell what the rates were at the beginning of the year?—We just take an average sum.

2690. You would add an average sum for your own trouble?—Yes.

2691. You tell the tenant three things: first, the rent; then, second, what you are putting on for your own trouble; and, third, the rates?—I would not tell them all that unless they asked particularly.

2692. I quite know that would not give the tenant the knowledge of what the real rent of the house was?—No, it would not give them the net rent of the house, but they would not care anything. That is the rent to them.

2693. But we have been told, now by yourself, that it is most expedient from a public point of view that the ratepayer should know what he is paying to his municipal government?—Yes, I think so.

2694. He would not know of that scheme?—He would have it in the valuation roll. There are valuation notices always served as to the net rent of the house for assessment purposes, and the tenant is made aware of that as he gets a notice served on him.

2695. Your suggestion would be to have a roll for

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assessment purposes and collect in a slump sum from the tenant?—That is statutory.

2696. (*Mr Esslemont.*) The tenant can easily find out what the amount of the rating is when he knows the rest—the rent and the cost of collection?—Yes, there is nothing to hide.

2697. Except that in some cases we have been told 25 per cent. would require to be added?—Yes, I would not like it. I have to take the good with the bad.

2698. (*Mr Howden.*) Seeing you admit the great rush for houses in January, and the rush at the yearly removal term, the 28th of May, would you not be inclined to extend the provision not in the actual terms of Mr Cross's Bill, but in doing away with the removal term of 28th May and spreading it over the rest of the year for the larger class of houses and business premises?—The removals in that class of house are so few that it would be of no real importance.

2699. But you would have no objection to starting a tenancy say in August for business premises, terminating the next August, if the tenant so desired?—Yes, I would object, and I will tell you why. The property may be sold or change hands at these terms, say Martinmas and Whitsunday, and it is expedient that the tenancies should all terminate at the same time as the transfer of property takes place. The usual terms for the sale and purchase are Whitsunday and Martinmas, and it is advisable that the tenancy should terminate at the same time, so that if the new proprietor wanted to alter the premises or make some alteration in rent or in the tenement, he would be able to enter upon the whole at the same time.

2700. You told us that in certain cases they contracted leases on business premises and the larger class of houses. All those will not expire at the one time?—Yes, all at Whitsunday. Every let I have expires at Whitsunday.

2701. But not all at one time. One may have five years' lease and another only four years' lease?—That is so.

2702. You think it is necessary that they should expire at those terms?—I do not follow you. Suppose I let for five years from Whitsunday 1900, that terminates at 1905. If I let for three years, it terminates at 1903, but it terminates at Whitsunday of each of these years.

2703. My point is that I want to do away with the Whitsunday term if possible. Would there be any great difficulty in the way of doing that?—I think so, a very great difficulty. It would be very inexpedient.

2704. Would that not apply to all classes of property?—You mean shorter lets.

2705. Yes?—No, not in the same degree, simply to business premises and the larger class of houses, business premises principally.

2706. (*Mr Cox.*) The rates on all £4 houses are paid by owners?—Yes.

2707. Above £4 are they collected?—No, paid direct by the tenant.

2708. In your 2800 houses there are 1262 monthly lets. You may say 45 per cent. of your houses are monthly lets?—Yes.

2709. So that of all your tenants 45 per cent. pay their taxes direct?—Yes, that is so.

2710. The authorities already collect a very large percentage of the rates directly from the tenants?—Practically them all, for I have only three or four houses under £4. The Corporation collect all the rates.

2711. They are already to a very large extent collecting the rates of short lets. Supposing the system of short letting was increased, as it would under the proposed measure, why should the authorities not collect them just as at present?—I don't know. It is as easy to collect them monthly as quarterly.

2712. (*Mr Esslemont.*) In these 1262 cases, all of them don't pay their rates direct?—Yes.

2713. Everyone of them?—Every tenant I have practically pays his rates direct except those I specially arrange with.

2714. These are very few cases?—Yes.

2715. (*Mr Cox.*) I have a statement before me that shows that in Glasgow there are probably 60,000 houses that are monthly lets, which would be enough for about 300,000 of the working population of the city. Out of all those are there enough for the man who wants monthly lets. Has he any difficulty in getting such a house?—No, if he wished a house he would get it of a certain class. We would not let every house by the month even supposing it was standing empty. The frequent tenement is this—two rooms and a kitchen house on one side at say £14, 10s. or £15; a room and kitchen say at £9, 19s. or £10, 10s. in the middle, and a room and kitchen of £11, 10s. or £12, 10s. at the side. There are two different sizes of houses on the one flat and three different classes of tenancies. Supposing I had a middle house standing empty at £9, 19s. and these other houses were all let yearly, I would not let it monthly.

2716. Are the monthly houses largely of the poorer class?—Yes, a different class of tenancies.

2717. So a man might want a monthly let and not get a suitable house?—That is so.

2718. (*Mr Binnie.*) You have given us the number of yearly and monthly lets that you have heard of, one and two and three apartments. Could you give us what is the gross rental of these. What is your gross let rental?—I have not made it up. I only made up the number of houses for this commission. I did not know myself till I made that up.

2719. Do you not know what is the gross rental of the property you factor?—No.

2720. I see your tenants of sub-lets lost about £30 for the last three years?—Yes.

2721. What rental would that apply to?—It must be a very, very small percentage.

2722. I am perfectly aware of that, but could you give us some idea?—I have no idea. I will send it in for you.

2723. (*Chairman.*) You can give us that to enable us to calculate the percentage?—Yes, on the gross rental, but that only applies to houses under £10.

(*Mr Binnie.*) Of course.

(*Mr Howden.*) You give us also the annual number of removals between the terms, the whole of the sub-lets.

(*Mr Binnie.*) He has given us the percentage so that we can make that up.

2724. (*Chairman.*) Supposing the compounding system was gone in for, what percentage do you think would be a fair allowance. You see Mr Cross gives 30 per cent. What is your view?—It is ridiculously inadequate.

2725. What would you substitute for that?—For these lets, £4 to £7, I should say 33⅓ per cent.; from £7 to £10, 25 per cent., and from £10 to £20 from 15 to 20 per cent. I should be prepared to say that we would take the same loss as the Corporation has, plus a sum for collection and a sum for loss on empties.

2726. What you are suggesting is only to keep you right, not for surplus profit?—No. If we are paid for our trouble and get the necessary allowance for loss, it is all we want.

2727. It has been suggested that this new proposal which you approve of would affect the value of properties for lending purposes?—It would not alter the class of tenancy in quarterly lets at all.

2728. It has been suggested also that the law of hypothec is all that is needed. In your experience has there been any separate agitation against the law of hypothec?—No.

2729. Is it a mere benefit to the landlord or also to the tenant?—It is a form of security the tenant offers us. I would certainly demand security if I had not the right of hypothec, because I have no other security except that to fall back on.

2730. Does it enable you, in the case of illness for instance, or other causes, to give indulgence to a tenant whom otherwise you might have to turn out?—Yes.

2731. Does it come to this, that the only people who have reason to complain are ordinary creditors?—Yes, and sometimes it is a great blessing to a working man to have the law of hypothec, if he has got to do with the loan purchase men who come round about his wife when he is not in, and the only protection is the law of hypothec.

2732. You have not known of any agitation?—Only grumbling.

2733. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do these monthly tenants of yours move as a rule at Whitsunday or throughout the year?—Throughout the year, at any time.

2734. You have 12½ per cent. of removals at Whitsunday?—That is not monthly at all, only yearly.

2735. And these monthly people do remove at intermediate dates?—Yes, they are always a floating population.

Mr D Munro

Mr Daniel Munro, J.P., F.S.I., called and examined.

Mr D. Munro

2736. (*Chairman.*) You have been a house factor and proprietor in Glasgow for upwards of forty years?—Yes.

2737. You have been engaged in business all that time?—Yes.

2738. You have given evidence in cases of arbitrations frequently?—Yes.

2739. You have looked at this question in the light of the recent Bill that has been introduced—have you also seen the previous Bills?—No.

2740. What is your experience? There has been a complaint against the present system. What has that consisted of? First of all, who has it come from?—From the working classes altogether, who occupy houses largely under £10 rental, and under £10 they felt it a great

hardship that they were compelled to retake their houses four months before the period of occupancy, and perhaps before that arrived they had to change from the place of employment and remove to distant parts of the city.

2741. How long is it since you have heard of that first?—Four or five years, more or less.

2742. Before that, was it not?—It was not so clamant.

2743. We had a Bill in 1890?—I cannot speak of the precise time.

2744. What attitude have the owners of property and their factors taken up?—They were quite willing to meet the views of the complainers if everybody had joined, and they could have been held to it by some legal enactment, to an arrangement whereby the period would be shorter. The date of warning stood in the way.

2745. Has it arisen in your experience from proprietors or factors going too early or rather from tenants coming too early?—We have a large number of tenants who come before the time, and we have to turn them away. The better class come very early, because they like to have a selection of houses.

2746. These tenants have brought the thing on the heads of all tenants?—Yes, and some of the landlords are anxious to get before their neighbours. That has led to it also.

2747. Taking the question of warning away, what is your suggestion about that?—It is at present 4th April. I think it might be left to the 1st of May.

2748. If that were done, what alteration might be made in regard to the entry, in regard to the taking of the house as compared to Candlemas in the present system?—If this could be postponed, say, to the beginning of May, renewal of lets could be delayed probably to the middle of March or to the 1st of April. Further, it would also have been necessary to enact that all lets for the ensuing year made before a fixed period should be held to be invalid.

2749. You want time enough for both sides to make their arrangements?—Yes.

2750. The present system seems to give an extra amount of time with the resulting inconvenience?—It entails a certain amount of hardship on the working people.

2751. Is that universally acknowledged?—I think so.

2752. There is a difference of opinion among the factors as to whether that should be done by voluntary arrangement or by legislation?—It would never work by voluntary arrangement, because they would go back to the old system.

2753. Supposing that it was done by legislation, what limit would you put in respect of the amount of the rent. Would you make it a general application to all houses or limit it to the houses of a particular rental?—The tenants of larger houses have a great many considerations to take into account, and they prefer as a rule to have some considerable time to arrange for their houses.

2754. I suppose the warning away might apply to all houses?—Yes.

2755. Then the period of taking the house as compared with the period of entry, would that not apply to all houses? Would there be any reason for limiting that?—Issuing the missives would be. The only thing is that the public who occupy houses above these rents are not complaining, to my knowledge.

2756. Then, turning from that to the proposal on Mr Cross's Bill to fix the period of let by the period of payment of rent, what do you say to that?—I think that would involve very serious consequences to the owner.

2757. What would be the drawback to the owner?—It would increase the amount of trouble very much. For instance, at the expiry of each period of let, the factor would require to ascertain whether or not the tenant would want to remain and re-let or warn away. That would be more trouble. His shorter period of let would have the effect of greatly lessening the value of security, inasmuch as the frequent changes of occupancy would entail serious loss of revenue from periods of partial occupancy.

2758. Then I presume that the result would be to make more frequent change of occupancy?—It would be certain.

2759. Why?—Because they would have opportunities of leaving for newer houses in the neighbourhood. The nature of people sometimes is to be restless and leave when there is nothing to restrain them.

2760. Would that apply supposing the period were merely shortened from the year to a quarter as distinguished from a monthly let?—It would apply to all short periods.

2761. In addition, thirdly, would it increase the wear and tear?—Yes.

2762. Is that from the injuries done in the course of removal?—Chiefly on that account.

2763. Suppose there were any such provision, would it require to be accompanied, in your view, with a more summary power for ejectment?—It would be rather awkward in some cases if tenants, after being warned away, were not leaving. I think summary power should be given for ejectment, as a great hardship would be imposed on the incoming tenant, and as a consequence claims of damage might arise against the owner.

2764. There are four reasons you have given, but at the present moment there are thousands of monthly lets, aren't there?—Yes.

2765. Then it would merely extend the number of monthly lets. All these difficulties you have mentioned apply to existing monthly lets, don't they?—It especially applies to houses of the better class occupied by the better class of working people.

2766. In your own factoring, have you any monthly lets above £10?—No, the houses occupied by monthly tenants are chiefly under £8.

2767. Take a monthly tenant at £8, do you say that their houses cost you more at present than a yearly tenant of £8?—Certainly.

2768. Could you put a figure on it?—I could not do that.

2769. Roughly?—I know the tear and wear is very great. In connection with houses under £8 the total outlay for upkeep and taxation would not be less than 33 per cent., but that does not include the loss from removals.

2770. Suppose a yearly tenant of £8 comes to you now—a first-rate man—and says to you, "I want a monthly tenancy; how much will you charge me?" I am referring to a man that you want to keep?—We would refuse to let on monthly terms.

2771. It would be a matter of money, wouldn't it?—Yes, but the short let would not suit us, because it would increase the outlay for the tear and wear.

2772. But if you got recouped?—The loss from partial occupancy would occur in that case too. Besides, we want to keep for a certain class of houses a certain class of tenants. Monthly tenants as a rule are not of the same social standing.

2773. At all events, if you did, you would put on a substantial increase?—Yes.

2774. Supposing, for instance, you were to turn a whole tenement from yearly into monthly lets, and there was no question of mixing up the tenants, you would substantially increase the rents?—We would require to do so. I could not tell you the amount.

2775. Do you say in regard to the thousands of houses existing with monthly lets that the demand for monthly lets is at present being made?—A large percentage of the population.

2776. Is there any demand at the present moment for monthly lets which is not being made just on account of the existence of yearly lets, or have you ever had experience of that?—No.

2777. Have you ever had a case of a man wanting to turn his yearly let into a monthly?—No, but I have had a monthly tenant wanting to pay quarterly and take yearly lets.

2778. What was the reason?—For some of them it was a social question.

2779. Did security of tenure enter into it or not?—I do not know. They don't wish the factor to be coming so often to their door. Respectable people don't care about that.

2780. Is that an element?—Yes.

2781. All you have stated is independent of the taxation difficulty?—Quite.

2782. And the evidence you give is on the footing that the short lets would lead to a substantial increase of rent?—I believe so.

2783. Therefore on that point of view it would be a drawback to the tenant?—Yes.

2784. And payment of rent in advance would be a result?—Certainly.

2785. Why would that be so if hypothec remained?—Simply because of a short tenure and the power of leaving at the end of the period.

2786. At the present moment are the existing monthly lets forehand?—Yes.

2787. Any others would be just the same?—In the same way. We have a number of quarterly rents payable in advance.

2788. In regard to taxation we have two views. In regard to the question of friction some seem to think that it would introduce an awkward element between the factors and tenants, others that there is nothing in them: what do you say?—I really cannot say; in connection with the collection of stair gas there is frequently an amount of friction between the tenants and the factors. The tenant seems to think he should have the benefit of the discount given to the factor.

2789. Would the same thing arise here?—They might certainly object to the amount the factor levied.

2790. Would they know that he was compounding?—They might not know in that case.

2791. Supposing the compounding takes place, what is

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your idea about the proposed allowance in Mr Cross's Bill?—I think it is quite inadequate.

2792. Do you agree with what Mr Wills has just said?—I think so.

2793. Covering the amount of loss and a sufficient sum for collection?—I think the amount of loss sustained by the authorities should be the measure of allowance to the factor, with a sufficient sum for collection.

2794. You say that it would require the keeping of a double set of books?—The factor would require to keep a set of books apart from the rents, and if it is to be levied from month to month and quarter to quarter, it would be a very difficult thing in the way of accounting to strike up the proportion of taxation into fractions. It would be almost impossible. The work would be enormous. It would require an accountant of the first order.

2795. Do you think that in the Act the tenant would have to be charged such a sum that they would not as a result make anything by this, but rather lose?—That the landlord should not use, you mean. I do not think the landlord should have any loss imposed upon him.

2796. Suppose the system of yearly let is changed to monthly and with compounding of rents, do you think it would be in the end to the benefit or to the loss of the tenant?—To his injury in the end.

2797. Supposing, on the other hand, that the Corporation were to collect these, say, quarterly. If the system has to be organised, do you think that is a better way than compounding?—I think it is a much better way. The system has been frequently spoken of at our public meetings by the public who wish for quarterly payments.

2798. Apart from this question of short lets altogether?—Entirely.

2799. It would be theoretically a better system. Do you see any practical difficulty to prevent it from being carried out?—Instead of quarterly collections it might be better in three parts. One quarter at the end of the year would be a very awkward time for collecting. It would be a long time to wait till the 28th of May before the authorities got the last quarter.

2800. You suggest Whitsunday, Lammas and Martinmas?—Yes; perhaps Candlemas, Martinmas and Lammas.

2801. Have you found that some rating authorities are taking an interest in this question?—No, except that I saw to-day that the Partick people were.

2802. Do you think, if the new proposal were carried out of short lets, it would affect the value of property for investment purposes?—I think it would certainly do that.

2803. Why?—Because it would lessen the value of the security in the property. There would always be a certain amount of loss with one tenant leaving and another coming.

2804. Can you say there is any difference at the present moment, as far as investors go, between property with yearly tenants and property with monthly tenants?—Yes, certainly.

2805. You have found that?—Yes.

2806. Investors are more ready to invest on a yearly property than a monthly?—Yes.

2807. Is that due to the class of tenants being better in the one case than in the other?—A good deal.

2808. Assume that the better class were made monthly?—There would be uncertainty of tenure, and it would be considered by any investor joined with this obligation to collect assessments.

2809. Investment in property as applied to workmen's dwellings would be diminished?—Yes, I am quite convinced of that.

2810. Whether that result takes place in England or not you don't know?—No.

2811. You think that is a very important aspect of the question?—There is no doubt about it.

2812. In your own experience, have you found many cases where there was hardship to a tenant who had to remove in the middle of a term through his losing a substantial sum of money?—I looked into that. I have gone back three years, 1903 to 1906, and I have found the loss is very, very small.

2813. Give us your total rents you are dealing with under £20?—Under £10 t' e total rental is 64 per cent.

2814. Of what?—Of dwelling houses.

2815. The whole of the houses you are factoring?—Yes.

2816. Then under £20?—Between £10 and £20 we have 20 per cent., and 84 per cent. altogether under £20.

2817. Can you tell us what number of houses you factor under £20 and divide that into 4 to 8 or anything you like?—1132. Of these there is 86 per cent. under £20.

2818. You have 1132 altogether under £20?—Yes.

2819. How many of these are under £10?—834.

2820. Out of the 1132?—Yes.

2821. Have you ascertained what loss there has been to principal tenants during the last three years where they had sub-lets to arrange?—Yes. We had a total of 45 removals in three years, the average for each year being 15 applications for relief of the houses. In one year the tenants lost nothing; in the second year they lost £6, 10s.; and in the third £3; in all the sum of £9, 10s. for the 45 tenants, equal to about 3 per cent. of the rental represented, which was £350.

2822. And the loss is £9, 10s.?—Yes.

2823. Did that arise from there being a period after they left before the sub-let took place?—Yes.

2824. (*Mr Cox.*) Was there any loss to the proprietor?—No, not in these cases. I understand a good many of these applications for sub-letting were made before the term and after they had taken the houses.

2825. Before the 15th of May?—Yes.

2826. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Just one question about the case of investors in property. You said, I think, first of all, that people were not so willing to purchase property which was let to monthly tenants?—Certainly not.

2827. You say in your precognition, that if these altered conditions of letting were coming into effect, investors would not for a moment think of having anything to do with them?—I do not think they would, with the burden of taxation associated with them.

2828. But one of the reasons, of course, why investors are not so keen to purchase houses that are let by the month is that these properties are the older properties?—Yes, and it is not very satisfactory dealing with monthly tenants as a rule.

2829. They are the poorest houses you factor?—As a rule.

2830. But that would in itself make investors fight shy of them?—Well, they do, but they are not so fond of them. There are often degrees amongst them.

2831. But that enters very largely into it?—Yes.

2832. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I think the same reason explains the sentiment which you referred to as existing against short lets in Glasgow. You said respectable people prefer yearly lets?—Yes.

2833. Does not that arise from the fact that the short lets at present are all very low rented and occupied by rather an inferior class and confined to inferior properties?—Well, I don't quite know the point of the question.

2834. I want to know why you think that people as they become respectable prefer yearly lets. You know in England, where there are some respectable folks, yearly lets are not known?—Well, it is different among the Scotch people. We have different ideas, and I am giving you my own experience. I have had tenants asking me to take them from the position of monthly to that of yearly tenants.

2835. I am putting to you that the explanation why there should be the present sentiment against short lets is just that at the moment tenants on short lets are of an inferior class, paying the lowest rents and occupying the inferior property?—That is so.

2836. Therefore, if this custom of short letting became more general and became popularised among all classes of rentpayers, that sentiment would disappear?—It might and it might not.

2837. You are in favour of some change in regard to the notice issued?—Yes, the Bill does not provide for that.

2838. I take it that your idea is that that would be more equitable to the tenant in the direction of giving him more time to make up his mind?—I think it would.

2839. I take it that there is always a scramble for the houses prior to letting?—Yes, always very considerable.

2840. While you agree that the law might be altered, I take it that there still would be the same scramble and discomfort to the tenant whether the letting day was in January or in May. When it did come there would still be the same anxiety on the part of the sitting tenant to take his house or somebody else's?—Yes, at an earlier period.

2841. On the other hand, short lets suggest that that discomfort would be minimised if spread over the whole year?—I do not think so, because tenants as a rule have got a custom at the end of the year as arranged at 28th May, and make their arrangements accordingly. I think the scramble would still continue.

2842. But if the scramble was four times a year?—We can scarcely imagine that. I do not suppose all the tenants would leave *en bloc*. A great many of them would remain till the end of the year.

2843. Do you think the Bill would be a dead letter and there would be the same tendency to have the removals annually at one term?—It might be modified.

2844. (*Mr Howden.*) You want the limit of this Bill up to monthly lets of £12 only?—Yes.

2845. You say that would favour a class who are well-to-do and who are more or less in permanent situations. Take the case of a tradesman who had a small family, how many apartments do you say that man should have in his house?—It depends on the number of his family.

Mr D. Munro. Dec. 1906.

2846. Say four?—It is generally a room and kitchen.

2847. Don't you think two rooms and kitchen would be necessary, especially if the family were grown up?—They won't pay a rent for it unless they are in an extra good position as tradesmen.

2848. Do you know of any tradesmen who are paying more than £12 of a rental?—We may have some at £13, but very few.

2849. You would not say a man was extravagant if he went above that rental?—It depends on his income.

2850. On the average tradesmen's wages?—We decline to give tradesmen houses much above the rent I have stated without some security or advance.

2851. Even taking it at what you say, a room and kitchen, there are a good many rooms and kitchens in the city of Glasgow rented at £12 and upwards?—Not many occupied by the working classes.

2852. I have myself occupied a house above that rental, and I am a working man?—Maybe you are a superior one.

2853. There are many others in the same position?—I do not say there are not exceptions, but I have stated what I believe generally. I have 50 per cent. of my houses let monthly.

2854. You don't want to extend those to £20?—No, I think that is too high.

2855. You are actually in a unique position. You are the only man who has come before the Commission in that position?—It is my opinion; I give it for what it is worth.

2856. You say the change of the monthly lets would increase rents?—It would certainly increase the rents for good.

2857. How do you make such a statement as that in the face of the fact that you say the owner would suffer a serious loss? If there is an increase of rents, there will be an increase of revenue?—Well, I say if we could raise the rents, we would.

2858. You said it definitely?—Only if we could get it.

2859. Then that is problematical?—In that case there might be no loss.

2860. You say here that there would be a particular hardship on tenants who would get monthly lets, because the landlord would claim forehanded rent. Is it not the fact that on quarterly lets at the present time the tenant pays almost exactly a month before the tenancy expires? That means, he pays his rent at Candlemas, 2nd February, up to the 28th of February; it is almost a month forehanded?—Practically.

2861. If you were to alter that to monthly lets, it would be carrying on that system practically unbroken?—No, it is a very different system between Lammas, Martinmas, and Candlemas.

2862. You would demand a month's rent. You claim that a man should pay on the 15th of May. Take it at that, then his tenancy expires on the 28th of May. Very well, you would then claim another month's rent from him, but he would have a fortnight's time, wouldn't he, to cover that, and it would be better if he was to shift in February. You actually charge a month's rent forehanded on these tenants and at quarterly rents?—Putting it over the year, that has been the arrangement approved of in the country for generations.

Mr D. Munro. 11 Dec. 1906.

2863. So that, although that is trotted out as a hardship, it really is exactly the present system?—All that I can say is that it would be made worse by the arrangement in the Bill. They would have to pay the whole quarter in advance at the beginning of the period.

2864. If it was monthly?—It would not increase the number of monthly tenants.

2865. (*Mr Cox.*) Do you not think there is a very real desire on the part of the working people for these short tenures?—I have not come in contact with the working classes to such an extent as to know, but I know this, it has not been clamant so much as the missive question. That has been the complaint, and a long-standing one. This Bill does not settle the question, and the complaints will go on as before in respect of missives.

2866. The agitation has been long continued and seems to be growing, and the evidence that comes before one leads one to consider that there is really this desire on the part of the people; but you have not come across that yourself?—No, I have not met it.

2867. (*Mr Binnie.*) In regard to notice of removal, it has occurred to me that this might be a possible way of simplifying matters, and I would like to hear what you think of it. If any intimation or intention to remove by a tenant could be made in writing twenty-one days at least before the day for removal, and that no warning away should in such a case be required, then the landlord, if he wanted to get quit of a tenant, would require to give twenty-one days' notice to the tenant?—That is prior to Whitsunday.

2868. Yes?—I think that would do. Any reasonable arrangement would do.

2869. That would save any trouble and expense of warning away?—Yes, but the tenants would require to be definitely made aware.

2870. Any intimation or intention to remove would require to be in writing?—Yes, that would do.

2871. And then you don't require to warn them?—No.

2872. On the other hand, if you required to give twenty-one days' notice to the tenant, would that not meet it?—I think it would, or something like that. I should mention that I have some particulars here I have not been asked for. The number of removals from my houses under £20 was 15 per cent. last year.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) That is 2½ per cent. higher than Mr Wills.'

[ADJOURNED.]

FOURTH DAY.

MONDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 1906.

At the Municipal Buildings, Glasgow.

Present:—

SHERIFF CHARLES J. GUTHRIE, K.C., *Chairman.*

MR JOHN T. HOWDEN. | SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, Bart.

MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C. | MR EDWARD COX.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr H. Brechin. Dec. 1906.

Mr HUGH BRECHIN, called and examined.

2873. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow, and convener of the sub-committee on the missive system, with which is incorporated the sub-committee on the collection of rates along with rents?—That is so.

2874. How long have you been a member of the Corporation?—About twenty years.

2875. Do you happen to know when the sub-committee on the missive system was inaugurated?—12th February 1903. The Corporation remitted to the Committee on Police Finance the following motion:—"That the Corporation 'exercises all its powers in favour of the abolition of the 'present unjust missive system."

Mr H. Brechin. 17 Dec. 1906.

2876. In 1903, what was meant by "the present unjust

missive system"?—It was felt to be a hardship on the part of people being obliged to take their houses so early, practically for sixteen months. That was one reason.

2877. Was the question, apart from that of the long lets, at all before the Corporation, or was it merely the length of time before entry that they had to take their houses?—Perhaps both; the length of time before entering the house, and, besides, their being bound to continue to pay rent for their houses until Whitsunday the following year.

2878. When was the sub-committee on payment of rates along with rents organised?—The following month, 13th March.

2879. Has the Corporation come to any conclusion as recorded in the minutes, beyond the one you have read, in 1903, on this matter?—Nothing beyond renewing the remit from year to year to the committee who had charge of it.

2880. I think, on 30th March 1903, at the time the sub-committee was formed, the Corporation remitted to the Committee on Police Finance the following motion:—"That, 'in view of the great hardship entailed on the working 'classes by the present system of rate-collection, it be 'remitted to the Finance Committee to consider and report 'on the advisability of obtaining Parliamentary authority 'to provide for the collection of taxes on a specified rental 'along with rents." Were both these motions, of 12th February 1903 and 30th March 1903, carried unanimously?—Yes.

2881. How many are there in the Corporation?—At that time there were seventy-seven.

2882. How many have you now?—Eighty.

2883. Is the view of the Corporation still the same on the matter as it was then?—My answer to that is, that when the present Council was being formed, this remit was rendered without any discussion. Beyond that we reported on 8th August last to the then Town Council what we had done, and the Council unanimously approved of the course which we had taken up to that time.

2884. Have you any working men on the Council?—Yes. What is a working man?

2885. A man who is still a working man in the ordinary sense?—They are representative of working men. I do not think we have anyone labouring with his hands in the Council.

2886. You have them representative of working men, and who have had the credit of having been working men at one time?—Certainly so.

2887. Is the view taken by the Council the same on the part of those who represent the distinctively working men's districts, as on the part of those who represent what is commonly known as the better class districts?—The question, so far as I can remember now, bulked pretty largely in contested elections a month or six weeks ago, and I think in working class districts alone the candidates were tickled as to their views upon this missive question.

2888. Did the question arise in a double form, both what may be called the missive question proper, namely, the long period between the taking of the house and the period of entry, and also the question of long lets by itself?—I should think the period from the taking of the house until entry was perhaps more important in the eyes of ratepayers than the question of long lets.

2889. What is your district?—Dennistoun.

2890. What character is that?—Residential to a very great extent.

2891. In the view of the Finance Committee, are the two questions of the letting proper and the collections of rates inseparably related to one another?—We think that they are.

2892. Why?—Because if the shorter let is to become operative, then, in our opinion, the question of compounding for rates along with rents should follow it.

2893. If the shorter let is to prevail, it would result, I suppose, either in compounding or the rating authorities having to collect more frequently?—The difficulty of collecting more frequently is very great.

2894. But the one or the other would follow?—Well, I think the collecting more frequently under existing statutes is akin to impossible.

2895. It would, in short, require alteration of the relative statutes?—Clearly it would. Of course a house is occupied from 28th May, and it is the 30th of September ere the valuatiou roll is complete. We cannot assess for that year until the valuation roll is complete. It takes a considerable time to send out the notices throughout the city, so that practically at the earliest it is the beginning of November—of course some do pay at the latter end of October, but it is the beginning of November before the collection gets any way.

2896. If you had an intermediate or intermediate collections it would involve a supplementary roll?—I do not see how they could go on the then roll not being made out till the 30th September.

2897. In the view of those you represent, is the custom of tenants becoming bound for a year's rent four months prior to the commencement of the occupancy merely a theoretical matter or involves substantial hardship?—I should think in many cases it will involve hardship more or less.

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2898. We have been told that a very considerable number of cases of removal and consequent sub-let arise between the period of taking the house and the term of entry?—Well, were I to speak as a landlord now, I should say if I thought the person who had taken the house and given it up were good enough for the amount, I might insist on that rent being paid, but how often do we find people taking houses and giving them up, not worth sueing in a sense, and no steps would be taken in that respect.

2899. I suppose it is your experience that, in regard particularly to certain trades, there is necessarily a good deal of shifting during the course of the year?—Clearly.

2900. Does that vary according to the trade?—To a great extent. Some are more shifting than others, I should say.

2901. But some districts of the town might be found to have a larger proportion of shifting people?—Yes, and families have to shift for the purpose of getting better situations now and again.

2902. May I take it that the Corporation have supported, apart from details, the general principle in Mr Cross's Bill?—We have reported to the Corporation what we have done. We waited on Lord Dunedin, when he was Secretary for Scotland in Edinburgh, and also upon the present Lord Advocate during this year, and following that we waited upon the Secretary for Scotland, and the Town Council have approved of what we have done all along.

2903. Did you lay before these persons any written statement you could produce to us?—No, I do not think so.

2904. It was all verbal?—As chairman I had to make a statement in each case.

2905. Do the Corporation minutes contain any statement of your report or your minutes and what the Corporation did?—Yes.

2906. You might hand these in.

(*Witness to Mr McIntyre.*) Get them copied and hand them in.

(*Mr McIntyre.*) I will do so.

2907. (*Chairman.*) Do you have in view, Bailie, that the consequence of Mr Cross's Bill would be practically to put an end to early lets?—No, I don't think it would.

2908. Well, now, just take it, it would be still possible, under his Bill, to have an early let, if the period of payment was one year?—Yes.

2909. But practically that is never done?—No half-yearly payments.

2910. Would not the practical result of it be to put an end to early lets for houses under £20?—It would in theory and practice too, but at the same time there would be an understanding between owner and occupier.

2911. An honourable understanding, but not legally enforcible?—Which would be carried out. It does not pay a tenant to flit every now and again, any more than the owner to have a shifting tenant.

2912. Would not it put an end also to half yearly lets, because we are told there is scarcely such a thing, if at all, as half-yearly lets under £20?—I do not say that. Speaking again as a landlord, I have several properties between £12 and £20, the rents of which are collected half-yearly.

2913. As to the other side, it is said, of course, and theoretically it is true, that it would interfere with the security which a working man has when he holds, as at present, a let for a year? Now, practically, I suppose, even though the tenant is only for a month or a quarter, if a working man is a satisfactory tenant, he is secure enough?—Most assuredly.

2914. It is the landlord's interest to keep him?—Certainly, if a respectable and satisfactory tenant.

2915. I don't know,—you can answer this or not, just as you like,—but we are having brought before us evidence from the Trades Councils, and so far as we have gone they are all in favour of short lets. Is there any reason known to you why the Trades Councils should not be taken as fairly representing the general opinion of working men?—I know of no reason why they should not.

2916. To take an illustration, I see a letter in to-day's *Glasgow Herald*, saying that 90 per cent. of the tenants under £20 don't want a change. I suppose if that is correct we ought to have evidence from those 90 per cent.?—Of course that is perhaps the opinion of one man just.

2917. But is there any reason why, if that is correct, we should not have evidence on that?—Certainly, the 90 per cent. can surely combine in such a way as to bring forward evidence to satisfy you that the writer of this article is correct.

2918. It is a question of evidence?—Clearly.

2919. We have no opinion about it ourselves; we are here to hear the evidence. Then to come to the point about the rates, which is very important and very difficult. If a Bill such as Mr Cross's or any similar Bill bringing about short lets were passed, your Committee are convinced that some change would require to be made on the system of collection of rates, and would you now just tell us what the present system is?—The collection of rates—at the present time the Police Department of the Council are responsible, unless for £4 and under, as I understand, but we have frequently before us applications from house factors to collect rates on properties above £4 and under £10, for which they ask a reduction of 7½ per cent. We ask the collector of rates to give us a report on the application so made, and the report on the collector of rates has been invariably, without a single exception, so far as I can remember, that he saw no reason why it should not be granted. The house factors who have asked that, renew their applications from time to time if necessary, but I have been asking Mr McIntyre, and he has no knowledge of any house factor who has had that privilege, going back and not taking it another year.

2920. It is very important, if we could get from you a statement showing the number of those cases—that could be made up?—Oh yes, Mr Borthwick has that.

2921. Now tell me, first, what section of the Glasgow Police Act, 1886, is it that regulates this matter?—Section 46.

2922. And, as you say, except in the case of houses rated at or under £4 per annum, the payment is made yearly direct on the occupier?—He is responsible for the rates, but the owner makes himself responsible for the rates, less 7½ per cent.

2923. But there are two cases where the occupier does not pay you: first, the house rated at and under £4, and these other cases of voluntary arrangement you have referred to; except in these two cases the occupier pays you direct?—Yes, for which the owner has a deduction, but I cannot remember the percentage of £4 and under.

2924. We are told that these houses are diminishing?—Oh, much, and quickly.

2925. You have explained that at present assessment schedules are not issued, nor is the collection commenced till the latter part of October, and it is impracticable to anticipate that day, however desirable?—The Water Department of the Corporation pays theirs upon the previous year's valuation under a statute of their own, I presume, but I know of no other.

2926. By the 42nd Section of the Glasgow Police Act, 1866, it is expressly provided that assessments shall be levied on the valuation roll of the year that is current, and under the Lands Valuation Act that roll remains open until the end of September of each year?—That is so.

2927. In your experience, is every possible effort made to do the thing as quickly as possible?—Oh yes, there is a great deal of overtime work to get out the notices.

2928 There is a reason for that, in so far as the expense of temporary borrowing is heavy?—Clearly, we have to pay for every penny we require.

2929. So it may be taken that the present period of issue, in your view, during the three weeks during 13th to 18th October is the earliest?—We are extremely desirous of having it at the earliest possible minute.

2930. You referred to the difficulties which would be connected with very frequent collections. These difficulties, I suppose, could be overcome by an alteration in the Valuation Acts, and by the expenditure of more money?—That would be required to meet the difficulties.

2931. But the difficulties are not insuperable?—It is an imperial question, the alteration of the Valuation Acts.

2932. In your view, would it be a distinct substantial advantage to working men in houses under £20 not to have the whole rates falling once a year only, but to be able to pay them along with their rents in periodic instalments?—That would apply to smaller houses than £20, probably from £10 to £15, more than from £15 to £20.

2933. But in a lesser degree to them all?—I think so.

2934. What about the clauses in Mr Cross's Bill, making the matter optional in burghs? What is the Glasgow view of that?—That looks to me quite to safeguard the Bill altogether.

2935. Why should it be there?—Because in large centres I should say the percentage of losses from non-collection of rent is bound to be much heavier than in the smaller districts. Where small districts saw no reason to adopt Mr Cross's Bill, they are allowed to remain as they are.

2936. You see the clause says it may be adopted in whole or in part. Now, in your view, it could not be adopted in part, because the one involves the other?—I have not considered that.

2937. But it does not occur to you that in the same burgh, Glasgow itself, there might be districts where it might be advisable to adopt the Bill, while it might not be advisable in other districts. That would entail extra trouble?—I think it would.

2938. There are two objections. What about the objection that if the tenant merely paid a slump sum, and did not know how much was rent and how much was rates, it would open the way to proprietors charging more than the proper proportion of the assessment, and also that it would be bad from methods of public policy, because the occupier would not know what rate he was paying and would not have any check on the rates?—I think the receipt should distinctly bear what is rent and what the rates amount to. I should be very sorry if a ratepayer lost what is, meantime, his desire to see that his representatives do their duty.

2939. As a landlord, is that practical? Would it not involve an amount of calculation?—No, not to any extent. Every landlord knows the cumulo rating for the year. Multiply that if you like and divide it, it would not mean any intricacy at all.

2940. At all events, the receipt could detail the rates that the occupier has to pay, and the amount per £ he has to pay, leaving him in that case to work it out for himself. I think at the present time the ratepayer does that. He does not know where the penny of an increase is, only that there is a penny over all, and does not trouble his mind in detail. He would have a difficulty in finding out whether it was on police, parks, sanitary, or water.

2941. But it is true that if it was too much of a burden on the landlord to work it out, the receipts could detail what rates are being paid by the occupiers, and the amount per £ at which they are charged?—Yes, that could always be done.

2942. What do you think about the question of the landlord's hypothec, the different proposals either to abolish it altogether or to extend it to cover rates in the event of the landlord collecting the rates?—In my opinion it should be extended to cover the rates as well as the rent, and the landlord is entitled to protection there too.

2943. It has been suggested that the law of hypothec has advantages not confined to the landlord, but that it is really a law in the tenant's interests, because in periods of sickness and other difficulties it enables the landlord to allow a tenant to remain on, the landlord knowing he has security. Do you think that is sound?—That is quite sound.

2944. What about this trouble of the percentage? You already incidentally referred to it. The landlords and the factors are saying that this 7½ per cent. which is in Mr Cross's Bill is totally inadequate, and their ground is that the Corporation at present lose more than that. They say that they lose more than the Corporation, and they put it that if the Corporation lose more than 20 per cent., and they would lose more than that, 7½ per cent. must be obviously inadequate?—I should be surprised to know that 20 per cent. or more than 20 per cent. was lost, but Mr Borthwick will have the total, showing entirely the losses of the Corporation.

2945. You refer to him?—Yes.

2946. What do you say to this? It is said by some people that the Corporation of Glasgow is taking an interest in this matter, not because they are interested in the working man at all, but simply because they think they will get more rates in the end?—The Corporation as individuals have no interest. They act for the community, and what benefits one in that respect benefits another.

2947. Do you find this matter is taken an interest in by members of the Corporation who are not on the committee specially relative to rating?—Not to the same extent. Of course we pay attention to our own departments more than to this.

2948. Do you find the view of those who are specially on the committee for rating is acquiesced in by others who are not?—Clearly, there has been no expression of opinion to the contrary in the Council.

2949. You are a man of great experience in these matters. What do you say to the limit of £20? Do you think it is reasonable?—Ward committees, I think, were so anxious to have the voice of the citizens on this matter that we instructed our clerk to ask the ward committees what they thought, and Mr Borthwick and Mr Henry will have the returns; but as far as my memory serves me, there were one or two for £15. £20—I speak subject to correction—was spoken of in several wards as the limit.

2950. (*Mr Howden.*) Were there none higher?—I don't remember, but the figures will be before you.

2951. (*Chairman.*) You think that is a fair compromise?—I think so.

2952. What about the preservation in any measure that might be passed, or the right to relief on account of inability to pay? What is your view of that?—It is felt by the committees, speaking generally, that inability to pay would not be felt by the ratepayers if they pay their rates twelve times a year, instead of one slump sum.

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2953. Still, we are told that if the people who get relief—practically it comes to this, that if relief was not given the rates would not be recovered. Do you not think that right should be preserved?—A percentage of relief, you mean?

2954. Take the cases where total relief is given, on the ground of inability to pay. We are told that really it would not much matter, because you would not get rates in these cases?—I think there is a minute of our Town Council where persons who are in receipt of parochial relief were exempted from police rates.

2955. The others were not?—Each case is considered.

2956. Don't you think the right in these cases should be conserved in any measure passed?—If it were practical to do so.

2957. But you think it would make it so much easier with periodic payments, that a lot of it would be paid?—Certainly it would, and not felt, I believe, by many who do.

2958. Still, you think if it is practicable it would be desirable to retain that?—There are cases, no doubt—some maiden lady, perhaps, should be relieved of her rates if it is at all practicable.

2959. We are told of maiden ladies who keep lodgers, and have failed to get any in the winter. These are real cases?—Very often we find that to be so.

2960. Have you had any deputations to the Council, or petitions on this matter, from working men or others?—I cannot remember.

2961. I suppose, Bailie, you sympathise, as we all do, with the general principle of not interfering, except when circumstances warrant it, with freedom of contract?—Certainly.

2962. Do you think the circumstances here are sufficient to warrant any interference with such a Bill as Mr Cross's may amount to?—I think the existing condition of things could be improved upon.

2963. Even if it did to a certain extent interfere with it theoretically?—Even if it did to a certain extent.

2964. (*Mr Howden.*) Mr Brechin has told us that they have numerous applications from factors who collect rates under £10, and we are to get figures from Mr Borthwick, but the evidence already submitted here has been all the other way, that the factors don't want anything to do with the collection of rates. How would Mr Brechin reconcile these two statements? The factors said they did not want anything to do with the rates, and the statement made to us that they are on the increase?—Kinning Park was annexed twelve months ago. Within a few months of annexation we had an application from Kinning Park from a house factor. That is fresh in my memory. And once a factor makes an application, I have no knowledge of his not seeking to renew it.

2965. There can't be very much in the contention that they don't want it?—I merely give you as a fact that there are applications.

2966. You told us that the water rates are collected at three periods in the year?—No.

2967. It is one period of the year, but on the previous assessment?—On the previous year's valuation.

2968. Does that make it different?—I think it is a clumsy way of going about it.

2969. But a large difference in the net result?—I do not know. It allows the water rate to be collected earlier than it would otherwise be. The valuation of premises changes from one year to another.

2970. Do they change very much?—In large rented places they do either rise or fall from time to time.

2971. Is it not the fact that the attention of the Corporation was directed to the question of the missive system and also shorter lets by the outside opinion?—There is no doubt of that. It did not spring from within. A member would bring it forward, but he would be advised from the outside ere he did so.

2972. We are deliberately told that it was because of the fact that the Corporation wanted to get some simple method of collecting rates. That would not be a fact?—Not at all.

2973. Does the schedule that is attached to Mr Cross's Bill meet with your approval—that is, his compounding of rates?—Yes, certainly, because he compounds with us.

2974. Do you think the amount of percentage that is stated here, to give to the landlords, is reasonable: £4 and under £7, 10 per cent.; £7 and under £10, 5 per cent.; £10 and not exceeding £20, 2½ per cent., from 10 down to 2½ per cent.?—I think it is quite a fair thing.

2975. (*Mr Cox.*) Suppose the allowance to owners for collecting these rates was to be 20 per cent.; would the City of Glasgow still like the owners to collect them or to collect them themselves?—20 per cent. would be infinitely too much; it would simply mean that the less that is collected the rate is the higher.

2976. (*Chairman.*) Take Mr Cox's question?—I do not think we would. The figures Mr Borthwick will give you will show you the loss.

2977. (*Mr Cox.*) In the remit of 30th March from the Corporation to the Committee it says, "that in view of the great hardship entailed on the working classes." What is meant by the great hardship in the present system of rate collection?—I do not think that a working man thinks that he should pay his rates on the 11th November along with his rent. It is a hardship.

2978. All in one sum?—Yes.

2979. Do you think, if the rating authorities were put to it, they could make more frequent collections than once a year?—You know he has six months' credit at the present time before he is asked to pay rates. He pays rates from 28th May, and he is not called upon to pay these rates for at least five months afterwards, so he has five months' credit just now.

2980. You say it would be very difficult to collect more than once a year, but if you were really put to collect twice or three times, do you not think it could be done?—It could be done, but the loss would be greater and on that account the rates would be higher.

2981. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I do not know that you mentioned—can you tell us, as a public man, whether there is in your view a public demand for any change in the present condition of things?—I have just said, before you came in, that at the ward meetings it was a prominent question.

2982. Can you tell me this—whether in your view the limit, assuming any change is made, should be £10 or £20 or higher? What is your view as to a limit dealing with average working class houses?—In what way?

2983. What is your view as to what is the normal rental?—I have no opinion upon the value of the subject.

2984. The remit to us is to deal only with smaller dwelling houses. Supposing a change is to be made, in your view should it start with the £10, £15, or £20 rent?—I have expressed myself favourable to £20 as a maximum.

2985. Do you think the view you have stated in regard to compounding might be equally well applied to houses of £20 as well as to £10 houses?—No, it is a question of degree. It is not so desirable with a £20 house as with a £10 house, to compound it.

2986. Are you prepared to advocate the application up to £20?—I have given evidence on these lines.

2987. (*Chairman.*) Some proposals are that the limit might be varied, in Glasgow one maximum, in Partick another maximum. Do you think that a practical suggestion?—I think the valuation of a subject is not alike throughout Scotland.

2988. In Edinburgh, for example, and Glasgow the suggested Bill is to apply to dwellings of £20 and under, while in Paisley it is £16, and in other burghs down to £12. Do you think it would be desirable, assuming legislation, that this distinction should be maintained?—I think what is a £20 house in Glasgow or Edinburgh might be less in some rural districts.

2989. Don't take rural districts. Take Paisley or Greenock?—I do not think the difference should be so outstanding. Govan and Partick are practically Glasgow.

2990. Say between Glasgow and Partick and Govan on the one hand?—There would be difficulties in the way of carrying that out.

2991. You told us about 7½ per cent. in the case of this voluntary arrangement with the factors. Do you know how that was arrived at?—Since ever I have taken an interest in Corporation work we have had applications. If I remember, it was the North British Railway Company at Cowlairs that was one of the first to ask this for their houses.

2992. The 7½ per cent.?—Yes.

2993. You referred to ward meetings, and the question being a prominent one. Is it the case that at these meetings, although you said to a very large extent it was the long period between the taking and the entry, still you say the other question on the shorter lets was also up?—The question generally was brought before the candidates and their opinions were asked upon it.

2994. As far as your experience or knowledge goes, was there, as far as working men were concerned, no appearance of difference of opinion?—I do not think so. The candidates acquiesced in the principle of Mr Cross's Bill, I think.

Mr James Henry, called and examined.

2995. (*Chairman.*) How long have you been Assessor under the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Acts for the City of Glasgow?—Fully twenty-three years.

2996. You are also Surveyor of Police and Municipal Assessments for the city, and have been so for some period?—That is so.

2997. And prior to your appointment as assessor, you filled various posts in the same department?—I have.

2998. So you have had forty-three years' experience?—I have.

2999. You have prepared a statement showing the total number of dwelling houses, and the number of unoccupied dwelling houses in Glasgow at various rentals for the years 1901–2 and 1905–6?—Yes.

3000. In regard to the statement, which shows in 1901–2 a total number of houses in Glasgow of 163,291, as contrasted in 1905–6 with a total of 175,277, was there an extension of Glasgow between these two dates, or is that due to increase merely?—Well, we have taken in Kinning Park since 1901.

3001. How many did Kinning Park amount to? How much of the difference between the two?—Of course, it is a small number. There are some 14,000 people altogether.

3002. Then you have in 1901–2 a total number of empty houses of 4467, as contrasted with empty houses in 1905–6, 13,495?—Yes.

3003. I notice, in regard to the houses at £4 and under, the number in 1901–2 was 2915, and in 1905–6, 2045. Has the diminution been going on progressively?—Yes, that class of house is gradually diminishing.

3004. I notice also that the next class, those of £4, 1s. and under £7, has also diminished. The number in 1901–2 was 34,620, and in 1905–6 33,782. Do you expect these will go on diminishing?—They are not building that class of house, and that is the reason for the apparent difference in figures.

3005. All the others have increased?—Yes, all above those rentals.

3006. Apparently in about the same proportion?—Yes, very much so.

3007. In Glasgow the system of letting dwelling houses in the month prevails largely in localities where the houses are small. The great bulk of single-apartment houses are let by the month?—Yes.

3008. I suppose in the case of house letting by the month, you find that in many cases the occupiers remain in the same house for years?—Yes.

3009. Paying the rent monthly. That is to say, monthly tenure does not necessarily imply short occupancy?—No, no.

3010. In your experience, what is the advantage of monthly letting for a working man as compared with yearly letting?—Monthly letting has its advantages, especially to the poorer class of householders, for the nearer in point of time a working man's payments out are to his payments in, the better for him. They are proportionately less and more easily paid than a quarter's rent, and a quarter's rent is more easily paid than a half-year's rent, and the same principle equally applies to taxes.

3011. How do you account for it that in point of fact so many of the houses under £20, say, between £10 and £20, are not monthly but yearly? Is that the tenant's doing or the landlord's doing?—I think it is both, but I think the tenants themselves don't want—in rentals above £10—any change.

3012. Do you make the contrast between those above £10 and those under £10?—I do.

3013. Do you think that in the case of those under £10 most of them would prefer to have a shorter tenure as contrasted with those above it?—It would be to their benefit to have short tenure and pay their rents monthly.

3014. Is that because they include proportionately the larger number of persons who require to shift than those above £10?—There are 94,000, I think I said in my evidence, in that class of occupiers, or fully half of the ratepayers of the city, and it would be a great boon to that class of ratepayers were they allowed to pay their rents and taxes in smalls. They buy their provisions in smalls; it is smalls all round with them; they cannot afford to pay large sums at one time, and, therefore, if they had the option of paying rent and taxes monthly, they would be more stationary tenants; they would not be inclined to remove; and were that plan or system uniform over the city, there would be no inducement to remove, because they would always have paid their taxes up to date. Just now that class of people move to evade the tax collector. I know from my experience that large numbers of them have that reason for removal—the tax collector. They cannot afford to pay down 15s. to 25s. in the shape of taxes, but if they were allowed to pay 1s. 6d. a month or so along with the rent, they would willingly pay it. Many a working man does not want to evade paying his share of taxes, but with £1 or 18s. a week he is not able to lay past £1 or 25s. for taxes, and his children crying for bread.

3015. You think the two questions are inextricably combined?—I do.

3016. Why do you make the distinction between houses under £10 and between £10 and £20?—My reason for fixing a £10 rent is this: in the first place, we are dealing with half of the ratepayers in the city. Another reason is that at present in Glasgow we have a differential rate. All houses under £10 are rated at half of the values assessed from those above £10, and therefore I want to stop at £10 rental. The legislature has thought £10 was a good amount for a working man.

3017. Why did you say so? Because of the differentiation on the police rates fixed at £10?—Quite so.

3018. Is there any other place?—I do not think so.

3019. It is under the Glasgow Act?—The Glasgow Act of 1866, and I never knew a ratepayer occupying a house rented over £10 to complain that the working man was getting half more value than he was. There seems to be a feeling among well-to-do people that he should be treated in an exceptional way, and therefore the rental under the 1866 Act was fixed at £10. That is my reason for drawing a distinction at £10.

3020. What is the exact distinction in regard to the police rates?—Under £10 are charged on the lower rate.

3021. Namely?—50 per cent.

3022. (*Mr Howden.*) On the police rate only?—Yes, police and sanitary. I might also add the water rate in Glasgow has been fixed by the legislature at £10. It is paid by occupiers of houses, and that is included in the rent. The landlord recovers the water rate of houses under £10 along with the rent.

3023. That is another reason?—Yes.

3024. Is the third reason what Bailie Brechin was telling us, namely, that in the case of certain voluntary arrangements between factors and the Corporation the limit there was £10?—Yes, there is a provision made that the factor or landlord may arrange with the Corporation to pay all the rates on houses under £10, getting an allowance of 7½ per cent. for his trouble and loss—any loss that may arise.

3025. You say there is a provision. Is that in one of the Acts?—Yes, the 1866 Act, Section 49.

3026. Read it, please.—"The Magistrates and Council, 'and any proprietor of land or heritage, the annual value 'of which is under £10, may contract for payment by such 'proprietor to the Magistrates and Council during such 'period as shall be mutually agreed upon, of any assess-'ments imposed, or which may be imposed, in respect 'thereof, on the occupiers, in pursuance of the provisions 'of this Act, in consideration of an abatement on the 'amount paid by such proprietor not exceeding 20 per 'cent.; and in every such case so much of the assessment 'imposed, or which may be imposed, in respect of any 'rent or heritage referred to in such contract, as corre-'sponds to the period for which it is let, shall be payable 'by the occupier to the proprietor, and may on settlement 'with the Magistrates and Council be recovered by the 'proprietor as rent in addition to any other rent agreed to 'be paid by him, provided that the abatement agreed to 'be given shall be the same rate in every such contract 'entered into by the Magistrates and Council."

3027. Do you know how the amount of abatement came to be fixed as not exceeding 20 per cent.? Do you know the history of that?—No.

3028. Could you give us any idea of what proportion of the occupier's rates in Glasgow is paid by occupiers in houses under £10? That would be one figure; another would be what proportion is paid by occupiers between £10 and £20. You can easily make it out?—Oh yes, I have the numbers.

3029. But I want to see to what extent the occupiers under £10 and under £20 are interested in the question of the rates?—Quite so. I will be pleased to put in a statement showing that.

3030. You have talked about the Corporation and the tenants and their interests, what about the interests of the landlord? Would he not be seriously compromised if he had the duty of collecting the rates?—Well, he would be just in the same position with regard to the monthly police rates as at present with the water rate.

3031. And with the rate in houses under £4?—Yes. Of course that will soon disappear altogether. And also with regard to the lighting of common stairs the landlord is charged just now 8s. per burner for every light in the common stair, but he is entitled to recover from the tenants 10s. for those lights. He recovers that along with the rent,

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and he would just recover the monthly rates as he recovers at present the water rate and the stair lighting.

3032. Just go over these cases and tell us what allowance he gets. Take the case of rates in houses of £4 and under?—He gets 25 per cent.

3033. Under what statute?—The 1866 Act.

3034. Then the water rate and the stair lighting, what allowance does he get?—20 per cent. on the stair lighting.

3035. Then I suppose the landlord's interest in this matter, in your view, would depend on whether he was to get a proper allowance or not?—Quite, that is the view I take of it. Give him a reasonable and proper allowance to meet his losses and something for his trouble; but he won't have much trouble, because he is collecting the rents at any rate.

3036. But, of course, if he got an insufficient allowance it would be a hardship?—Certainly. I think the landlord should be protected in this way.

3037. Do you think that it would be fair that he should have additional remedies to enable him to collect the rate?—He would just have the same remedies as at present.

3038. But not the same as you have?—Oh, he is entitled to recover the stair lighting just now. I read from the Act of 1866, Section 361: "The proprietor or proprietors of 'every land or heritage having an access by a common stair 'shall provide and maintain suitable gas pipes and brackets, 'lamps and burners in such common stair to the satisfaction 'of the inspector of lighting (or Magistrates and Council), 'and placed as the city inspector (or Magistrates and Council) 'may direct, under a penalty of Forty shillings payable by 'each such proprietor, and the Magistrates and Council shall 'cause them to be supplied with gas and lighted in the same 'manner as the public street lamps, and for each burner the 'proprietor or proprietors shall pay to the Magistrates and 'Council such sum not exceeding ten shillings per annum as 'the Magistrates and Council may from time to time direct, 'and the said sum shall be recoverable by the proprietors 'from the occupiers in proportion to their respective lands 'and be deemed to be a debt recoverable in the same way 'as rent."

3039. The effect of that, in your view, was to give the landlord a hypothec over the furniture?—In the same way as rent. I think that would cover it.

3040. You think it would be reasonable that he should have the same right over furniture in regard to rates, if he had to collect them, as he now has over rent?—I do.

3041. What amount of allowance do you think the landlord should get, supposing he had to collect the rates under £10?—Mr Borthwick has gone into that matter, and will give information.

3042. Does any reason occur to you why, if the landlord gets 20 per cent. in the case of the rents under £4, and in the case of stair lighting, he should only get 7½ per cent. under Mr Cross's Bill?—But I would differentiate. I give you the £7 rent, because in dealing with the allowance to the factor, those between £4 and £7 should be treated differently from those at £7 and under £10.

3043. Let us see how Mr Cross's Bill proposes to deal. Look at Glasgow. Over £4 and under £7, 10 per cent.; £7 and under £10, 5 per cent.; £10 and not exceeding £20, 2½ per cent. You think there should be a difference in all these cases?—Yes.

3044. Why?—The trouble in collecting is between £4 and £7.

3045. And also probability of loss?—Yes, there is a great amount of loss there.

3046. Diminishing as you go up, both trouble and loss?—Yes.

3047. Then you think that under £4 might quite remain 20 per cent., and between £4 and £7 would be fairly 10 per cent. That would be a half?—Of course you are going into a little different class of people. The higher you go up, there are people better able to pay.

3048. That would be halving it each time—above £4 and under £7, 10 per cent., and between £7 and under £10, 5 per cent., so that it would be in the same proportion?—Yes.

3049. The result of your views is, first, that with reference to dwelling houses rented under £10 in burghs, there should be introduced a system of compulsory monthly lets?—I do.

3050. You are not pinning yourself to Mr Cross's Bill or any other?—No, I am giving you my opinion.

3051. Second, that the system should be accompanied by a scheme to recover the rates from the tenants monthly along with rents?—Yes.

3052. I suppose, in your view, if the matter was first of all dealt with by the legislature only up to the limit of £10, that would not prevent the legislature subsequently, if that was found to work well, taking it up to £20?—That is what I would like, a safe experiment up to £10.

3053. And you think there is ground for making a difference between £10 and £20?—A strong ground.

3054. (*Sir John Stirling-Maxwell.*) Do you find that in the case of houses close to the £10 limit, there is any attempt to evade taxation by artificially placing the house below the limit?—I find this, that working men, when they go to the factor for a house, if he says £10 or £11, he hesitates about taking it, but if he gets a house at £9, 19s., he is delighted. Somehow he has got the idea into his head that this saving of the high rate to him is of such importance that he will do his very best to get a house under £10.

3055. But are any illegal arrangements, have you any reason to suppose, entered into?—No. I would say the landlord, in giving me his return, gives me an honest and fair return.

3056. We have a witness coming to-day from the Glasgow Dwellings Company. They collect rates themselves for you?—Yes, along with the rent.

3057. From all these houses?—Yes, I believe that goes over all the letting—the letting of these houses that are paid by the month.

3058. You don't collect rates in any of the Dwellings Company's houses?—Well, the notices in terms of the statute are all sent in to the occupiers, but they hand them over to the factors. That is the arrangement between the factors and the occupiers.

3059. They are all paid by the factor?—Yes.

3060. (*Mr Dobbie.*) With reference to your views on short lets, am I right in thinking that you agree that short lets would be advantageous in regard to tenancies up to £20?—Well, I don't object, but many of my friends take the view that they should go up to £20. As I have already stated, I don't want a great revolution in this matter. I want to go cautiously, and I think £10 would be a very good limit in the meantime.

3061. I am talking of rents at the moment. Can you give us a reason for altering the present system referable to £10 rents? What distinction do you find between occupants of houses up to £10 and occupants of houses up to £20, in regard to class?—When once you go above £10, you get into a class of people that can look better after their interests than those under £10.

3062. What do you think the effect of any change would be with reference to, say, removals. Do you think that short lets would lead to more removals?—Quite the opposite. I am satisfied that the tenants of those small houses would be more stationary. I am certain of that. One would be surprised how stationary those people would become if they paid their rents with short lets. There would be no inducement to remove. They don't want to, if it were not that they could not meet the assessments in one slump sum, and so long as there are empty houses to be got, they will run from house to house to evade the tax collector. I think I am speaking correctly when I say that a number of working men, a great number, are wanting to pay their way all round,—don't want to shirk responsibility. But help them to pay their way in the matter of taxes. They are helped just now in the matter of the rent by the factor taking their rents monthly instead of quarterly or half-yearly. Help them in the same way with their taxes.

3063. Would not that be an excellent reason for applying the same help to the 45,000 or 55,000 tenants who pay between £10 and £20?—It might be applied to all the ratepayers in the city for the landlord to pay the whole of the taxes.

3064. That would be an ideal reform, from your point of view. Tell us this. We hear from you now that one recommendation of short lets would be that there would be less removals, and more ability to pay—would not that be met by having a more frequent collection at the instance of the present collectors?—If a more frequent collection were practicable.

3065. Why is it not practicable?—Bailie Brechin gave us reasons for that. If you wish mine, I would just say that as assessor under the Lands Valuation Act I make up the valuation roll. The roll is not completed till the 30th September.

3066. When do you begin it?—Immediately after Whitsunday.

3067. When do you give your notices?—I make a survey of the city every year. That survey is begun on the 29th of May, after the Whitsunday term. It takes about a month for my large staff to go round the city.

3068. (*Mr Cox.*) How many have you on your staff?—Thirty-two. While surveying the city, I also send out landlords' schedules, to get from the landlords and factors names and rentals of the occupiers. Those of course don't all come in on one day, but over the month. At the end of the survey these schedules are pretty largely in. There are always some who are late, but when I remind them that they have failed to make their return and use a little gentle pressure, I get the returns. That takes me into July, because June is occupied with the survey. Those

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returns are compared with the information got on the survey. There are discrepancies frequently between the survey and the returns, which are cleared up by a re-survey of the premises. After that is got through there is the making up of the valuation roll. The valuation roll is written out, and copies of every entry are sent out. The landlord gets a copy, showing all his tenants and rents, and each tenant gets a copy also, showing his name and rental on the roll. Appeals are allowed up till 8th September by the proprietors and occupiers. They may be adjusted with the proprietors and myself up to 8th September if anything is wrong. After 8th September we have the Appeal Courts, and these courts adjourn from time to time as necessity arises, but they must be all over by 30th of September. After the 30th of September I make out my assessment rolls. By that time the assessments for the year have been fixed, and I make up my assessments. Well, there are the writing of rolls, the extension of the rentals, and the extension of the rates. After the assessment rolls are copied, assessments extended, and made up, I issue assessment notices to the occupiers. I have also the duty of writing the receipts corresponding to those entries, and the rolls and receipts are put into the hands of the collectors. The issuing of the notices usually begin from 18th to 20th October, and all are out perhaps by 4th or 5th November.

3069. To be paid when?—Within fourteen days of that date. Of course there are some districts where the fourteen days expire, but there is no money coming in from some districts where there are working men, and they are reminded by second notices from the collector that the assessments fall to be paid, and that may be over seven days.

3070. How often could you collect, do you think, so as to be practical, in your view, as compared with the present annual collection. Can you collect twice?—No, you see the first half year is gone and the collector is as busy as he can be during the remaining six months, dealing with that first lot of tenants.

3071. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You won't get your assessments in promptly, do you?—No, we have to wait patiently on some of the ratepayers. They are good enough, but they just want to get a little time, some of them.

3072. Is it usually granted by the assessors?—It is quite impracticable to get in the money. If you were to give them six months there would be a great loss in the collection in that way.

3073. We will get evidence as to the present loss to the Corporation?—Yes.

3074. Is it your view that, whatever that loss may be, a deduction might reasonably be allowed to landlords in the event of compounding being operative?—I do not know if the landlord would lose as much as the Corporation, because he would be getting his money regularly. We cannot send men round every month to collect in small sums.

3075. Is it your evidence that there might quite reasonably be a smaller allowance to landlords than the actual loss shown by burghs just now?—But he would not lose the same money as the Corporation.

3076. Assuming that limit was fixed for defining houses to be let on short lets, say £20—whether it is £20 or £10 or £15, may we take it from you that compounding should apply to the same houses—that is, that you would not have compounding up to £10 and short lets up to £20?—Oh! go along with the lets.

3077. What ever the limit is, the two must go together? I—do think so.

3078. (*Mr Cox.*) Look at the list of empty houses. You don't have the figures for this year 1906-7?—No, they are not made up yet. I do not think they will vary very much from these years.

3079. We got figures from Mr Wood. I suppose they apply exactly to the same district?—No, he has Glasgow, but not Govan, Cathcart, or Eastwood. A large portion of the south side is in Govan parish, within the city.

3080. There is a great fluctuation with regard to empty houses?—There are a great many houses built just outside the city boundaries. Cars have taken out a lot of people within the last two or three years with penny fares.

3081. Would that not make it difficult to fix a reasonable allowance to owners for collecting rates?—Empty houses?

3082. But there is a fluctuation; an allowance that might suit an owner this year might not suit him next year?—I think the same allowance might do in every year.

3083. It would not do for meeting every loss?—No, he would do as now with regard to the water. You observe I am speaking of the £10 rent, and he is just now getting the water rate and stair lighting rate along with the rent, and he is quite happy.

3084. Although they don't collect from empty houses? These figures are taken from the valuation roll?—Yes.

3085. Some houses that are empty when the valuation roll is made up would be filled, and others might be empty, so it stands to reason that the owner might, through these fluctuations, suffer loss in the collection of rates?—I cannot see it. Of course the lets are to embrace the rates. If his house is only let for six months the rates would just go along with the rents.

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3086. Why is it, do you know, that the owners and factors and so on are opposed to the idea of their collecting rates?—I do not think they are all opposed to it. We have factors quite willing as long as they don't suffer any loss with a reasonable allowance, and I believe that landlords, were this system adopted, would find it to be in their interests after all, because frequent removals to a landlord is a serious matter, and the more stationary his tenants are the more it is to his advantage. I have no hesitation in saying that it is to the advantage of the occupier to remain. Of course there are working men who have to move for their work and so on.

3087. (*Mr Howden.*) You told us you fixed £10 as the rental on the basis of the statute that was passed in 1866?—Yes.

3088. Don't you think, looking to the facts you have given us yourself in connection with £4 and under, and £4 and under £7, how they are decreasing in number—they have decreased 870 in five years under £4, and 838 under £7 in five years—don't you think that would be a reason why you should slightly raise the amount at least as far as they are concerned?—I have no objection. At the same time I feel that the £10 is the rent that I would be prepared to stand by in any change of the system.

3089. But these people must be housed somewhere, I presume, and if they are demanding merely better housing accommodation, the same class of people, they should surely get the same advantages as they had in 1866?—That is all true, but if you are going to deal with half the householders in Glasgow, it is a big jump.

3090. But if you are satisfied that it would work satisfactorily under £10, why should it not be the same with houses up to £20, where presumably more stationary and better class of tenants prevail?—I have considered all that, but I just feel that I am safe in saying £10, and I would like to see how it works with them, and if I see it working well, if I am spared, I will be quite prepared to go up to £12 or £15.

3091. Do you also think there are no working men staying in houses above £20?—Oh yes.

3092. Would you not be inclined to extend the benefit of shorter lets to those individuals?—I leave those gentlemen to look after their own interests. They are better able to do so than the man that has a small wage. He is helpless compared with people living in that class of house.

3093. How are they going to look after their interests? Is not this one of the methods of looking after their interests, to see that legislation on proper lines is passed for their benefit?—Yes, but I am not so sure but what there are a large number of people who don't want any change. They want to pay their rent quarterly, as they do at present, or half yearly, as at present, and want to pay their taxes too. There are working people who are very methodical in the way of laying out their money to meet rent and taxes, and don't want any change. I am dealing with a class of people who require to be helped just because there is a want of method and ability to lay past money to meet a year's assessment and a quarter or half-year's rent. I want to help these people to pay rent and taxes monthly, and they will get nicely along through life.

3094. Does not the provision of Mr Cross's Bill precisely cover these tenants?—I am not taking his Bill.

3095. But any such system as Mr Cross's Bill provides that the length of tenancy ought to be determined by the amount of rent?—Mr Cross is anxious to help the working man in his Bill, but I am giving you the length I am prepared to go.

3096. You are not prepared to go any further than £10?—I am not prepared to advocate it.

3097. (*Mr Cox.*) Of the very large number of people you speak of that want no change, there are none who have come forward to give us any evidence to that effect?—Perhaps not.

3098. Have they had an opportunity given them?

(*Chairman.*) Oh yes.

3099. (*Mr Cox.*) It would be very desirable, would it not, if we could hear both sides?—Certainly, and if your Committee think that there is a large number of people that would not like this change, by all means let us have them.

3100. You have told us there is a large number?—I am just expressing my views and feelings.

3101. (*Chairman.*) But you rather expect a larger number of these, if they exist, to be persons paying above £10 than persons below £10—all those who value the security of tenure particularly?—Well, this Act of Parliament would be general, I understand, and I would go the length of saying that it should not be limited to Glasgow, but embrace Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee.

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3102. What I mean is, as far as opinion in favour of no change is concerned, would you expect there would be more of that in people who paid higher rents than £10 than in those who paid below £10?—Oh, certainly, I should think there would be if there would be any under £10.

3103. You gave us full details about the valuation roll; tell us about the supplementary?—It is made up in March, and there is a survey in the city of all empty houses. When I say empty houses, I mean appearing empty on the valuation roll and houses that have been built since the original roll has been prepared. Whatever sum is paid between the date of occupancy and Whitsunday is entered on the supplementary valuation roll. That may be a quarter's rent or a half-year's rent that goes into the supplementary roll, and there is a supplementary assessment on the rental as appearing on that roll.

3104. Do you get any returns of the city done by survey?—I am quite entitled to call for returns, but I have no difficulty in getting the information without the returns. I issue notices to the owners or factors, a copy of the entries in the valuation roll, and also to the occupiers, and there is the same course open to them of appealing and getting rentals adjusted where necessary. The same provision is made in the way of appeals as provided for in the original roll.

3105. You spoke about compounding in favour of it; what do you say to the condemnation by the English Royal Commission on compounding? Have you seen that?—No, I have not considered that.

3106. In this Bill of Mr Cross's it is proposed to differentiate between Glasgow and Edinburgh on the one hand, and such burghs as Paisley, Partick, Govan, and sundry others on the other hand. In the one case £20 and in the other £16. Do you see any warrant for that?—Well, in the first place, take Edinburgh and Glasgow.

3107. Is there no difference between Glasgow and Govan?—I don't think so.

3108. What about Partick?—The same.

3109. And Clydebank?—The same.

3110. And Greenock?—The same.

3111. These are the ones you know specially about?—Yes.

3112. (*Mr Dobbie.*) If you did desire a change of £10 or £20, in your view that might be made applicable to the whole of the burghs?—Oh yes.

3113. You would not differentiate at the term you mention?—Well, you see, when you go to small burghs, people pay their rent and taxes without much trouble.

3114. (*Chairman.*) Take Kilmarnock, Falkirk, etc.?—Yes, where there is no change going on. Of course the Bill provides for a difference. In Aberdeen, Dundee, etc., it is to be 7½ per cent., and, under £7 and up to £16, 2½ per cent. Well, I would expect that the factors or landlords in those small burghs must have very little loss, because there are not the same opportunities for people leaving; there are not the same facilities for getting houses; and, as a matter of fact, they are more stationary. There would not be much loss in some cases.

3115. But would you have a maximum rental, varying in different burghs?—I am inclined to put down the £10 as applicable to all burghs.

3116. Arising out of a question Mr Cox put. Supposing short lets were more prevalent and a house was let and the landlord paid rates upon that house less the compounding allowance, in the event of the house becoming vacant in the course of one or two or three months, how do you propose to make up to the landlord for the loss of the rate through the remaining nine or ten months?—That is a question for the Committee. If it were only occupied for three months, it would be very hard for the landlord to pay twelve months. It depends on the percentage. If he gets a big percentage, that is to cover his losses and trouble.

3117. It represents the irrecoverables?—Exactly.

3118. It does not represent the rates on empty houses?—It is only on the valuation roll as occupied houses.

3119. (*Chairman.*) If we thought that 7½ per cent. is too small, it should be larger?—Yes. He might have an empty house for one, two, or three months, and the difficulty is dealing with appeals, as it would be in Glasgow. I would be inclined to say, give a percentage that would cover his losses in the event of people leaving and the house being empty for two, three, or four months.

3120. (*Mr Dobbie.*) We will get evidence to show the amount of rates irrecoverable?—Yes.

3121. We want to get any indication of what is not recovered through partially empty houses?—It is only the landlord that can give you that.

3122. You get the re-let houses by supplementary roll?—Yes.

3123. We don't represent the case of houses being let and then being empty if the assessment has been imposed on the landlord?—No, if you are going to saddle the landlord with the rates, give him a reasonable allowance that will cover all his losses.

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3124. Is that also to cover the risk of collection and the risk of paying rates on empty property?—No, occupied property as appearing on the roll.

3125. (*Chairman.*) It is trouble, irrecoverables, and partial lets?—Yes.

3126. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Can you give us any views of the effect of any such change in regard to unfranchised voters?—Yes.

3127. What would be the effect of this?—You will observe that I limit my statement to municipal assessments. In Parliamentary burghs, failure to pay poor rates is a disqualification, and if a man pays his poor rates and has a twelve months' occupancy, he goes on to the Parliamentary roll of voters. The Parliamentary list of voters is also the municipal list of voters, but if a man fails to pay his municipal rates, he has no vote at the municipal election. I don't want to disturb the Parliamentary franchise, and that is my reason for confining my statement to municipal assessments.

3128. In spite of all you have told us in favour of collecting rates and rents together, are you still of the view that poor rates and parish rates on rentals under £10 could well be collected, in spite of short lets, from the tenant direct?—Well, the amount is small. I find that people pay their poor rates, but they don't pay their municipal rates—because it is a small sum.

3129. They flit to avoid municipal rates, while they are content to pay the poor rates and the parish rates?—That is so.

3130. (*Chairman.*) You would approve, would you, of the way in which clause 9 is limited? It says all rates and assessments in except imperial taxes and poor rates, and for school, registration, and special rates levied by Parish Councils, etc.?—Yes, I approve of the clause as it stands.

3131. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Suppose your plan was carried out, in what form would your assessment be imposed on the landlord; would each house have to be assessed?—No. Here is a landlord owning a block of property with twelve or twenty tenants. Add the whole rental together, as is done at present by the water authorities. They just add the rental together, and it amounts to, say, £300. £300 is the rent less the deduction.

3132. (*Chairman.*) What would the deduction be?—Supposing you make the deduction 10 per cent.

3133. Oh yes, the allowance?—He is just assessed on the whole rental, with the 10 per cent. deduction of the rental, and rated at the usual rate.

3134. Does that mean a great saving of work?—It means a saving of work to me in the way of preparing the assessment roll and issuing the notices.

3135. In that way it should increase the allowance, I suppose, because the difficulty in assessing would be put on to the shoulders of the landlord?—You see just now there are landlord's assessments. In the case of a good many of the assessments the landlord pays one half. I don't show each tenant portion in making out his charge; I just slump his rental and charge him on it for whatever rate it is.

3136. The reason I asked you was that some people think that if the rates are paid through the landlords, the tenant ought to know at least how much is paid, separate from his rent, and the house factors complain that that would be difficult to do?—I do not see it. They do it with water and stair gas.

3137. (*Chairman.*) They don't specify it?—No, but I rather think they should.

3138. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Would that be any great objection, assessing each house separately, even if the landlord paid that?—I don't see that it would serve any good purpose, because they would hand the notice over to the landlord.

3139. (*Chairman.*) They would see what they were paying?—They would not remember it.

3140. (*Chairman.*) Would there be any objection to it if we thought it the proper thing?—No, it is what is done just now. There would be a great saving of work and trouble. When these notices go out, they are not very careful about laying them past, and they are lost, and they would not be sent to the landlord.

3141. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Supposing they are sent to the landlord direct, the question is, could you do the arithmetic, the allocating the rate for each particular house?—The tenant would not see them.

Yes, that would be stated by the landlord when he exacted the rent.

3142. (*Chairman.*) Suppose that was made compulsory, he would have the means of doing it without any trouble to him?—No, only I would have all the trouble in making out these separate assessments.

3143. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Could you put a figure

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on that trouble, and give us an idea of what saving it would be on your staff?—Well, at that period of the year I get a great lot of work done by extra hands. It would be a pity for them. They would be getting less work, but when you think that there are two hundred thousand ratepayers, and each has a separate assessment notice and you are going to reduce them to about one hundred thousand, you can see that, with all the calculations, and the notices and the rolls, the saving of time and the expense would be considerable.

3144. To you?—I don't grudge it.

3145. You could not have put them more precisely than as considerable?—Considerable.

3146. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You are really one of the most important witnesses we will have. You told us you did not see any difficulty in separating the rates and the rents. You make up the rent roll, don't you, subsequent to May?—Yes.

3147. Is it not a practical difficulty in letting a house by the monthly let at Whitsunday that you could not tell then what the cumulo rates were to be for the current year?—No more difficulty than they have at present The water rate is not a stereotyped rate.

3148. But the landlords don't attempt just now to show the actual difference?—No.

3149. The reason given was that it was impossible to go into it in May and see what it was. Is not that a substantial reason?—No. The rates don't vary very much. Supposing there would be a penny per £ of alteration, and there is very seldom that, suppose it amounts to 8d. or 9d., the landlord has no difficulty.

3150. You think it would be practicable to estimate?—Yes. Take the stair lighting. There are a dozen tenants having four burners at different rentals. The landlord is a man of figures and knows what each tenant should pay. He takes care not to charge less, rather taking a penny or twopence more.

3151. (*Chairman.*) He could not be out or in more than one shilling?—No, he could not be.

3152. (*Mr Dobbie.*) That does not make the difficulty here with the ratepayers who know accurately the increase or decrease of the rates?—Yes. That is quite right too, and I would give the tenant a receipt showing that.

3153. But here the tenant has got to have his rate and rent fixed at the beginning of May and told what his monthly sum is. He won't know whether the rate is going up a penny or twopence, will he?—If he gets a copy of the rates from the factor, and after all the tenant is in the factor's hands. It is a question of supply and demand.

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3154. I am almost with you. But if there is to be monthly letting with regard to smaller houses; if rent and rate are to be added, the tenant will be invited to pay one-twelfth part of a certain fixed sum independent of whether the rates go down or up?—That will be the contract.

3155. (*Mr Howden.*) In connection with property that would be partly let, that is for two or three months in one year, would it not be practicable to assess it on the full twelve months' rental, and then on satisfactory evidence being given to the collector that the house was not occupied for a certain time, to give him back a rebate equivalent to the amount?—Well, if the Committee fixed an allowance making provision that he is to appeal in the event of the house being empty and not remunerative, that he should get rebate to the extent of the period that the house has been unoccupied.

3156. Would it not be the best way to give a rebate?—I think it would.

3157. That would never be taken into account in fixing the rate?—Quite so.

3158. (*Chairman.*) At present a large number of people get relief on the ground of inability to pay. Is it your view that whatever changes are made that right should be conserved or retained?—There would be a difficulty to begin with.

3159. Assume the £10?—Yes. I begin by saying that the rates would not be felt to be the same, shall I use the term obnoxious, burden as at present, for the working man would pay them in Scotland as in England, but if the Committee were inclined to think that those people who have been getting off hitherto should still get off, if those people will show at the end of the year that they paid their rates along with their rent, and that they were formerly getting relief, I would be inclined to return them the money.

3160. To them direct or through the landlord?—To them direct. They would make the claim, assuming that they had made out a case for relief, and it would be a great boon to get back a month's rates. It might help them to pay a month's rent.

3161. You don't see any practical difficulty, if it was thought desirable, in that being done in the way you mention?—None.

Mr James Dougall Borthwick, called and examined.

Mr J. D. Borthwick

Mr J. D Borthwick.

3162. (*Chairman.*) You are Treasurer to the Police Department of the Corporation of Glasgow, and have held the appointment for twenty-five years?—That is so.

3163. The Finance Committee of the Police Department has under its charge the district offices where the whole assessments levied by the Corporation are paid with the exception of the water and gas rates. Are they separate departments or one?—Separate departments.

3164. Are there three?—There are three rate-collecting departments.

3165. Your district offices are four in number, and the fortnightly reports made by the district collectors on the progress of the collections are submitted to the Finance Committee through you?—That is so.

3166. The cumulo rate of assessment imposed by the Corporation during last year 1905–6 for municipal purposes only (*i.e.*, excluding Juvenile Delinquency and Lunacy assessments, which, though collected by the Corporation, are not administered by them, but including the public water rate) amounted on rentals of £10 and upwards to 3s. $5\frac{11}{16}$d. per £. That was the rate excluding the Juvenile Delinquency and Lunacy assessments. You collect these but do not administer them?—They are simply paid over by the Corporation to these administrative bodies.

3167. You include the public water rate?—Yes.

3168. Of that rate of 3s. $5\frac{11}{16}$d per £, 2s. $6\frac{31}{32}$d. was paid by the occupier, and $10\frac{29}{32}$d. by the owner?—Yes.

3169. You heard what I asked Mr Henry, and I suppose it could quite easily be done—what proportion of the occupier's rate is paid by houses under the different classes which he mentions—namely, £4 and under, £4. 1s. and under £7, £7 and under £10, £10 and under £15, £15 and under £20?—I think so.

[*Note.*—See questions 3451 and 3452 for this information.]

3170. On rentals under £10, but over £4, the occupier's assessment was 1s. $10\frac{3}{4}$d. per £?—That is $8\frac{7}{32}$d. less than on rentals of £10 and over.

3171. How does that arise?—In respect that two assessments (the general police purposes assessments and the general sanitary purposes assessments) are charged at only half the rates on lower rentals—that is, on rentals over £4 but under £10.

3172. Does that apply also to owners?—No, the owners' assessment is the same on both classes of rental.

3173. I wonder whether you could give us a list of all the different assessments?—That can be quite easily done.

3174. Just a table?—Yes, I will tabulate the rates which make up these cumulo rates.

[*Note.*—Table D, since prepared and handed in, supplies the information here promised.]

3175. Besides these rates of assessment which vary from year to year, are there imposed in each year three charges which don't fluctuate?—Yes.

3176. We have heard something about these. Tell us what they are?—There is, first of all, a charge of a penny per £ payable by owners for cleansing private streets and courts, this charge being levied on about three-fourths of the rental of the city. It is only levied on property either bounded by or which has the right of access by or to a private street or court.

3177. That is an owners' tax only?—Yes. We regard it, in short, as a charge for work done on behalf of the owner, which the Corporation does for him in consideration of this charge.

3178. Then the second?—There is also a second charge, payable by owners, of 15s. per lamp for lighting private streets and courts, and, third, a charge of 10s. per light for lighting common stairs, payable (under the deduction of 20 per cent.) by owners, but recoverable by them from occupiers.

3179. Is the same deduction allowed whatever the rent of the house is in these stairs?—Yes, the charge and the deductions are uniform.

3180. The lowest class and the highest class?—Yes.

3181. The Corporation collected, you mention, with their own assessments, those for Lunacy purposes and for Juvenile Delinquency prevention. The Lunacy purposes amounted last year in the part of the city situated within the parish of Glasgow to 3d. per £, and in the part within the parish of Govan to $2\frac{1}{2}$d. per £, being divided equally between owner and occupier?—Yes, that is so.

3182. The Juvenile Delinquency assessment of $\frac{15}{16}$d. per £ was assessed uniformly over the whole city and paid by occupiers all along?—Yes.

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3183. These are respectively paid by owners and occupiers. In no case does the owner collect the occupier's portion?—No.

3184. On rentals of £4 and under, no assessments are charged against the occupier. All the assessments are levied on the owner, and last year the rates were:—for owner's rates, 8$\frac{23}{32}$d. per £, as against 10$\frac{23}{32}$d. on rentals above £4; and for certain occupier's rates, 9$\frac{13}{32}$d. per £ under a deduction of 25 per cent., but without any right of recovery from occupiers?—That forms an absolute charge on the landlord which he has no power to recover. It is included in his rent, of course.

3185. Can you tell why the percentages of 20 per cent. in the case of lighting the common stairs, and 25 per cent. in the case of rents under £4, were fixed at these figures?—No, I find these rates in the 1866 Act.

3186. Was that the origin of the rates in both cases, or were they levied before that?—I think they were levied before.

3187. You might look into that and see whether earlier the percentage was the same or larger or smaller?—I will do so.

[*Note.*—A reference to the Acts seems to show that the levying of assessments on rents under £4, and the lighting of common stairs compulsorily by the Corporation, were both sanctioned for the first time by the 1866 Act; so that the abatement of 25 per cent. in the one case and of 20 per cent. in the others originated with that Act.]

3188. The cumulo sum represented by all these assessments and charges, either levied by the Corporation for their own purposes or collected by them on behalf of other authorities, was £1,001,652. Of that sum there was collected at the close of the financial year at 31st May last, plus the amount estimated at that date as still to be recovered, £978,802, leaving as the balance, which it was estimated would be outstanding at the close of the collection, £22,850, equal to an outstanding balance of 2$\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. on the amount levied?—That is all correct.

3189. Has the collection of arrears proved rather better than the estimate?—It has. The proportion ultimately left outstanding will be fractionally less than the 2$\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. I have named.

3190. By the way, before we forget, does any reason occur to you for those percentages I have referred to, 20 per cent. and 25 per cent., being exceptionally large? An exceptional amount of loss in the lighting of common stairs, for instance?—In that case the landlord pays the charge, supposing he had not a tenant in the property; supposing there was not a single tenant in the whole tenement, the landlord would still be charged, because necessarily the stair must be lit, so that the landlord's percentage of loss on that assessment may be considerable. He has only the right of recovery where the house is occupied, and he must pay whether the house is empty or not. Then, in the case of rentals under £4, he has no right to recover. It forms a part of his charge in connection with the property.

3191. And what is allowed for it in that case?—I suppose because he has no right of recovery. If you take the similar class of assessment under the Burgh Police Act of 1892, the landlord there also pays the occupier's assessments on rentals under £4, with a deduction of 10 per cent.; but he has the right to recover from the tenant. In Glasgow, he has to pay without any right of recovery, hence I take it the larger rate of discount allowed.

3192. He just adds it on to the rentals under £4?—Quite so. In Partick or in Govan, or in Kinning Park before it came in a year ago, the householder at £4 has or had his rent to pay plus his assessment. In Glasgow he pays rent only.

3193. You have never heard any suggestion that either of those deductions was excessive or too little—have not been accepted as fair?—They have been accepted. I have never heard the deduction on rentals under £4 criticised, because it is a mere bagatelle. The whole assessment we get from that class of rental is under £300 for the whole city, but I have heard repeatedly criticism in various quarters in respect of the deduction of 20 per cent. that is allowed on the stair lights as being an excessive allowance.

3194. Nothing the other way?—No. I do not think it is reasonable to suppose that under any circumstances the landlord loses one-fifth part of what he pays to the Corporation. Rather, I should put it, that I do not think it is reasonable to suppose he loses a fourth part of what he pays to the Corporation, because he pays to the Corporation 8s. and has the right of recovering 10s., 25 per cent. more than he pays. Putting it the other way, no doubt from the charge of 10s. he only gets a discount of 20 per cent. The difference between stating his margin at 25 per cent. or at 20 per cent. depends on whether the calculation is based on the cost price or the selling price.

3195. On the arrears of £22,850, that includes £9023, payment of which was not pressed for because of assumed inability to pay?—That is so.

3196. You have no statutory powers to grant relief on that ground?—No, not on the ground of poverty. All that can be done in such cases is simply not to press the charge, and the charge therefore remains uncancelled and forms part of the amount outstanding at the close of the year.

3197. You have statutory power to consider applications?—Not for relief from poverty.

3198. No similar provision to the one in the Burgh Police Act?—No.

3199. Was it intentionally omitted?—I rather think it was from what I have heard.

3200. You bring the same thing about?—Yes, by not pressing. I remark further that practically the only cancelling of a charge once made is when premises which have been occupied for part of a year are vacated by their tenant and a new tenant comes in. On his appeal the charge is restricted to the period of occupancy. If, however, premises remain empty, no one being interested in appealing, the charge remains uncancelled and forms part of the amount outstanding at the close of the year.

3201. Is that amount carried forward from year to year?—No, we don't carry forward, but in speaking of the percentage of loss in any year, there is included an amount which might be cancelled for empty premises. To that extent the loss is fictitious.

3202. Have you any applications, in point of fact, formal applications for relief, such as they have in burghs where the 1892 Act applies?—Cases of poverty. Well, the practice is that persons in receipt of outdoor parochial relief present their relief cards at the collector's counter, the fact is noted, and the amount, though it remains uncancelled, is not pressed for.

3203. But even in that case there is no statutory right?—No, no statutory right of exemption. In other cases of distress, persons not in receipt of parochial relief make a statement of their circumstances to the collector, who notes the particulars and puts them before the Sub-Committee of the Police Department Finance Committee, who consider these cases along with the collector and instruct him how to deal with them.

3204. Have other authorities either in special Acts or general Acts provision for applications for relief?—I cannot say whether in any of the local Acts there are such powers, but there are such powers in the General Police Act. I do not know whether it is so in Edinburgh.

3205. As to the allocation between occupiers and owners of the cumulo sum collected at the close of the financial year, or estimated then as recoverable, the occupiers paid £693,272, being—

For general purposes	£659,741
For stair lights (charged against owners, but recovered by them from occupiers)	24,687
For Lunacy and Juvenile Delinquency purposes	31,694
Making	£716,122
Less estimated outstanding at close of collection	22,850
	£693,272

—That is so.

3206. Then you have paid by owners. The total sum there is £285,530, under the heads—

For general purposes	£232,515
For occupiers' assessments on houses of £4 rental and under . . .	299
For private streets and courts cleansing and lighting charges . . .	20,777
For lunacy purposes	31,939
Total	£285,530

—Yes.

3207. Approximately, therefore, 71 per cent. of these monies was contributed by occupiers and 29 per cent. by owners?—That is so.

3208. Then you have heard the evidence given by Bailie Brechin and Mr Henry as to the Corporation having had for a number of years the question of short lets for smaller houses, and also the question of assessments along with rents before them?—I have.

3209. Is it the fact that, as to the letting question, it has not merely been the question of the undue length of time between the date of taking the house and the date of entry, but also the whole question of short lets?—Yes, the whole question of short lets.

3210. What is your own view derived from your own experience in the past?—I say I am personally in favour of both these proposals, of short lets for smaller houses, and the collection of assessments along with rents.

3211. Is that from a general point of view, or merely as an official of the Corporation looking to their benefit?—From a general point of view.

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3212. As a citizen?—Yes, on general grounds.

3213. Taking the three interested bodies, landlords, tenants, and the rating authorities?—It would be good, I think, all round. These are the three that are interested, and I think these proposals are beneficial to all three.

3214. Do you think they necessarily go together?—Yes, necessarily.

3215. You have considered, I suppose, the alternative of the landlord's collecting the occupiers' assessments along with rents,—namely, that the Corporation should assess more frequently?—Yes.

3216. And you reject that?—If that had been practicable it would have been done many years ago. It has not been done simply because it has not been regarded as practicable.

3217. In theory there is nothing against it?—Certainly not. The more frequently you could have collections the better.

3218. I see, and you think that that principle can only be carried out by the landlords collecting it?—Yes.

3219. You think that at present the system of collecting only once a year is objectionable in the case of smaller houses?—It is by no means an ideal system.

3220. Now it is a fact, is it not, that at the present moment there are large numbers of occupiers on short lets?—Undoubtedly that is so.

3221. Does that satisfy the demand for short lets or not?—I do not think the advantage should be confined to those householders who are already on short lets, but the principle ought to be extended very considerably.

3222. But then, Mr Borthwick, if these people are on short lets, should not other people, if they wanted them, be on short lets too? What is to prevent them? Is there a market?—These people are on short lets because the landlords themselves wish to have them on that system.

3223. But the same landlords have got other smaller people of yearly lets?—Yes.

3224. Now is that because the other smaller people prefer the yearly lets, or is it the action of the landlords that brings about that difference?—In my opinion it is largely the action of the landlords.

3225. For what reason do the landlords pursue that action?—They wish to have their houses let for as long a period as possible, although, in my view, the landlord does not consult his own interest on the whole in refusing short lets.

3226. Is it your view, then, that there is a considerable number of working men who desire to get, in Glasgow, houses under £20 of rent on short lets and cannot get them?—Who desire to get them on short lets and cannot get them. That is so.

3227. On the other hand, from your experience, is there not a large number of working men who prefer the security of a yearly tenure of cases of houses under £20 of rent?—I do not think that the security of any good tenant—any decent man who is behaving himself and paying his way—would be in danger to any extent by the introduction of a system of short lets.

3228. In short, the system of short lets would not interfere with the system of security which a man naturally values, if he was a satisfactory tenant?—I suppose theoretically it would, but practically the cases would be very, very rare, and I should say would form a negligible quantity, in which that security would be interfered with.

3229. It is said that the proposal for short lets would interfere with the freedom of contract. Is it your view that, at the present moment, there is any freedom of contract? There is no freedom of contract, because the landlords are not willing to let houses on short lets which the working men would like to have?—That is so. Of course there is theoretically freedom of contract. The conditions are not equal on both sides.

3230. How do you account, Mr Borthwick—you have been so long connected with these concerns—for the difference between England and Scotland in this matter?—I have no theory on the point. The practice of the two countries is different; that is about all one can say.

3231. You don't see any difference in their actual conditions?—No, it is not the conditions at all.

3232. The work is as shifting in the one case as the other?—I should think so.

3233. But in your view the difference is greater in the large burghs than in the small?—Yes.

3234. Why?—A smaller burgh has a smaller area, of course, and I think there is probably less necessity for a man to remove his house unless he wishes to remove from the burgh altogether. I think, even in a small burgh, it would be a great advantage to the working man if trade there was slack and he wished to find his way to another centre. No doubt the number who wish to clear out from a small burgh would be less.

3235. And still less in rural districts?—Yes.

3236. Where employment goes by the season of the year a good deal?—Yes.

3237. So that you agree with Mr Henry in the distinction he suggests between the houses under £10 and those between £10 and £20, in so far as he suggests there is more necessity to move in the case of those under £10, and also less ability to deal with landlords than in those above £10?—There is something, I think, in both of these statements, but I would not be afraid of extending this principle of short lets and compounding of rates to a point beyond where Mr Henry is disposed to go as an experiment.

3238. Where would you go?—The limit suggested by Mr Cross is £20, and I don't think I would be afraid of going to £20.

3239. But not more, at all events at first?—No, probably not.

3240. Now, in regard to the part of the proposal that we think is necessarily involved, viz., the compounding, what in your view would be the advantage of that to the tenant?—That for the present system, which requires him to make payment in one sum, there would be substituted an arrangement by which payment would be accepted in light instalments over the whole year. I suppose, in the poorest class of property, rent is collected weekly. I think I have not heard at the table any remarks as to more frequent payments than monthly, but rents are collected weekly and fortnightly in the poorest properties.

3241. Under £4 you mean?—Above that.

3242. Between £4 and £7?—Yes. And instead of asking payment of assessment in one sum, they would be taken in dribblets, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, as the case might be.

3243. Just for convenience, kindly give us the calculations of the rates on the different class of houses up to £10. Take £4, 11s. rate, what would that be in the year? Take last year's rates, not to a fraction, you know. Just give us Mr Henry's figures, those £4, 1s. and under £7. What would that be? We were taking £7, £10, and £20?—On the third paragraph of the first page, on rentals under £10, and over £4, the occupier's assessment is stated as 1s. 10$\frac{3}{4}$d. per £: that multiplied by 4 would be 7s. 7d. as the charge on a £4, 1s. rent.

3244. £7, how much would that be?—13s. 3$\frac{1}{4}$d.

3245. £10?—That comes under the high rate of assessment.

3246. Take £9, 19s.?—18s. 11$\frac{1}{2}$d., I think.

3247. And £10?—That is at the high rate of 2s. 6$\frac{31}{32}$d., say 2s. 7d., which would be practically £1, 5s. 10d.

3248. £15?—£1, 18s. 9d., I think.

3249. £20?—Twice £10, £2, 11s. 8d.

3250. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell*).—Can we have the total figures, Mr Chairman, the figures for all the rates paid?

3251. (*Chairman.*) These are all the occupier's?—Yes, for municipal rates.

3252. (*Chairman.*) These are the total municipal rates. You can give us the Lunacy and the Delinquency?—Roughly, the Lunacy rate is 1$\frac{1}{2}$d. per £ to the occupier, and the Juvenile Delinquency 1d., that is 2$\frac{1}{2}$d. per £ practically to add to each of these rentals.

3253. Give us £10 and £20?—2s. 1d. to add to the former and 4s. 2d. to the latter. For the £10 that would give a total charge of £1, 8s. roughly, and for the other £2, 16s.

3254. You cannot for convenience give us what we should have got from the other witnesses before, what the parish rates come to?—I have not it with me.

3255. To save us going back to the previous witnesses, you might give us it and put it in.

3256. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Could you give us a schedule?—The rate is not uniform for the whole city. If I tried to show the exact rate for each district that would make a complicated table, but if I give it you for the Glasgow Parish, well, while not absolutely correct, it would be practically so.

3257. (*Chairman.*) Can you include in it the Parish Council rates as well?—Quite readily.

3258. Mr Cox was suggesting, if it could be done, it would be a great convenience if you could put columns along with these; the first column would show whether paid by occupier direct or by owner; and you might consider, Sir John, we have been considering what we would ask Mr Borthwick to put in. If you could put in the case of any where there is an allowance granted, the amount of allowance. Could you do that, it would be a very great convenience to us if you could put it in one table?—I think I know what the Committee wish, and I will try to put it into such a shape as will give the particulars you want. I submit to the Committee a table, which appears in the Appendix to last year's Police Department Accounts, of our own rates, the municipal. The figure I quoted in my evidence, 3s. 5$\frac{11}{14}$d., is shown in large type. The manuscript addition shows the corresponding rate for the current year, 3s. 6$\frac{3}{16}$d.

3259. (*Chairman.*) If you could prepare a draft table

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and send it in to us, we might have some other column to suggest to you after; that would be the best way.

3260. (*Mr Cox.*) Yes, that is the table that will show every rate?—These municipal rates which I have just quoted are, as you know, levied on the full rental, the rental as it appears on the valuation roll; the poor rate and the school rate are not.

3261. (*Chairman.*) If you could add a note at the bottom of the statement in regard to any matters of that kind it would gather the whole thing into one in a very convenient way. You will do what you can?—Are the Committee prepared to express any opinion as to this point, namely, as to whether, to secure uniformity of statement, they would wish the school and parochial rates put in, not at the nominal rates which are levied on, say, only four-fifths of the rental, but at what would be the equivalent of these rates if levied on the full rental.

3262. We want to know what the occupier has to pay out of his own pocket?—I will try to put it in such shape as will give you the information you want.

[*Note.*—Table C, since prepared and handed in, supplies the information here promised.]

3263. You have spoken to the advantage of the occupier. Is the advantage of short lets confined to the occupier?—Certainly not.

3264. What is the advantage to the owner?—There are various advantages to the owner. Removing would be spread over the whole year, and so, if the tenant who desired to remove would have a reasonable chance of obtaining a house at any time, the owner would equally have a reasonable chance of letting at any time, instead of, as at present, if he misses the market, being probably left with an empty house for the whole year. I am clearly of opinion that short lets would tend, not to more, but to less frequent removals. I have long thought that the annual recurrence of a house letting term has a most unsettling effect. The missives come in and everyone is set asking the question, "Shall we remove?" or "Shall we not?" When people meet the question passes, "Well, are you flitting or sitting?" I think that if a tenant knew that he could remove at any time on giving reasonable notice, he would rest on that knowledge and the question of removal would, as a general rule, only be raised when one cause or another rendered removal desirable. I am satisfied that at present many removals take place for which there is no reason in the tenant's circumstances, or in anything in their houses rendering it desirable for them to go. The people are unsettled and the question is raised, and people remove simply because this is the proper time of the year for doing so.

3265. Is that something you know of, the two ways of managing, with the result that some mistresses are in the habit of asking their servants regularly, "Are you going to stay?" while others never ask that, and the question never arises?—That is so.

3266. Do you think there would not be more frequent removals? would they be more spread over the whole year?—The removals that did take place would certainly be spread over the whole year, instead of taking place largely at one time as at present.

3267. In addition, do you agree with the view that one removal term causes a great deal of inconvenience and loss through the whole of the work being thrown within a very short period?—Undoubtedly loss to the tenant and also to the landlord, who is forced to get his houses done up at one time.

3268. There is a loss, some people say, I understand to the trades employed? Do you agree that there is over-pressure at one period?—Yes, and want of work at other seasons.

3269. Do you contemplate that the result of short lets would be to raise the rents or not to interfere with the rents?—I do not think it would interfere with the rents, balancing one thing with another. It would neither raise nor lower rents. That is a negligible factor, I think.

3270. What about the position of an owner who finds himself with an undesirable tenant, an annoyance to the neighbourhood, say, who yet pays his rent and cannot be turned out?—It seems to me that, with a system of short lets, this is one of the advantages an owner would enjoy. He would be able much more speedily to rid his property of an undesirable tenant.

3271. Do you think it would raise the question of the law of hypothec one way or another?—I should not wonder but it might.

3272. How would it bear, in your view, on that?—If the right of hypothec were abolished, I should think the landlord would be more disposed to ask prepayment of rent.

3273. And go in for short lets?—Yes.

3274. But the statutory enactment of short lets would not necessarily lead to the law of hypothec being interfered with?—No, I don't think so, not necessarily.

3275. As to owners: owners, apparently, and the factors object to the friction that would be caused if they had to collect assessments. What is your experience about that, where they actually do collect the assessments?—As Bailie Brechin said, at present quite a considerable number of owners find it to their advantage, though their brethren stand aloof. The fact is that certain men do find it advantageous.

3276. You think that has been submitted to test—it is not mere opinion?—No.

3277. Is it found, in fact, that tenants very often show a disinclination to pay rates, and a desire to get rid of rates as contrasted with the payment of rents?—They can more easily give effect to their disinclination to pay rates than they can to their disinclination to pay rents. Perhaps the disinclination may be equal, but the cases in which the tenants avoid payment of rates are no doubt very much more numerous than those in which they evade payment of rents.

3278. And if the two were collected together, you think the difficulty of getting the rates would be lessened?—Yes, undoubtedly.

3279. Without a corresponding drawback to the landlord, if he got a proper allowance?—Without a corresponding loss to the landlord.

3280. The question having been before the Corporation, is it a fact that there is no agreement as to the limit of rental to which a system of short lets and compounding might be applied?—The Corporation has never agreed on any limit.

3281. What sums have been suggested?—I have heard £10, £12, £15, and £20 named.

3282. In reply to inquiries made three years ago, did eighteen local associations, including thirteen ward committees, express themselves in favour of a change?—Yes.

3283. Of what change?—The abolition of the missive system, and a system of short lets.

3284. What kind of organisations were they?—The Trades Council and Labour organisations were asked to express their opinion for the guidance of the Corporation.

3285. Were they unanimous in their view?—They were not unanimous.

3286. To what extent did they differ?—I have not the figures, if you wish the numbers.

3287. Perhaps you have them sufficiently here?—I have only dealt here with those who approved of the change.

3288. Those who approved differed over the figures they named as the maximum?—Thirteen of the organisations, including eight ward committees, named £20. Other four ward committees named respectively £10, £15, £25, and £35, as the limit of rental, while the remaining ward committee, approving of the abolition of the missive system, did not suggest any limit.

3289. Were those areas, including a substantial number of the houses that would be affected, under £20 or £30?—That is so, all these areas.

3290. Were there several who were against a change, and in favour of the retention of the old system?—I think that is so.

3291. That would be very interesting to know. At whose instance were these inquiries made?—The sub-committee of which Bailie Brechin is convener.

3292. Did you send out notices?—The town-clerk wrote a letter.

3293. Have you a copy of it there?—This is the remit—"to communicate with the various ward committees in the 'city, and with other organisations interested in the missive 'system, on the question of, up to what rental they were 'of opinion the present missive system should be abolished, 'keeping in view that such may necessitate the collection 'of rates along with rents."

3294. Looking to the sentence beginning "keeping in view," that shows necessarily, doesn't it, that the missive system was meant to include the short let question?—Oh, undoubtedly.

3295. Well, now, what is the result?—The result of the favourable expression of opinion is mentioned in my print.

3296. What about the unfavourable?—(1) Glasgow United Trades Council were favourable; so were (2) the Independent Labour party, Glasgow District Executive Committee; (3) Glasgow Workers' Municipal Election Committee; (4) Plasterers' Federal Union, Glasgow District; and (5) Independent Labour Party, Blackfriars Branch. These were the five outside organisations that expressed themselves in favour of the abolition of the missive system on rentals up to £20. Then those that were either neutral or opposed to the change were—The Citizens' Union, the Association of House Factors and Property Agents in Glasgow, and the Ratepayers' Federation, Limited. These were the associations that expressed themselves as either neutral or opposed.

3297. We know about the Citizens' Union and the House

Factors. The Ratepayers' Federation, Limited, does that still exist? We have not heard about them. What was the date?—Three years ago.

3298. You have not known, have you, of any working men's organisation that has expressed disapproval of the proposed change?—No.

3299. Were there any of the ward committees against the proposed change?—Yes. I think so.

3300. Tell us about that.—Dalmarnock, Calton, Mile-end, Whitevale, Blackfriars, Cowcaddens, and Anderston were all in favour of abolition, and fixed limit at £20. Hutchesontown was also in favour of abolition, and of making it illegal to let house property under a rental of £20 for a longer period than one month. Gorbals Ward, in favour of abolition, did not suggest any limit of rental. The four wards which, approving of the abolition of the missive system, suggested limits of rental other than £20, were:—Park Ward, £35; Townhead Ward, £25; Dennistoun Ward, £15; and Sandyford Ward, £10. Park Ward is one in which there are houses of a pretty good class. Broomielaw Ward was not in favour of the abolition of the missive system, but recommended that missives should not be issued before the month of April. Blythswood was in favour of a reasonable reduction of the time at which houses require to be taken prior to the removal term, but was not in favour of the collection of rates along with rents. I think Broomielaw was the only one opposed to the abolition of the missive system. Opposed to the collection of rates with rents were also Hutchesontown and Pollokshields, as well as Blythswood. All the wards, except Hutchesontown, favourable to the abolition of the missive system either expressed or implied approval of the collection of rates along with rents.

3301. Is that the lot?—One ward, Kelvinside, thought the Corporation should not interfere.

3302. They express no opinion on the rentals?—No, and two ward committees wished to keep an open mind on the subject until the matter had been considered by the Corporation, viz. Govanhill and Maryhill.

3303. How is the ward committee elected? What is a ward committee?—At the annual ward meeting, sometimes the principal part of the time of the meeting, which should be devoted to hearing the representatives of the ward, is devoted to electing this committee.

3304. Just tell us—Broomielaw was the only one that was against interference with the missive system. What kind of ward is that?—A working men's ward, undoubtedly.

3305. You have no explanation there?—No.

3306. Then Blythswood, Hutchesontown, and Pollokshields, against compounding. What sort of wards are these? Take Blythswood, residential or working men or what?—It is a mixed ward.

3307. Blythswood must include a good deal of business property. Does that not apply to Broomielaw too?—Undoubtedly.

3308. Are there many working men's houses in Blythswood?—There must be a number, but it is nothing like one of the most distinctly working-class wards.

3309. What about Hutchesontown?—It is a better-class working-men's district.

3310. What about Pollokshields?—Pretty much a villa district.

3311. So is Kelvinside?—Yes.

3312. What about Govanhill and Maryhill?—These are both mixed areas.

3313. Now, you have referred to the cases where arrangements have been made for owners, in certain cases, collecting rates, and you have prepared a table, haven't you, which we are going to call Table A, showing the amount of occupier's assessments (*in cumulo*) imposed, collected, and outstanding, as at the close of each year's collection, including both the assessments imposed by the Corporation for Municipal Purposes only, and those (*e.g.* Juvenile Delinquency and Lunacy assessments) collected by the Corporation but not administered by them, (1) on rentals over £4 and under £10, and (2) on rentals of £10 and upwards? That table is correct?—These tables are correct.

3314. Are there any remarks you have to make on these tables? How long do they extend over?—They cover a period of twenty-eight years, giving the amount imposed, collected, and outstanding, and the percentage the outstanding bears to the amount imposed in each year from 1878–79 onwards.

3315. Look at the table dealing with £4 and under £10. The percentage outstanding in the first year was 39·53 per cent., and a steady improvement follows, until it comes down to the year 1896–97, from 39 per cent. to 13·86 per cent.?—That is so.

3316. Then there is a turn, and increases occur, and last year 25·61 remains outstanding? How do you account for these fluctuations?—I explain that at the period the table starts with, the collection was not receiving the attention that probably it should have. There was a certain amount of slackness in the work of collection. In 1881–82, November 1881, a new convener was appointed to the Finance Committee, who took the view strongly that I have impressed just now, and he induced the Committee to take a much closer supervision of the work of collection, with the result that a steady improvement, as the table shows, followed until the year 1891–92 is reached, with a loss of 14·90 per cent. What I would like very particularly to direct the attention of the Committee to, is the loss during the eight years 1891–92 to 1898–99 inclusive. The loss for these eight years averages 14·65 per cent. In each of the eight years the result of the collection is practically uniform, the year with the highest percentage, 1894–95, being only 0·41 per cent. above the average, and the year of the lowest, 1896–97, being only 0·79 per cent. under the average. If, instead of being presented in tabular form, these results were shown in the form of a diagram, the curve would become practically a straight line for this period of eight years. Now, I regard these eight years of average percentage as showing the normal loss on a normal collection.

3317. Properly attended to?—Yes.

3318. Apart from any such causes as bad trade or war or anything of that kind?—Yes.

3319. As a fair basis from which to calculate, allowing, of course, a reasonable margin?—As a fair basis from which to calculate, if it were to be assumed, which, however, I do not admit, that there is any connection between the Corporation losses under the present system and the discount that they might be expected to allow.

3320. Assuming that they were the same, or that they were similar?—Assuming that there was any connection between the two things, I think these years are a fair basis to calculate on.

3321. If you were calculating what the Corporation's probable loss in the future would be, you think these eight years a favourable basis for them to go on?—It should be so.

3322. To what do you attribute the rise since 1898–99?—In my precognition there are some remarks in regard to that. But, before that, there is a paragraph explaining how this average loss of 14·65 per cent. may be apportioned between different grades of rental.

3323. Yes, I should like that.—Dealing with this average of 14·65 per cent., and in view of the fact that the proportion of assessment uncollected is greater on lower rentals than on higher, if £7 were regarded as a dividing line in the class of rental over £4 and under £10, I may state that, on the basis of the first year of the eight years' period referred to, which year may be taken as fairly typical, the amount outstanding from all causes was:—

On rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, 27·86 per cent.

On rentals over £7 and under £10, 5·87 per cent.

While, as I say, these percentages are based on the first year of the eight years' period referred to, 1891–92, and while that is going a long way back, as these average years are practically uniform, the figures based on any one of them may be taken to apply to the whole eight years' period. Deducting the amounts, payment of which was not pressed for on the ground of poverty, and an allowance for what would, on appeal, have been cancelled for empty premises, the amount outstanding at the close of the collection from every other cause was:—

On rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, 18·94 per cent.

On rentals over £7 and under £10, 2·29 per cent.

Now, in my view, these are the maximum losses that should be incurred by the Police Department on that class of rental, apart from any allowance the Corporation may see fit to give on the ground of poverty.

3324. When you take the amount outstanding "from all causes," what do you include in all causes?—Just what I say.

3325. There are poverty, empty houses: anything else?—The 18·94 per cent. under £7 must, to a large extent, be due to improvidence on the part of the ratepayer. I have, in the difference between 27·86 per cent. and 18·94 per cent., discounted the relief given to the decent poor.

3326. You don't show anywhere, do you, Mr Borthwick, what it costs the Corporation to recover the rates?—No, but I have the figure for it.

3327. Would that have any bearing on what it would cost the landlord, or would the conditions be so different?—The conditions would be quite different. It would not and could not possibly cost the landlord the expense which it costs the Corporation. They have to maintain a separate staff for this very thing. The landlord would simply collect rates along with his rents. I do not think there is any analogy.

3328. You could not give a 25 per cent. or 30 per cent.? You could not make any percentage roughly?—No, I think not. The net cost of the four collecting offices last year was £5777. The gross cost was £8635; but the amount

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recovered from persons in arrear with payment of their assessments in name of penalty yielded £2858. Deducting that, the net cost of the offices to the rates was £5777. For that sum we collected, as shown in the first page of my evidence, £978,802, so that it worked out at something less than 12s. per cent.

3329. Is that cost merely salaries and wages, or capital spent on buildings, and all that kind of thing?—It includes rent for the offices, printing, and stationery.

3330. It includes everything?—Yes, the entire cost.

3331. So that, in your view, the present percentages outstanding are higher than they need to be or ought to be?—That is so.

3332. Do you think the difficulties of the country in the way of war in 1899 had an effect in compelling generous treatment of the families of men on active service?—I think it was the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 that accounted for the start of this worsement in the collection.

3333. And relief, in point of fact, from assessment, has been given to a greater extent than formerly?—Much greater.

3334. When a habit is started, it is apt to continue?—That is what I am afraid of. I think we are drifting back towards the position we were in twenty-eight years ago.

3335. But that you might be able, if it were fairly enforced?—Fairly enforced, without oppression. I do not think there was anything oppressive in the collection of that eight years period. It was a fair collection.

3336. You said, if the two were comparable, that would be a fair basis. What is your view as to the loss, suppose the landlord was to collect, as compared with the loss that the Corporation suffers?—If the landlord gave you his loss in rental at present, I do not think that the percentage which that bears to his rent-roll would be increased to any appreciable extent by your adding on the collection of assessments. If you gave the landlord an allowance for unlet property——

3337. And partial lets?—Yes, and partial lets. Under the Glasgow Police Act, 1866, we make an abatement for all periods during which premises are unoccupied, and I think the landlord, under any system which would place on him the payment of the rates, should receive an allowance on that score. He should only be charged, I think, rates for the time his house is occupied. It seems to me thoroughly inadmissible to charge assessments on empty houses as Poor Law authorities do.

3338. They charge on premises empty the whole year?—Yes, on rental as it appears on the valuation roll. That seems to me quite inequitable. If a man is not uplifting any rental from the property, it is surely very hard that he should be assessed on it. But it is on whether such an allowance is made or not that there would depend very largely the fairness of the discount or abatement to be allowed the landlord for collection of assessments. The landlord is clearly entitled to one rate or abatement if he is to pay assessments on the full rental as it appears on the valuation roll, let or not let, and a very different rate should apply if he is allowed a deduction for empty premises.

3339. You are just going to come to that. Before doing so directly, in your second table on document A, you give occupiers' assessments on £10 and upwards. The percentages outstanding are much smaller than on the other table. Why is that?—Because the higher the rental, the less the rate of loss will be.

3340. That goes up to the fullest amount?—Yes.

3341. You have no notion how it would look, if you had shown between £10 and £20? It would have been substantially less than under £10?—Enormously less.

3342. If we are to recommend any change, there may be a question as to the limit. Now, it is very important to see what is the practical difference between those paying under £10 and those paying between £10 and £20. Could you, without inconvenience, give us the percentage and arrears between £10 and £20, not working it out elaborately, but perhaps taking a year or two?—I think so. It could not be done without some little work, but the information could be got and supplied to the Commission.

[*Note.*—See note at end of evidence, *i.e.* following question No. 3455.]

3343. One year would be all we would want, and we would compare it with the same as you have already given us. We want to see if there is really a substantial difference between the people. Mr Dobbie points out on page 6 an illustration of what it comes to. There you have on rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, 27·86 per cent., and on rentals over £7 and under £10, 5·87 per cent.?—I prefer you would take the figures lower down, on rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, 18·94 per cent., and on rentals over £7 and under £10, 2·29 per cent.

3344. If you went up above that, it would be marked, would not it?—The reduction would be very marked.

3345. Not so marked as the difference between £4 to £7, on the one hand, and £7 to £10 on the other?—I can give you each pound of rental between £7 and £10, the per centages the average of which is 2·29.

3346. It would be interesting to see where it really arises?—Let me go back. Take the line above; we lose 18·94 per cent. between £4, 1s. and £7. Well, between £4, 1s. to £5 the loss is 34·91; between £5, 1s. to £6 the loss is 17·54; between £6, 1s. to £7 the loss is 8·50. Now that averages 18·94. Then, on £7, 1s. to £8 the loss is 4·48; on £8, 1s. to £9 the loss is 2·07; £9, 1s. to £9, 19s. the loss is 0·78. On these three grades of rental the average is 2·29. Now, you can imagine what the loss will be over £10. Take it without distinction of rental at all, £10 and over, it is 0·39.

3347. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Assuming compounding it up to £20, a very much smaller rate would be required than if the limit was under £10?—Surely, but I do not suppose you would approve of an ungraded rate. I think Mr Cross's graded rates for the higher rentals are needlessly liberal, more so than his allowance of 10 per cent. from assessments on rentals over £4 and under £7. That is not relatively so large an allowance by any means as 2½ per cent. from assessments on rentals of £10 and over, and I think that is what he recommends.

3348. Yes, over £4 and under £7, 10 per cent. Your figures show that if you take £4, 1s., it is 34 per cent., and if you take £6, it is only a quarter of it. You will give us that?—I think there is no analogy between the losses which the Corporation incurs and the abatement which it might be expected equitable to give to the landlord.

3349. These last figures are, without taking off anything for exemption for poverty or empty houses?—It is after taking these off.

3350. You are making no allowance in these for either?—No.

3351. And you think there is no analogy either with the cost of collecting or the loss incurred?—No.

3352. (*Mr Cox.*) These averages are not brought out exactly by the figures you gave?—I have not the figures beside me for bringing out the averages. You are not adding the three percentages together and dividing the quotient; that will not give the average unless the amount at each rate is equal.

(*Mr Cox.*) That is quite true.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) Upon these gross outstandings, you might put others in. You have given the figures of the 18 per cent., but the real outstanding is 27 per cent. You might give us the figures dealing with these rentals on the actual gross arrears.

3353. (*Chairman.*) Haven't you that?—No.

[*Note.*—The allocation asked for, of the percentage outstanding from all causes, making no allowance for exemption for poverty or empty houses, of 27·86 per cent. on rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, was:—between £4, 1s. and £5, 45·84 per cent., £5, 1s. and £6, 26·11 per cent., and between £6, 1s. and £7, 15·85 per cent. The similar allocation of the percentage out-standing of 5·87 per cent. on rentals over £7 and under £10, was:—between £7, 1s. and £8, 9·68 per cent., £8, 1s. and £9, 5·73 per cent., and between £9, 1s. and £9, 19s., 3·03 per cent.]

3354. On that second table of rentals, £10 and upwards, the percentages outstanding are smaller, but show the same trend?—Undoubtedly.

3355. We had evidence from Councillor Brechin of the arrangement mutually entered into betweeen certain owners and factors under £10 and the Corporation, by which the factors, in consideration of the deduction of 7½ per cent., pay their tenants' assessments. You have prepared a table referring to that?—Yes, Table B.

3356. Was that owing to the private action of factors, or were they in any way concussed into that by the Corporation?—No.

3357. Who came to whom?—The factors to the Corporation.

3358. What led them to do that? Finance?—I expect their interest in letting the property.

3359. Not that they expected to make anything out of it?—It seems to me it would tend to secure permanency of tenancy. To avoid the rate collector is the reason for running away which so many tenants have. That temptation is taken out of the way.

3360. Yes, but the basis of 7½ per cent. was based to cover cost rather than yielding profit to the factors and their employers?—It was an inducement which the Corporation were prepared to offer in consideration of the payment of assessments by the factors.

3361. But would it, in the end, result in gain to the factors, which they would not have got under the other system, through their getting an allowance for the trouble of collection?—I think it could not have resulted in loss, otherwise they would have withdrawn from the arrangement.

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3362. But it would result in profit to them, as they would be paid their fees?—If the allowance they receive is in excess of any loss through failure to recover assessments they have paid, as I assume it must be, there is profit to them. There is no doubt it is profitable to the Corporation.

3363. Through getting better payment of rates?—Yes.

3364. And also to the profit of the factor, because he would be paid for his trouble in collecting the rates. Your table B states the rental over £4 and under £10 on which the occupiers' assessments have been paid to the Corporation by the owners in consideration of a deduction allowed to the latter of 7½ per cent. That has progressively increased, has it, with the exception of one year. It dropped a few pounds between 1902–03, when it was £10,627, and 1903–04, when it was £10,623. With that exception the amount has annually increased?—Yes; that last large increase in one year from £10,861 to £15,824, followed on the inclusion with the city in November 1905 of the former burgh of Kinning Park. In Kinning Park, as in all places administered under the Burgh Act of 1892, owners who let premises for less than a year were liable in payment of the assessments thereon, without receiving any deduction whatever from the Burgh Authorities. But after Kinning Park came into the city, these owners received an abatement of 7½ per cent. for continuing payments which they formerly had made without abatement. It was open to them, of course, to decline to pay the assessments, but instead they continued making the payments for an abatement of 7½ per cent., which they were obliged formerly to make without any abatement.

3365. And the rate under this arrangement of 1896–97—did it start then?—No, I only go back ten years.

3366. When did it start?—It has been going on during all the period of my service with the Corporation.

3367. Are any of the factors who are parties to that arrangement members of any of the Factors' Associations, or are they outside factors?—I cannot say. I do not know.

3368. Is there anything special in their composition?—I do not see any reason why these gentlemen should compound and others should not.

3369. Is the compounding in the hands of a very small number or spread over many? Have you any notion how many of the factors are involved in this thing? It is not the case of one or two men factoring very large estates, is it?—Well, the largest single item is the property of the Corporation City Improvement Department.

3370. How much of it consists in that?—Of this £15,800, £5900 is the rental of property belonging to the Improvement Department, but that property is managed just as any private estate would be. It is no argument against compounding here that the Corporation are dealing with their own property and their own assessments, because the official at the head of that department wants to show a balance on the right side just the same as any factor or landlord would, and if it were not to the interest of the Department to pay those assessments, they would not be paid. So that I do not think it is open to anyone to say that to the extent of that £6000 this figure goes for nothing because it applies to Corporation property.

3371. (*Sir John Stirling-Maxwell.*) Was it the same in 1896?—I do not doubt it would be, Sir John.

3372. (*Chairman.*) The question of short lets, I suppose may in its application to the Corporation property be somewhat affected by the fact that they have caretakers, but you think not the question of compounding?—No doubt the Corporation tenants are a selected class.

3373. It is open to that observation at least. Can you tell us what the workmen's dwellings represent?—No, I have no knowledge of that.

3374. What we would like is, how much of that is property of the ordinary class, without being open to any comments at all. Take the Corporation and the Glasgow dwellings, you have nothing else?—I think not.

3375. You can give us the Glasgow dwellings and then we will see how it stands. You do not see, do you, any reason why, if that is done in regard to that property and is found to answer, it should not be done in regard to others?—I do not see any reason. Apparently the factors see such reasons, because they don't avail themselves of this arrangement.

3376. Have you had complaints as to the deduction being too small in these cases and endeavours to raise it?—I have not heard of any such complaint from any quarter.

3377. You have no notion of how that percentage would be fairly divisible between the cost of collection and losses?—No. It was not made up on that basis. It seems to me the cost of collection is nil.

3378. It would mostly be what then—losses?—The cost of collection is nil. The inclusion of the assessments cannot add a cent, I should say, to the cost of collection.

3379. Do you suppose that in any of these properties there is any amount given off on the ground of poverty? There could not be, because they don't pay it in full?—No, where the tenant is in receipt of parochial relief in a property for which the landlord compounds, we still give the tenant relief. We don't charge the landlord the assessments.

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3380. That is outside the 7½ per cent altogether?—Outside, we don't charge these assessments.

3381. It is only in that case?—Yes, and in this other. If the property is not let for part of the year, the landlord will intimate that his house is empty for, say, six months. He gets his 7½ per cent. off the six months for which only we charge. His only loss can be if he fails to recover assessments when his house is occupied; but unless his house is occupied we don't charge him.

3382. But the hypothetical lady with lodgers gets no look-in in this arrangement?—No, if there is a tenant the landlord has to pay.

3383. You know that in Mr Cross's Bill the adoption of the Act in whole or in part is made optional. Have you any view in regard to that?—I think it is desirable that option should be given. I should fancy, in a small burgh, the authorities might be glad to adopt the clause fixing short lets, and yet, in their own protection, they might not find it needful to bracket with that the collection and payment of rates by the landlord. They might be willing to collect the rates themselves, knowing their loss is practically nil, and yet they might be desirous of giving the ratepayers the benefit of short lets.

3384. In other cases there might be burghs desirous of doing neither the one nor the other?—Yes.

3385. With the present views of the Glasgow Town Council, of course there is apparently little doubt they would adopt the Act in whole or in part?—Unless they were prevented from doing so by the large discount to be paid. I think that is the only thing that would deter them.

3386. You have noticed the difference between Glasgow, with a limit of £20, and Govan and Partick, with a limit of £16. Do you know anything to justify that?—It is very difficult to justify that. It seems to me the conditions are very much the same.

3387. Would you say the same about Paisley and Greenock?—I had rather not express an opinion.

3388. At all events, Govan and Partick you cannot distinguish?—I don't think so. With regard to B table, you observe a very considerable portion of the rental that is compounded for is under £7 of rental.

3389. You are now referring to the statement in B table showing the proportion of the above sum of £15,824 effeiring to each £ of rental from £4, 1s. to £9, 19s. inclusive?—Yes; the addition is roughly £8000.

3390. You are adding together what?—The first three lines, so that something over the half of the rental on which the landlords are willing to pay assessments with a 7½ per cent. allowance is the rental on which the Corporation incurs its biggest loss, being under £7.

3391. (*Mr Howden.*) Do the landlords of the present time pay assessments on unlet property, owner's share?—Not municipal assessments; they do parochial and school assessments.

3392. Do you not think it fair that they should pay part of that assessment, for instance, the police rate? Unlet property surely needs as much protection as let property?—Well, I do think you might, with greater fairness, ask the landlord to pay police rates than you can ask him to pay parish rates. Still, I think it is a stiff thing to ask him to pay assessments on what is yielding him nothing. Undoubtedly you are rendering him a service.

3393. Have you any idea how many removals there were in Glasgow last Whitsunday?—No, I have no means of knowing.

3394. Would it be fairly stated at 33,000?—I would not be surprised to be told there was that number.

3395. (*Chairman.*) Is there any means?—Mr Henry ought to be able to tell the changes.

(*Mr Howden.*) This is a statement from the Gas Office.

3396. (*Chairman.*) How do they find it out?—There must be houses in which gas is not consumed.

3397. (*Mr Howden.*) At Whitsunday term it should be a difficult job for the gas men to overtake their work?—I suppose it will be.

3398. (*Chairman.*) I suppose you could get this from the Treasurer of the Gas Department of the Corporation. If it is the case that 33,000 removals were recorded in his books, that would be an accurate way of getting it?—It would not overstate the removals. As I said, there is a large number of small houses to which gas is not supplied. They burn oil.

3399. This would be a minimum?—It would be a minimum, I should say.

3400. (*Mr Cox.*) This £15,824 you award by commission for collection of rates, that is a fourth part of the £69,000 paid?—Yes, it is.

[*Note.*—See No. 3407.]

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3401. That is the amount as appears as being let when the valuation is made up in June?—Yes, including the supplementary survey.

3402. You allow 7½ per cent. off that. Do you allow any further abatement if any part of the property should become unlet during the course of the year?—Yes, we allow that.

3403. Say on every six months of the year some of the property is unlet, you allow on that?—Yes, we only charge rates on the period for which the house is let. Suppose it was occupied for six months, and the landlord got three months' rent only, we charge for six months, so that he would lose the rates on three months.

3404. His risk of loss is only a risk of not getting the rates from his tenants?—Yes; the rents or the rates from his tenants.

3405. Are separate receipts given?—I do not think so.

3406. At the top, Table B, that is the rental?—Yes.

3407. And this on Table A is assessment?—Yes, that is so. The two figures are of different denominations, Mr Cox. The £69,542 in Table A is assessment imposed under date 1905–06, and the £15,824 in table B is the rental on which assessments are paid by the landlord.

3408. Could you tell us the assessment leviable on table B?—Roughly it is at 1s. 10d. per £, that is about £1600.

3409. Of which about one-third is payable by one proprietor?—Yes.

3410. On that rental of £15,000, representing £1500, you gave 7½ per cent. rate to proprietors?—Yes.

3411. So that when rates are collected by yourself, taking into account that you get these rates collected for 7½ per cent., your loss for outstandings was 27·86 per cent.?—The 27·86 per cent. is the amount outstanding on rentals of £4, 1s. to £7; the 7½ per cent. allowance is from assessments on rentals of £4, 1s. to £9, 19s.; the average amount outstanding on that class of rental is, as I previously stated, only 14·65 per cent.

3412. You would exceed 27·86 per cent. Does not that explain why it is not quite fair, on the part of factors, to compound?—Well, unless it paid those who own this £15,000 of rental to pay the rates, I do not see that they would do it.

3413. We know why the public body does it. It is part of their scheme?—Well, I do not think it would be done, as I have said, in the Improvement Department property, unless it paid the Improvement Department as property owners to do it. It would not be done for the sake of this theory that rates should be compounded.

3414. We may take it, then, that the outstandings just now are 27 per cent. You hinted you were apprehensive least they might drift back to the 30 per cent. and 39 per cent. which obtained thirty years ago?—I do not think they are in the least likely to drift back to that. I say the drift has been in that direction. I shall be very much surprised if they get to worse than they are just now, say 25 per cent.

3415. But assuming there is no war or bad trade, you think 14 per cent might be taken?—Yes.

3416. And you gave us your evidence on the footing of 14 per cent. being a reasonable allowance?—No, on the basis of 14 per cent. being a reasonable loss. I do not think that the collection on the present lines direct from the occupier can show a much better result than 14 per cent. outstanding, but I don't think that has any relation whatever to the discount that might be allowed to the landlord. There is no connection between the two things. I do not think that an improvement in any direction should be made to cost as much as the inferior system which it replaces.

3417. We are just sitting to discover whether this would be an improvement?—I think this would be an improvement.

3418. Your evidence is that, despite your own experience dealing with that 26 per cent. of loss on these figures, we might take the 14 per cent. as what might be expected to be lost?—Yes; always bearing in mind that these two percentages do not apply to the same rentals—the 26 per cent. applying to rentals of £4, 1s. to £7, and the 14 per cent. to rentals of £4, 1s. to £9, 19s.

3419. How do you force payment of arrears in cases where you insist on recovery?—In the last resort by arrestment of wages over 20s., or by poinding.

3420. You have certain preferences, have you, in cases of bankruptcy?—Yes; there is a preference in bankruptcy, subject to the landlord's hypothec.

3421. Can you imprison?—I cannot tell whether theoretically or not we can. Certainly we have never done it.

3422. It may be that the weapon may be effective without being put into force?—I don't think there is such a weapon.

3423. If you had compounded up to £10 or £20, in your view would the landlord's right of hypothec be a sufficient weapon to enable him to recover, or would you give him the right to get a summary warrant to recover by means of arrestment and even imprisonment?—I would give him all the powers he had for recovery of his rent and no more.

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3424. Mr Cross's Bill applies solely, as far as compounding goes, to municipal rates, and that would leave, assuming the change to be made which would give short lets, compounding in regard to your collections should leave untouched parish rates and school board rates?—That is not Mr Cross's Bill in its more recent form. It compounds for all rates except imperial rates.

3425. (*Chairman.*) No, not 1906. In 1905 I notice his clause runs "on all rates and taxes except imperial taxes and school rates." He may have suggested it?—In any case I think all rates should be compounded for.

3426. (*Mr Dobbie.*) As a practical man, assuming there are short lets, compounding would require to apply to all the local rates?—Clearly, with a suitable allowance in each case.

3427. (*Chairman.*) As far as you know, would one allowance be suitable?—You would not require a differential allowance, I should think.

3428. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Can you tell the total number of people who don't pay their rates?—That £17,811 which is said to be outstanding in 1905–06 of assessment on rentals under £10 represents 23,338 persons out of a total number assessed of 89,824.

3429. (*Chairman.*) That is a percentage of how many?—25·98. The percentage in money is 25·61. The percentage of persons 25·98.

3430. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Can you tell us what number are not forced to pay on the ground of poverty?—I have not made it up. I have the figures in the office.

3431. Can you let us have that?—Yes, clearly.

[*Note.*—In 1905–6 at rentals under £10, 11,997 persons were, either in whole or in part, relieved from payment on the ground of poverty. At rentals of £10 and over, 2008 persons were similarly relieved in whole or in part.]

3432. In cases where rates are compounded, what is the procedure? Does the notice go to the ratepayer or to the owner of the property?—No, I cannot tell you. I know the form of the assessment paper which the Water Department issue, who charge to the owner domestic water rate on all rents under £10, in which each tenant's name is given, with the amount of his rental and the proportion of the charge effeiring to him and to that rental. The schedule, with these particulars, is sent for each property to the owner.

3433. I notice the ten years for which you give your figures in your Table B, the ten years during which the collection by the Corporation and their rates have been getting worse and worse, the percentage of loss has been increasing; but there has been no change in the rate of compounding, has there?—No.

3434. Has there been any increasing nnmber of complaints?—I never heard of any complaints from any quarter. The rate of compounding, 7½ per cent., has applied during all the years I have been in the Corporation service.

3435. Although your loss has nearly doubled?—In the early years it diminished, though in recent years it has increased; but the allowance has been uniform all through.

3436. About the table you are preparing for us. If you state the school rate and the poor rate, as you propose to do, in terms of the Corporation rates, I suppose you will put in a note to show what the difference is?—Yes, I will do that.

3437. (*Mr Cox.*)—Are those properties where the owners collect the rates fairly representative of the Glasgow properties, or perhaps better than many, and therefore a better class of tenants from whom there would be less likelihood of making a loss? Would that be the reason of the owners being willing to compound?—I would think they are a fair average of Glasgow property.

3438. Is Kinning Park not a new district—new houses?—No, it is a working-class area.

3439. You don't think there is anything in the quality of the properties that would render collecting easier by the landlord?—I know no reason.

3440. (*Chairman.*) For instance, if they were all pretty near £10?—The table B shows the amount of rental at each £ from £4, 1s. to £9, 19s.

3441. (*Mr Cox.*) Of course, in those Corporation dwellings, these are the better class altogether, where, we are told, there are no losses at all. They are selected tenants?—Yes. I quite admit that.

3442. Do you not think that would apply to the great bulk of this £15,824?—I do not think so. The £5000 added on in 1906 is, of course, just the working class property in Kinning Park, the property on which the landlord was formerly paying the assessments without any deduction. He comes into Glasgow and continues to pay the assessments and gets 7½ per cent.

3443. (*Chairman.*) Have you any idea how many house-

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holders would be included under these rentals amounting to £15,824 in Table B?—There would be no difficulty in putting that alongside.

3444. You could give us the names of the factors who compound, so that if we found one on a large scale we might examine him?—Yes, I will give you that information.

3445. I mean someone that is not in the Improvement Trust, or anything of that sort?—Yes.

[*Note.*—The information desired in No. 3443 and No. 3444 has been supplied by an addition to Table B.]

3446. Did you say that in regard to the rates of compounding mentioned in Mr Cross's proposed Bill, that on the higher rents compounding was excessive?—Yes.

3447. What do you say for £4 and under £7, 10 per cent.?—Well, looking to the fact that a certain number of landlords are at present, and have been for these years compounding at 7½ per cent., and to the fact that deduction is given for all unlet premises, I think that even 10 per cent. is a very full allowance. Still, personally, I would not object to 10 per cent. on that class of rental. I think it is a pretty fair rate.

3448. What would you propose to substitute for 5 per cent. in the case of £7 and under £10?—I hardly care to suggest rates.

3449. Would it be substantially under that?—5 per cent. is, I think, too high a discount in view of the figures as to the present losses, though, as I say, there is no connection between the two things. I should think 2½ per cent. would be a very fair allowance between £7 and £10.

3450. And between £10 and £20 there is practically no loss?—There is practically no loss there. If you gave a landlord 1 per cent. it would be ample enough. It is found money from my point of view.

3451. Then you prepared a statement of the total occupiers' rates applicable to the people under £20?—Yes.

3452. It is only an approximation I can submit, but I think it may be taken as not being very far out. Now, referring to page 3 of the proof, of the £693,272, there shown as being rates paid by occupiers, about £163,461 effeirs to rentals under £20. That is to say, 23·58 per cent. of the whole. Of that £163,461, £60,362 effeirs to rental under £10, that is, 8·71 per cent., and to rentals between £10 and £20, £103,099, or equal to 14·87 per cent. These are approximate figures, but I don't think they are very far out.

3453. So that if the change were limited to £10, if the limit were fixed under £10, it would affect one way or the other the amount of £60,362 either advantageously or detrimentally, as it might work out?—Yes.

3454. It is a less serious experiment than an experiment that would apply to 23½ per cent. of the whole?—Yes. From the Corporation point of view—I should say from the rate-collecting point of view—you would do almost all that we have any special interest in if you deal with that class of rental, but from the tenant's point of view I think you ought to go the whole way to £20.

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3455. (*Chairman.*) That is a very interesting distinction. I do not think that you have a note of all these points; if you have not, you can see the notes on that statement Sir John was referring to is very interesting.—You wish to know the number of tenants whose rates are represented by this £15,000 of rental and the names of the factors?

(*Chairman.*) The amount in each case, that we may select a few of the big ones.

Note.—Subsequently to my appearing before the Committee, I was asked to divide the assessments outstanding at the close of last year (1905–1906), on (1) rents over £4 and less than £10; (2) between £10 and £15; and (3) between £15 and £20, so as to show on each of these three clases of rental, (*a*) the amount remitted on the ground of poverty; and (*b*) the amount found irrecoverable from other causes.

I beg to explain, in regard to the figures shown as outstanding in Table A, that these state the actual result as ascertained at the close of the collection in each year, with the exception of the year 1905–1906. For that year the figures given are those as ascertained at 31st May 1906, with an estimate added for the amount of arrears to be subsequently recovered. As stated in my evidence above, the collection of arrears proved better than the estimate. Taking credit for the amount recovered to 11th December 1906, in excess of the estimate, the figures for 1905–1906 should be stated thus, instead of as in Table A:—

	On rentals over £4 & under £10.	On rentals £10 and upwards.
Net imposed . .	£69,542	£621,602
Collected	52,664	616,798
Outstanding . .	16,878	4,804
Percentage outstanding	24·27	0·77

The subdivision of these two outstanding amounts of £16,878 and £4804 (together £21,682) between poverty relief and irrecoverable otherwise is as follows:—

	Poverty Relief.	Irrecoverable otherwise.	Total outstanding.
Under £10 rental .	£6,488	£10,390	£16,878
£10 to £15 inclusive .	1,571	1,204	2,775
Over £15 to £20 rental	600	506	1,106
	£8,659	£12,100	£20,759
Over £20 rental . .	364	559	923
	£9,023	£12,659	£21,682

Mr John Mathieson.

Mr John Mathieson, Paisley, called and examined.

Mr John Mathieson.

3456. (*Chairman.*) Well, we need to confess our ignorance and ask you who you are. Who do you represent, Mr Mathieson?—The Town Council.

3457. Are you a member of the Town Council?—Yes.

3458. How long have you been a Councillor?—Fifteen years.

3459. Of the Town Council of Paisley?—Yes.

3460. Have the Town Council considered the question raised directly in Mr Cross's Bill as well as the question generally?—I may say that we agree generally with Mr Cross's Bill, with the exception of Clause 9.

3461. That is the compounding clause?—Yes.

3462. Has the Council considered the matter as a whole?—Yes.

3463. Have they passed any resolutions on it?—That resolution I have handed to you now.

3464. Namely, the resolution that a certain clause should be added to the Bill?—Yes, that is the modified Clause 9.

3465. Do I understand that they otherwise approve of the Bill?—Generally, yes.

3466. Were they unanimous on it or divided?—They were unanimous in approval of the Bill, with that clause included, but they are not unanimous as to whether there should be compounding at all or not.

3467. They have not fully discussed that yet. The last meeting was adjourned, because there was a division of opinion as to whether there should be compounding at all or not.

3468. One side thought it should be deleted altogether, and the other that this clause should be added?—Yes.

3469. Have they appointed any Committee on the matter, or have they discussed it on the Council itself?—I have been on the Council several years and attended various conferences in Edinburgh and London, authorised by the Corporation.

3470. Have they conferred with Lord Dunedin?—In Edinburgh, I think it was the first conference with Mr Graham Murray.

3471. And the present Scottish Secretary?—Yes. There was a conference with him along with others.

3472. The Town Council represents a large area of working men?—Yes.

3473. Has the matter been discussed at ward meetings at all?—Well, generally the public that have taken any interest in it approve of the Bill. I don't think they really realise the effects of this Clause 9. What they probably want is a short let and the missive system done away with.

3474. How have they shown their interests?—There is a Tenants' Defence Association, for example, and they have declared in favour of the Bill, but they also agree with that.

3475. Have you had a recent election?—In November.

3476. Was it at all made a question at any of the ward meetings?—Not particularly. I brought this clause up at our ward meeting and explained that we had agreed to it, but there was no opposition shown to it.

3477. In your district, is there a large number of working men?—A good number; there are working men in every district in Paisley.

3478. Do you find any difference of opinion among working men on the short let and the missive question?—There has been no great interest taken in it at all outside of the Tenants' Defence Association. The Landlords' Association had a deputation the other night condemning this outright. They will have nothing to do with compounding.

3479. Did they express any opinion on the other?—They are against the Bill altogether.

3480. As regards the working men, what view do they take?—They are in favour of this and the reform.

3481. Both short let and missive question?—Yes.

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3482. In Paisley, have you as much of a shifting population as in Glasgow?—Well, I could not just say.

3483. Are the trades similar?—I might for your information state that last year the reason we were very strong on that amendment was that we relieved over 1200 on the ground of poverty.

3484. How many, do you know, altogether in Paisley?—I can only give it from memory. There were a great many applied for relief on the ground of poverty. There were over 2000 delinquents in addition to the 1200. They did not apply for relief. There are nearly 4000 altogether that lost their votes by not paying the rates, so that would affect the roll to a considerable extent if the landlords had to pay these rates.

3485. Would that be an advantage?—No, I think it would be a disadvantage.

3486. What would you do to prevent that?—Well, you might delete it altogether.

3487. What?—This clause, and leave things as they are.

3488. You think that compounding is attended with that drawback, that it would add persons to the roll who should not be there?—I think so.

3489. Are you referring to Parliamentary arrangements, or municipal, or both?—Both.

3490. Suppose a Bill somewhat on the lines of Mr Cross's were to be passed, do you see any reason for making a difference on the limit between Glasgow on the one hand £20, and Paisley £16?—Yes, I do. The reason is this, the rents of the houses in Paisley of the same class are very much lower.

3491. Conld you give us an idea?—From 15 per cent. say.

3492. Is that because they are less substantial or because everything is cheaper?—Everything is cheaper. One reason is that there are too many houses. They are over 15 per cent. at least cheaper, unless you come to the very new houses. But, generally speaking, there should be a difference.

3493. You think the difference made is a fair difference?—I quite approve of the schedule for that as far as Paisley is concerned.

3494. Your knowledge is pretty much limited to Paisley in that matter?—Yes.

3495. You don't know about Greenock?—I would not like to give an opinion.

3496. You have proposed a clause in these terms—"Notwithstanding the payment of the tenant's rates by his landlord, the tenant shall be entitled to appeal against such rates on the ground of poverty, and in the event of his appeal being sustained, the landlord shall have relief from payment of the amount of such rates, or if he have already paid the same, he shall be credited with the amount thereof, and such rates shall not be chargeable by him against such tenant." Do you see any practical difficulty in working this clause?—No.

3497. Suppose the rate has been paid by the landlord, he would be credited with the amount, and the rates would not be chargeable by him. Would that mean he would give back the amount that he had got from the tenant?—Suppose the landlord has paid this, the tenant applies and gets relief, then the landlord would have to pay him back, wouldn't he?—Of course if they appealed at the proper time. There would not be very much of the rates paid at that time. Mr Cross's Bill provides for the rates and rents to be stated separately in a book to be given to the tenant.

3498. That is what people say it should provide?—Yes, that would keep the tenants right.

3499. You approve of that?—Yes.

3500. Why?—Because it is very handy and simple. I worked that system for years. I have some property, and I give a book showing the rents and taxes separately.

3501. Have you an arrangement with the burgh for compounding?—Oh no, there is no compounding in Paisley.

3502. How does the necessity for showing them separately arise then?—To show how much they are paying in rates.

3503. But at the present moment they pay their rates themselves?—There are certain rates the landlord already pays, two rates under local Acts.

3504. What are they?—The local water rate and the burgh improvement rate. Landlords have to pay these two rates in Paisley, with all lets less than six months, and in one sense it is compounded. They get 10 per cent. for collecting water and 25 per cent. for the burgh improvement rate, and it is these rates I was referring to.

3505. You are not bound to show these in the books separately?—No, it is a matter of convenience.

3506. Do you find it difficult to work it out arithmetically?—No, very simple.

3507. If it is done with these, you don't see why it should not be done with others?—That is so.

3508. Do you agree that if there is compounding—— ?—Personally, I would have no compounding at all.

3509. And if you have no compounding, would you propose to have more frequent collections by the rating authorities?—Yes, I think it could be done quite simply. There are far too many difficulties made.

3510. How do you prefer the latter course?—Because I think it is an injustice, in certain cases, to tenants who have to pay, and an injustice to landlords at the same time.

3511. What is?—The compounding.

3512. But would not that depend on the ground of allowance?—Yes, so far, the allowance in my opinion proposed in the Bill is far too little.

3513. Are you going on the average of 10 per cent. on the water and 25 per cent. on the burgh rate?—It would require to be something like that, to make it fair all round. I know there is at least 25 per cent. of loss on the smaller lets in Paisley.

3514. Do you think it would be more or less on rates if they had to pay them?—There is 25 per cent. of loss on rates already.

3515. On rates in the hands of the Corporation?—Yes, small rates only.

3516. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) What do you call the small rates?—Under £5 I am taking. Between £4 and £7 we would require at least 15 per cent.

3517. What do you say between £7 and £10?—Perhaps 7½ per cent. would do there.

3518. And between £10 and £20?—It is £16 in Paisley. That would be 5 per cent. there. There is a point that has not been brought out, that factors in Glasgow are in favour of compounding because they get 7½ per cent. It is all right for them, but not the landlords, for this reason: they get a percentage for their collecting, and whatever loss occurs falls on the landlords. Suppose they don't get the rates at all; sometimes they neither get rates nor rents; the rent falls on the landlord, but the factors have no loss at all.

3519. The landlords have interests apart from the factors?—Yes. In Paisley it was pointed out that to pay 2½ per cent. the factors might have to get 3½ per cent. for collecting.

3520. Suppose you had a factor who had an absent landlord. Take the thing stated in the matter, the statistics there might be of very little consequence, because the factor would be all right?—In any case.

3521. It would right itself in the case of a landlord looking after his own interests?—That would be different, but the bulk of the property is under factors' hands.

3522. And with a landlord who was not taking a personal interest, it might go on without showing anything?—He would be a loser.

3523. Are these suggested allowances of yours the result of any experience, or your own idea?—I have had very great experience in Paisley for fifteen years. I was Treasurer for six years, and took a great interest in the incidence of taxation, and how much loss there was on the different classes of people.

3524. And also your own as owner?—Yes.

3525. Is it working-class property you own?—Both kinds.

3526. That would apply to other rates. £7, 10s.—7½ per cent., is that based on this to prevent loss?—Yes.

3527. And to cover the factor's commission for collection of the rents on irrecoverables or unlets?—It would need that at least to cover all these points.

3528. Have you any idea of the factor's commission by itself? Mr Borthwick thought it would be practically nothing?—The factor's commission is from 3 per cent. to 5 per cent. of all the money he collects.

3529. But if he collects the rents at the same time, why should he have anything more?—Well, he charges it anyway, whether he should have it or not.

3530. (*Mr Dobbie.*) He won't draw two commissions?—No, he draws commission on all the money he draws.

3531. Whether it is collected at the same time or not?—Yes.

3532. It would be no answer to him to say, "You are there anyway, you might as well collect the rates as the rents"?—No.

3533. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) How is the allowance so much larger for the collection by burgh rate than the water rate, 25 per cent., as against 10 per cent.?—I do not know. That was fixed by a local Act for Paisley only.

3534. Is there any difference in what is done?—Well, as a rule, the people always pay the water. They cannot do without water; but I cannot give a proper reason why there is a difference, except that it is fixed by Act of Parliament. Meantime it averages about 17½ per cent. if you take the two together, the rates that are at present.

3535. How does the loss exactly fall on the landlord? Would it be that he got nothing at all or that the tenant

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was able to pay the rent and not able to go so far as to pay the rates as well?—Meantime there are a great number of successful appeals and the landlord loses nothing there.

3536. But in a case where there was not an appeal?—Then the landlord is not liable for the municipal rates at all.

3537. I am asking you from the point of view of the landlord, would it be that the landlord could get his rent and not his rates?—Very often in the smaller class he loses both the rent and the rates.

3538. That is what would happen, he would lose both?—Yes, make it all the worse.

3539. In the case of a monthly let, the actual sum involved in any one payment would not be very much?—In Paisley they collect these two rates along with the rents under monthly rents, but in all the other rates the landlord is clear of any loss. The loss is borne by the Paisley community, whereas, under this clause, the loss from any poor persons would fall on the landlords only, and the occupiers of large houses would escape, except as far as the allowance would make it up?—Yes.

3540. (*Mr Dobbie.*) About this suggestion that the factors' interests are antagonistic to the landlords', I would like to understand your point. Is it that the factor would collect rents plus rates and charge commission on both?—Yes. Take a tenement of £100 rental, he would get his 2½ per cent. on £110, which would mean 5s. on the tenement for collecting the rates of that tenement monthly.

3541. Are there many houses in Paisley under £4?—Very few, but a good many of the old properties are under £5. We have a number of maiden ladies in Paisley, and it is a great number of these that seek relief, that would not get it under this clause.

3542. Is it under £4 or £5 that the landlord pays the whole rates at present?—Under £4.

3543. Have you any property under £4?—I think I have only one tenant.

3544. Can you tell us what the yearly loss to the proprietor is in cases under £4 where he pays the whole rates?—No, I could not answer that. There are not very many under £4.

3545. Are there many monthly rents in Paisley?—I have been informed by a large factor that there are about 2000, but I do not know what there are of my own knowledge. Then there are 3000 people who don't pay their rates—more than that.

3546. Have you any view in regard to the process of ejection as a proprietor?—Personally, it does not affect me, but I believe there would be far more ejections if this clause passes. In Paisley there are not one half of the ejections that there are in Greenock, because they are very lenient in Paisley, especially on the yearly lets. I have known them letting them stand for six months or even twelve months in cases of illness or idleness, but no landlord could afford to do that if they had to pay the whole of their rates. Therefore, it would be a great evil to the tenant, especially under this clause, if it passes. In Paisley there were 400 ejections, I am told, and there were 800 in Greenock, a town of the same size.

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3547. Have you any views on the law of hypothec, assuming short lets become operative?—I think the hypothec, while in some respects it may not be counted fair to all creditors, is a great benefit to the tenants in many cases. I could give you an example. I had a tenant myself, and allowed him to run for a year. They were in poverty, and the grocer came in and pointed their furniture and came to me first to see how much they were owing. They let them alone, and they recovered and paid both me and the grocer.

3548. We have not the grocer here, but tell us how he took it?—He got his money in the end.

3549. (*Chairman.*) Your distinction is a perfectly fair one. You say it is advantageous both to landlord and tenant apart from other creditors?—Yes.

3550. (*Mr Dobbie.*) If short lets were becoming common, hypothec would not continue for a year only for the period of let?—The fact is, that, if these monthly lets come in, there will not be very much use for hypothec.

3551. What will take place?—If they don't pay their rents, they will be ejected.

3552. There is one clause optional in the Bill. Does that meet with your approval?—I think it is a very good thing, because the landlords, say in Millport or Rothesay, would object to short lets, because people from Glasgow would take the houses for six months during the summer and give them up. It would not pay them at all.

3553. During the course of your evidence you support the view that the newer class of property in Paisley is higher rented than the older class?—But as a rule the rents are lower all over.

3554. But is that a fact? Did you not state that the rent was higher in the newer property than in the older class?—Yes.

3555. Is there large building going on in Paisley?—Very little.

3556. It has been pretty prevalent?—Within the last year or two it has stopped. It is over-built.

3557. If they ever start again to build, they will build a better class of property?—Very likely.

3558. And the rents will more nearly approximate those of Glasgow?—Probably they will.

3559. And when it comes to the old properties being taken down and new ones going up, it will become the same?—It may in the future.

3560. (*Chairman.*) Have you any local Act, or just the Burgh Police Act?—Just the Burgh Police Act so far as it goes, except the one I have referred to.

3561. Have you any example of the voluntary arrangements between factors and the burgh that Mr Borthwick spoke to?—No, there is no such thing in Paisley.

Mr A. Baillie and Mr Hugh Lyon.

Mr Andrew Baillie and Mr Hugh Lyon, sworn and examined.

Mr A. Baillie and Mr Hugh Lyon.

3562. (*Chairman.*) Mr Baillie, you are Secretary and Treasurer of the Glasgow Tenants' Protective Association?—Yes.

3563. Mr Lyon, you are Secretary of the Scottish Carters' Association, and you are President of the Tenants' Protective Association, of which Mr Baillie is secretary and treasurer?—Yes.

3564. You are also a Director of the Cowlairs Co-operative Society?—Yes.

3565. Then, Mr Baillie, you have been interested in the matter of house letting in Scotland among the working classes for the last thirty years?—Yes.

3566. What was the beginning of the whole thing. Do you remember the origin of any complaints?—As far as I have taken an interest in the matter, it is, at anyrate, owing to the labouring conditions that we have been working under, and it is becoming more acute as we go on.

3567. Has your experience been confined to Glasgow? Have you any knowledge of it as affecting Scottish burghs in general?—I have had a very favourable opportunity of touching all parts of Scotland nearly in my occupation.

3568. What is your own occupation?—At present I am in the shipping trade.

3569. What department are you concerned with?—Outside, going about looking for traffic, freights, and so on.

3570. What is your view on the real grievance?—The exceedingly long lets.

3571. And that aggravated by the long period between the term of taking and the term of entry?—Yes.

3572. But in your view that is a question of increasing it, not of being the real grievance?—Yes.

3573. What is the limit you think the grievance extends to substantially—the limit of rent, I mean?—I have just got a brief for our Association, and we made it £20, but that was deleted. We tried to come into harmony with the forces at work to redress the grievance, and we have reduced it to £20, but I believe up to £25 it would be a proper thing to do.

3574. Is that because the ordinary working man, as distinguished from the foreman or employer, occupies houses up to £25?—The big bulk would come under £20, but there are exceptional cases, and I do not see why they should be exempted.

3575. That would be in general cases of working men having members of their family who are bringing in money?—There would be such conditions.

3576. This matter has been considered in the Tenants' Protective Association. How many do you include? What is your membership?—Our paying membership is over a thousand, but we get people at public meetings to come and support us, and unanimously pass resolutions by the thousand.

3577. What proportion of the thousand paying members are working men?—They are all working men. Well, I beg your pardon, I have members whom it would not affect at all, who are simply in sympathy with us. The big bulk are working men who have felt the grievance.

3578. Is there any difference of opinion in your Association, or are you unanimous?—Quite unanimous—red hot!

3579. What led to the formation of the Association?—Just public opinion, people having a grievance, and the only constitutional way we had of bringing it before the powers to be.

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3580. How old is the Association?—There have been associations formed from time to time for twenty years, but we have kept together for five years now.

3581. Can you hand in a copy of the constitution of the Association?—Yes.

3582. If it is the case, Mr Baillie, that, instead of the mass of working men who occupy houses under £20 wanting a change to short lets, they are opposed to it, do you think you should have come in contact with that opinion?—Undoubtedly.

3583. But that is not your experience?—Not at all.

3584. Do you not find some who are so impressed with the importance of security of tenure that they will rather retain that with all the drawbacks of long lets?—The landlords, so long as they have a good tenant and get the rent, will give as good as fixed tenure.

3585. They want, in addition to what they have from character, the opportunity of leaving if circumstances should require it?—They want more freedom; that is all we are claiming.

3586. And I think, with a view to this inquiry, your Association elected Mr Lyon president, and yourself to give expression to your views?—Yes.

3587. I suppose these views are not theoretical, but based on actual experience? It has been suggested that this agitation is one that has proceeded from a certain number of Englishmen who have come into Scotland. What do you say to that?—That is quite erroneous. They have naturally drifted into it, because they feel it, perhaps, in a different degree from what a Scotsman does. They look upon it as a perfect outrage.

3588. What proportion of your paying members will be Englishmen?—Well, we have not one on the committee, and we have a pretty large committee, selected at a public meeting.

3589. Is there any trade in Scotland into which a large number of Englishmen have come?—Oh, they are quite general, just the same as Scotsmen going into England, where they can better their condition.

3590. More Scotsmen go into England, I think, than Englishmen come to Scotland?—When an Englishman comes to Scotland, as a rule he is a specialist.

3591. The proportion in any trade is very small?—Very small in comparison.

3592. Do you find, then, in regard to details, certain differences of opinion among you, such as the one you pointed to as to the limit. There will be differences of opinion as to a thing like that?—Yes, but the remedy we adopt will adjust that.

3593. Do you find also a difference of opinion as to whether there should be compounding or not?—Yes, there is more that way.

3594. But on the general question you are unanimous?—We are leaving that to the authorities to work out. We know they must have funds to carry on the good government of the city, and we look upon that as their business, and it is not insurmountable. It is being done in other places. I have lived under it myself.

3595. Whether it was done by compounding or more frequent collections, it would be all one to you?—All the same to the general tenant.

3596. What is the practical grievance in regard to the long let, and the long time before entry that they have to take their houses?—It affects the tenant in many ways.

3597. In what way?—Losing work, ill-health, and many changes.

3598. Take, first of all, monthly collection of rent as compared with quarterly or half-yearly, which is best for working men?—A month.

3599. As near as possible to his payment of wages?—Yes, and the sum being proportionately smaller, it is much more easily met by those who have not much money to come and go on.

3600. They have not the facilities for accumulating money that others have?—A big class would be spending, and not be spending too much. It is just a case of meeting their necessities. The great bulk of working men are anxious to meet their obligations.

3601. And they would do it more readily if their obligations had to be met more often?—Yes, both rates and rents.

3602. Do you think both would be better paid in the end?—Bound to be.

3603. Therefore, in addition to the interest of the tenant, it is in the interest of the landlords to have a change?—Quite so.

3604. In your experience, are there many cases of men who, after taking a house, may find that they could get employment elsewhere, and were prevented moving because they are tied to the house for a month's period?—That has been a very general complaint to us in our Association.

3605. Do you think it would not be fair merely to look at the cases of men who actually do remove, but that we must also consider the cases of men who would remove but for this difficulty?—The obstacle is there. It cannot be overcome.

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3606. Is it the case that we must also consider that if a man moves, while a sub-tenant may be found and there may be no loss in the end, he is still exposed to the anxiety all through the subsequent period, that the sub-tenant might not be able to pay, and no recourse might be had with him?—All the legal responsibility rests on him and the consequent anxiety.

3607. I think you are handing in some cases which you think are illustrations of what you mean?—Yes, some letters we received from complainers.

3608. It seems to be agreed that it would be very desirable to have the period from the taking to the entry shortened. Everybody is agreed on that. Personally, do you think that could remove the substantial grievance or still leave it unredressed?—That is only begging the question, we think.

3609. But it is good so far as it goes?—Very little difference; it would not remedy our grievance at all.

3610. For instance, now, we are told that out of cases of men removing, 25 per cent. occurred in the first two months, February and March. Of course, if the period of letting were limited to April, you would get rid of these?—I don't see how they can prove that under the present conditions.

3611. At all events, whatever number there are, there are some cases of a man taking a house, say, in the end of January and finding out in the end of February that he has to move?—That is occurring all the year round.

3612. There is no greater proportion to one period than to another?—No.

3613. What is your view as between half-yearly, quarterly, and monthly tenure? Of course, you think anything less than a year is better than a year?—It would be a very good way of allowing a large class of tenants to let themselves out. If a man was in a precarious situation, he would say a month. Another man whose occupation was more reliable, would say three months. There are other classes who would say six months. It would work automatically. That is the great advantage of Mr Cross's Bill; it is so elastic that it would work automatically for different classes of people.

3614. The elasticity stops at half-yearly, because no landlord would agree to one payment in the year, would he?—It does not follow that, because you are paying six months, you might pay up twenty.

3615. It would kill yearly lets?—That is what we mean to do.

3616. You would still find arrangements made for payments half-yearly?—I am sure that would occur.

3617. Are there in Glasgow many cases where there are payments half-yearly?—A good many.

3618. These are about £20?—Yes, generally speaking, it is quarterly.

3619. Under £20 it is more often a quarter?—It is quarterly rents.

3620. What proportion quarterly and what proportion monthly in your experience?—I should say 75 per cent. quarterly and the others monthly and half-yearly.

3621. That would be between £10 and £20. Of course below that more frequently monthly?—Yes, according to the class of property they have.

3622. And the class of tenant?—The two go together.

3623. You have an illustration here. On page 3, you say you think removal involves such a hardship that, even if the period of tenure were made more free, more frequent removals would not occur, and so on.

3624. It is your view that while removals would be spread over the year, the total number of removals would not be substantially increased?—I am sure that would occur.

3625. Do you anticipate that the rents would be substantially increased or not, taking the thing all round?—Well, we are more concerned about the shorter lets, but we are quite willing to take the risk of an increase.

3626. You don't, in point of fact, anticipate that it would be substantial?—No, we don't anticipate that.

3627. Take the rates and taxes in Glasgow on a house of £20, you say the amount would be something like 4s. 6d. to 5s. in the £, that is taking police, poor, school and water rates? Is that taking both municipal and Parish Council rates?—Yes, that is just the sum total.

3628. Your experience is that when a man is called on to pay something like £5 in addition to a quarter's rent at the end of the year, it is very hard for him to meet it?—The big bulk of working class tenants find it that.

3629. Although the same class may easily pay it over the year?—He would not find it to the same extent at all. It is at the end of the year when he is short.

3630. What happens, suppose a man has not laid past, and the £5 of rates has to be paid at once. Does it mean the pawnshop or what. We suppose he has no friends who can advance it?—If he is an honest man it is a big

effort. He has to resort to all kinds of ways to raise the money.

3631. Suppose he has nobody able to lend to him, he has either to realise his effects or to go to the pawnshop?—That is his resource.

3632. I suppose we are all agreed that the less he has to do with the pawnshop the better?—That is one of the moral objects we are aiming at.

3633. I think everybody agrees with that. You talk of the landlord as well as the tenant. In your view, would the proposed alteration be to the benefit also of the rating authorities?—Yes, I think they would reap a great benefit from it.

3634. Then you think that although both your interest and that of your Association is on behalf of the tenants, the change would not only be to their benefit but in the end to others also?—All round.

3635. That would depend on proper allowances being made for compounding and the landlord being properly protected?—Our contention is that there would be more money coming in, net money, and if that is a result, you must admit they would be better off all round.

3636. Do you think this matter affects more directly tenants up to £10 than those between £10 and £20?—No, it does not follow. There is an artisan class, shipbuilders and engineers, and all that class fluctuating very much now. Works have become so gigantic and get such big orders—thousands of menare employed to complete certain kinds of work. These men are only there while the work lasts.

3637. With regard to the distinction you pointed to, you mean the skilled class of artisan as distinguished from the labourer?—Yes.

3638. Up to what rent does a labourer pay for his house?—As cheap as he can get it, from 3s. a week. There is labour and labour.

3639. But in Scotland, about what rent does the labourer, as distinguished from the artisan, pay for his house?—It depends upon his own resources. You can easily judge for yourselves. He has got 18s. a week and has to keep himself, and he cannot afford to take a pound a week house on that.

3640. I suppose with regard to Trades Unions and Tenants' Protective Associations, their interests are most directly connected with the artisan?—Yes, that is our aim, to relieve and help the class of workmen you refer to.

3641. Are there any Trades Unions of labourers?—Mr Lyon is better posted on that.

3642. How does that stand, Mr Lyon?—There are several Trades Unions who look after nobody else but unskilled labourers—some of the largest in the country.

3643. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Are there any in Scotland?—They are in Scotland, but their headquarters are in England.

(*Chairman.*) One has come in contact with a good many, but they are usually skilled people.

3644. You have a reference here, I notice, to the success of the co-operative movement. What bearing has that on this question?—As far as the co-operative societies are concerned in the question, the point that Mr Baillie wishes to draw out there is that there are several co-operative societies that have to a certain extent house property. They of course want to set an example to the private landlord by letting houses monthly and doing away with the missive system, and they find that, to a certain extent, it is a hardship on both parties, because they are placed in this position—say, for instance, their members are all anxious to become tenants of their own houses, but they find they are tied to a house of another landlord. Say, for instance, Mr Baillie here is an occupier of a co-operative house and I wish to occupy one too. I find in the month of February that all co-operative houses are occupied, and I have to sign my missive with the landlord I am with or else vacate the house. The result is that I sign my missive, and then I find that Mr Baillie leaves the co-operative house, and the co-operative society finds that they cannot get a tenant then.

3645. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Do all the co-operative houses let monthly?—Yes, most of them, I am quite certain.

3646. (*Chairman.*) Is that a big thing?—Not to any great extent—not to the extent we would like it. Still, it is a position. Supposing there were landlords who were anxious to let their houses monthly or quarterly, the system prevents them from doing so.

3647. (*Mr Cox.*) Are they put up for the purpose of the men who take them becoming owners of the houses?—No, they are let simply by monthly lets.

3648. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Is it an investment of co-operative funds?—I don't think any of the societies have gone in for house letting. There are some in the country who have done so and sold them on the hire purchase system, but in Glasgow the cause of co-operative societies building houses is more than anything else the fact that they have generally to build shops to suit themselves, with the result that they build houses on the top.

3649. (*Chairman.*) In any of these cases, Mr Lyon, are arrangements made for rates being paid with the rents, or is it the ordinary system?—I think the rates are paid along with the rents.

3650. But you have no personal experience?—I could not exactly say.

(*Mr Howden.*) We have evidence that Cowlairs Co-operative Society do so.

3651. (*Chairman to Mr Baillie.*) In addition to what you have said, is it your view that with rents below £20, if they were monthly lets, removals would be more economical and expeditious?—Yes.

3652. You agree with the evidence we have had, and for the same reasons?—Yes.

3653. And also so far as the trades referred to spreading the work over the whole year and preventing pressure at one time of the year?—Yes.

(*Mr Lyon.*) There is another class which I represent, the carters. These are men who conduct the removals. I have known a man to be out for a week night and day at the term time working continually.

(*Mr Baillie.*) You have to pay 200 per cent. more at his crowded time.

3654. (*Chairman to Mr Lyon.*) Then it is an advantage to the tenant and an advantage to the carter by having the thing spread over the year?—It is a hardship on those who have got to remove, too, because they have to pay 5s. an hour for a horse and lorry which at other times he would get for a shilling.

Everybody admits, landlords, factors, and everybody, that the present system of one removal term is a great misfortune.

3655. (*To Mr Baillie.*) You referred to public meetings held in Glasgow during the last fifteen years protesting against the present system; have there been, on the other hand, counter meetings?—No, I have not heard of them.

3656. You say if a feeling had existed in favour of the present system there should have been counter public meetings?—Undoubtedly there would have been.

3657. You are not concussing the other people to be silent?—Their forces are so great that they could have got people to turn out. I am quite justified in saying that the landlords are annoyed at our meetings because of the remarks of their association to that effect, and that they could have demonstrated to the public in the same way; they had more opportunities and more money. We depended just on public opinion.

3658. Supposing a factor with a large number of tenants, if it was the fact that these tenants under £20 rental were in favour of the present system, there would be no difficulty in taking a plebiscite of them?—None whatever.

3659. There was a special meeting you referred to in February 1904; what was that?—That was the Conference we held in the Waterloo Rooms, called by our association of the different public bodies, trades unions and men who were in touch with the question.

3660. Was it reported in all the papers?—Yes, in the *Herald* and all the different papers. The report would appear on the 26th. I think I have a copy of the report. It was to have been handed in to the secretary; I gave it to be handed in. There is a scrapbook with reports.

3661. You will arrange with Mr. Gillon to hand it in?—Yes.

3662. What was the result?—We held this meeting, and we had delegates present from Glasgow, Greenock, Paisley, Falkirk, and Dundee, and a great many more places, representing big bodies of men, and resolutions were drawn up and passed, with which these men, went back to their constituencies. Of course all were voluntary workers, and it would not just be followed up, but whenever we had occasion we could get strong support.

3663. Was there any difference of opinion at that meeting?—The resolution was passed unanimously. As regards the missive question, there was a little dispute about the rates.

3664. Then you had a deputation, consisting of delegates from many of the west country towns as well as from many in the east country, to the number of 100 or 120. That was the one that waited on Lord Dunedin?—Yes.

3665. You know about this. It is said that while the matter interests other burghs of Scotland, it is mainly a west of Scotland question?—We have been more active, but, to be adopted, it must be universal for Scotland.

3666. For Scotch burghs?—Yes.

3667. You don't suggest that it should apply to rural districts?—Well, it would not affect them to the same extent.

3668. At all events there is not general demand for that?—It is the burghs. In villages it would just be individual cases. I am not in a position to give you that.

3669. The other matter is the question of rates and taxes. Have your association any marked preference for the compounding system as compared with frequent

collection by the local authorities? Have you anything to say specially on that?—I think I may say we have a feeling that we would like to pay our own rates, but in the event of difficulties being raised with that, we are quite willing to waive the question in order to get the benefit of shorter lets.

3670. Supposing the rating authorities raised difficulties and had put a compromise that they should make a collection four times a year. I suppose you would prefer the collection to be twelve times by the landlord to four times by the landlord?—We are quite open on the question.

3671. Then four times a year would be an enormous advantage?—Very great, because the rates are not so heavy as rents. Splitting £5 into four, would make it easier than paying £5.

3672. What does undoubtedly obtain to a considerable extent, namely, evasions of the payment both of rates and rent, would be substantially reduced?—Undoubtedly.

3673. In the case of landlords getting any undesirable tenants, he cannot be turned out because they pay their rental. Although undesirable, the landlord would have a benefit there?—Yes.

3674. There are a good number?—Yes, immoral, and one thing and another.

3675. Such people may be paying their rents?—They are paying the rent, all right and neighbours don't complain because they don't want to be mixed up with them. They just make up their minds that they are going to leave when the year comes round.

3676. (*To Mr Lyon.*)—How long have you been interested in this question?—Ten years.

3677. You were previously in Falkirk?—Yes.

3678. Did you find that there was a grievance felt there?—A very great grievance, as I found in Glasgow. In fact, have seen elections fought on the question.

3679. Municipal elections?—Yes.

3680. We have been noticing that Falkirk has been dealt with along with Aberdeen and certain other burghs, the limit there being £16 instead of £20 a year. In your view, is there any reason for it?—Not that I know of.

3681. Are rents any cheaper in Falkirk than in Glasgow?—I do not think so; it is not my experience.

3682. Are the conditions similar?—Yes, much the same. Perhaps the houses are not so commodious.

3683. You can corroborate Mr Baillie in his evidence generally, particularly to a large meeting and other forms of expression of a grievance?—Yes.

3684. When did you become president of the Protective Association?—At the last annual business meeting.

3685. You can speak also as to individual cases of hardship that have occurred?—Yes. I have had personal experience myself.

3686. It is said that every system will have cases of hardship, and if you had monthly lets as compared to yearly, you would have cases of hardship on the other side, namely, of men being turned out by landlords as compared with the security that they have here for a year. What do you say to that?—The difference is that at the present time you are paying the full penalty for your security, and yet you are sometimes forced to pay double, unless you can get a substitute. That was my personal experience when I left Falkirk. I had to travel back and forward from Glasgow. I came to Glasgow in May six years ago, and had to travel till November term. Even then I had to find a substitute and pay the full rent to the landlord and run the risk of getting six months' rental from the substitute. When I came to Glasgow I was in the same position in the house I was going into.

3687. Supposing you had had a system of monthly lets, might you not have taken a house in Glasgow with the expectation of remaining for at least a year, and then, if it were a monthly let, the landlord comes and says, "I have a friend, you must clear out." That would be a hardship?—It would. It would be an exception for the landlord to put out a man.

3688. The difference would be that that would be against landlords' interest. His interest is to keep a good tenant, and therefore cases happening against his interest would be few?—Yes, exceptionally.

3689. (*To Mr Baillie.*) Do either of you two gentlemen have any experience of the English system?—Yes, I have had a good deal.

3690. Is it the case that while it has advantages over the Scotch system you have mentioned, there are any counter draw-backs?—I never heard the question raised in England. As an illustration, I lived in a house for ten years outside of London. I agreed to pay my rent half yearly, first of all. The house belonged to a Building Society. They came to me and asked me if I would pay it quarterly, and then they came to me and asked me if I would make it monthly. They were wanting the use of the money. I agreed. I paid it monthly for the bigger part of the time, paid my taxes to the local authorities half yearly. I have all these receipts; I can show them. I had the option of leaving half yearly on a months' notice. On the other side of the same street they had the option whether they would pay it all in a slump per week. My neighbour paid it 11s. per week. On the system I had I saved about 6d. a week.

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3691. But why should it require a statute here to have short lets? There is no statute in England against long lets?—That is the unfortunate thing, it is use and want. They have got the whole of our tenants here; the thing can be settled up in a moment if it was possible to get tenants, but the factors or landlords have got such a grip of them that they cannot let go.

3692. Why don't the factors and landlords have the same thing in England?—My humble opinion is that Englishmen are not so docile as Scotchmen are.

3693. But there is nothing essential to prevent it? No, nothing like Mr Cross's Bill or anything of that kind?—No. The Englishman looks upon renting his house the same as buying his clothes or butcher meat.

3694. Do you find a landlord, if a sum including rents and taxes is paid, expected to charge more for taxes than he ought to?—They never speculate on that at all.

3695. Do you find that if a tenant does not know what he is paying for rates and taxes, he takes no interest in the municipal government?—They will always get to know, because they always know what they are paying in the sum total. Perhaps you don't get it analysed, but on the whole they pay 5s. or 6s. 8d. in the £.

3696. So you can ascertain by a simple calculation?—Yes. Another thing is that while you pay taxes on the full amount here, in England they tax you on three-quarters, and it looks bigger.

3697. But the taxes are bigger in England?—Proportionately they look bigger, because they are only on three-fourths of the rent.

(*Sir J. Stirling Maxwell.*) But the actual amount you pay, is that bigger or smaller?

3698. (*Chairman.*) We have been told it is larger?—I believe it will be larger in England. The rents are smaller.

3699. And the rates larger?—Yes.

3700. (*Mr Howden.*) Is there much difference in the sum total of both rents and rates? Do you actually pay more here?—Yes. You get better value in England as a whole.

3701. (*Chairman to Mr Lyon.*) Of course, there will be differences of opinion as to what the ideas of a working man really are, whether security of tenure, on the one hand, or being able to remove, on the other, is better. I suppose the view of your Association is that working men could best know that themselves?—I have never found the working man yet that was in favour of the missive system.

3702. The general view is that it would not raise the rents. Suppose it were the fact that short lets would raise rents, that would naturally affect the view of the working man in wanting them, wouldn't it?—I do not know regarding that.

3703. It would depend on whether the increase were substantial or not?—That is so.

3704. They are prepared to take the risk of that apparently?—Yes, that is their opinion.

3705. Have you any view as to the limit in this Bill? Mr Baillie said £20 had been agreed to. What would you place the limit at?—I would have no limit at all. I would simply abolish the missive system.

3706. Do you mean you would have houses without limit and with enforced short lets?—Yes. I think it is just as hard sometimes for a man with a rent of £45.

3707. But to a very diminished degree that is so. The hardship is greater up to £20. You are talking theoretically?—Yes.

3708. Have you anything to add in addition?—No.

3709. Is Cowlairs Co-operative Society a large affair?—Yes, it has over 6000 members.

3710. Mostly working men?—All working men.

3711. And fairly representative of working men generally?—It is considered one of the largest working-class districts in Glasgow. It contains large locomotive works, such as Hyde Park, the Caledonian Works, and North British.

3712. This matter has never been brought before the Co-operative Society, has it?—Well, it has been brought before the Society through their own property. The missive question has been brought before them in that fashion.

3713. But you are prepared to say you represent fairly the views of the members of the Society, as far as they are known to you?—I am not representing the Cowlairs Co-operative at all.

3714. But your own individual views, as far as you

know, represent the general views of members, as far as you know them?—Yes. They have appointed representatives separately. They have two coming.

(*Mr Baillie.*) I produce the report from the *Herald* of 24th November 1904. We had a great public meeting and filled the City Hall.

3715. There does not seem to have been any counter-meeting?—No, they were all agreed.

3716. (*Sir J. Stirling Maxwell.*) Are your members drawn from all parts of Glasgow?—All parts. We go from one hall to the other. We have been round all the public halls.

3717. You don't admit members from the outside?—We don't care where they come from. We have several in Falkirk, but we don't get a chance of coming into touch with them.

(*Mr Lyon.*) There was an association, to my knowledge, in Falkirk, and there is one in Greenock at present, and one in Paisley similar to the Tenants Association in Glasgow. I believe the Paisley one has been longer in existence. In Glasgow, the question originated years ago. The difficulty in getting associations of that kind is that it is only one grievance that has an effect on people, and it affects them acutely at one time of year, when they sign the missive, but that is the only time you can get enthusiasm raised. Of course it is affecting them all the year round, but it is when they come to sign the missive that they feel it. So it is difficult to keep them up against it in small towns. There are no other benefits to be derived from the Association.

3718. (*Chairman to Mr Lyon.*) Tell us what exactly happened when you came from Falkirk to Glasgow; when did you leave?—I did not leave till November for the situation that I am in now. I was appointed to it in the month of May, but I had signed a missive in the month of February for the house, so I had to stay. I took lodgings and went back to Falkirk every week-end until the May term, and I could only leave the house then that I paid the full year's rent, but I found a substitute who agreed to pay me a half-year's rent. I was responsible and had to pay the half-year's rent before I left Falkirk.

3719. Up to that point, what loss you actually sustained was in having to travel from Glasgow for six months?—If I had gone at May, I would have had to pay a year's rent in Falkirk and a year's rent in Glasgow.

3720. What happened after that?—When I came to Glasgow I had to pay six months' rent for the house I went into.

3721. You were not actually paying two rents of two houses?—I had to pay one and was responsible for the other.

3722. You did find a substitute?—Yes.

3723. Are there cases where people do not find substitutes?—There are thousands of such cases—I do not know whether it is really a wide experience, but I think it is pretty wide—where you may sign for a house in January and find in March that you have a situation in some other quarter of the town. You go to your landlord and ask him to try and let the house between March and May. He agrees to do that on condition that you pay 10s. for his trouble, and he agrees to try and let the house. You remove, but you find possibly that when the first three months of the year are up, the landlord has not found a tenant for the month of May, and he makes you pay the rent of the house for that year. That has been done very often.

3724. Any cases you have handed in are cases where the people have had to pay for two houses at once?—Cases of that kind.

3725. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Lyon.*) You give reasons here for the view that houses below £20 should be let monthly; is that the view of your Association?—Yes, of the Tenants' Association.

3726. What rent, as a rule, do you think the members will pay?—I believe that most of them are over £10—between £10 and £20.

3727. At what terms do the tenants of from £10 to £20 houses pay under the present system?—Mostly every three months. I pay £15 for a room and kitchen, and I pay it quarterly.

3728. That is the common period for paying rents between £10 and £20?—Yes.

3729. Mr Cross's Bill would make it quarterly?—Yes; I could leave at the end of three months.

3730. Would a quarterly let meet the views of your Association? Mr Cross's Bill would simply substitute for a yearly let, a quarterly let in your case, and in the case of most of your members?—I believe it would mean most of the artisan class, but if we came down to the skilled labourer and unskilled labourer, it would not meet their position. We find that they generally pay their rents monthly or weekly—the lower you go the less time you have.

3731. We have had proposals in different Bills, one, for example, with a clause prohibiting all lets for longer periods than a month. Of course that is very small, but may I take it from you that Mr Cross's Bill, which would substitute quarterly for yearly lets in cases of rents above £10, would be reasonably satisfactory?—Yes, I believe it would.

3732. (*To Mr Baillie.*) In your proof, you say that you are strongly in favour of rates and taxes being collected once a month through the landlord. Is that your own personal view or the view of the Association?—I am afraid that is my own personal view. I have not a brief for my Association on those details.

(*Mr Lyon.*) I believe the members of the Tenants' Association are very much divided on the question of rates. Some people think of course that if the landlord was to collect the rates it would take away the interest of the tenant in municipal affairs or Parliamentary affairs at election times.

(*Mr Baillie.*) But at the later meeting we were, broadly speaking, in favour of the compounding, seeing there is a difficulty with this rating question. I can see difficulty where a monthly tenant moving about might cause a difficulty with the municipal authorities in collecting the money, and therefore we are willing to waive that point and bring it into harmony with the shorter lets, and we look upon the municipal authorities as practical men who could work out the technical part of the problem.

3733. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Baillie.*) The distinction is very marked. As you know, there is exemption on the ground of poverty in the case of a great number of tenants just now. Obviously, if the landlord paid the whole rates up to £20, he would not be prepared to give that exemption which at present the impecunious ratepayer gets from the Corporation?—We do not want to disturb that at all. We would give the landlord the same power of exempting his tenant who makes out a case the same as just now. It is a concession, and we would still allow the landlord to claim that concession for his tenant.

3734. Then you would adopt the clause which the witness from Paisley gave us, suggesting that the ratepayer might, as at present, apply for relief, and on getting it from the Corporation get repaid from the factor or landlord?—Yes, undoubtedly, as a matter of fair play to the landlord.

3735. About this compounding and quarterly collections, apart altogether from the question of exemptions, there is a question of voting. We have heard to-day that there are something like 19,000 electors disqualified for not paying poor rates, that is for Parliamentary voting purposes. They would be qualified if the rate was added to the rent?—Not if it was shown that they did not pay it.

3736. But you may take it as a matter of experience that in the cases where the ratepayer does not pay his poor rates, it would be very much less if the rate was added to the rent collected monthly?—It would certainly. If they paid monthly more people would be on the voting roll. That would be an advantage.

3737. It is an important point, as between compounding and frequent collections, and I had hoped that your Association would have come to a decision on that part of the question?—We have been so interested in the bigger greviance that these minor points have not been discussed very extensively. We find at public meetings that by the time we have got through that, the time is gone. That is all in our favour, bringing these people on to the roll, and making them respectable whether they will or no.

3738. Has your Association expressed any view in regard to the landlord's remedies, such as hypothec?—Under our constitution one of our rules is for the abolition of the law of hypothec.

3739. Has this been one of your objects in the past?—Yes, from the very first.

3740. Are we to take it, then, that the thousand odd members of your Association are pledged to the abolition of the law of hypothec?—Yes.

3741. Have you got this put in detail? Have you discussed it at public meetings?—We are all just one about that.

3742. Can you put in a minute showing any conclusion or decision come to?—No, we never passed a resolution to that effect. There are resolutions about rates, but at the annual public meeting the constitution is submitted and adopted.

3743. It is submitted to the general members?—Yes.

3744. (*Sir J. Stirling Maxwell.*) Have all got a copy of the constitution?—Yes.

3745. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Apart from the landlords' question, we are considering here any grievances tenants may have, and we have had some evidence in favour of the view that no creditor should be entitled to remove tools or bedding from a house on account of the physical and other discomforts necessarily following. Have you any such exemption as

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that in favour of tenants?—We have. It is a gross hardship that the landlord should have, through the law of hypothec, power to remove tools and absolute necessities of life while the people are in the house.

3746. May I take it that, assuming the law did not think proper to abolish hypothec, meanwhile would it be a step in the right direction if it exempted from the landlords' hypothec tools and wearing apparel?—Certainly it would be a great concession.

3747. (*Mr Cox.*) Do you not think there are points of view from which the law of hypothec is an advantage even to the tenant? If, for example, he became ill, his landlord, having his furniture there, and knowing he would not lose, would be contented to let him stay?—Practically speaking, I believe you could presume on the good feeling of the grocer as well as the landlord.

3748. You must have a house above your head?—Well, the landlord does not give it any more than he can help as a rule. They are very smart, that is our experience in Glasgow. I have had many, many cases of complaint about landlords coming down on them immediately the rent is due.

3749. In the case of moonlight flittings, of which there are a good many in the course of the year in Glasgow——?—We are not here to defend people on that point at all.

3750. Do you suppose these are for the purpose of escaping rates rather than rents?—When anybody resorts to that, they are just in a general fix with their debts. One thing follows on another.

3751. (*Mr Howden to Mr Baillie.*) I see, in Clause 9 of your precognition, you say under the new system provision could be made whereby undesirable tenants could be readily ejected. What do you mean, exactly, by that?—Presuming that such a system as Mr Cross's should be introduced, and that the landlord found he had an objectionable tenant in a tenement, he would get him removed within a very reasonable time, whereas, at present, for all the nuisance, you have to prove your case. Before you can take action against people you have to get up a lot of proof, and it is sometimes difficult. But the landlord does not require to give reasons for saying, "You have to go" at the legal term. It would be palpably to his mind and to the neighbours' minds that these objectionable people we resent away.

3752. That is all you mean by that?—That is all I mean.

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Mr George Kerr, jun.

Mr George Kerr, Junior, sworn and examined.

Mr George Kerr, jun.

3753. (*Chairman.*) You appear on behalf of Partick Labour Representation Committee, and you yourself are a Councillor for the third ward in Partick?—Yes.

3754. Is it a large ward?—The second largest in the burgh.

3755. What is the population of Partick?—65,394.

3756. How many are in your ward, roughly?—About eleven and a half thousand.

3757. Is it fairly representative of working men?—Yes, largely.

3758. What are you yourself?—A machineman.

3759. Have you been long in Partick?—Thirteen years.

3760. How many are there in the Partick Town Council?—Eighteen members.

3761. What kind of organisation is the Labour Representation Committee for which you appear on behalf of?—It is an organisation composed of trades unions, co-operative societies, Independent Labour Party, and socialist organisation generally.

3762. Limited to Partick?—Yes, Partick Parliamentary constituency, which includes a portion of Maryhill.

3763. Roughly, how many does the Committee represent?—Say about a dozen trades. It has a membership possibly of four or five thousand.

3764. Has this matter been before the Committee several times?—Yes, it has been before them in view of municipal elections. This Committee is for the purpose of securing representation on local and national bodies.

3765. How many are on the Committee itself?—Two delegates from each trade, about thirty or forty altogether.

3766. You have no means of bringing a matter like this before all your constituents? They never meet, do they?—No.

3767. It is in the hands of the Committee?—Yes, but they report to their various societies, and at election times it is brought before the electors.

3768. May I take it that the views of the Committee are fairly representative of the views of your whole constituents?—Yes.

3769. Are the Committee unanimous in their view?—Yes, on long lets as a grievance.

3770. Among your trades, are all the trades affected by this question equally, or some more than others?—Practically all the same.

3771. Owing to the introduction of machinery and works getting executed in much shorter periods, are working men of all sections oftener on the street looking for work than used to be the case?—Yes.

3772. Do you connect that with the introduction of machinery?—Largely, and also with the introduction of hustling methods.

3773. But I suppose that, as compared with the old days, before the introduction of machinery, the working classes are much more unsettled?—Yes; owing to the introduction of machinery.

3774. Is shipbuilding a staple industry in Partick?—Yes.

3775. Will it employ half of the working men?—More than half.

3776. Do you think the existence of men out of work has any connection with this house-letting question?—Yes. I believe many men, because of the house-letting system, are prevented from going elsewhere to look for a job because of the necessity of either having to pay two rents or having to get a sub-tenant and be subjected to a lot of hardship in doing so. For instance, I have known of a man having to leave to go to Rothesay in the interests of his health, having got a job to suit him. He advertised his house in the *Citizen* every night for a week, and the factor was very dilatory in putting up a notice board intimating that the house was to sub-let. This was due to the fact that he had other houses in the property to let. When the tenant found a sub-tenant, the factor wanted to put an extra 10s. on to the rent. There are such things as that.

3777. So you are in the hands of a particular factor?—Yes.

3778. Of course, if you have a very active factor, if he is sympathetic, that may be a very different case from the case of a factor who is lazy and regardless?—There are very few of them very sympathetic in that direction.

3779. But it is the interest of the factor to let his house if he can; he gets his commission?—Well, if he is assured of his commission, of course that is a further hardship on the tenant.

3780. The 5 per cent., or whatever it may be?—Yes.

3781. Suppose a factor sub-lets, does he charge anything to the landlord, or is it the principal tenant that is made to pay?—It is always the principal tenant.

3782. He won't get anything from the landlord?—No.

3783. Of course a single man in lodgings, as you say, has no obligation?—No.

3784. It is the case of married men who have houses of their own?—Yes.

3785. You are not referring at all to the cases merely of labouring men, but men of the best class?—Men of all classes.

3786. It is not the mere shifty men that are always flitting about that you are really concerned in, but men of good class?—Yes.

3787. Do you find that there is any one period of the year, more than others when this liability to remove is chiefly to be found, summer or winter, spring or autumn?—I find it is pretty general. Of course, in the shipbuilding industries, weather conditions affect the employment largely.

3788. In the case of the shipbuilding industry, when a contract comes in for a man-of-war, they will bring men from all quarters?—Yes, it creates a business, and there is a large section employed for the time being.

3789. How many men will be employed at once on a man-of-war?—I have known a matter of 1200 men employed on one.

3790. These men might have to be drawn from a considerable area; they would not all be found on the spot?—No.

3791. Suppose a man arranges to go and take lodgings in the district to which he removes and leaves his family to work out the remainder of the tenancy in the place which he leaves, does that add substantially to his total cost?—Yes.

3792. Whether he travels or not?—Yes.

3793. If he travels back and forward it will be so much more?—All the more hardship.

3794. We know, of course, of these cases you have referred to, but are cases numerous where, in the event of a sub-let, the principal tenant has to pay for the whole or a portion of his original let?—Well, yes, they are getting more numerous.

3795. I suppose that will vary with the number of unlet houses, but if there is a large demand for houses, these cases will be fewer?—Yes, of course.

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3796. But supposing the house-building had been over-done, and there were a lot of houses vacant, there might be many?—Just so.

3797. In addition to that direct grievance, are there incidental grievances also in the way of increased cost and discomfort owing to the removals being at one period of the year?—Yes, removals being at one period of the year necessitates the people having to pay very much higher prices for the use of vehicles, and then their furniture runs all the more risk of damage owing to possibly three or four flittings being up one close.

3798. We have had a good deal of evidence on one side, and information on the other, so I may take it you agree as to that, and also as to the trades concerned?—Yes.

3799. There is a further point, namely, that a workman is often tied to a house for twelve months which is not very suitable; it may be draughty and damp, and this grievance would be rectified by shorter lets. The people would require to be provided with better houses or would remove to where they could get better houses. These are the cases which never actually come to statistics of removal, because they grin and bear it?—They have to.

3800. On account of the risk of having to suffer loss?—Yes.

3801. I see you point out that it also results in bad and imperfect work on the part of builders and others. How is that?—Because of the rush at the term time.

3802. The work has to be done, and if pressed it cannot be so well done?—Yes, and it is often done under contract to be accomplished at a certain time.

3803. You have pointed out drawbacks of the present system. In your view, are there not counter-balancing advantages that it has over short lets?—No, I don't know of any.

3804. You don't attach importance to the idea of security of tenure?—Not if the tenant pays his rent regularly, he will have a fixed tenure.

3805. Is it your view that, supposing a plebiscite were taken, your members would all go in for short lets?—Yes.

3806. Supposing they got an offer to convert their tenacy into short lets, they would accept?—Yes.

3807. Supposing it was left to yourselves what the short let was to be, what proportion would wish quarterly, and what proportion would wish monthly lets, do you think?—Quite the greater proportion would say monthly lets, I believe 75 per cent. at least.

3808. There would be a substantial number who would prefer quarterly?—There would be a number, but very few, I believe. The great number would be for monthly lets, because it would be handier for paying, and also for getting out of the house. The great difficulty is being tied to the house not only for reasons of work, but for reasons of illness.

3809. Still, as you express yourself, you think there is a sufficient amount of desire for quarterly lets to make it reasonable that they should be provided for as Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, I think monthly and quarterly lets should be provided for.

3810. Then, in regard to the question of rates, if it be the fact that short lets would necessarily lead to shorter payment of rates, what view do your people take as to compounding of rates, the landlord paying them and more frequent collection by the rating authorities?—I believe we were pretty well divided on that point. I believe the greater proportion would prefer the landlord to have nothing to do with the collection of rates.

3811. So that it could be done?—Yes.

3812. And if it cannot be done?—That a notice be sent by the authorities stating the amount of rates, so that the tenant would know precisely what he was paying for rates.

3813. You might have them whether the landlord collected them or the rating authority?—Yes.

3814. But whichever did it in either case, the tenant should know?—Yes.

3815. What is the advantage of that?—In order that he would know whether it was his rent or his rates that were increasing or decreasing.

3816. It would be a check on the landlord and induce him to take an interest in municipal affairs?—Yes.

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3817. (*Mr Howden.*) Is there any large feeling on this question in Partick?—Yes, I believe it is very largely due to my attitude on this question of short lets that I was returned to the Council.

3818. We have had a representative of the Partick Corporation present who told us he had gone through three campaigns in Partick and had never been once asked that question?—I heard him make that statement, and I also read it in the papers. I do not know anything to the contrary, but I question it. There is one thing I do know, that it is made a very large question in my connection and in three wards—the second, third, and fourth, which are woven into each other—and when practically every night the candidates in the third and fourth wards were being asked this question with regard to shorter lets and the abolition of the missive system and collection of rates, I expect that he also would be asked it.

3819. Was the Partick Parliamentary representative ever asked that question?—Well, I was trying to get a press cutting about that. I understand that he was asked in Partick at the time of the election and is pledged to support Mr Cross's Bill.

3820. (*Chairman.*) Is that Mr Balfour?—Yes. Proofs of that can be had from the office of the Partick Press.

3821. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) The candidates on both sides have usually been in favour of it, haven't they?—No, I think Mr Parker Smith was against it.

The reason I said so was that there was a notice here from the scrap book which has been issued on behalf of Mr Parker Smith.

(*Chairman.*) Mr Parker Smith says—"In my view lets 'for a year are too long. The English system of short 'lets is much preferable, and it should be provided by law 'that the lets of very small houses should terminate 'monthly."

3822. (*Mr Dobbie.*) That is dated 20th January. He has found his salvation too late?—I understand from press reports of Councillor Lang's evidence that he said neither of the Parliamentary candidates had been asked questions in order to make out that it was not a burning question, and also that he stated this question had never been before the Town Council, whereas, as a matter of fact, it has been before the Council twice in one year.

3823. When?—In March of this year there were five votes in favour of Mr Cross's Bill.

3824. Five separate votes?—The Council took a vote on Mr Cross's Bill versus Mr Provand's Bill, and for Mr Cross's Bill there were five votes.

3825. And the balance for the other?—Yes.

3826. Mr Lang in his proof said it was brought before the Town Council. Councillor Lang did tell us that in Partick there was almost no migratory population, that even during a strike the workmen remained in Partick until they got work there. Your experience is to the contrary?—Yes, within eight days during the recent November election it was brought out by my election agent that in the third ward there were practically about one hundred and fifty people who had left the district in search of work.

3827. Supposing it is practically impossible in the case of small-rented houses to collect monthly, in separate sums, rates and rents, and if the view was taken by Parliament that rates should be compounded and collected by the landlord, would the failure to distinguish the amount of rates included in this monthly payment be fatal, in your view, to any such method?—I think it could be done quite easily. The rating authorities could quite easily send a notice stating the amount of rates.

3828. Which, in fact, were exigible in a particular burgh for the current year?—Yes, for these houses, and that would permit people to know and to take the necessary interest.

3829. That would satisfy your objection, even though it would have the effect that they paid a slump sum monthly?—Yes.

Mr Robert Lemmon and Mr W. Lorimer.

Mr Robert Lemmon and Mr William Lorimer, called and examined.

3830. (*Chairman to Mr Lemmon.*) You are Secretary of the Horsemen's Union in Greenock, and also you are a councillor and magistrate of the burgh?—Yes.

3831. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) You are a blacksmith residing at 5 Lauriston Street, Greenock. What connection have you with the Union?—I am President of the Blacksmiths' Union in Greenock and represent Greenock Trades Council.

3832. We have no precognition of you, Mr Lorimer?—No.

3833. You represent Greenock Trades Council?—Yes.

3834. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) Let us hear first about your special matters. What is the Horsemen's Union?—A Trades Union of carters.

3835. What number may it consist of?—About 350.

3836. Are there horsemen's unions in all big towns?—Yes, there are two in Glasgow.

3837. How long have you been on the Town Council?—Four years.

3838. How long have you been a magistrate?—Since November.

3839. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) How long have you been President of the Blacksmiths' Union?—Two years.

3840. How many does that consist of?—There are 198 members at the present time.

3841. How many does the Trades Council represent

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roughly?—About twenty-five branches of different trades.

3842. But not twenty-five trades?—No, possibly about twenty.

3843. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) You are Secretary of the United Trades Council. Is that of the whole council?—Yes.

3844. Including blacksmiths and all the others?—All who are affiliated with the Council.

3845. How many altogether would that include?—Over 5000 members.

3846. Have the Trades Council as a whole had this matter before them?—Very frequently.

3847. At meetings of the Council as a whole or only committees?—Meetings of the Council as a whole.

3848. Have the Corporation had the matter frequently before them?—Yes.

3849. Who are you speaking to here, Mr Lemmon; for the United Trades Council along with Mr Lorimer?—Yes.

3850. Not for the Corporation?—The Corporation of Greenock is sending Bailie Bennett later on.

3851. Is the Horsemen's Union a part of the United Trades Union?—Yes, just like the Blacksmiths.

3852. You, gentlemen, represent say 5000 working men in Greenock; how many working men would there be in Greenock altogether? Have you any notion?—A great many more than that.

3853. I suppose you are fairly representative of all the large unions?—That is so.

3854. You have no reason, I suppose, that your people would be more inclined to start a proposal of this kind than other working men?—No. I think all those who have houses by the year as a rule favour the same view.

3855. In Greenock the houses of the working men usually consist of one, two or three apartments with rents varying from £4 to £23. Are there any number under £4?—No, I don't think so.

3856. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) Is it like Glasgow, few in number and diminishing?—Yes.

3857. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) Is Greenock increasing?—Yes.

3858. The total number of inhabited houses for 1906–1907 is 14,681. Of that number there are let weekly 102, fortnightly 31, quarterly 3, and monthly 4296, being a total of what you may call short lets of 4432. That deducted from the total number, 14,681, leaves 10,249, most of which are let yearly. Have you any information of how many may be let quarterly or half-yearly of houses under £20?—These figures have been given to me by the Burgh Assessor.

3859. You gave us the quarterly. As far as you know are there any considerable number let half yearly?—No, I do not think so.

3860. You bring out that there are houses let monthly which owing to the statutory arrangements are not stated in the valuation roll so that there are no doubt more houses let monthly?—The Assessor told me so.

3861. He did not give you an idea of how many more there might be?—No, these are the figures from his books.

3862. All they know about?—Yes.

3863. Under the Greenock Police Act, 1877, the Corporation are empowered to levy the assessments falling upon occupiers where the rent does not exceed £5 upon the owners in place of the occupiers under a deduction of one fourth of the assessment?—Yes.

3864. And last year the number of tenants occupying houses so assessed of rentals not exceeding £5 was 1125, and the rental assessed upon amounted to £5413?—Yes.

3865. Then the Corporation are also entitled under the same Act to levy assessments on the owners in place of the occupiers in the case of all premises let for less than a year the rentals of which are £5 but do not exceed £8, under a deduction of one-fifth of the assessment, and the total number of houses so let last year was 3116 with a total rental of £18,858?—Yes.

3866. The assessable rental on burgh for rates leviable upon occupiers last year was £346,348?—Yes.

3867. In addition you have obtained information from the Assessor that the number of occupied houses in Greenock last year of all rentals was 14,576 and that in addition there were 333 vacant houses?—Yes.

3868. What, Mr Lemmon, is the grievance in Greenock that the working men complain of?—Having a house on for a year and also the time of the year at which they have to take the house.

3869. Suppose that the period at which they had to take the house, instead of being four months from the term of entry, was reduced to say two months, would that remove the grievance?—I do not think so if it was still a yearly let.

3870. Has the matter been brought up in Greenock in connection with the municipal elections?—Yes, and also at the Parliamentary election.

3871. By way of questions?—Yes.

3872. Did you find that the working classes differed in opinion among themselves, or are they fairly unanimous in the matter?—They are fairly unanimous.

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3873. As judging by questions at these meetings and otherwise?—Yes, and frequently the Council was memorialised on the question long before it was so popular as it is to-day.

3874. How far back would you put it that this grievance has been ventilated?—Twelve years.

3875. What is the practice in regard to the payment of wages in Greenock?—Weekly in all the shipyards now.

3876. What are the main trades in Greenock?—Shipbuilding.

3877. What else?—There are sugar refineries.

3878. (*Mr Lorimer.*) Sugar and ships.

3879. (*Chairman to Mr Lemmon.*) Is the shipbuilding interest specially shifty more than some other trades?—Their work is of a temporary nature, that is to say, it has often slack spells.

3880. When they want to move off elsewhere?—Yes, to look for work. Some of the trades are very bad in that way.

3881. Take the question in regard to shipbuilding. Suppose a big contract was got at Clydebank, and your work was slack at Greenock, might you have men moving off there?—Yes, they often go off to Belfast.

3882. How long may men go for?—When they are out of work in Greenock, and if they have the prospect of work in Belfast, they will go. The possibility is that they may stay there.

3883. Supposing that you go for a temporary job, how long does a big ship take to build?—We build them very quickly now; it is always a number of months.

3884. In that case would he want to bring his family?—I think, everything else being equal, he would prefer to have his family with him.

3885. Of course though he went to Ireland in connection with one ship, he might have a chance of staying on?—Yes.

3886. In regard to Greenock, is the work among artisans and labouring classes as constant as it used to be?—I don't think so.

3887. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) Why not?—The introduction of machinery is the chief cause, by simplifying labour, and, as the result, throwing skilled labourers on the street.

3888. And is that, Mr Lorimer, from the work being more rapidly done?—That is so, they will build a large ship in three-fourths of the time now-a-days.

3889. Now, may that come in either of two ways, either that they have to remove their families, or although they keep their house on in Greenock under the present arrangements they have to take lodgings in other towns?—That is so.

3890. (*Mr Lemmon.*) A foreman joiner was telling me quite recently that they have been finishing big ships very much more quickly than they were a short time ago.

3891. (*Chairman to Mr Lemmon.*) Is it the case, as others have said, in your experience that if a man has to pay for lodgings in another town, even although he does not travel at the week-ends, it runs away with his earnings as compared with having one house to support?—Yes.

3892. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) If he travels periodically?—It increases the cost.

3893. In shipbuilding, what kind of wages are made?—The artisan class you might say earn an average of 35s. 6d. on the Clyde, and the labourer about 16s. on the average; the lowest in some cases is 12s. 9d. a week of fifty-four hours.

3894. What would it cost a man to go and return between Greenock and Belfast?—A return ticket would be 8s., but they do not use return tickets, they would use two single tickets at 4s. each.

3895. That is the cheapest way you can go?—Yes.

3896. (*To Mr Lemmon.*)—You think from the point of view of the effective administration of a household that when men have to go in that way, and when the head of the house has to remain absent, the effect on the family is not advantageous?—I do not think so.

3897. You mentioned, I see, one of the difficulties of yearly lets is the short time a tenant has to look round him for another house. How does that arise?—The missives are sent out and returnable in eleven days. That sends everybody a-hunting for houses, and possibly has a tendency to keep up rents, and if they do not get a house they have to run the risk of being left without, as sometimes happens.

3898. You will consider the other question of the two, namely, the suggested advantage of security of tenure?—Yes, I remember having that put before me at the Conference in Edinburgh with Lord Dunedin.

3899. What view was taken?—Lord Dunedin referred to the East End of London where certain Jews provided accommodation for families who could be turned out at a moment's notice, and great hardship had resulted from an

arrangement of that kind. I replied tnat we would be quite willing to take the risk of that.

3900. Do you find that there are some working men, however, who take another view of that and think that it is so important that it counter balances the admitted drawbacks of the present system?—I have not heard that.

3901. You have not met them?—No, I was representing the Council at that meeting, and I reported what had been said, and of course we did not experience it, and it was altogether foreign to anything we had conceived on the question. Lord Dunedin mentioned very strongly how it affected a certain district in London, but I think the explanation even went to minimise the effect of it. It is possibly a certain kind of landlord that they have in that quarter. Ours are of a higher standard.

3902. You have not found that any of these 4296 who have at present monthly lets are clamouring for yearly lets?—No.

3903. But a good many the other way?—Yes.

3904. You have been talking about your own interests and the tenant's interests; what is your view as to the effect this would have on the landlord's interests? Do you think it would be seriously detrimental to them or the other way?—I think they are very well protected.

3905. But suppose monthly lets come in as well as yearly, do you think they will lose or would there be advantages on their side?—I often have to assist people to get two months' rent paid before they can get into a house at all.

3906. How does that arise?—They have to give two months' security.

3907. These are monthly lets?—Yes, they have to pay two months forehand before they get into a house.

3908. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) That is for the one month forehand rent, and what is the other month for? I can understand it being forehand the first month?—If a tenant has no rent book or anybody to vouch for him as a cautioner, the landlord makes him pay two months before he gets the key. He is allowed to sit for one month then, and from that on, he always pays a month in advance.

3909. That is just forehand rent?—Yes.

3910. Do you find that even where there is sufficient furniture to make the landlord safe that is hypothec?—Yes, under certain rental, irrespective of the furniture that he may have to recover in his hypothec, he claims forehand rent.

3911. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) Suppose that were the result in consequence of some measure such as proposed, you are not afraid of that? In short, you are not afraid of forehand rents?—No, I don't think so.

3912. Even though the result was that people now in yearly tenancies had to pay forehand. Are they prepared to do that?—Yes.

3913. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Lorimer.*) In houses below what rent is that monthly rent exacted?—In Greenock up to £8.

(*Mr Lemmon.*) 10s. or 12s. a month.

3915. (*Chairman to Mr Lemmon.*) Then above £8, between £8 and £15?—The let is generally for a year.

3916. May I take it that those monthly lets, 4296 in number, are almost all of them under £8?—I think so.

3917. How high up in the way of rent will the monthly lets go to?—There may be exceptional cases that go up to £10 or £12.

3918. I suppose above £12?—No.

3919. Suppose if a more frequent collection of rents led to some extra charge for the additional trouble to the factor, what would you say?—I think that for the reform the tenants would be generally willing to pay. They have to pay for everything in a way.

3920. You say here on page 4, that when it suits the landlord and factor they adopt the plan of the Bill, what do you mean by that?—They only let for short periods.

3921. That is to say, this would merely increase the number of monthly lets that exist already?—Yes.

3922. Which is the class most affected by the existing system, the artisan or the labouring class?—The artisan.

3923. I suppose most if not all of your union members belong to that class?—That is so.

3924. What do your people think about the landlord's hypothec? Have they any strong view on that?—Personally I think the landlord should stand in the same way as any other creditor.

3925. But is that not a question for the other creditors than between landlord and tenant? Do you find any practical grievance as between landlord and tenant from the law of hypothec?—I know the other creditors don't like it.

3926. (*Mr Lorimer.*) It is a matter of indifference to the tenant who should claim his sticks provided he is going to lose them, but as a matter of right the Council has expressed the opinion that the landlords should not get preference over any other creditors.

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3927. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) In Greenock is there any practice of demanding the security of cautioners to any large extent above £8?—The great bulk of the people who inhabit houses above that have sufficient furniture.

3928. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) You referred to a rent book; explain exactly what you mean? Does it mean as showing that they have paid in previous tenancies?—Just so, or it may be shown by receipts.

3929. But in other cases there is a signature of the landlord's clerk showing what has been done?—Just so.

3930. (*Mr Dobbie.*) They are vouchers for good character?—That is so.

3931. (*Mr Howden.*) Do they not ask a line from your previous factor in Greenock?—I have a good deal of practice in assisting people of this kind to get a house, and even if they have a book fairly well clear they must pay two months' rent.

3932. (*Chairman to Mr Lemmon.*) Then it is said that in practice there is really not so much grievance as you would make out because a sub-tenant is practically always got and there is no loss in the end. What do you say to that?—There is a loss because the man who wants to get off his house has to clear the expense, which may not be very big, but a few shillings when a man is idle is a considerable amount,—even half-a-crown.

3933. What about the cases where a sub-tenant is not immediately got?—He would not get clear.

3934. Have you found that existing?—The fact in Greenock is that houses of this class are very scarce at the present time, and there is not much difficulty in getting them let.

3935. That depends on whether there are many empty houses or not?—On supply and demand, yes. From £10 to £12 and upwards, the supply is not equal to the demand in Greenock.

3936. Owing to the fact would you say that the grievance is greater in Glasgow, in practice, than in Greenock?—It may be. There may be a better supply of this class of houses.

3937. In Greenock is it the case, that just as in Glasgow, there is practically one removal term?—There are not many at Martinmas; generally at 28th May.

3938. Would you expect, bailie, that the total number of removals in the course of the whole year, or that they would not be much increased, but spread over the year? We think they would be spread over the year.

3938*a*. That would be a great advantage?—I think so, where people were suited and their rent was regularly paid they would remain as now.

3939. I suppose you agree with the evidence we have already heard, that it would benefit the building trade?—Very much so,—more trades, particularly joinering, and painting, and decorating,—all the building trades, to a large extent, but those who are in the inside so much more.

3940. Not the plumbers so much as others?—No.

3941. What do you say to the differentiation of the limit between Glasgow and Greenock,—£20 for Glasgow, and £16 for Greenock? Do you think that is warranted?—No, we think it is far too low.

3942. You may think they are both too low, but take the difference between them, are the rents in Greenock cheaper than in Glasgow?—I don't think so.

3943. The other conditions are similar?—Yes.

3944. Suppose they were both the same, what do you say is the maximum of rent?—£30.

3945. Why is not £20 enough?—Because a workman with a grown-up family requires more accommodation, and two room and kitchen houses are let in the street I live in, at £23.

3946. What will one room and kitchen houses come to?—£14

3947. Have they bathrooms?—Yes, some as high as £16.

3948. What will two rooms and kitchen come to?—£23.

3949. Are there not two rooms and kitchen with bathroom below £20?—There are; but a modern house in a good locality is and £20 upwards.

3950. Is there any special reason why the value of a house should be high?—Yes, building material, and the feu-duties are very high.

3951. Building material would not be more than elsewhere?—We are removed from the stone quarries.

3952. £30 would be your maximum?—I think so.

3953. Some gentlemen who have come here have said that, while they would be in favour of your view, they think £20 might be a fair compromise. What do you say?—I am speaking of what I know to be a fact for two rooms and kitchen house at the present time.

3954. Lastly, what about the rates? Do you think it would necessarily follow that if there were shorter lets, there would be more frequent payment of rates?—I think that would be a benefit.

3955. Well, then, we have been told that there are two ways, either the landlord paying the rates with relief against the tenant, or the Corporation collecting more frequently. Which way do your people advocate, or are they indifferent?—The landlord should be responsible.

3956. It would not matter to the tenants, would it, unless the landlord got too big an allowance?—I think it would simplify matters if the landlord did it.

3957. One gentleman said theoretically he would rather pay his own rates, but he put it that, practically, it would be very difficult to carry it out, so he approved of compounding. Do you take the view that you would rather pay your own rates and know what you were paying?—That is so.

3958. But it might be so difficult that you have got to go in for compounding?—Yes.

(*Mr Lorimer.*) The rates and the rents to be separate?

3960. (*Chairman to Bailie Lemmon.*) You would still want to know what you were paying?—So that the taxpayer would know exactly what he was paying.

3961. Also that he would know if he was paying too much?—By commission, that is so.

3962. It is said, Baillie, that this is a question which is really being agitated by Englishmen?—I do not think so. It might be that Anglo-Scotsmen see the benefit that their English fellow-workmen have.

3963. Are any of your officials English by birth?—No.

3964. Are any of your committee Englishmen?—No, some of them have worked in England, and they are always bragging of the advantages of the system there.

3965. That is quite fair. Those that have practical experience of the English system and the Irish system, what do you find is their view?—I find they are very much in favour of it. They say it is a great advantage. In the last months of the year a tenant's liabilities are very high. His rates always come in at a time of the year when work is very slack. The cost of living is higher in the winter time. In fact, in Greenock an effort has been made to have the rates levied twice a year, but we have been told by those responsible for the book-keeping that it cannot be done. It has not been done, but one of our magistrates has made an effort on two different occasions to see if it could not be possible. The rates are payable at a time when I think the people are least able to afford it.

3966. What month?—November.

3967. What time would they best be able to afford it?—I think it would be best if it could be divided. In summer work is steadier, not being so much broken by weather.

3968. Supposing you had it twice a year?—Whitsunday and Martinmas? There is a good deal of time lost with weather in outdoor work.

3969. You have not found, on the other hand, men with experience of these systems taking the opposite view—preferring the opposite system?—Not except at the Conference in Edinburgh, when Lord Dunedin put it that way.

3970. Not by those who have had practical experience in their own cases?—No.

3971. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) May I take it that you concur in the views the Bailie has put forward?—Yes.

3972. You are appointed by the Greenock Trades Council to give evidence along with him on these lines?—Yes.

3973. There are details in Mr Cross's Bill which, perhaps, you have not applied your mind to, such as the rate of allowance to be given to the landlords?—Yes, the Council had that up for consideration.

3974. What did they think about it?—They seemed to think the rates allowed by the Bill were very fair and reasonable. That was the impression our Council had.

3975. Of course what you are anxious about is the general principle, however it may be carried out in detail?—Yes.

3976. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Lemmon.*) Have you had experience at Belfast?—I have never lived there. I am speaking of what I have heard from several members of our Council who have worked there.

3977. The system is the same as the English system?—Yes.

3978. Does that form an inducement to go to Belfast?—I don't know that exactly. They go when they get work.

3979. Does the feeling influence them that if they go to Belfast, they can get rid of their houses when they want to, and come back? Are they more inclined to go to Belfast than to come from Belfast to Greenock? We have many people coming from Ireland to Greenock, but I don't know so much about the tradesman class?—There will be a great many artisans in Belfast.

3980. We have not heard of such a consideration?—When I have heard the matter discussed, it was the system that a tradesman at the end of the week knew how he stood, instead of having his rates coming up against him at a certain period.

3981. He paid his rent at the end of the week, or the month, and he was clear, and they spoke of it as an advantage?—.

3982. (*Chairman.*) Instead of a running liability?—Yes.

3983. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) When a man has got a lease he must get rid of, and must get a sub-tenant, what sort of a person does he find? Is it only some person who arrives in Greenock and wants a house?—Yes, or it may be someone who has been living in a smaller house, and wants your house. There are many people who, when they want to shift, instead of shifting at the time, there being only a week allowed at the end of January to take a house, wait on and see if they get a chance of a sub-let.

3984. In that case they voluntarily saddle themselves with two houses? It does not follow that they get a sub-tenant for their houses?—But they will not give up their houses until they know that they have a sub-tenant.

3985. They will have to get credit, in the end, from the outside?—Yes, they have to satisfy the landlord and factor, as well as being willing to take the house.

3986. Would there be cases, for instance, of a man marrying and wanting to settle down; would there be chances of getting a sub-tenant?—Mr Lorimer and I could speak from personal knowledge of certain people who had to do with lodgings after getting married.

3987. So that there are a certain number of sub-tenants?—Yes.

(*Mr Lorimer.*) I know of a case that occurred in Greenock, where a man refused to sign his missive within the specified time. The house was let over his head, with the result that he could not get a suitable house within his means, and he had to store his furniture, split up his family, and go into lodgings for a clear twelve months. In Greenock we are in an entirely different position from Glasgow, owing to the fact that there are not so many houses unlet in Greenock to suit the working classes.

3989. Did the case occur recently?—A year last May. He got a house to suit him.

3990. So that it is not safe to decline to sign the missive?—He was left.

(*Mr Lemmon.*) We think that has a tendency to keep up rents. I know of a case, two years ago, when a member of my Union got married and wanted a house at the end of the year. It was on to December before he got it. If he had not had a little influence with the factor he would not have got one. The factor told him he could let the house twenty times over.

(*Mr Lorimer.*) If you are going to marry in June, July, or August, you have to take a house in May.

3993. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Lorimer.*) There is more danger of being left without a house at all than there is of having two houses on your hands at once?—That is so. They only build to meet the demand.

3994. Has that raised the rents higher in proportion than they are in Glasgow? I think there are very few in Glasgow about £7?—So far as the older houses are concerned in Greenock, I am prepared to say the rent is a shade lower on the properties that are being put up. On modern dwellings the rental is nearly as high as in Glasgow, because supply and demand determine the rent, and the factor, even Mr M'Alpine, is taking as much as he can demand according to supply.

3995. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Lemmon.*) Who is Mr M'Alpine?—A spec. builder in Greenock, he of the Holy City at Kilbowie. We in Greenock anticipated a drop in rents, say a pound; that would affect the others, and the result is that they are actually higher than one of the ordinary dwellings—£9, 15s. for a room and kitchen. But they are not built on a very modern plan, a great many tenants going up one stair, and going into a kitchen and off the kitchen into a room. There is not the usual lobby that there usually is in most artisans' houses where rooms go off the lobby. That is M'Alpine's plan. It is considered old-fashioned.

3996. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) Sir John asked you whether the practice in Belfast operated favourably for Greenock workmen. I suppose you cannot test that until you have the same practice at both ends. Going to Belfast, the local man would leave a house taken by the year at Greenock, therefore he cannot get the benefit of the rental let at Belfast, so long as he has a house taken by the year at Greenock?—As far as the housing is concerned, when a man is idle it is a secondary consideration. His job is the first thing—that is, where he gets a job, and in Greenock we can generally get rid of these houses. The advantage, so far as the let is concerned, is a question not of primary importance to the workman in Greenock.

3997. (*To Mr Lemmon.*) Has it always been so prosperous so far as the demand for houses is concerned?—For some years back.

3998. Has your Council considered the clause making the Bill optional?—I think that is its weakness, because, if

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the Bill is to be adopted, we think it would be better to adopt all round in the burghs.

3999. You would not give each burgh the option to adopt it or not?—I think it would be better if it were not optional.

4000. Another clause is that certain police rates and burgh rates could be compounded and paid by the factor, while other rates, poor rates and school rates, would have to be paid by the occupier. Is it the opinion of your Council that all rates up to the rent limit should be paid by the factor or house proprietor?—I think it would be better to have all paid together, and the tenant knowing what he was paying.

4001. Rather than have the poor and school rates paid direct by the tenant and the others by the factor?—I think it would be better if all were paid together.

4002. It would be better if the amount he were paying were made clear to the tenant, the amount he was paying for rates?—I think that would be better.

4003. We have had evidence saying that at present, where the factor does pay the rates, as a rule at least, the tenant just pays a slump sum?—That is the case. The factor pays the rates in Greenock, under a certain rent.

4004. And just levies a certain sum on the monthly or weekly tenant?—Of course. The sum he is allowed is very high, 25 per cent.

4005. In England we had evidence to show that there, as a rule, where rates are compounded, the tenant is simply invited to pay a fixed sum per month, no definition being drawn between rate and rent. Now, if it seemed impracticable to show exactly the proportion of payment proper to rent, and proper to rate, would it meet your difficulty if the tenant got a notice showing what in fact the rate per £ was in a particular burgh?—I think so.

4006. Does it bring home to him the fact that the rates are so much?—Yes.

4007. Leaving it to the proprietor to pay the rates, and leaving it to the tenant to pay a slump sum in lieu of rates and rent?—Yes.

4008. (*Mr Howden.*) Does Mr Lemmon see any reason why the removal term, as at 28th May, should not be abolished, and all lets made to run from the date of entry?—No.

4009. You tell us you are in favour of the abolition of the law of hypothec. Assuming that we could not get all that, would you favour an Act that would make the necessary effects of a tenant secure, say up to the length of £20, against arrestment from any source whatever—that is, tools, personal effects, and bedding?—I don't think you should be allowed to take a man's tools, to deprive him of the means of earning his livelihood—that is, the tools he works with.

4010. Also personal effects? We had evidence which went to show that that was not the law here at the present time. You don't agree with that?

4011. Would you also protect a man's home, to see that he was not left exactly bare, that he should have some stuff left, even if he were in arrears?—I think the landlord should be on the same footing as other creditors.

4012. You would give the other creditors the right to sell off a man's furniture?—Not if I could prevent it. I do not think anybody should be left stranded.

4013. Can you state the amount that you would be prepared to protect the tenant up to, Mr Lemmon, against all comers?

4014. (*Chairman.*) What would plenish a house in the barest possible way?—£20 will not go very far; but not comfort——

4015. We are not talking of comfort. That would leave him absolutely bare?—That is so.

4016. (*To Mr Lorimer.*) Do you give the same answer, Mr Lorimer?—The opinion expressed by our Council is that, in so far as the actual things necessary to the maintenance of the man and his family are concerned, the law should not have any control over it. If you take away his means of living, you leave him worse than he was before.

4017. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Also the maintenance of his health?—That is so.

4018. (*Mr Cox.*) Would you put it out of the power of a man to pawn his tools, because that happens sometimes?—He will not be a very sound man, or will be very desperate before he does that.

Mr A. Stark.

Mr Alexander Stark, called and examined.

4019. (*Chairman.*) You are the General Secretary of the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society, which extends to England, Ireland, and Scotland, with headquarters in Glasgow?—Yes.

4020. There are about 7000 members?—Yes.

4021. Where are they chiefly?—The membership is principally in Scotland.

4022. What proportion of the 7000 members will there be in Scotland?—5543 in Scotland, 1215 in England, and 121 in Ireland.

4023. How old is the Society?—Over forty-five years.

4024. What is the difference between carpenters and joiners in the trade?—There is no difference whatever. It is simply what you may say the naming by the different countries. In England the house joiner is called a carpenter. In Scotland we call them joiners all over.

4025. When referring to ships?—We always refer to joiners. The shipwright in Scotland claims the name of carpenter, but in England he is called a shipwright.

4026. Have your Society considered this matter more than once?—It has been up at different times.

4027. In your Executive Committee only, or in meetings of the Society?—At meetings of the trade in Glasgow and Edinburgh it has been spoken of at different times.

4028. What kind of number have attended any of these meetings?—In Glasgow there would be probably about one thousand members at the meeting, and in Edinburgh, probably about the half of that, 400 or 500.

4029. How many members are in Glasgow and district as compared with the rest of Scotland?—I am better to let you understand to begin with that there are two Joiners' Societies, the one the Amalgamated, and the other my own, the Associated. Altogether, in Glasgow district I reckon that there are nearly 2¾ thousand members, and in the Clyde district 3000 members. That includes both societies members.

4030. But you were talking of joiners?—Yes.

4031. What has been the conclusion in regard to the question we are considering?—The desire of my Executive and of the members in general is that the yearly tenancy of a house is bad to the general interests of the building trade. We think that if a shorter period of lets were brought about it would be more beneficial to the building trade as a whole.

4032. In the building trade, do you include the joiners also?—Yes.

4033. You say you approve generally; is there a minority who take a different view?—I cannot say I know anyone.

4034. Is there any difference of opinion as to whether the lets should be shortened to a month or to a quarter?—Well, we prefer the monthly certainly, but, at the same time, we would not object to the quarterly. Quarterly certainly would benefit us to a great extent at the present time, comparatively speaking.

4035. Just now you have got one term?—Yes, that is so, Whitsunday.

4036. In what way would it benefit the building trades?—Our opinion is that it would divide the work to a greater extent over the whole period of the year.

4037. During what period of the year have you a busy time?—The busy time is, generally speaking, from the beginning of March to the month of June.

4038. March, April, and how far into June?—Well, the slackness begins after the term day. Sometimes it extends a few days past that.

4039. The busy time lasts for a quarter of the year?—Yes, under ordinary circumstances.

4040. Do you mean, apart from being under big contracts for building hospitals, etc.?—They might extend further on in the year.

4041. But in the ordinary case?—Yes.

4042. Suppose that short lets took place, of course you would always have frosty weather and so on to deal with. To what extent would the rest of the year, the other nine months, be occupied more than it is now?—If shorter term periods were brought about, the houses, generally speaking, that are being built in the winter without any great hurry, could be gone into with more expedition, and the fact that tenants might be procured for them whenever they were finished, whereas it is at present impossible to get tenants except at Whitsunday.

4043. If work is available, there is no period of the year where all work is absolutely stopped. Indoor work goes on?—Yes.

4044. Mason work is stopped necessarily every year for a considerable period?—With frost.

4045. Absolutely?—No.

4046. What other trades would be stopped whatever their arrangements are?—Plasterers and slaters.

4047. Plumbers?—Not to the same extent.

4048. Do you find over-pressure during these three months you have mentioned?—No, not an over-pressure. Unfortunately we never get the over-pressure to that extent.

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4049. We have been told that there is an over-pressure resulting in work being scamped?—Yes, I admit all that.

4050. Does that result from over-pressure?—Yes, I must admit so; I have said in my statement that many contractors work short-handed in winter and autumn months. If work has to be finished in May it has a tendency to scamp work.

4051. Do you find also, as I see you bring out, that when a number are so busy, a number of tradesmen are tempted to flock into the large towns from the surrounding country districts? What is the result of that?—The demands for men for the time being are great, and the result is that when a number of jobs are finished, we have greater numbers of unemployed in those particular districts.

4052. Have there been communications between joiners and their employers in regard to this question at all?—No, not that I am aware of.

4053. I see you refer to communications between men and their employers about altering the time for fixing the wages. Has that any bearing on this question?—Well, I have been requested, of course, to state our grievances under the present system and our opinion as to the effect any new legislation would have, and that is the reason I put that forward. That is certainly a grievance in the present state of affairs.

4054. How would short lets remove that grievance?—It would not be so particular then as to springtime.

4055. Because the work would be spread over the year?—Yes.

4056. So that your view is that any such measure as Mr Cross's, apart from mere details, would have the effect of regulating and steadying employment to a far greater extent than at present?—Yes.

4057. Do you think that, through the benefit to your trades, incidentally, shop-keepers and other industries would also benefit?—Yes.

4058. In the way of more consumption and more slump payments?—That is so.

4059. The steadier a man is in employment, the more he can afford to pay for himself and his family?—That is so; the steadier a man is in his employment, the more he can afford to pay for extras for himself and his family.

4060. As far as you know, are the views that you have expressed applicable not merely to Glasgow and the Clyde district, but the other areas?—I am safe in saying it is quite applicable to all our large towns in Scotland.

4061. Do you yourself ever go personally among your English and Irish members?—Yes.

4062. Have you found any difference of opinion among them on the question of the letting period, or any desire in England or Ireland to adopt the Scottish system?—No, it is quite the opposite.

4063. Are there any grievances in England and Ireland which are not to be found in Scotland, different to the English and Irish system?—I am not aware of any.

4064. You are likely to have heard of them if they had existed?—I have worked in Belfast myself for some time, and found from my experience there and all round that the system is very satisfactory to the workers.

4065. Were you a lodger?—Yes.

4066. But coming in contact with men who had houses?—That is so.

4067. You did not find any grievance from that kind of insecurity of tenure?—That is so.

4068. Did you find any grievance there on account of the landlords collecting the rates as well as the rents?—No.

4069. You did not find it to be a power put into the hands of the landlord to charge more?—I cannot say that I did.

4070. What is your view of the desirability of having to separate so that the tenant should know what he is paying?—I am quite favourable to having the two paid together, but it would be necessary, in order that the tenant might know where he stands, to have them separately stated.

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4071. That is not done in England or in Ireland?—It is done in some parts of Ireland, I think.

4072. But if it is not done in England, and generally it is not, it rather seems to point to a practical difficulty in doing it?—Practically, from the factor's point of view.

4073. What rents do working joiners generally pay who are not foremen? Up to what do they go?—You get joiners in different grades of houses, a single house up to three and four-roomed.

4074. Take the man who has not a wage-earning family. How much will he pay?—The ordinary working man with one or two of a family has a room and kitchen house.

4075. What will that amount to?—It depends on the locality again. It may be rented from £10 to £15, 10s.

4076. Two rooms and a kitchen?—Will rent from £14 or £15 up to £22 or £23.

4077. What are the joiners' wages?—At the present time the ship joiner gets 8¼d. an hour.

4078. What does that come to per week?—For fifty-four hours that is 37s. 1½d.

4079. These are the Union rates?—Yes. House joiners work fifty-one hours in the summer and forty-eight to forty-two in the winter, and gets 9½d. an hour.

4080. To what extent, in these two classes, may the employment be constant all the year round? Must there be no broken time at all?—Well, in these times there are some cases. Of course there are steady men who have been long in one employment, but long jobs are very scarce.

4081. But there is nothing in the conditions of employment, as there is in the masons' case, to prevent working?—Yes, many times men working in buildings are knocked off by wet weather.

4082. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you know of any reason for maintaining the 28th of May as a removal term?—No, I fancy not.

4083. Do you see any reasons for shifting it?—Yes, many.

4084. Do you know any cases of any of your members being compelled to pay two rents owing to having to leave a certain district?—Yes.

4085. Could you cite a case?—Well, I could cite many cases. When I was appointed to my present position, three years ago, my appointment took place from the 1st October, and I had to remove from Govan to Edinburgh. When I gave up my Govan house, I had to get a tenant for it, and I got a house in Edinburgh after some difficulty. The people who took my house in Govan had also to find a tenant for their house, but I could not go further back as to what the other tenant did. That was two cases in connection with myself, where we had to find sub-tenants.

4086. (*Chairman.*) There was no net loss there?—No, but I was liable all the same. If I had not been successful in getting a tenant for a house, I would have been held liable.

4087. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) How did you get the tenants?—It was through an acquaintance of my own.

4088. (*Chairman.*) What is the most numerous trade? You will have more men, for instance, than the plumbers or the slaters?—I think the blacksmith and the joiner trades might have it, from this fact, that you will scarcely get a country village but what has got a joiner and a blacksmith.

4089. As compared with masons?—Well, I believe the joiners have it.

4090. You represent a very large interest in that way?—Yes.

4091. You talk of another Society; are their views similar to your own?—I am safe in saying the views I have put forward are the views of our sister Society, the Amalgamated, for this reason, that we work in joint action in all trade matters.

Mr Daniel Baird and Mr David Chalmers, called and examined.

Mr D. Baird and Mr D. Chalmers.

4092. (*Chairman to Mr Chalmers.*) You are Secretary of the Scottish National Plasterers' Association, Glasgow District?—Yes.

4093. (*To Mr Baird.*) What is your position?—General Secretary of the Scottish National Operative Plasterers.

4094. For the whole Scottish Association?—Yes.

4095. You have a large district?—Quite so.

4096. Mr Chalmers represents the Glasgow District?—Yes.

4097. What other districts have you?—Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Falkirk, Dunfermline,—I think altogether the country is divided into about twenty-five districts.

4098. As far as you know, are the views of the Glasgow people in any way different from the views of the people of other districts?—Speaking generally for the West of Scotland, our views are identical so far as the North of Scotland is concerned, and I believe the Edinburgh District have somewhat modified terms. They are said not to be so much affected.

4099. The question, in short, is more a pressing one for the Glasgow District?—Yes.

4100. As far as you know, are there any of your trade who take the view that there should be no change?—None whatever that I know of.

4101. Take your whole organisation just now; what is the membership?—It varies very much at the present time. It runs between 1200 and 1300. That is our Union. That does not not account for the whole of the trade.

4102. (*To Mr Chalmers.*) Of these, how many are in the Glasgow District?—At the present time there will be about 560 or 570.

4103. (*To Mr Baird.*) How old is your Association?—This is the second time our Association has been formed, and as at present formed it is something like twenty-five years old.

4104. What is the view of your Association generally on the question we are considering?—Our view, as far as the 28th of May as a uniform term day is concerned, is that it is very determintal to the interests of our trade.

4105. You take that view both as working men generally and as also speaking in the interests of your own trade?—Yes, indeed the members of the building trade suffer threefold from the present system of letting. In the first place, we suffer because of the cramming of the most of our work into a short period of the year. In the second place, we suffer as householders in the ordinary way; and, in the next place, we suffer as ratepayers, because, being residenters and ratepayers in Glasgow, and the bulk of our work being crammed into a certain period of the year, and there being a rush from the country, that deprives us of the opportunity of maintaining ourselves in the position of citizens and ratepayers.

4106. How is that rush created? Are there advertisements put into the papers at that period for additional men?—Undoubtedly.

4107. And they come from as far as where?—From the surrounding districts around Glasgow; from all parts of Scotland; from Ireland and England. They advertise in England, Ireland, and Scotland.

4108. Suppose the lets were shortened. What effect would that have?—Well, as far as the smaller houses are concerned, it would not do us any great good. It would not affect the building trade very materially, unless it applied to the whole of house property, such as warehouse property and office property.

4109. Then it would be very important?—Very important indeed.

4110. But is the term for the class of property you have mentioned as much limited to Whitsunday as it is for the working men's houses?—Just the same.

4111. But, as far as it went, you would benefit by the smaller class for what it was worth?—To a certain extent we would.

4112. Are you more interested in this thing than other departments of the building trade?—Just about equally.

4113. Your interests are identical?—Just so.

4114. Do you agree with what we heard from our two friends last in the box as to the period of busy time about three months?—Yes, I have looked over some of my returns from our large districts. I went back three years to 1904, and I found that in Glasgow we had 782 members. In August of the same year it fell to 487. In 1905, the trade was beginning to decline, and in April we had 513 members on our books; in September we had 385.

4115. What does your membership depend upon?—On their being able to pay their contributions to the Society.

4116. And if they are not able to pay, do they get out of benefit?—Yes.

4117. (*Mr Howden.*) They may go to other localities?—Yes, of course. We generally get hold of them sometime. In April this year we had 508, and in July we had 322.

4118. I suppose your trade is, owing to conditions of weather, wet and frost, to a certain extent stopped necessarily?—Our trade is stopped, of course, by frost.

4119. You say your building trade would remain normal throughout the year if the present system were abolished, but I suppose there are considerably varying periods when there is nothing doing?—Well, we are of course slacker at certain periods than others, but by different methods of going about our work, such as closing in buildings and lighting them up, we can in a measure cope with the frost when it does not become too severe. In severe frost we cannot work, but it is very rare that we have a very severe frost.

4120. That would stop you entirely?—Entirely. That is in Glasgow; in the country districts it is different.

4121. Is your trade more liable to men having to shift from one job to another than other trades?—Well, I believe it is more liable than, say, the joiners.

4122. Why?—Because our work on the job does not last so long. The joiner is the first man on the job and the last.

4123. What is the order? Is the mason first?—No. The joiner is first. He stakes off the ground and so on.

4124. Who comes next?—Then the mason; then the slater and bricklayer and plasterer and painter.

4125. When does the plumber come in?—Generally before the slater.

4126. Suppose there is a great pressure on the work, is it possible to get the proper order? Are your men rather apt to be mixed up on the job?—I have worked on a job myself in Glasgow where we had joiners, painters, plasterers, and electricians working in one office, a lawyer's office.

4127. That was because the job was hurried?—Yes.

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4128. What is the detriment?—It amounts to this. In many cases, when we arrive at a stage like that, if work can be cut out of a job, then it is done away with because a tenant does not want tradesmen to be troubling him when he is carrying on his business.

4129. Do you coincide with witnesses who said that the result of the present system is that a man going to a job in another place and leaving his wife and children in a yearly tenancy and taking lodgings elsewhere adds a serious item to his expenditure?—It does, because if it is in the winter time he may be knocked off by weather where he has gone to.

4130. Does the cost of removing often deter a man from changing his employment?—Certainly, I know that is the case.

4131. Of course it will vary infinitely?—That is so.

4132. Roughly speaking, in Glasgow, what would it cost for an ordinary man with 25s. a week to remove? It is largely done by hand, is it not?—It all depends where it is to. If he is removing from one locality to another in Glasgow, I daresay. It would cost more than that. It would not cost under £2 at least.

4133. £1?

4134. There is a lot of assistance given in cases of that kind?—There is sometimes. It is not a great deal.

4135. There are cases where there is a reason for people removing?—That is so.

4136. So that, apart from all the general interest as working men, you think you have a special interest in this question as members of the building trade?—I do.

4137. But you think the two questions don't conflict, but are the same?—That is so.

4138. You referred to your interests as ratepayers. What did you mean?—That, being citizens and ratepayers in Glasgow, we think we should not be handicapped by any interference with the course of trade. Uniform term causes the bulk of our trade to be done in a short period of the year, and in consequence we are deprived of the means of earning our living during the remainder of the year. As ratepayers we suffer. We ought to get the same benefit from the city trade as other tradesmen do.

4139. In regard to the annual collection of rates, what does the ordinary working man do? Does he bank a certain amount in view of the £5 he may have to pay in rates, or keep it in the house?—I do not think he does. I think he waits on to see what turns up, what position he is in.

4140. He may be in a position of considerable savings?—I do not think he is in that position at any time. He is not in a position to save it.

4141. Savings banks are used?—Oh yes! Taking it all over, there is a very small percentage.

4142. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Have you had emigration?—We have about five hundred who left Scotland for America this year to come back again. They are coming back just now. They went to New York principally.

4143. Is that quite a common thing?—Yes, quite.

4144. (*Mr Cox.*) Do they carry on their own trade there?—Yes.

4145. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) What does the journey cost them?—From £6 to £8.

4146. What do they bring home usually?—I have a son just now in New York. Since he went there last April he has sent home about £40 after keeping himself. He could not have done that working five years constantly in Glasgow.

4147. He will be a very good fellow?—Just a young man whose time was newly out.

4148. What age is he?—Twenty-two.

4149. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do you think that one result of shorter lets would be to spread work throughout the year and make it less necessary for the emigration to take place?—Undoubtedly. Of course, if there are greater inducements as far as wages are concerned in America, I daresay they would go there still, but not so many.

4150. Can you give us any views upon details of some proposals we have had in regard, for example, to Mr Cross's Bill. Have you studied the Bill?—I have seen it, but not studied it.

4151. Tell us shortly whether you approve of £20 as the limit for short lets or not?—Well, I do not approve of the £20 as a limit, nor does my Association. We believe that there should be no uniform term at all; that the 28th of May as a uniform term should be abolished, and that houses should be taken from the day of entry to a corresponding period, according to arrangement.

4152. All houses?—All houses.

4153. Including warehouses?—With regard to smaller houses. I do not see that, so far as Mr Cross's Bill is concerned. The fourth clause, I think, deals with shorter periods in accordance with how you pay your rent. I think it is a very fair way.

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4154. Your members usually pay quarterly, do they?—The majority of them, I think.

4155. That would mean, as you quite see, and it would transfer the present yearly let into a quarterly let under Mr Cross's Bill?—Well, as far as those who pay quarterly.

4156. Would that be fairly satisfactory to your members?—Yes, fairly satisfactory.

4157. In regard to the rating question, is it your view that, with compounding—that is, with burghs getting the rates from the landlord, and the landlord collecting from the tenant—that would be more satisfactory than quarterly collections by the burghs?—No, I favour the collecting by the burghs.

4158. Frequent collections?—Yes.

4159. (*Chairman.*) How often?—Quarterly, I think, would be fair, for this reason. I think that once a man loses connection with his rates, it so far lessens his interest in public affairs. The fact that he has to pay rates thrusts upon him the responsibility of a citizen. I do not think he should lose that.

4160. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Assuming the rating experts tell us that it is practically impossible to have more than one collection?—Of course that kills the argument.

4161. Then, rather than have the present condition of lets, you would acquiesce in the view that the landlord might pay the rates and collect them monthly or quarterly along with the rent?—Oh, decidedly.

4162. Beginning at May, it is said to be impossible to distinguish the actual amount of rate to be added to the rent. For example, some rates are only fixed in September, therefore it might only be an approximate amount, not the actual sum for that particular period. Would that objection be overcome if the tenant was told at the proper time what the current rate was, whether it was increased or decreased by comparison with the previous years, although the information did not enable him to find out precisely what rates he was paying to the landlord?—I daresay that would meet the difficulty.

4163. (*Mr Cox.*) Something was said about the quarterly dividends from the Co-operative Society as being useful for paying rents. Does that mean that these dividends would be sufficient to pay the quarterly rents?—No, it would be a rather large purchaser if that was the case.

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4164. What do you suppose a dividend might come to?—I myself am a co-operator, and I think I run from something like £18 in the quarter in the Co-operative. Of course I don't purchase everything from the Co-operative, but I do to a great extent. You have 2s. in the £ as a rule. That is the amount. I have a fairly large family, and of course it very much depends on the size of the family.

4165. (*Mr Howden.*) Does any danger arise to workmen from being on a job to sign in connection with the rush? You have mentioned, of course, that you have known cases where various workmen were working together who were altogether unsuited to the methods. Do you know any case where that has happened?—Yes. I was working on a job at the corner of St Vincent Street, the very job that was mentioned, where there were so many tradesmen, and there was an electrician came on the job. The job not being in a condition for his work, he was not quite aware of the dangers that were besetting him on every side, such as elevator well-holes being left open—that is to say, the house was not fitted up. He ran through a door into another room and went right down through. That is a simple case of a job not being in a position for his work. Painters would have been in the same position.

4166. You attribute that to the rush and the hustle?—Yes.

4167. What is your opinion in connection with the law of hypothec?—My view of the law of hypothec is that the landlord may be in no more favoured position than any other creditors.

4168. Would you favour an Act that would protect the goods and chattels of workmen?—Yes, I think there is such an Act in America, and I would favour such an Act as that.

Mr W. Cross.

Mr William Cross, Secretary of the Amalgamated Slaters' Society of Scotland, Central Board, called and examined.

Mr W. Cross.

4169. (*Chairman.*) Where is your Central Board?—The office is in Partick; the meeting-place is 132 Trongate, Glasgow.

4170. Are you Secretary?—Yes.

4171. How long have you been Secretary?—Three years.

4172. How large is your Society?—Between 1000 and 1100.

4173. What proportion would you say would be in the Clyde District?—That takes in practically Glasgow, Greenock, and Paisley.

4174. A majority?—I believe more than half.

4175. Has your Society considered the question we are discussing?—Yes.

4176. Have they done so at meetings of the Society, or only at Committee meetings?—The Glasgow Branch had considered it at meetings of the Society.

4177. When?—Not altogether in the form of a resolution, but it has been considered, as the matter has been publicly discussed from time to time.

4178. Have they varied in their view, or always taken the same view?—Always the same.

4179. What has that been?—For the alteration of the present system. They take the view that the present system of the May term ought to be abolished.

4180. Both as workmen, and specially in the interests of their own department of the building trade?—Both from the trade point of view and as occupiers.

4181. Do you agree in the view you have heard given by other departments of the building trade, namely, the joiners and the plasterers?—That it has a deteriorating effect on the trade? Yes, most certainly.

4182. Would it affect your department equally with others?—Yes, but to a less degree, although exactly in the same manner. The members of our trade are naturally a shorter time on the building during construction, but it affects us in exactly the same fashion.

4183. There are a good many slaters outside of your Society?—Not so very many. The opinions here expressed are the opinions of the organised portion, and the unorganised portion is comparatively very small. I have spoken to a number of men, both organised and unorganised, and I have not heard an opposite opinion.

4184. What are the slaters' wages?—Ninepence an hour, with a week of fifty-one hours in the summer time, equal to £1, 18s. 3d. They are as low as 7½d. in the winter time, about 30s. a week.

4185. What will they pay in the way of rent?—The ordinary room and kitchen will be rented, according to the locality, from £10 to £16.

4186. How many did you say were in the Society?—About 1040.

4187. Roughly, how many of these will be in room and kitchen houses?—I could not give you an accurate idea, but I am safe in saying that two-thirds of them don't pay more.

4188. To what extent, in point of fact, do your men remove? Do they go to England?—Sometimes, but in the majority of cases it is a case of removing between various towns in Scotland.

4189. Do many men come from England and Ireland to your business?—Not so many, because the method of work is slightly different, and the men are not so conversant with the style, but there are cases in which they do so.

4190. We have been told that in certain trades advertisements are put into the papers, and they come from different parts. It would not apply so much to you?—It does. In our busy seasons we have known cases where the advertisements were inserted in outside newspapers for men required in Glasgow, while no advertisements were inserted in Glasgow papers.

4191. What is the result?—The result is to bring men in from the country districts where there is an extra pressure on for a short period. It naturally follows that after that work is finished there is an overplus of labour in the city so far as the particular trade is concerned.

4192. Do you find, under the present system, that builders are reluctant to start operations until such a time as will enable them to have their houses ready for the annual term?—They prefer to hold up operations until there is time to have them ready.

4193. That is not a good thing for the work or for the workers themselves?—Certainly not. We are of opinion that if we had a different system the work would naturally distribute itself over the whole year more evenly, at least there would be no incentive for any builder to withhold operations.

4194. Your trade is to some extent affected by weather, like those of plasterers and masons?—Yes, wet stops us, and frost and snow. We could work even in frost and snow, as far as new work is concerned, actual slating, we can work, but wet weather is very much against us.

4195. To what extent would you say in an ordinary year you will absolutely average—how many days?—Sometimes in the winter time you might be stopped for a com-

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plete week, almost every man. At other times, during the summer, it is a day now and again.

4196. A month in the year, on the average?—Yes, even more sometimes with a very severe winter. Conditions vary with a heavy fall of snow and frost on the top of the roofs; when snow-bound, it is a case of being entirely suspended for two or three weeks.

4197. Even if work were spread over under the proposed new system, there would be certain parts of the year when work would be stopped?—Yes.

4198. But the boom at Whitsunday would not exist as it does just now?—We don't think so.

4199. You agree, I understand, apart from your special interests, as far as the working men's interests generally are concerned, in all the views that have been expressed?—Yes.

4200. Are you in the position of other trades of being unanimous in this matter, or have you some men who take a different view?—I have not heard.

4201. How many Englishmen have you in your trade?—To my knowledge, about two, or perhaps three.

4202. Are any of your officials English?—No.

4203. Are there any on your Committee?—No.

4204. You don't agree with the view that the English view is at the bottom of the objection?—Certainly not. This is on the merits of the Scottish system.

4205. Have you had any experience yourself of actual loss from failure to get a sub-tenant?—I can scarcely give you specific cases, beyond one of a relative of my own who, living in Glasgow, had to go to Kinross in August and failed to get a sub-tenant. He had to pay the rent of the Glasgow house up to the May term.

4206. And have you known of cases where, rather than run the risk, they will not try it?—There has been a general feeling expressed on the part of our members that, when they were forced to shift to Edinburgh or Aberdeen or Dundee, if they had been able to get clear of their houses in Glasgow, they would remove all their home there.

4207. These were cases where it would have been an advantage to do so?—Yes. Of course there are exceptional cases, where a man might like to go back again, but in the majority of cases the men feel that they ought to be in a position to be at liberty to do so if they desire it.

4208. Without the risk of being liable?—Yes, for double rents.

4209. Do you take the same view as others, that it would be advisable that rates should be paid at short intervals as well as rents, whether by the landlords or direct to the rating authority?—My personal opinion is that the rates should be paid direct by the tenant.

4210. If it turned out to be practicable?—Yes.

4211. (*Mr Howden.*) What is your opinion of the law of hypothec?—It is just as it has always been. I see no reason why the house factor or landlord should be placed in a more favourable position than any other creditor.

4212. You would be in favour of the Homestead Act as expressed by Mr Baird?—Yes, most certainly.

4213. (*Chairman.*) Would that have any effect without any other legislation in producing short lets, supposing the law of hypothec were abolished? You see, Mr Provand has suggested to us that all that is needed is to abolish the law of hypothec, and the landlord would then be encouraged to favour short lets. Do you quite follow that, how the one thing would follow the other?—No, I cannot say that I have given that side of the question any consideration.

4214. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What limit would you put on any change in regard to rent? We have had various suggestions?—I do not know. Our general opinion is, as tradesmen, that it is not so much a question of limit in rent. What we would like to see, as already stated by Mr Baird, is a system that all property, even business premises, ought to be taken at any term, and the abolition of the May term altogether, so that houses, irrespective of the rental, should be at liberty to be taken at any period of the year. The matter of business premises could be fixed up by a lease, but that could take place in any month during the year.

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4215. I suppose you are in favour of all local rates, both burgh rates and poor rates, being treated in the same fashion, either with frequent collections or paid to the factor?—Yes. I am in favour of that: the whole thing being placed together. It would be apt to mislead many working men if it was otherwise.

4216. In one of the Bills, for example, the suggestion is that the burgh rates should be compounded, leaving the poor rates and the school rates as at present. Is it your opinion that all local rates should be compounded?—I think all local rates should be on the same footing, either compounding or paid by the tenant.

4217. Have you any view in regard to the fact of payment by the landlord on the enfranchising of a number of ratepayers who at present don't pay their poor rates. There are some 19,000 males in Glasgow who would have a vote, if they paid their poor rates by a certain day?—I should think that would be a benefit to the working classes. It would force these practically to take an interest in their civic affairs as they ought to do.

4218. In your view, it is desirable to put on these delinquents the responsibility of citizenship by making them pay their rates through the landlord and give them their voice in the management of public affairs?—I stated before my opinion in favour of paying the rates by the tenant himself if practicable. There is a feeling among a good many of the workers that there is a possibility that they may be charged too much, unless the separate charges are stated separately.

4219. Would it not be an objection, in your mind, to the rates being compounded and paid by the factor, that by that method 19,000 people in Glasgow alone, who at present don't pay their rates, would be forced to pay them?—It would not be an objection on my part. I would consider it beneficial.

4220. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Is your chief reason for asking that rates should be paid direct, to make sure that they should not be overcharged with the rent?—That is the only reason I am thinking of at the present time.

4221. It is not also your reason that you want the ratepayers to know what they are paying and take an interest in public affairs?—Well, that is practically the chief reason why the tenant should have the right to pay for himself, so that he may understand what he is doing.

4222. That is his rent, if the rates were separately stated?—There would be no objection to that.

4223. (*Mr Dobbie.*) The great objection would be that there would be less tendency to exempt on the ground of poverty in the event of the tenant actually paying the rent monthly. He could not very well plead poverty and get money back?—I believe it would ultimately work out to the benefit of the corporations and the house factors.

4224. And detrimental to the poorer tenant?—Not exactly, because there are certain times of the year that a man might be perfectly able to pay. At other times poverty might be brought about through no cause of his own; and in cases where the rates are practically lost at the present time, there would be at least an opportunity of gaining a certain percentage.

4225. You quite realise that one result of any change in the let may be that any ratepayers, who cannot afford, under the present system, to pay, might be compelled or be able to pay without compulsion?—You practically mean that those who are free at the present time on the plea of poverty will be forced; but I don't think that naturally follows. I think that men's circumstances must always be taken into account.

4226. You admit that many people who cannot pay a slump sum and don't pay at all, would pay a factor by monthly instalments?—I believe the means would be placed within their power where they don't pay at the present time.

4227. And one result of the change would be that people would, in fact, pay under the new system, who under the present system don't pay?—That is so.

Mr Archibald Gardner.

Mr Archibald Gardner, called and examined.

Mr Archibald Gardner.

4228. (*Chairman.*) You are General Secretary of the Scottish Amalgamated Society of House and Shop Painters?—Yes.

4229. How long have you been Secretary?—Since the institution of our Society in 1898.

4230. Your Society represents over 4000 workmen in various towns in Scotland?—Yes.

4231. Where are your headquarters?—Glasgow.

4232. Do you take the same view in regard to the question of yearly lets as other members of the building trades do?—Yes, generally speaking.

4233. And for the same reasons?—Pretty much.

4234. Does the matter affect you in any way differently?—It affects us very much more than other trades.

4235. Why?—Because we are put into a season's rush for a few months in the year, in every town in Scotland, with the exception of one or two coast towns and visitors' towns, where there would be busy times quite apart from the question of lets at all; but that is only with reference to such places as Rothesay and Troon, and some of those other small places where they depend very largely on the visiting season. In these cases there always is a decided

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rush from February up to the end of May, quite apart from the house-letting season.

4236. Why does it affect your trade more than others?—Because there is always more painting work done. When a tenant goes into a house there is always more done in the way of painting and papering than in the way of joinering and plastering.

4237. So it affects it much more in a new building?—Also, because we are last on the ground, and the consequence is that the tenants are often on the top of us before we get right into the building.

4238. But have you not a lot to do in the holidays with the people cleaning and so on?—Not except in very large houses.

4239. From the trade point of view, your difficulty is just that it tends to perpetuate the season trade?—Yes.

4240. How long do you put it as lasting?—Well, in Glasgow, the season begins in March, sometimes April. I have seen it the April holiday before anything was done, and before Glasgow Fair everything was wound up.

4241. When is Glasgow Fair?—In the middle of July, but the rush is sometimes over by the end of June. It all depends on what kind of season it is. It generally applies to all towns in Scotland that the Fair holidays in July or August end the season.

4242. Is your trade specially affected, like some others, more in the Clyde district than in other parts of Scotland?—No, it is affected pretty well all over Scotland, in the burghs.

4243. In Glasgow, do you find that men come from the country districts, and during the winter seasons that great numbers of them are idle?—A very large number.

4244. What percentage?—I don't think we have 20 per cent. working at the present time. Some of the towns are even worse, and some are better. In the smaller towns work gets a steadier flow; the larger cities are the worst sinners.

4245. Do you know a shop which has sixty men in the summer which has not six employed in the winter, and at the present time, in one of the largest establishments, are there only some fifty men employed, mostly at country work?—Mostly at mansion houses in the country. A fortnight ago there were only two men in that shop employed in the city. The bulk of these men employed in the country are young men, and that is one point. When the season begins there is a big rush; we get men from the country, but quite apart from that—many of the young men want experience and come into the towns, and we find that they are sent out to the country jobs with one or two of the staff to look after them. There is a big job just now, and there are only two of the staff on the job, and twenty over and above. In consequence, the older men, the citizens and ratepayers, are going about idle.

4246. Has that any connection with the weather?—No, want of work in winter seasons.

4247. You think these other conditions are conditions that would be affected by the change to short lets?—Yes, if there were quarterly lets, it would do away with one big removal term, and there might be more flittings every quarter. In one or two of our small towns there is a November term as well as a May term, and the November term always brings in a few jobs.

4248. You have a statement here, coinciding with others, that the rush is responsible for scamping of work, and that, from a sanitary point of view, this is baneful. What do you mean by that?—In connection with the smaller working men's houses in Glasgow, there are a lot of flittings. You go into a house of that kind at the May term. There is no time to clean up. It does not matter how filthy the house is, they put on the paint on the top of the filth. You paper a room, no matter what it is like. I have seen cornices and walls infested with vermin. You have no time to clean them out, and as a matter of fact, the men don't want to clean them out, and want out of the place as soon as they can get. Bugs may be running over the walls, but you stick the new paper over them as you have not even time to make a job. With a new tenant in the house and the furniture lying in the middle of the floor, you cannot get at the work properly, and a good deal of really necessary work is not done.

4249. We all know that putting on one paper on the top of another is a very bad thing from a sanitary point of view. That is not the same with paint?—Well, you are covering up the filth instead of scraping or washing off the old dirt. It used to be that we washed off the old dirt. Now we just paint it over.

4250. Is new tenement work rushed for the term?—It is:—and generally for the May term. The job has to be completed, and it is often the last minute when we get at it. In conseequence I have seen cases of work being done with one and two coats which should have received three. The builder is sometimes late in making a start, and may be kept back by the weather, but he wants it finished for the term. There was one case recently in which the work was kept back but was occupied at the May term, and now they are tearing out all the joisting for damp rot, and one of the tenants has died, for which I am inclined to blame the condition of the house.

4251. Of course, under any system, a certain number of these cases would always remain, but you think the difficulties would be greatly alleviated and lessened with a system of short lets?—Yes.

4252. And what you have referred to in the way of over-pressure resulting in inferior work; of course, even in the case of those, they are doing their very best, and giving the best work?—Yes, it is unavoidable under this system. Say you go into a room littered with furniture, where you can scarcely move, if you take too much time your employer gets at you.

4253. What are a painter's wages?—They vary from 7d. and 7½d. to 9d. per hour in Glasgow.

4254. How many hours?—Fifty-one in Glasgow. Those who are fortunate make 38s. 3d. a week in the summer season, 29s. on the average over the year, but these are men who are never idle; but often wages fall as low as £1 a week on an average.

4255. To what extent do wages vary in other parts of Scotland?—6½d. per hour is our lowest. They go from 7d. to 9d. in most towns.

4256. In regard to the rents your men pay in large towns, you have seen the list of towns for a smaller maximum. Are the rents in these towns less, for instance in Aberdeen and Dundee?—Oh yes, they are lower than in Glasgow.

4257. Are they substantially lower?—I should say so. Edinburgh, I think, is the nearest to Glasgow.

4258. But the other towns mentioned are lower? Do you include Partick and Govan as distinguished from Glasgow?—Yes.

4259. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) Have these irregularities of employment been increasing lately?—Things have been getting worse for a number of years back. The change has been gradual. The season has been getting shorter for the last six or seven years.

4260. Do painters make expeditions to America the same as the joiners?—No, generally our men go for good. They may come back by and by, but they have not gone merely for a trip. They move about from time to time in England and Ireland in search of work.

4261. (*Mr Howden.*) Have you made any representations to the local authorities in connection with stripping off papers from walls?—Yes, both in Glasgow and in all the branches they had that matter before them, and resolutions were passed and authorities approached.

4262. Have they not received you favourably?—No, they don't seem to think it worth while.

4263. Do you think it is dangerous to have so many different trades working together in a building?—Yes, under present conditions it is very dangerous for all to be working on top of each other.

[ADJOURNED.]

FIFTH DAY.

THURSDAY, 3RD JANUARY 1907.

At the Municipal Buildings, Glasgow.

Present:

SHERIFF CHARLES J. GUTHRIE, K.C., *Chairman.*

MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR EDWARD COX.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr J. W. Bennett.

3 Jan. 1907.

MR JOHN WALLACE BENNETT, called and examined.

Mr J. W. Bennett.

3 Jan. 1907.

4264. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the Town Council of Greenock, and have been so since 1900?—That is so.

4265. You are one of the representatives of the third ward, which is a working class constituency?—Yes.

4266. You were Dean of Guild for the three years ending November 1906, and are now a magistrate?—That is so.

4267. What is your own business?—My business is that of an outfitter in Greenock.

4268. Was your seat contested, and did you stand for re-election to the Town Council in 1906?—Yes.

4269. And during that contest was the question of the missive system specially brought up?—That is so.

4270. And I think what is called the reform in the missive system was a special feature of your candidature?—Yes, that is so.

4271. What is meant by that expression, "reform in the missive system"?—The basis of the question was Mr Cross's Bill, which was before Parliament last year. That was being discussed, and has been discussed by the Council, and an opportunity was afforded at the election for discussing it with the constituents.

4272. Did that question embrace both short lets and the lengthened period between taking and entry, or mainly the latter?—Short lets, and also the disadvantage of the long engagement to tenants.

4273. Which seemed to bulk largest in the view of the constituents?—There were two concurrently. They regarded the long period and the responsibility as a decided objection, and they regarded the shorter lets as a cure, and they very much desired that.

4274. I suppose the lengthened let would be looked upon as aggravated by the period before the beginning of the entry?—That is so.

4275. In regard to Greenock, we were told that it depended on ships and sugar?—There are ship-building and engineering and sugar factories and other industries where they employ the ordinary working classes.

4276. Does that apply to all the wards, or are there wards in Greenock as distinguished from yours, which are not largely working class?—It applies to seven out of eight wards, and also to a part of the eighth. We are practically an industrial community.

4277. When was the question first before the Council?—About two years ago. Early last year there was a conference held in Glasgow, to which two of our members were delegated to appear.

4278. And the result of the conference was——?—I do not know.

4279. What instructions did those members get?—They were just to appear as representing Greenock on the question of the House Letting Bill, and they reported to the Council in favour of Mr Cross's Bill. I produce an excerpt from the Minutes of the Law and Finance Committee of 30th May 1906, showing what took place in the Council when that report was made. This is a copy of that.

4280. We will put that in. It comes to this that you proposed that a petition be sent by the Council in favour of Mr Cross's Bill. That was seconded, and an amendment was moved, "that with a view to obtaining further in-'formation on the subject the matter be remitted to the 'Law and Finance Committee." There were fourteen for your motion and four for the amendment, so that your motion was carried. The result was that the Town Clerk was instructed to prepare the petition and have it sent to Mr Halley Stewart, M.P., for presentation to Parliament, and also to the Secretary for Scotland and the Lord Advocate?—Yes.

4281. The amendment was not a negative to your motion, but asking for a remit to the Law and Finance Committee. In the speaking was there any direct opposition to your proposal?—There was opposition to the proposal.

4282. I mean on the merits?—Yes, there was opposition by the late Bailie Steel, who was afraid of the result of the adoption of this shorter let system. He was speaking very largely as a proprietor of property in Greenock.

4283. Are there a number of your Councillors who are proprietors of house property in Greenock?—There are several.

4284. You are here to-day to give evidence on behalf of the Corporation of Greenock. You are not a proprietor?—I am not.

4285. Give us the figures. The total number of inhabited houses in the burgh of Greenock for the year 1906-07 is 14,681?—That is right.

4286. They are let by four different periods, namely, weekly, fortnightly, quarterly, and monthly?—A portion are.

4287. What you call short lets?—Yes.

4288. The weekly being 102; fortnightly, 31; quarterly, 3; monthly, 4296; the total of the short lets being 4432. This, deducted from the total of 14,681, leaves 10,249, which are let yearly?—That is so.

4289. Are you under the provisions of the General Police Acts?—No, we are not.

4290. You have local acts?—Yes.

4291. In one of your local acts provision is made that the valuation survey books shall show the duration of let of houses, the rent of which is £8 and under?—That is so. The Local Act of 1877, the Greenock Police Act. We administer our affairs under the 1877 Act.

4292. Where the rents are above £8, the return, you say in your precis, need not show how the premises are let, whether yearly or otherwise, and, in point of fact, do they ever show it?—No. And where they let for a year they need not show.

4293. The assessor has shown the figures there as accurately as they can be made?—Yes.

4294. There may be some houses let by the month above £8 which don't appear?—No, rather this, that between £5 and £8 the responsibility for the rates is on the proprietor to the rating authority the same as they are under £5 if the premises are let for less than a year; but to avoid that responsibility in many cases premises are ostensibly let for a year, although the rentals are paid monthly or at shorter periods.

4295. Have you any notion what number of these houses there may be?—I have no further information than what I give.

4296. As to the houses in relation to the rent paid, the figures are—at £5 and under, 1158; above £5 and up to £8, 3992; above £8 and not exceeding £16, 6647; so that you have 11,797 out of the total of 14,681 which are let at £16 and under?—That is so. We have less than 3000 above £16.

4297. Tell us what that leaves for convenience, 2884?—That is right.

4298. So that, if a measure were passed affecting all

houses in Greenock under £16, it would cover the whole, with the exception of 2884?—That is so. I may say that we put this in here because in the Council we discussed the limits as put forward in Mr Cross's Bill as applied to Greenock, £16. Individually, some of us are of opinion that that limit is too low; personally, I am.

4299. What do you think it should be?—I don't think £25 would be an extreme limit.

4300. We had a suggestion from one of the Glasgow witnesses that, at all events, as an experiment to start with, it might be safe to limit the application of the Bill to £10 houses, becauses he pointed out that that would cover about 50 per cent. of the whole householders. Now, you cannot tell me how that would work out in Greenock. Suppose the limit was £8, the number of houses out of the total would be 5150. You would have a little more than one-third?—Yes, about one-third.

4301. The Corporation themselves have 256 houses; how does that come about?—Under their Improvement Scheme they erected houses when clearing out part of the town.

4302. These are rented from £5 to £15?—Yes.

4303. Do the Corporation pay rates in the same way as other proprietors with occupants at and under £8 being 130 in number, so that you have had some experience in that way?—Yes; and our experience is that the application to that Bill is an extension of that principle.

4304. In Greenock in what cases are occupiers' rates paid by owners? In all houses under £5?—Yes.

4305. Then in houses where the let is less than a year?—Where the let is less than a year and the rent is between £5 and £8.

4306. They are paid there again?—Yes.

4307. Are there any special rates, such as the water rate, where the rate is paid by owners, as in the case of some other towns?—There are a few small assessments, roads and bridges, water, and health rate, small assessments such as registration and so on, amounting to very small sums, which are responsible for a considerable loss, because we have to recover these from the occupiers, and the amounts are so small that the expense is not worth it.

4308. (*Mr Binnie.*) Are they collected separately from the others?—We have not the power for collecting them from the proprietor the same as others.

4309. (*Chairman.*) You gave us the house under £5 and then the house between £5 and £8 where the let is less than a year. Are there any other cases?—Well, in those cases where we have the power of collection between £5 and £8 from the proprietor, that power does not apply to all the rates; and the occupier's portion of such assessments as roads, health improvement, and similar assessments, are practically, if we don't get them from the proprietor, irrecoverable from the occupiers.

4310. All the other rates between £5 and £8 you recover from the owner?—Yes.

4311. What do you think, from the rating authorities' point of view, would be the effect of the passing of some measure on the general lines of Mr Cross's Bill, so far as assessments go?—Well, there is one thing we would like to make clear, that, if facilities are given for shorter lets, the responsibility must go with that to protect the rating authority. That is one thing we feel should be insisted upon, and, if any part of the Bill is adopted, the assessments clauses must be carried with it.

4312. Have you considered the two ways of managing the rates if there are shorter lets, either compounding or more frequent collections by the rating authorities?—We have considered that, and we considered the compounding of rates as the most satisfactory method.

4313. Is that on the ground of principle, or because the difficulties of more frequent collection by the rating authorities are insuperable?—There is a difficulty with the more frequent collections certainly; but we consider that the proprietor is more closely in touch with his tenant, and that to collect the rates with his rent is practically no extra trouble to him, and we consider it would be a great benefit to the rating authority, because it would reduce the number from whom our rates would be collected, and would naturally increase our security and benefit the ratepayers largely.

4314. Your view is from a practical point of view. What I mean is, I suppose, theoretically everybody should pay his rates direct to the authority, and then would know exactly what he was paying?—Well, we believe it would be a good thing for the tenants to know what they were paying as rates.

4315. And it would be a good thing if they would just pay their rates to the people who are to apply the rates, in theory?—I am not so sure about that. I think the tenants, at all events, have a desire to pay in one sum with the rent.

4316. To whom?—To the proprietor.

4317. You don't mean in one annual sum?—No, in frequent payments.

4318. But as far as the tenant is concerned, if he gets frequent payments, would it matter to him whether these frequent payments were made to the rating authorities or to the proprietor?—No.

4319. But I suppose practically, if the frequency of the payments was to be anything like monthly, it would be quite impracticable that they could be made to the rating authority?—We believe so.

4320. We have had a suggestion that the rating authority might possibly collect four times, but nobody has suggested once a month?—When we consider that the valuation books are supposed to be ready at the end of June, so that we can get the valuation made up to the end of September, it shows the work that has to be done in the offices of the Corporation; and my own opinion, and the opinion generally held amongst our people, is that it would not be a proper thing to have more frequent payments made to the rating authority than at present, but we do think that to collect from the proprietors where they have the premises let for short periods would be an advantage.

4321. You concur in the evidence that has been given by the other rating authorities on that question?—That is so.

4322. And even if in theory it were better that the rating authorities should receive the rates direct, you think even on that assumption it is not practicable?—That is my opinion.

4323. Is it your view that, so far as the tenants are concerned, it is an undoubted benefit to the working class to make frequent payments, whether it be rent or rates?—Clearly.

4324. And you concur in the evidence that has been given?—I do, certainly. I think it is a very difficult matter for a working man to save up large sums. That has in many cases been so, and it has been made more so since the application of payment of wages weekly.

4325. Is that a recent change?—Quite recent with us.

4326. What is that?—The payment of wages weekly has been insisted on by the Workmen's Unions throughout this district, and I think it will add to the difficulty of gathering large sums which may be necessary for rates and rents.

4327. Has it been a question between unions and masters?—Yes, previous to the last strike. A month or so before that there was payment of wages weekly on the Clyde as a question between masters and men.

4328. It did not lead to a strike?—No, it was arranged.

4329. It has been generally arranged with the men?—Yes.

4330. In place of what?—Fortnightly.

4331. To return to the landlords' and factors' view, they very naturally think that, if your proposal were carried out, they would have to pay a great deal in share of rates, that they would have to pay 100 per cent., which they would never recover from their tenants?—I say that they would be quite entitled to a fair commission for the collection of rates, and the Bill provides for something of the kind. The amount is a matter for arrangement between themselves. I have no knowledge of what they would lose, but it seems to me that with the more frequent payment of rents the rates would be quite as easily recovered as rents.

4332. Would it have an effect on the choice of tenants?—I think they would be very careful in their choice.

4333. In the cases you mentioned, the houses under £5, is there any allowance to the landlords there?—Yes, and also between £5 and £8.

4334. The allowance under £5 in Greenock is 25 per cent., what is it between £5 and £8?—20 per cent.

4335. Under which section?—51.

4336. Of the 1877 Act?—Yes.

These commissions I consider are altogether too large.

4337. Do you happen to know whether these have been written in from the previous Act, or whether they originated in the 1877 Act?—I am not aware of that, but this has been a provision since 1877.

4338. Has there been any agitation about it?—No.

4339. Why do you say they are too high?—I just think that one-fourth is too much for the collection of rates from their own tenants.

4340. But does it not cover three things—the trouble, the cases of loss from people failing to pay, and, third, the cause of partial and total unlets?—Only for three months. If the premises are unlet for three months they have a claim for abatement of rates.

4341. Apart from 25 per cent?—Yes. On these grounds I consider this altogether out of proportion to the responsibility they take.

4342. But you have not experience to say what could be done?—No, I only notice that it is very greatly in excess of what is proposed in this Bill.

4343. You know that where the parish rates are paid by owners they get no allowance?—I was not aware of that.

4344. Assume that that is so?—I suppose the landlord

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won't lose in the end; it will just be added on to the rent?—The tenants pay all taxes.

4345. Have you considered the question which has been suggested, whether, if you are to have compounding, there should be any allowance at all, or whether the landlord should not just be allowed to adjust that in the matter of rent with the tenant?—I have not considered that closely. The only thing is that it would be an unfortunate thing for the tenants not to know what was being spent by the Corporation or the rating authority on their behalf. If they did not feel that they were paying those in addition to the rent, they would be inclined perhaps to be too extravagant in their demands.

4346. But how does the giving of an allowance to the landlord affect that question?—It depends on the allowance altogether. We, at the present time, make a considerable loss on our assessments, and I am inclined to believe that, even paying landlords for their responsibility, it would be a profit to us as a rating authority.

4347. What is the loss at present?—The loss at present is £1480 plus £788, that is, the loss of the other assessments I have referred to, namely, roads, health improvement, and land valuation; the occupier's portion of which can only be recovered from occupiers is 9·77 per cent., or £788, which altogether is £2268, or equal to 1½d. on our rates.

4348. In that calculation you have just mentioned you have illustrated the difference between the case where you can only recover from the occupiers and the case where you recover from the owners?—That is so.

4349. In the case where you recover from owners, they having their relief from the occupiers, the loss is only 3·66 per cent.?—Yes.

4350. Whereas in the case where you recover direct from the occupiers it is as much as 9·77?—Yes, that is on all these small assessments.

4351. You think that is a fair illustration of the amount to be expected if you recover the whole from the owners?—I would anticipate that we would do so at a saving of at least 1d. in the £ to the ratepayers over the town.

4352. (*Mr Esslemont.*) This 3·66 does not cover the amount of assessment collected from owners; it is the whole assessment?—The whole assessment.

4353. (*Mr Binnie.*) Practically, you lose nothing that the landlords pay?—We lose nothing where the landlords are responsible, that is so.

4354. (*Chairman.*) You simply, then, make your allowance?—Yes.

4355. Is the view you have expressed in favour of direct assessment on the proprietors in the case of all houses under £16 the view of your Council?—Yes.

4356. And the view also that it should be in all these cases arranged by means of an allowance whatever the rate may be?—Yes.

4357. Is it your view that however it may be done, whether by direct notice to the tenants or otherwise, the tenants ought to know what they are being charged in the way of rates?—That is my opinion. I think they ought to be made aware of what they are paying in taxes.

4358. Have you considered how they best could be done if the owners paid direct?—It could be done by the same methods as at present.

4359. And by the occupiers continuing to get notice?—Of what they are entitled to pay.

4360. We were told by one factor, or are to be told, that his method was, in the case of several houses, that he collected the tenants' notices of rates, they getting the notices, and then he paid them in one sum?—Yes.

4361. Do you see why the notices should not continue to be sent to the tenants?—I see no reason why the same machinery should not be continued.

4362. That would satisfy that view?—It would.

4363. Last year the number of rentals under £5 was 1125, and the rental assessed amounted to £5413. Then the rentals of £5 up to £8 was 3116, with a total rental of £18,858, or total assessable rental being £346,348. What amount of assessment was paid by people under £8? Just add those together. What rates did the people under £8 pay out of the total rates?—We are dealing with the assessable rental.

4364. What is the total assessable rental of people under £8?—£24,271.

4365. Out of a total of £346,348?—That is so.

(*Chairman to Mr Binnie.*) What percentage is that, Mr Binnie?

(*Mr Binnie.*) Seven per cent.

4366. (*Chairman to Mr Bennett.*) So that the interest in the rating question of the people in houses under £8 is about seven per cent. in relation to the whole?—Yes.

4367. You have told us the total number of houses already, 14,681. It is slightly different, because we are dealing with the calculation that goes on the Valuation Roll.

Vacant, there are, ...	333
And occupied, ...	14,576
Giving altogether, ...	14,909

4368. Just now your vacant houses are not abnormal?—No; small houses are practically not unlet at all in Greenock.

4369. What do you call small houses?—Two and three apartment houses, which are somewhat difficult to get in proper localities at the present time.

4370. Of these, 1125 were assessable for police assessment and other assessments, following its incidence, either:—(First), as at £5 or under, irrespective of how let; and (second), 3116 were assessable of £5 up to £8, inclusive of both rentals, because let for less than a year.

4371. Do you mean that you add together the 1125 as at £5 and under to the 3116, making altogether 4241?—Yes, that is the same figure as you had before.

4372. You know the question has arisen of the effect of this bill of enfranchising a certain number of people, both for municipal and parliamentary franchise, who at present are disfranchised?—Yes.

4373. Tell us about that in Greenock. In 1905–06 the number disfranchised under the Town Council Act of 1900, on account of not having paid all burgh rates, was 6945. The number of qualified municipal voters for the same year was 8528?—That is right. Taking off the starred and adding the female voters, the total strength of the burgh of that year was 8528.

4374. And nearly 7000 in addition might have had a vote but were disfranchised?—Disqualified for various reasons. Some of them were starred in the Parliamentary Roll. There is a number who, if they don't pay their poor rates, are not put on the roll at all. If they pay their poor rates, and not their burgh rates, they are disqualified for municipal purposes. The number of Parliamentary voters for 1906–07 on the roll was 7886. Of these there were disqualified for non-payment of burgh rates, 694; leaving on the Parliamentary Roll, voting for municipal purposes, 7192; the number residing seven miles beyond the burgh was 121. The number of females in the burgh was 1557, and of these there were disqualified 342, leaving 1215, making up 8528 as the total on the Municipal Roll.

4375. It is suggested that if all rates were paid by proprietors, and if proprietors don't recover the rates from the tenants, you have a number of tenants exercising a vote which they have no right to, because they won't have paid the rates in respect of which they are supposed to vote?—These are contingencies which I cannot understand, because I understand that the principle sought to be applied in Scotland is what already exists in England, and, personally, I cannot see any reason why the Scotch occupier should not have the same privilege of voting as they have in England; and some of our people who have had experience of living in England cannot understand all the trouble that is being made about this. We quite realise that if the occupiers in Greenock, who are occupiers and entitled to vote, were qualified, we would automatically increase our voting strength by at least 5000.

4376. You realise that?—Yes.

4377. You don't see why it should not?—No.

4378. You admit the case might occur that I suggest that a person would be voting although he himself had not paid in any shape his rates, because, while the landlord had paid them for him, he had not chosen to pay them to the landlord?—I could see such a contingency arising; but, if the rates were paid, the occupier is entitled to vote, I understand, according to the English system.

4379. By anybody?—Yes. The same argument might hold good if any political party were to make sure, on an election coming on, that the poor rates of their particular friends were paid before the time limit ran out.

4380. And you think the same principle would apply to the Parliamentary franchise as you have enunciated in the Municipal?—I think so.

4381. What is good for the one is good for the other?—I think so. I expect they would have the residence qualification as at present.

4382. On a general question of the present drawbacks as to having only one term of removal and the consequent overpressure of one period of the year and want of employment at others, the drawbacks to the general building trades, the high rates that have to be paid in connection with removals, the difficulty of cleaning houses, on all that general kind of evidence I understand you and the Greenock Corporation are of opinion that these were well founded complaints?—Quite a strong grievance.

4383. Do you see any other way in which that grievance can be effectively removed than by some such method as indicated in Mr Cross's Bill?—I think that is the proper

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method, to abolish the 28th of May and have the 28th of any month as the term of occupancy.

4384. Then it comes to this, that you practically go in for a monthly let?—In principle, yes. If they choose to have their rents quarterly, then, of course, according to the terms of the Bill, it is a quarterly let.

4385. Do you realise that the effect of the Bill would necessarily be to kill yearly lets, because there are no rents paid yearly under £20?—Yes, I realise that.

4386. And substantially would kill half-yearly lets, because there seem to be very few cases?—Yes.

4387. So that it would reduce the lets to quarterly and under.

4388. If that be so, wouldn't it be more straightforward for the Bill to say so rather than to approximate the period of let to the period of payment—to say that there shall be no lets longer than a quarter?—Does it make any difference if they do put it that way; if they determine the period for payment of rent to be the period of occupancy or let.

4389. Does it make any difference in the appearance of freedom of contract?—Yes. Of course, the object of the Bill is to abolish the missive system. It does not hide that, and it determines starting from the point, that if a proprietor is going to let his premises to a tenant, and wanting the rent paid quarterly or half-yearly, then that is the duration of let.

4390. Do you yourself have any knowledge or any reason to suppose that, assuming the short let system works well in England, it would not work well in Scotland?—I have no reason to think so.

4391. You don't know any question of difference in conditions in employment?—I don't, especially in industrial communities.

4391*a*. Or the question of how there is a difference between England and Scotland, because in England they have no short-let Bill?—I have no knowledge of that.

4392. You are £16 under Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

4393. Do you see any reason for that?—No, I think it is too low.

4394. Do you see any reason for differentiating between you and Glasgow?—No, our rents are quite as high as they are in Glasgow, especially the modern houses.

4395. Whatever rules the one should rule the other?—Yes, if you are going to legislate for the benefit of working men, you are legislating for them as a class; and when their families become wage-earners, and are grown to manhood and womanhood, they want more accommodation, and naturally seek more extensive houses, and my impression is that £25 would not be an extreme limit.

4396. It has been put to us that the ordinary working man, as distinguished from the foreman, without a wage-earning family, is substantially in houses of under £20, but that the ordinary working man who has a wage-earning family may quite well be in a house up to £25 or £30. Do you see any reason why, because he has a wage-earning family, he should not have the same benefits as one who has no wage-earning family?—No; naturally we discussed the limits under the scope of this Bill, but as individuals we thought the limit was too low.

4397. What do you say to Mr Henry's views, already referred to, that Parliament, having already up to £10, sanctioned the principle in the water rate of owners paying the rates, but not having gone beyond that, it might be a fair experiment, as a start at all events, to limit the application to £10 and see how it worked?—Personally, it might be a very good experiment to make, but I don't think it should be limited to £10. If you are going to face the question at all, you should face the question as to workmen occuping dwellings suitable to their requirements. You should rather make it £25, and see how that worked, and it might be raised to something higher afterwards.

4398. It has been put to us that there are workmen who value the long let because of the security of tenure which it involves. What is your view, whether that security of tenure is really needed in the case of respectable working men?—I don't think so. I don't think anyone has anything to fear, or will suffer any inconvenience, if he discharges the obligations he takes upon himself and lives respectably, he will have his house as long as he wishes to have it. The proprietors don't wish frequent removals, I am sure, and this is with the object of giving workmen the privilege of moving when necessity arises.

4399. You think that a tenant can fairly trust to a state of matters continuing which it is in the landlord's interest should continue?—I think so.

4400. What do you say to the other objection that tenants who are yearly have had to step down socially to be classed as short let tenants?—I think it is altogether sentiment.

4401. It exists, however?—Yes.

4402. But would that exist if short lets became universal?—I don't think so.

4403. It is the present contrast?—They might feel the change, but I think it is entirely sentimental.

4404. You have a word to say on the very important question about the optional clause. I see you are against that?—I think that is its weakness.

4405. Why?—Because if it is made optional in its application, the Bill will not provide the remedy it seeks to provide, unless it is adopted pretty generally in the industrial centres. Particularly it will not give the benefit to the working classes which it means to give them, freedom of contract, and, unless it was made general, some curious results regarding the franchise might follow.

4406. As for instance?—Supposing, for example, it was objected in Glasgow and not in Greenock, or in Greenock and not in Glasgow, it automatically increases our voting strength by about 5000, and, if it was not adopted in Glasgow, the parties would have to conform to the present method.

4407. Supposing you limited it to industrial burghs. There seems a good deal to say in favour of a small residential burgh like Rothesay, or these places where the people take houses for the whole summer. Would there not be a great difficulty there?—I know there have been arguments used in that way, but I do not see the difficulty, because Glasgow people who have houses in Rothesay are not going to take them for two or three months and store their furniture; for the rest of the year besides, you have coast towns in England, such as Blackpool, where the same rule applies as over the whole of England.

4408. And where, so far as you know, the difficulty is not felt?—It is not felt.

4409. That probably is a true answer, if there is an answer to the argument that in England the same difficulty applies and is not felt?—I don't think it is felt to be a difficulty. There may be a fear on the part of parties of the Clyde watering place, that it is going to interfere with their rents—I regard it only as a fear.

4410. Say I want a certain house, I am not going to turn out at the end of six months if I take a house at Rothesay?—But if you took the house at Rothesay in the usual way, and you were in the position that you wanted to keep it, you would take it not for six months, but take it with the intention of remaining there right through the year, and the proprietors would get to realise who their friends were, as at present, and they would shut up the house during winter. Do you mean to say that you were going to take a house for the summer time only, with a lot of furnishing to be done? It is a most unusual experience. They would naturally want a much higher rent for the summer months, if that was the effect the Bill was going to have on them.

4411. You think that, just as in the case of the working men, the interest of the landlord would not be to disturb such tenancies, even although he had the right of terminating them?—That is so, and, of course, I could realise the greater benefit to any burghs and towns where workmen are employed in large numbers. In the other it is quite a small matter, but I do not see the difficulty that has been put forward.

4412. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Under this Local Act of 1877, you say in your precis that the Council has power to assess landlords of houses let at and under £5 direct, and has also power to access the landlords in place of the tenants where the rental is £5 to £8 inclusive?—That is so.

4413. Do you impose all assessments on the landlords in cases of the rents from £5 to £8?—We do; but, as I have indicated, that does not apply to the power of recovery by landlords of occupier's rates.

4414. I know you qualify it; but you go on to say, "and the premises are let for less than a year?"—Yes, that is a condition.

4415. You said that you thought 25 per cent. was too great an allowance?—That is my opinion.

4416. Too large a discount to give to landlords for the expense and risk of collection?—Yes.

4417. You have not submitted any detail showing the amount outstanding as, say, any excess of rents up to £10, £15, and £20?—I have not.

4418. We had evidence from Glasgow to the effect that the shrinkage was more than 25 per cent. on small houses under £10?—Of course, we have no table to show under £5 or under £8 where the landlord has accepted the responsibility, because they, and they alone, can give us that information. We lose nothing.

4419. No; but if you knew exactly the amount of loss incurred by the Corporation in the cases of houses let at £10 or £8 and under, or whatever it is over the whole burgh, you will be better able to judge whether 25 per cent. was a reasonable allowance or not?—But we are not in the position to realise any of the loss made, because the proprietors are responsible up to £8, where the premises are let for less than a year, and we regard this proposal for reform just as an extension of that same principle to a larger amount.

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4420. I follow that?—You see, the proprietors will see what they lose; I don't. We get all the money for premises let for less than a year.

4421. (*Mr Binnie.*) You have, as a Corporation, 256 houses of your own. How do you let these?—I have not got the numbers as to how they are let, but they are mostly let monthly.

4422. You don't know how many?—Well, there are 130 mentioned here on which we pay the rates. Those 130 are let under £8 and for periods of less than a year.

4423. But above that?—There is a difference between the 130 and the total number.

4424. How are they let?—They will be let for a year.

4425. Why, when you were so anxious for short lets?—We just follow the principle of other proprietors in towns.

4426. But you were showing the lead in this case and should show an example, I think?—We wish to support a measure that proposes a reform.

4427. You can do that yourself without the Bill?—It has never yet been proposed.

4428. But if it had been a very pressing question—I am just wishing to know how pressing the question has been—why you, as a Corporation, have not introduced the letting of these houses for short periods, when you could have done so any day?—We have not gone out of our way to make any alteration on the existing principle of letting of houses.

4429. Although you had power to do so?—Yes, but we have done it under £8.

4430. (*Chairman.*) Have you selected tenants in any way like Glasgow Corporation?—Our factor just exercises the greatest possible discretion.

4431. You have no caretakers?—No.

4432. (*Mr Howden.*) What is the difference between the valuation of a house, say in 1886 and 1896? Probably your memory does not take you so far back, but so far back as you can go, what is the difference?—I do not quite understand you; what do you mean by valuation?

4433. A house is rented at the present time at £10. As far back as you can go, what do you think it would be rented for?—I could not say. I consider there has been a considerable appreciation in the rental of houses within the last twenty or thirty years, but as to what proportion I am not prepared to say.

4434. How much freedom of contract do tenants at the present time enjoy in Scotland in taking their houses?—Do you mean under the missive system?

4435. Yes?—It is very limited. They are compelled to sigh or run the risk of losing their houses. It is considered a very great hardship on the tenants.

4436. You say in your precis that the whole town required a remedy proposed in the Bill, with the exception of a small portion of the 8th ward?—I pointed out that there are only some 2000 odd houses over the £16 rental in Greenock, and that is the meaning of that phrase.

4437. You have told us that you were in favour of abolition of 28th May as Removal Term. Do you apply that all over—business premises also included?—I am quite prepared to do that.

4438. What is the rent at present usually charged for a three apartment house in Greenock?—It very much depends on the locality. Two room and kitchen houses in some localities are considerably under £20 and others over £20.

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4439. (*Chairman.*) From what Mr Howden asks, if £5 was the rate fixed that the owners were to pay in 1877, and if that principle were sound, probably it would be nearer £7 now?—I see; I did not understand the drift of his remark, but I understand there has be an appreciation in the value of house property in that time, and I have not been able to discover the history of the making of owners responsible for the small amounts.

4440. (*Mr Binnie.*) There is a double risk for the tenants in rent in Greenock as in other places, newer houses are much better class, larger apartments, higher ceilings, and different sanitary arrangements?—Undoubtedly you have insisted upon legislation in many directions that has increased the cost of property, and the feu duties are also higher and streets are wider, a great many restrictions have gone to increase the cost.

4441. The houses are better?—Yes.

4442. If that were a two room and kitchen house, let at £20 now, is it not quite a different house from the two room and kitchen house let at, say, £15, twenty years ago? That is so.

4443. (*Mr Howden.*) But is it not the same class of tenant that occupies the one as the other?—That is so.

4444. (*Mr Dobbie.*) With reference to the houses belonging to the Corporation of Greenock, they are let yearly?—Over £8.

4445. Is that in consequence of the fact that there is no universal system of short letting in the burgh?—That is so. We follow the custom of house letting.

4446. If you or any proprietor did go in for short lets in the absence of a larger custom, your tenants would be unable between terms to get the necessary accommodation?—If shorter lets were gone in for, we would adopt it.

4447. But pending a general change, your tenants would be inconvenienced if you did go in for short lets?—Surely, because they would have no facilities for removing.

4448. (*Mr Binnie.*) They could continue to sit in their present house till they got another to suit them; that would not be inconvenience?—If they wished to remove, they would be, because, if you adopt this Bill for example in one town, and not in another, the fact of your having adopted the Bill in Greenock, giving the operatives the privilege of shorter lets there, is not going to benefit them, unless they can get the benefits in the town they are going to remove to.

4449. How? Are they to be put into a worse position than they are? That is the meaning of inconvenience?—What I understand is that the inconvenience would be being compelled to remain where they are, because of not being able to procure accommodation where they were going.

4450. That might be?—That is what I mean.

4451. (*Mr Esslemont.*) They would have all the other benefits of paying their rent in instalments?—That is so.

4452. Along with their rates?—Yes. I consider that would be a great benefit to them, although it might be considered by them a hardship to begin with.

Mr J. W. Hodgson.

Mr J. W. Hodgson, called and examined.

Mr J. W Hodgson

4453. (*Chairman.*) You appear representing the Independent Labour Party, Kingston Branch?—Yes.

4454. You yourself live in Glasgow?—Yes.

4455. When did Kingston Branch originate?—About 20 months ago.

4456. Are your members all skilled workmen?—Not all.

4457. Both skilled and unskilled?—Yes.

4458. You have about 80 members altogether?—Yes.

4459. And you considered the matter, and it was your unanimous opinion that there should be a change in the present house letting system. What do you consider that change would amount to?—It would abolish the missive system entirely and assimilate the Scotch system to the English system.

4460. Have you yourself an experience of the English system?—Yes, all my life.

4461. To what extent are your members Englishmen? How many Englishmen have you among your ranks?—Two.

4462. It has been suggested that the movement in favour of a change has been originated by Englishmen rather than Scotch. What do you say to that?—Probably.

4463. Have you found that, in addition to English working men in Scotland, there have been Scotch working men who have gone to England and have returned to Scotland, and known the two systems?—Yes, I have found them; and if you took a plebiscite of the men who have lived across the Border and come back, you would find them entirely in favour of the English system.

4464. You know a number of such men?—Yes.

4465. You say that they have had a chance of trying both systems. They are all in favour of the English system?—Yes.

4466. Does that apply both to the question of short lets and to the paying of rates along with the rents?—Yes.

4467. Do you not find some men, who, while they approved of the short lets, would rather pay their rates direct?—No, I have not found them.

4468. Have you ever heard of complaints that in England the landlords are apt to put too much on to the rents to cover the rates?—I have heard murmurs in that direction; but, at the same time, the tenants, by reading the returns of the Council, know what rate has been assessed.

4469. They know the rate per £, and can calculate it for themselves?—Yes.

4470. But in England we are told they don't get a note showing what their rates will be?—No, they don't get the note.

4471. Do you think it would be an advantage if they did get a note and see exactly what they were paying?—Yes, I fancy it would be an advantage in that way.

4472. We are told that while there are working men in favour of this change, like members of your Independent Labour Party, there are a very large number who want no change?—No.

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4473. Have you come in contact with working men outside of your own branch?—Yes. I am in works containing 800 hands, men in every department, and I have talked to several of them, and the opinion is always the same.

4474. What are you yourself?—I am clerk in the works.

4475. Have you any reason to believe that their opinion is different from any other working men in similar works?—No, I fancy it is the general opinion.

4476. In regard to the rate at present, the rate is paid once a year and rents are paid frequently?—Yes.

4477. Is it your experience that there is a practical difficulty with working men having to pay the whole rate at once?—I find the difficulty myself, and I am a little over the average.

4478. Is it the difficulty of laying by periodically?—Of laying by, and having such a large sum to pay at one time. If they were paid with the rents they would pay the rates more readily, and would not feel it to the same extent.

4479. And the more frequently the better?—Yes.

4480. It would not matter to the working man if he had frequent payment of rates by experiments whether it was to the landlord or to the rating authority?—No, but I find the fewer persons you can get working men to pay to the better it is. Instead of paying to all the different collectors and the landlord, if there were less collectors, it would be better for the working men.

4481. If he made just the one payment?—Yes.

4482. In point of practice, how do the working men pay their rates? They go up to the office, do they?—Yes.

4483. Who does it, the wife generally?—Yes.

4484. May she sometimes have to go a considerable distance?—A 1d. tramfare, say.

4485. If she goes when everybody else is going she may have to wait some time?—Yes.

4486. If everything was paid to the one man in the tenant's own house at frequent intervals, it would be a very substantial benefit?—It would.

4487. What about the amount of rent that the ordinary working man, as distinct from the foreman, pays in your experience. The limit fixed by Mr Cross's Bill is £20; what do you say to that as representing the highest rent of an ordinary working man's house?—I don't think more than £15.

4488. You think £15 is about the ordinary?—Yes.

4489. If a man has wage-earning children, he may be in a higher house?—That is true.

4490. And able to pay?—Yes.

4491 (*Mr Cox.*) You are an Englishman?—Yes.

4492. Where do you come from?—Oldham.

4493. Have you been in many places in England?—Accrington, that is all. I have not lived in many towns; but, of course, when you are working in Lancashire in various towns you can easily get home.

4494. What do you say about the various rents in Scotland as compared with England?—They are higher here.

4495. Much higher?—In England I had a six-roomed house, self-contained. Including the rent, rates, everything but gas, water and poor rate and burgh rate were included. I paid 7s. a week, which I paid weekly. Here I have a two-roomed house, which I pay £21 a year for, and the rates besides.

4496. How do you account for there being higher rents here?—I do not know; I have been making some inquiry about the ground rent, and in a general way I am told the ground rent is much higher, but I believe it is only higher where there are tenement dwellings. In villa property I believe the ground rent outside the city is somewhat similar to that in England.

4497. Are they better built houses here as compared with England. Are they mostly of brick there?—The finished appearance is better; but really I do not think the buildings themselves are any better. Of course, an outside wall of stone looks better than an outside wall of brick, but the inside is somewhat similar. I do not think the plaster work and that sort of thing is any better.

4498. Are they not less draughty and warmer here than in England?—It is colder here, in fact, as I think the closes make them draughtier.

4499. What is your experience as to the rates in England as compared with Scotch rates?—Of course, we are assessed on two-thirds of the rent, not on the full rent, which would be 4s. in the £ instead of 6s. in the £ of two-thirds, and I think the rates in Oldham are somewhat similar to the rates in Glasgow.

4500. That is allowing for an abatement of rent; the rates are about the same?—Yes, the rents here are slightly higher and the difference makes the rates lower, but in the £ they are about the same.

4501. (*Mr Binnie.*) What is the size of the apartments in this six-apartment house? Are they not small?—No, I could put two beds into the bedroom very comfortably.

4502. Can you give us the size of the house over all?—About 75 square yards. That is absolutely absorbed independent of the yard and the front.

4503. What is the thickness of the walls?—Nine inches.

4504. And the height of the ceilings?—9 or 10 feet.

4505. So much as that?—Yes; somewhere about that. I will not say 10; 9 or 10; 9 feet I feel certain.

4506. I think that would be it?—Yes, 10 is rather high.

4507. And brick walls?—Yes.

4508. They are all wooden stairs?—Yes.

4509. Is there no deafening in any of the floors?—No.

4510. (*Mr Cox.*) Is this rent you speak of quite a common one? Can you easily get a six-roomed house for 7s. a week, or is that one you speak of an exception?—No; it was not exceptional. Next to me there were four more at 2d. a week less. 7s. and 7s. 6d. a week down to 3s. 9d. you can get good houses, and you can get them even cheaper in other localities.

4511. (*Chairman.*) How many years have you been here?—Three years.

4512. Some people say that if short lets were introduced in Scotland there would be many more removals during the year. Other people say the total number of removals would not be increased, but they would be spread more over the year. In your experience are there more removals in England under ordinary circumstances, or are they spread over the year?—I should think that there are less removals in the Lancashire towns than in Glasgow.

4513. How do you account for that?—I daresay one thing is that the work is not so changeable in Lancashire; situations in the cotton towns are pretty stationary. If you get out of work in one town you get into another and you have no need to remove.

4514. So you think short lets would be more desirable here than in Lancashire?—Yes.

4515. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Did you pay any sum in name of rates and in name of rent, or just a fixed sum?—It was a fixed sum paid to the landlord, and he paid all the rates with the exception of gas.

4516. Did you know from week to week, or from year to year, how much you were paying for rates?—In my case I did, because the rates came to me, although it was not the usual thing. I handed it to the landlord.

4517. What was the usual practice?—To send it direct to the landlord.

4518. Each rate?—Yes.

4519. How does he allocate the rate?—The houses were let at so much per week, say 5s. 3d. for an ordinary workman's dwelling, and 5s. 10d. for five rooms, three down and two up.

4520. Did that rent vary with the increase or decrease of the local rates?—The increase or decrease did not alter the rent.

4521. They did not affect the sum you paid?—No.

4522. Do you think it is a wise principle that working men should pay a slump sum and have no means of knowing how much they pay to Municipal government, for example?—I think the idea of sending out each rate to each individual person, and the landlord collecting the rates from the tenant and paying them afterwards, would inform the tenant of what portion he was paying.

4523. The difficulty is, on taking a house to expect you to bargain with the landlord at a fixed sum per week?—Yes.

4524. At that time the year's assessments were not positively fixed, and he could not have the actual allowance of rates on each house when he made the bargain?—That is so.

4525. Has the landlord to take the risk of the rates which he estimates either being increased or decreased during the currency of the year of occupancy?—Yes. Besides, he gets 25 per cent. of reduction if paid before a certain time.

4526. But do you think that it would be expedient, if that were possible, to acquaint each ratepayer with the amount he is paying in name of rates as distinguished from the amount of rent proper?—Yes, I think that would be proper.

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4527. (*Chairman.*) You are Provost of the burgh of Hamilton?—I am.

4528. How long have you been so?—For nearly seven years.

4529. What is your own business?—I am a Wholesale Grocer and Wine Merchant.

4530. In Hamilton?—Yes.

4531. Your population is 37,000, and contains many workmen's houses, which will be affected by the proposed Bill?—Yes.

4532. What is the general industry in Hamilton?—Mining.

4533. Anything else?—There is no general industry other than mining.

4534. When was Mr Cross's Bill before your Council?—In June and December of last year.

4535. And, apart from certain specialities, you approve of the general lines of it?—As regards the abolition of the missive system we approve of that, and as regards Clause 4, dealing with short lets, we approve of that; but we disapprove of other points.

4536. By the missive system you mean the taking of a house so long ahead of entry?—Yes.

4537. Now, just take it in regard to Clause 3 The definition of dwellings, and the rate in reference to different towns, what do you suggest about that?—We suggested that there should be no differentiation at all. That whatever the Act is, it ought to deal with general principles under these and be applicable to the whole of the country.

4538. Do you think it should be limited to burghs?—No, I think not on the question of house tenure, because there are now a large number of urban areas under County Councils, and it would be absolutely necessary that any alteration in the system of house-letting should be equally applicable to those urban areas which are outside the burghs. In fact, much more necessary, because there is a continuous interflow of population between the burgh and the outskirts.

4539. If there was any alteration with regard to burghs, is it the view of your Council that there should be no differentiation between burghs?—No.

4540. Now, supposing there was any differentiation, which class do you think Hamilton—which is not named—would come under?—The second class, £16.

4541. In with Aberdeen, Dundee, etc.?—Yes, Govan and so on.

4542. Are rents lower than in Edinburgh or Glasgow?—I think that might be expected.

4543. Under Clause 7, the clause dealing with the exceptions from provisions of the Act, the first sentence runs thus: "This Act shall not apply to any dwelling-'house which is let along with land for agricultural pur-'poses, or with a fruit or vegetable garden, nor to any 'dwelling-house let in connection with a shop, workhouse, 'stable, byre, or the like." Do you suggest any addition there?—Yes. "Nor shall it apply to houses in the occu-'pancy of employees of any owner or leaseholder of house 'property."

4544. Why do you propose that?—In our district there are a large number of properties owned by mine-owners, occupied by their employees, and we consider, in these circumstances, if they are to be dealt with at all, that they should be dealt with by separate legislation.

4545. In the direction of giving security of tenure?—Yes.

4546. Whatever the nominal let may be?—Not necessarily; you would probably have to come under general statute; and what we pointed out was that this Bill would really bring them under a form of tenure which would not be a secure tenure, and that it would make statutory what they at the present time complain of as a grievance, because it is a voluntary tenure.

4547. Of course, there is no provision in the Bill as drafted against contracting out?—No; but I expect they themselves would not like to be put into a position of having to contract out, because they would regard it as a compulsitor to contract out. I fancy you will get evidence from the miners' representatives themselves; and while they, as we, wish short lets, we at the same time wish not to be in a peculiar position, especially during strikes or labour disputes.

4548. You think that is reasonable?—I would not like to express an opinion as to whether they should have security of tenure during a strike; but at the present time, of course, they have not that. Whatever is the law, I am afraid, would have to apply all round.

4549. That is a separate question?—Yes, and that is the reason why—a large and difficult question—houses which are held under that tenure should not be covered by this Bill.

4550. So that, as you say, not to make statutory what at present is a merely voluntary difficulty?—Yes.

4551. In regard to Section 10, which is the optional section, what do you say about that?—We say any Act dealing with house tenure should not be optional.

4552. Why not?—Because it would be entirely against the public interest that there should be one system of house tenure in one burgh and a different system in a neighbouring burgh or in the outskirts of it.

4553. We are familiar with the Burgh Police Act, and, on the other hand, it contains optional clauses?—That is, optional as regards application; but I think, on the whole, that is a wrong principle, if it could be possibly avoided. If it cannot be avoided, it should be minimised.

4554. What do you say to what we were told by Bailie Bennett about such cases as Rothesay?—I don't think the difficulty you suggested there really exists. If you wish to take a house for three months, why shouldn't you? I don't see that that should be altered. You are taking it as a lodging; it is not a question of house tenure, but a question of furnished lodgings.

4555. (*Mr Binnie.*) But people there early in the year take their houses for, say, August?—You are dealing with the missive system.

4556. No; people who intend to go to the coast don't go down just a few days before their holidays and take their houses, but very often they go in April or March even, and take a house for August and September. What security would the person letting them have, that he would be able to give them the house in August or September, that is the difficulty?—It seems to me that no person who has furnished lodgings for August and September, and lets them, is going to let them to any other body.

4557. No; but the landlord could come to that person at any time and put them out?—Yes. Very well, I suggest that there should be security of tenure for six months at least; that instead of having statutory annual lets which are statutory under custom, that is to say, under a system of house-letting, if you take a house in May you are held to it for a year—that that should be limited to six months.

4558. You object to the three months?—I say there should be security of tenure for the occupant for at least six months, and that might meet the case.

4559. (*Chairman.*) To sum up your views under Clause 10, if that clause was retained contrary to your view, you have an observation to make on the passage that says: "Such resolutions shall be reported to the Sheriff of the 'county in which such burgh is situated in the case of the 'city of Glasgow, in the County of Lanark, who shall pro-'nounce a deliverance thereon, declaring such section or 'sections of this Act specified in the resolution to have 'been adopted, and shall cause such resolution and deliver-'ance to be recorded in the Sheriff Court books." That seems to give no option to the Sheriff, but simply record the decision?—Yes, but it compels everyone to go to the Sheriff of the county. We suggest an amendment which would leave it to the Sheriff-Substitute. Take our own district. We have a Sheriff Court in Hamilton. Under this Bill we would require to go to Glasgow and register it with Sheriff Guthrie. Airdrie is in the same position.

4560. Then, lastly, to sum up your views on details, you propose to omit the schedule containing different rates of compounding, and you will explain immediately the views on which you go?—Yes.

4561. In your view, can a measure be passed, such as is proposed by Mr Cross, without affecting certain other statutes?—No, it is not possible. There are a large number of statutes that cluster round the question of house tenure, and these would all have to be amended consequently.

4562. In the first place, I see you point out the question under the Sheriff Courts Act, 1 & 2 Vict. cap. 119?—Yes.

4563. You point out that, with reference to complaints of ejection during disputes between employers and employees?—It is that section which gives the powers so frequently put into operation, and which are the cause of grievance in our district.

4564. You point out that the proposal of Mr Cross does not modify in any way the difficulties that are said to arise?—No, on the contrary that it accentuates these difficulties.

4565. Instead of Mr Cross's proposal for assimilating the period of let to the period of payment, what view do you present of the statutory period of let for urban subjects?—That failing a lease, instead of being yearly, as is usual from May to May, it should be half-yearly from May to November, and from November to May, subject to the provisions of Clause 4 of Mr Cross's Bill, which would require amendment accordingly by the addition of the words—I

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have further considered that, and I would suggest that Clause 4 should read: "The term of let for any dwelling-'house of which the rent is payable more frequently than 'quarterly shall be the term fixed for the periodic payment 'of the rent thereof, whether such terms of payment be 'weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or otherwise."

4566. The result would be to make a maximum let of what?—Six months. That is dealing with dwelling-houses under £20. We are taking £20 as a basis.

4567. In the case of a house under £20, to prevent a let for longer than six months?—Yes, except under special contract. If two parties agree, whether this house is to be taken for twelve months or two years, I don't see we can limit the right of contract, but I am assuming no special contract is being entered into, and therefore the custom of house tenure would come to be a six-monthly custom.

4568. If it were proposed to add to Mr Cross's Bill a clause prohibiting contracting out, would you object to that?—Yes, in so far as it would be a compulsitor on a working man who does not wish to contract out but wishes to get all the benefits of the Bill. We wish to protect the position of the working man householder.

4569. If you protect the position of the working man, would you only give the option to him. Wouldn't you equally be enabling a landlord to secure a yearly lease, the working man wanting a monthly?—If the working man wants a monthly let, I say the law must provide that he shall get it, and under no circumstances has he to be deprived of his right to get a monthly let if he wishes it.

4570. I don't quite follow that. Suppose you don't have in a Bill, such as Mr Cross's, a clause against contracting out, things would just remain as they are. The landlord would say, I only give you this house, provided you take it for a year, and you must contract out of the Bill by an express contract. That would leave things as they are?—Oh, certainly. If that ought to be avoided, and if that could only be done by a clause prohibiting contracting out, such a clause would be necessary.

4571. Do you think working men have a substantial interest to have short lets against yearly lets under £20?—Undoubtedly.

4572. You agree with the general evidence given as to the grievance of the present system?—There are grievances.

4573. Suppose the maximum were six months, do you think this grievance would be substantially modified?—It would be. I propose that security of tenure to the working man should be six months security; but that under the provisions of the Bill, if it is necessary for him to leave, by having the house for a month he will have that option, but the landlord cannot put him out except on three definite grounds:—(1) That he is not paying his rent monthly; (2) that he is damaging the property; (3) that the obligation, whatever it is, that he enters into, is not being observed.

4574. That would give an absolute right to the working man to remove at a month's notice, but only modifies the right of the landlord to put him out?—Yes.

4575. The three conditions being—failure to pay the rent, failure to fulfil the conditions of the let, or abuse of the property?—Yes.

4576. What about the length of the period between the taking of a house and the entry?—That is the missive system. I say that may be got over by materially reducing the period within which it is lawful to exact a missive of let. I suggested, in the case of houses let for six months or more, it should be lawful to exact a missive within forty days of the removal terms. I say removal terms, because I say again, if we make this statutory, they could avoid it by adopting the Candlemas and Lammas terms, so we say removal terms, "whatever they may be."

4577. How early in the year are missives signed?—As early as 2nd February in some cases.

4578. You suggest that section 4 should be modified to read "in all cases in which warning is required." That would be before any term?—Yes, before the term of removal.

4579. From premises let for six months or more such warning shall be given at least forty days before the term of removal?—I find it necessary to modify that. I say at least thirty days before the ish: "And it shall not be 'lawful to contract to let for a period of six months or 'more premises occupied by a tenant or tenants earlier 'than forty days before said term, provided that (as pro-'posed by section 4 of the House-Letting Bill) the term of 'let for any dwelling of which the rent is payable more 'frequently than quarterly shall be held to be the term 'fixed for the periodic payment of the rent thereof, whether 'such term of payment be weekly, monthly, or otherwise."

4580. That would be forty days?—One is the missive and the other the notice of removal. These two must not coincide, because if they did, if the landlord lost his option of ordering a man out, assuming he refused to accept the missive, he might not do so till night, and on the following day it would be too late to warn him out. We suggest that there should be an interval of ten days between the date on which it is lawful to take the missive and the date on which it is lawful to warn out. Consequently, if you would allow me to alter the first forty, "such warning shall 'be given at least thirty days before the ish, and it shall 'not be lawful to contract to let for a let of six months or 'more premises occupied by tenant or tenants earlier than 'forty days before the aforesaid terms, provided that (as 'proposed by section 4 of the House-Letting Bill) the term 'of let for any dwelling-house of which the rent is payable 'more frequently than quarterly, shall be held to be the 'term fixed for the periodic payment of the rent thereof, 'whether such term of payment be weekly, monthly, 'quarterly, or otherwise."

4581. You point out that the clause of the Bill would require to be read with section 345 of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, providing that "owners who shall let for 'rent or hire land or premises for less than a year, shall 'themselves be responsible for these assessments, and the 'same may be recovered from such owners." In Hamilton, how do you proceed under that? You have no local Act?—No; we are under the Burgh Police Act.

4582. How do you proceed under that section?—The assessor in issuing the valuation under Clause 7, I think it is, puts in a column, "Period of Let." That, however, is not statutory, and therefore there is no penalty attached to a false entry, and the factors and landlords have all discovered that; and, as a matter of fact, all they put in is the word "annual."

4583. Just as a matter of form?—Yes. While the let is annual they are collecting the rent monthly, and they are practically evading the Act, and we are getting no benefit.

4584. You think it would be necessary to amend that?—Yes, so as to limit the statutory responsibility of landlords by provision that a person who has paid his rates monthly to a landlord shall not be disqualified in respect of the landlord's failure to pay the rates for which he is liable *quoad* occupancy before the statutory date, and which would involve a change in our practice of collecting the rates annually. We would have to collect them half-yearly if you go in for six months' tenure statutorily.

4585. Would that involve in any way additional staff or expenditure?—I am not sure it would—not very much more. At the present time our Parish Council are practically collecting the parish rates, if the tenants desire it, half-yearly or in three sums, but that is an optional thing. Our Demand Note says so. I have it here. "Ratepayers 'who desire to pay their assessments by instalments may 'do so in two or not more than three instalments."

4586. There is no statutory warrant for that?—No.

4587. It is availed of?—This is the first year it has been tried.

4588. Have other burghs tried it?—I have not heard of them.

4589. What led to that?—The complaint of working men of the large sum they had to pay at once, which was a grievance. We have a large number of working men both on the Parish Council and the Town Council, and they raised the question of getting their Councils to adopt this idea. We cannot say how it is going to work, but I think it is a most desirable thing that assessments should be collected more frequently than once a year.

4590. (*Mr Cox.*) Would twice a year meet the case?—I think twice a year would be a considerable assistance.

4591. (*Mr Howden.*) Was one of the reasons urged not that it was at the worst time of the year that these taxes fell due?—It is a bad time of the year that simply aggravates the grievance. The great grievance is that the parish and town rates have to be paid in one sum.

4592. (*Chairman.*) Who should pay to you and other rate authorities the whole taxes, both occupiers and owners?—As far as possible, each should pay their own; but where the rents are going to be collected more frequently than half-yearly, and where there is a considerable temptation to remove from house to house, and as our rate just now is based on the Assessment Roll which again is based on the Valuation Roll, only made up once a year, there is only one occupier appears as responsible for the rates of a given house. That occupier probably leaves, and this system will aggravate the possibilities of his leaving, and, when the Demand Note is issued, he is not there.

4593. What do you think that all points to?—To making the owner responsible for the rates on smaller houses.

4594. And by smaller houses do you mean those under £20?—Yes, I would fix it at £20.

4595. Whatever the period of let may be?—No; if the period of let is six months, I say the occupier presumably is a permanent resident, and should be called upon twice in the year.

4596. With a let under six months, the owner should pay?—I don't call it a let under six months if the rent is collected more frequently than quarterly.

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4597. If the rent is collected quarterly?—I would still make the occupier liable. I would shift the onus from the owner on to the occupier, and let the local authority take the risk.

4598. If more frequently than quarterly, then the amount of rent up to £20 you say the owner should be liable?—Yes, I am reducing the statutory limit to six months, and applying it to the newer conditions of house tenure we are proposing to introduce.

4599. If that be a sound principle, there are two ways of doing it: either the landlord shall get no allowance and be left to adjust the matter in his total charge on the tenant, or get an allowance, as is done in cases under £4. In your view, which is the right method to follow?—I think the right method is the first one you spoke of, that the matter should be allowed to adjust itself.

4600. That has not been the method followed hitherto in regard to municipal assessments, because, in the case of those whose rents are under £4, there is an allowance, isn't there?—That is so. Ten per cent. Then that is based upon statute. We have to go away back to the Valuation Act of 1854, section 31, and you find there that the house rents of £4 are declared to be assessable to the landlord.

4601. But I think in all the municipal cases where owners pay occupiers rates, they always get an allowance?—No; not except in the case of £4 or £5 rents, as the case may be.

4602. In what cases do owners pay and get no allowance?—Houses let for less than a year.

4603. There is no statutory allowance?—No.

4604. And no allowance is given?—No.

4605. So that you have both principles in operation?—Yes, and I say that we should not extend this principle of exemption. It is an old practice based upon the Valuation Act, "That in all cases where lands or heritages shall be 'separately let at a rent not amounting to £4 per annum, 'and the names of the occupiers thereof shall not have 'been inserted in the Valuation Roll, the proprietor of such 'lands and heritages shall be charged with, and have to pay, 'the whole of the assessments of such lands and heritages 'separately let as aforesaid; but every such proprietor 'charged with and paying such assessments shall have relief 'against the tenants and occupiers of such lands and heritages 'for reimbursement thereof, if and in so far as such assess-'ments may by law be properly chargeable upon such 'tenants or occupiers."

4606. That has been carried out under local Acts such as the Greenock one?—Yes, necessarily. Local Acts must conform to the general practice.

4607. But in your view the question is an open one?—Yes. The statute meanwhile is against the extension of the principle that a house being let for less than a year implies compounding because of the landlord's responsibility for rates.

4608. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You are aware that it has been extended under local Acts?—Yes, only under local Acts, not under a general statute.

4609. (*Chairman.*) You think it would much simplify the whole system if the landlords were left to adjust the matter in the total charge they make?—Yes.

4610. And take away a most difficult question, namely, the exact amount of allowance to be given, whether a fixed one or a differentiating one?—Yes. I have here two rent books dealing with the same house. In the one case the occupier was told that the factor was going to pay the rates. In the other case, the tenant was told that he must pay the rates himself. The book speaks for itself. The one tenant is charged 12s. a month; the other tenant is charged 10s. 5d. a month. 1s. 7d. a month, therefore, is the figure which this factor took in name of rates. The only rate chargeable for the house was 16s. 7d., and the factor took 19s., or at the rate of 19s. He did not get the whole twelve months. He had only some eight months of the one tenant; but when he passes in the other tenant he alters it, and he says: "Will you pay the rate?" then your rent is 10s. 5d. As a matter of fact, this person is a pauper. He knows perfectly well this pauper had no rates to pay, because we relieve all paupers.

4611. What do you deduce from that?—The fact that the factor looks after himself, and that he does not need a bonus of 2½ or 7 or 10 per cent. He would get that in addition to this 15 per cent. which he has taken. He has actually taken 15 per cent. of a profit on the rates, and I say to introduce a system of giving anybody a profit on the rates is a vicious system which we should be rather afraid of instead of making it statutory.

4612. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Why did the factor make a change?—Because this tenant wanted a larger house.

4613. Why did he make a change in the system?—Perhaps he had difficulty in getting a tenant, and made it cheaper.

4614. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Do these books refer to the same house?—Yes, I will show it to you.

4615. (*Chairman.*) It is the same house, not the same tenant?—The same house.

4616. Which was first?—The 12s. rate.

4617. (*Mr Cox.*) You say he only got eight months out of the year?—The one finishes in September and the other begins in November.

4618. He lost two months of it?—There is an apparent interval between.

4619. That would account for his wanting to make a little profit?—Oh yes; but I suggest that, apart from that, they look after themselves, and I think that an equitable consideration has to be shown to the landlord, and I propose consequently a different form of treating the landlord. This is a proposed new clause to meet the case.

4620. (*Chairman.*) You propose this clause: "For 'every three continuous months in any year from Whit-'sunday to Whitsunday during which a dwelling-house 'of the value of £20 or under is unlet and unoccu-'pied, an owner shall be entitled to claim exemption 'to the extent of one-fourth from all or any rates for the 'year chargeable against an owner or an occupier in respect 'of such dwelling-house, provided that, if any claim for such 'exemption be proved to be knowingly erroneous, the owner 'or occupier making the claim shall be liable to a penalty 'not exceeding £20, which shall be payable to the Local 'Authority upon whom the claim for exemption was made, 'and failing payment to imprisonment for a period not 'exceeding two months, and such penalties may be imposed 'by the Sheriff, the magistrates of any burgh, or any one 'of them, or by two Justices of the Peace of any county." Under this clause the landlord would pay the occupier's rates; and then, if the dwelling-house turned out to be entirely unlet——?—For the twelve months?

4621. For the twelve months?—He would be charged no rate at all.

4622. As far as during the twelve months it was unlet, he would get a deduction?—If it amounted to a quarter he would get a reduction of a quarter. If it amounted to six months he would get a reduction of a half. The new principle introduced here is that the owner is to be relieved of owner's as well as occupier's rates for unlet property. That seems to me to be an equitable consideration which should be extended to owners whose houses are unlet.

4623. If it was unlet for six months, he would get a reduction of a half?—Yes, both for owner's and occupier's rates. Some say why should not he get it for a month. That is a matter for further consideration. I limit it to three months' occupancy.

4624. Would not it be similar to give to the owner the right to the extent of which his property is unlet?—It might not be unfair or inequitable, but the only difficulty is, judging from the facts I have before me, that there are vacant periods which do not amount to a whole month, and we must draw the line.

4625. That would be a question of detail?—Yes.

4626. You are enunciating a general principle?—Yes; what seems to me fair and just is that if you were going to put a burden on landlords of small houses there must be an equitable *quid pro quo* that is not a vicious one. To my mind this is a sound principle and thoroughly equitable, whereas the other system is a vicious one.

4627. Namely, the one of compounding?—Yes.

4628. Is not there an intermediate view. The compounding view, then there is your view of no allowance at all, leaving an adjustment to be made in a total charge. But is not there an intermediate view that an allowance should be made for the trouble of collection and for losses of unpaid rates, leaving to the landlord the right for unlets to claim such a deduction as you propose here? In short, to limit his allowance to an allowance for: firstly, trouble, and, secondly, losses?—Yes; well, I don't think an addition to the farming of the rates at all is one that we should countenance, and we should certainly avoid it if it is possible to avoid it. I suggest that as a feasible and a proper remedy.

4629. And as simplifying the system?—Yes.

4630. Do you think you have some authority in what took place prior to 1889?—I say that prior to 1889, in county areas, owners were liable for all rates, and that we are not introducing any new principle when we are making owners of small houses liable for owner's rates.

4631. When was that change?—Under the Local Government Act of 1889. The owner's rates were then stereotyped, and any increases since are just charged half on occupier and half on owner.

4632. So far as the owner's goes, if he collects the rates, say from May to December, he has the interest of that money before he has to pay the rating authority?—That is so. He might, in fact, keep it on till the month of March before he requires to pay it.

4633. So far as the franchise goes, you have an observation there, what do you say to that part of the question?

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Take the municipal franchise?—In the meantime it depends on payment of municipal rates.

4634. Suppose the landlord pays them all, and then fails in certain cases to get payment of what would represent the amount of rate from the occupier? Do you think it is fair that that occupier should still have a vote if his rate, in point of fact, has been paid?—If his rate has been paid he should certainly get a vote.

4635. You would say it is no concern of the country that he has not, in point of fact, paid what represents the rate to the landlord?—Yes; of course, I cannot assume that that man has not paid his rate if he has paid his rent.

4636. Suppose he has paid nothing at all?—Then he must only have had a month's occupancy, and is not qualified. Our experience is the opposite of that, that men in our burgh have been disfranchised because the landlords failed to account for the rates.

4637. Has that happened?—That has happened in our case. A great number of working men lost their votes because their landlord, who was in difficulties, would not pay the rates he had collected from them.

4638. You cannot collect that?—There is no collection from monthly tenants. We have no statutory power.

4639. That would arise in the case you were contemplating in Mr Cross's Bill?—It might arise, and therefore we have to provide for it.

4640. How do you propose to deal with that?—That we should have an amendment to the effect that the occupier who could show that he had paid his rates was not disfranchised through the failure of his landlord to account for them.

4641. That is to say, that, if the tenant could show that he has paid a slump sum to his landlord, he was not to be disfranchised?—Yes, that would be necessary, because you are going to make here the occupier's municipal franchise depend on the owner's collection of the rates monthly.

4642. I understand you don't approve of what is suggested in Clause 9 of Mr Cross's Bill, the making a distinction between imperial taxes and poor rates and other school registration and special parish rates levied by parish councils on the one hand, and burgh assessments on the other?—No; imperial taxes certainly should be excepted, but poor and school rates should be in the same position as municipal rates. If the landlord is to collect the one, he should collect the others; and, as a matter of fact, that is what they are doing. It is monthly lets in Hamilton now.

4643. You say there is no practical difficulty in doing it?—No.

4644. You think any perpetuation of different systems, if it can be avoided, is undesirable?—Yes, it would be exceedingly confusing to have one system applicable to the tenant and the other to the landlord.

4645. What about the difficulty that has been suggested to us that in May you don't know what the rates are going to be, because they are not fixed till the end of the year?—That is so.

4646. And therefore the landlord would just have to speculate in fixing the proportion of the total payment of his rate as distinguished from the rent. What do you say to that?—I say the assessment chargeable as against the owner should be as from November to November, and it would be necessary to stipulate that the rates chargeable against the owner, except all monthly lets, should be up to November of each year, the rates authorised by the local authority in the year preceding.

4647. Do you see any practical difficulty in doing that?—No difficulty at all.

4648. It would remedy the difficulty that has been suggested?—It remedies that difficulty.

4649. What about the other difficulty, namely, that Mr Cross's Bill would take away the right to people who get relief on the ground of poverty? What do you say to that?—That is under section 343 of the Burgh Police Act. I say we would require a clause enabling us to relieve these persons of responsibility for rates.

4650. How is it to be worked out? The landlord pays the rate?—Yes.

4651. Then the person comes forward and gets relief, let us say. Well, the landlord has paid the rate, what would you do then?—He has paid the rate to the landlord before he gets relief. Well, of course, that just proves again the necessity for making the rate which the landlord has to collect run from November to November, or from January to January, because the Appeal Court is always held in January. I think it is always held in January under statute, consequently we don't know until January who are to be relieved of the rates. The landlord may have collected a number of monthly rates from that person before he was relieved. He may have insisted upon his paying it, so that the whole system has to be modified in order to meet that difficulty. I suggest, of course, that a poor person who is relieved of his rates must have some means to show the landlord that he has been relieved, and the landlord cannot legally charge that person with his rates.

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4652. What means do you suggest?—What I have suggested is something in the nature of an adhesive stamp, which might be supplied by the local authority, and that on being produced to the landlord, is a claim to his right of exemption, and it must be produced by the landlord when he is paying his rates, to show that he has in good faith relieved a poor person.

4653. Therefore, that he is entitled——?—To be relieved of the occupier's rates.

4654. (*Mr Esslemont.*) How do you do in Hamilton in cases where the rent is under £4? Do you relieve in cases of that kind?—Yes, we relieve irrespective of the rent they are paying. Of course, these £4 rents are chargeable against the owner too. When you put the question about that there are a number of cases where we refused to relieve the owner of the obligation, although we do relieve the occupier.

4655. We in Aberdeen deal with a large number of appeals, but the landlord is responsible for the rates on all the rentals of £5 and under?—Then you don't relieve there at all.

4656. I cannot recall cases?—My Town Clerk informs me that we have never relieved in that case; we are in the same position as yourself.

4657. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Where the people are on the poor roll are they charged taxes?—That is why I reply in the affirmative to start with. We lay down the principle that whoever is on the poor roll is not to be charged with rates. If that poor person happens to be occupying a £4 house, the landlord there apparently does not collect rates. Here is a house on which the rent is entered £3, 12s. This person charges no rates against his tenant.

4658. (*Chairman.*) Is this a pauper?—I don't know; I only know that there is a case of a house less than £4—£3, 12s—which appears in the Valuation Roll. He is paying 6s. a month.

4659. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Why do you assume that that is not on the rates?—Because £3, 12s. is the value at which it appears on the Roll.

4660. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Does not the collector have some plenary power in cases of paupers who let the factor know that that rate is not to be exacted on them, and that, therefore, he will only get the net rent from a particular tenant?—We have no such system with us, but that would be a most desirable thing, and that is exactly what we want to get at. If we adopt the method of relieving the poor person, which apparently you have in Aberdeen in £4 houses, it would apply to people living in £8 houses.

4661. In Hamilton the rates of paupers occupying houses under £4 are paid by proprietors?—All rates chargeable on £4 houses are paid by proprietors.

4662. But in the case of paupers?—We don't know what they may be.

4663. Does the Town Clerk happen to know of such a case where the landlord has a pauper tenant getting relief and the house is under £4? Does he pay anything in the shape of rates?—The Town Clerk informs me that the owner is certainly responsible for the rates to the Town Council; whether he charges the tenant we cannot say, but we hold the owner responsible.

4664. Even though the tenant is a pauper?—Yes.

4665. You have had no case of the owner coming forward and objecting?—There was one case where there was a question, but it was more in connection with unlet property at that time.

4666. (*Chairman.*) You may have no statutory power?—I think it really works out in practice like what we have here, that the owners of these small houses pay the rates, and it is a charge upon them. It is one of the burdens of that kind of property.

4667. Look at the end of your precis, at the bottom of page 9. Is that what you have dealt with already about the separate return or something new? You say in view of the terms of section 4 of the proposed House-Letting Bill, another modification of existing statutory enactment would be requisite. Section 350 of the Burgh Police Act of 1892 provides for a return from owners of houses of period of lets and amount of rental. Then you think that section 350 quoted would require amendment to the effect that owners should furnish a return of the periodic payments of rent subject to the penalty provided by that section? Why?—Because our claim has to be based upon the periodic payment of rent; and if it is the term of let, although the periodic payment of rent was monthly, the owner may say, "my house is let for six months," and we have to get rid of that difficulty. We must provide that it is not a term of let but a periodic payment of rent that is to determine his liability.

4668. And you produce, do you, a copy of the form used by your collector of assessments?—Yes. Dealing with that section.

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4669. You might just put that in?—It is as follows:—

BURGH OF HAMILTON.

THE BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1892.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,
5 HOLMES STREET,
HAMILTON, 189 .

SIR,—In consequence of the large number of tenants removing during the currency of the year, I have been instructed by the Police Commissioners to draw your attention to section 350 of "The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892," which provides,

"It shall be lawful for the Commissioners to require an 'owner to furnish a written statement of the period or 'periods for which the land and premises of which he is 'owner are let to the respective tenants or occupiers 'thereof, and of the rents for which the same are let, all 'which the said owner shall be bound to furnish within 'seven days of his being required in writing so to do: and 'if such owner shall fail, without reasonable excuse, to 'furnish such written statement, he shall be liable to a 'penalty not exceeding £10; and if such owner shall 'present, or cause to be presented, any false statement of 'the period or periods, or the rents for which any lands or 'premises belonging to him are let, knowing the same to 'be false, he shall be liable to a penalty of £20."

In terms of the said section, I have to require you to furnish me with a written statement, as therein prescribed, within seven days from this date.

To enable you to furnish the required particulars I annex a form, which you will please fill up, sign, and return to me.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Collector.

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to cases of houses belonging to employers. Is that a frequent method of tenure in mining districts?—Yes, the houses in many mining houses are the property of the owners.

4673. Do they pay rent, or is it part of their remuneration?—They pay rent very often in the office, but the subject will be spoken to by the representatives of the miners. They are better able to give you first-hand information than I.

4674. You indicated that you thought that there should be an exemption from the operations of the Bill of tenants of such houses?—Yes; I say that type of occupancy must be dwelt with by special legislation.

4675. May I take it that in the case of such houses where there are rents payable this Bill would apply and would therefore give fixity of tenure depending upon the period for the periodic payment of rent?—Yes, in all probability fortnightly.

4676. In cases of fortnightly payments?—Yes, that would be the statutory effect of the Bill if it were to pass.

4677. All a fortnight?—Yes.

4678. Of course, the clause preventing the operation of the fortnightly ejection, in the event of disputes, would remedy it?—Yes.

4679. That might be part of some measure?—It could. Of course, the question would arise whether that is a proper thing or not.

4680. As a matter of policy?—Yes.

4681. I do not know myself, but do you know whether there are any cases of employers' houses occupied by employees as part of their services without paying rent?—There may be isolated cases of a foreman or some one of that kind having a free house.

4682. I mean a free house?—That man would then enjoy the service franchise.

4683. And be open to ejection?—Summarily.

4684. Within forty-eight hours?—I think so.

4685. This Bill would not apply to an instance like that?—I think that is a special contract.

4686. Have you any views in regard to a modification if any were needed in regard to hypothec. Assuming that shorter lets were prevailing, would it affect any of the hypothec

STATEMENT BY.....

FOR YEAR FROM 15TH MAY 189 , TO 15TH MAY 189 .

Property, Street, and Number.	Name of Tenants or Occupiers.	Period or Periods for which Premises Let.	Period for which Premises occupied by each Tenant if more than one.		Rent.		
			From	To	£	s.	d.

Signature,_____

4670. May we sum up your views under three heads at the end of your precognition?—I have five heads.

4671. Just read them?—(1) The missive system complained of might be remedied by the amendment of section 4 of the Removal Terms (Scotland) Act, declaring it illegal to contract to let premises in the occupation of tenants earlier than forty days before the removal term. (2) An alteration in the present laws regulating house tenure would involve a number of consequential amendments in the Burgh Police (Scotland) Acts, the Lands Valuation Acts, and possibly the Representation of the People Act, and would also necessitate a revision of our Rating System generally. (3) The necessities of the working classes demand greater flexibility in the condition of house tenure, and the proposals of Clause IV. of the House-Letting Bill form a suitable media for the evolution of a system which would provide greater facilities for changes of occupancy. (4) Whatever system of house tenure is legalised should be general and not local. Statutory and not adoptive. (5) The extension of the system of compounding rates is against sound public policy. If owners are to be made liable for rates under the provisions of the House-Letting Bill the equities of the case can be best met by relieving owners from all rates on unlet and unoccupied houses for the period they are empty.

4672. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In regard to the evictions, you refer

Acts?—I think it would. I think that probably, if we were going to introduce the system of short lets and make the owners responsible for rates, that we should not abolish the law of hypothec yet, only we are to see how it is going to work. I think they are bound to give some kind of security to start with, and they have that security now.

4687. Do you think that short lets would result in more frequent removals?—Undoubtedly.

4688. In that case, of course, the present law of hypothec which gives to the one proprietor a preference for three months after the expiry of the let would lead to applications with subsequent landlords?—Undoubtedly.

4689. The question would be, who has the hypothec, and who is entitled to bring back?—Yes.

4690. Coming to the view which you expressed in regard to yearly missives, I take it that you would make yearly missives illegal?—These would be half-yearly in my proposal.

4691. But you would make it unlawful for the landlord and tenant to make a yearly missive?—No, I would not personally. That point was raised by the Chairman earlier. Of course, the Chairman pointed out the difficulty, but I would not say it should be illegal, because it seems to me it would be a matter of contract.

4692. Of course, I want to be quite fair to you. As the Chairman very properly pointed out to you any reservation

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of the right to make a contract would merely mean that the missive for a year would become universal in spite of the law?—Yes. I must say that what I want to reconcile is my view as to the right of a free citizen to make a contract for myself; but I think I said that, if that right would impose a hardship upon the tenant whom we wish to keep right, then it would have to go overboard.

4693. It would be all the same trouble, of course. Assume for a moment that we do not know that there is a hardship under the present system, and if, as a matter of policy, shorter lets are introduced, in order to arrive at that result, would you go as far as to make it in your view right to prevent the landlord and tenant entering into a yearly let?—For houses below a certain value.

4694. £20?—If it needs statutory enactment, I think that might certainly prevent a grievance; and if it will have that effect, I would certainly support it.

4695. Coming to the question of assessment, you have given us quite a valuable opinion upon that. You point out that the assessment roll necessarily only contains the name of the tenant at the date of making up the roll and that is the tenant for the whole year?—It is the nominal tenant for the twelve months.

4696. Can you suggest how, assuming that there is to be a yearly collection only as at present, that the system could be modified so as to enable collectors to collect from the successors of the principal tenants whose name is on the roll?—Yes, I provide a proviso to section 346 of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, which covers the point, "Provided that if the owner of a dwelling-house let for six 'months shall notify in writing to the collector of muni- 'cipal assessments, at least twenty days before the November 'removal term, that a change of occupant is being made 'at that term, he shall be entitled to exemption from the 'liability imposed by this section; and in the event of his 'failure to give such notice, and the occupiers' rates for 'the six months ending 28th November are unpaid, the 'owner shall, in terms of this section, be liable for the said 'rates."

There is a section of the Burgh Police Act upon owners which would come to be a very onerous one if this Bill were passed "When any lands or premises in respect of which 'the said assessment might be imposed upon the occupier, 'not being premises usually let for any period shorter than 'one year, shall not be occupied by the same occupier for 'the whole year from the term of Whitsunday in any year 'till the term of Whitsunday in the year following, but 'shall be occupied for part of such year by a new occupier, 'it shall be lawful to the Commissioners to impose and 'levy on and from such new occupier who occupies the 'same for any part of such year, whether his name appear 'in the Valuation Roll or not, a proportion of such assess- 'ment for that year, corresponding with the period of his 'occupacy, and on and from the owner of such lands or 'premises the proportion of such assessment, if any, 'corresponding with the period during which such lands 'or premises were occupied during the said year by any 'other occupier." Therefore, the owner just now, in the event of changes of occupacy, is liable for the rates for the first half or first three quarters or first third of a year, whichever the case may be. That hardship would be very much increased, consequently we have to provide a remedy for it; and I suggest that if he, before the November term, intimates that there is to be a change of occupancy, that allows the Local Authority to put the powers they have in operation. They can immediately poind if they know that there is to be a removal by a person who cannot pay his rates. The authority just now can step in and immediately poind his effects. I say if the landlord or the factor gives the Local Authority that opportunity he should be relieved of the obligation which the law puts upon him just now to pay the rates for a man who has run away.

4697. Then you have laid down the three conditions subject to which you think a tenant should be entitled to sit—payment of rent, fulfilment of conditions of let, and abuse of property. So long as these conditions occur, do you think the tenant should have the option to remove at the end of six months' let?—Yes.

4698. And the landlord should not be entitled to eject at the end of six months'?—Yes.

4699. What is the loss in Hamilton on the collection of municipal rates?—Our loss upon the gross collection last year did not amount to 2 per cent.

4700. What was the loss on the gross collection under £20?—It was nearly all upon that form of tenure.

4701. But what would the percentage of loss be?—I could not speak so definitely. I do not think our collector has ever made that up.

4702. Can you send that in?—I will be delighted.

4703. And also under £16, seeing that that is the limit you indicate for Hamilton?—Yes.

4704. That affects the question of compounding very much. We have had other views on that, and the question is a very practical one, as to what rate, if any, should be allowed to proprietors. In Glasgow, for example, we were told that the loss under £10 is 26 per cent.?—Yes, but that is because the Local Authority does not get at the occupier who has left his house. He may have occupied the house for five months, he can have paid his landlord his rent and taxes, but if he has gone away in five or seven or eight months the Local Authority does not get a penny. He has gone to another house, and that is the reason why the Local Authorities are losing very much more than what the landlords would.

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4705. Either more frequent collections of rates by Corporations, or a collecting from proprietors who would collect monthly from the tenant, would make a great difference in favour of the authorities?—Enormously; that is why I specially think the landlord should be held responsible for small house rates.

4706. I would not think it a proper deduction to make from the fact that the Glasgow Corporation lose 26 per cent. of their low rented rates?—Certainly not, because the one is no criterion of the other. The loss to the Local Authority is no criterion of the loss to the landlord.

4707. I assume you do have some loss on collecting rates on houses under £20?—Yes. We have very often to put that into the hands of a messenger-at-arms for collection.

4708. If you collect only from the proprietor you would have very much less difficulty?—It would simplify it, undoubtedly.

4709. Could you not afford to make some concession to the proprietors or the factors, seeing you were to be relieved of this trouble?—I would not be disposed to make a concession of a financial kind, such as is suggested, but to relieve him of rates of unlet property, it would be a very important concession indeed.

4710. But the general law in regard to evictions, assuming that short lets became prevalent, have you anything to say as to remedying the present law under which a proprietor gets the tenant removed?—No, I could not make any suggestion as to that. We would like to avoid evictions as much as possible.

4711. (*Mr Howden.*) In connection with your new clause you say you favour exemption of owners for all unlet property, but you also add from both the owners' and occupiers' rate; I think that is correct?—Yes.

4712. Do you collect police assessments in Hamilton?—Yes.

4713. Does it not strike you that at least the police rate of unlet property, as far as the owner is concerned, is as essential as if the property was occupied?—Yes.

4714. That in effect the police rate is a rate for services rendered?—Yes, both on the owner and occupier.

4715. And would have to be performed whether the property was let or unlet?—It would.

4716. Consequently it would not altogether be just to exempt the owner in rates and property which had to be protected?—If you were putting another burden on him which would be a fair equivalent, for that exemption, then it would be fair. I say that is an equitable way of giving a *quid pro quo* which would not establish a vicious principle, and you are not applying the exemption of owners from rating to any but the dwelling-houses below £20, and you are applying it to him only because of the burden. Assuming that one house out of every ten is unlet, you are giving him exemption of rates on this one house in respect of the work he is doing for you as a local authority on the other nine. That is not an unreasonable thing. It is certainly true that a policeman has to watch the one empty house as well as the nine full ones, but what are you going to give the landlord or the factor for the work he is doing?

4717. Suppose the whole ten houses were occupied, what do you give him then?—Nothing.

4718. He would have more work?—He would have a full and complete revenue from the ten houses.

4719. (*Mr Binnie.*) You propose that missives should not be legal if they are signed nearer than forty days before the removing term, and then that the warning away should be thirty days before. Do you think that ten days is enough before a busy term of removal, such as there will be, to adjust the lets of all houses?—No; I do not think it would be possible to adjust the letting of all houses, but you have only got to deal with one or two or half a dozen particular cases who have refused to sign the missive.

4720. But factors have in Glasgow, for instance, 5500 houses, particularly of this class. Do you think it would be possible within ten days to adjust such a number of lets?—I do not think it would be possible to adjust all these in ten days.

4721. You have told us what your loss is, and have to send us more particulars. Can you tell us the cost of collection also?—Yes, I will get you that.

4722. In this clause you say that you propose to give exemption where for three continuous months in any year a house shall be unoccupied?—Yes.

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4723. Why take continuous months? Is the loss to the landlord not as much if the three months are not continuous?—Yes; of course, I think I said, when I was giving that in, that that was subject to a further amendment. My conclusion is that the equities of the case may be met by relieving owners from all rates of unlets and unoccupied houses for the period they are empty. I do not stick rigidly to the three months. We must lay down something of a definite kind that we are going to legislate upon.

4724. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Will the return you have to give us show the loss of houses let at £10 and under, £15 and under, and £20 and under? Do you understand we would like it in that form?—Yes, the loss upon graded rents.

4725. The £10, £15, and £20, that is the form in which we have it from other authorities?—I will send it in to the secretary.

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4726. (*Chairman.*) You have said a Bill would lead to more frequent removals, or that they would be spread over the whole year?—Spread over the whole year. There would be a larger number of removals.

4727. That is ambiguous. Do you mean the net number at the end of the year would be greater, or, instead of being practically all at Whitsunday, they would be spread over the year?—I would go the length of saying it would increase the net number, while at the same time it would spread it over a much longer period.

Mr Robert Smillie, Mr D. Gilmour, and Mr J. Murdoch.

Mr Robert Smillie, Mr David Gilmour, and Mr James Murdoch, called and examined.

Mr Robert Smillie, Mr D. Gilmour, and Mr J. Murdoch.

4728. (*Chairman to Mr Smillie.*) Your association is the Lanarkshire Miners' County Union?—That is so.

4729. What are the respective positions of the gentlemen here?—I am President of the Lanarkshire Miners' County Union, Mr Gilmour is General Secretary, and Mr Murdoch is one of the Agents, devoting his whole time to the work.

4730. How old is the Union?—On its present lines, about eight years.

4731. About how many miners will it represent?—We have about 26,000 organised workers, and we represent fully 30,000 miners, some of whom are not connected with the association, but are under our advice, and with the members of the association.

4732. Are the miners coal and iron miners?—Coal entirely.

4733. Are there miners who are not in connection with your Union in Lanarkshire?—We embrace them all, practically.

4734. I understand you appear on behalf of the Union. The question has never been before any general meeting, I suppose?—It has been before our county delegates, representing 100 branches of our association, and it has been before the branches of the association.

4735. Is the name Lanarkshire accurate, or do you embrace some outside Lanarkshire?—Lanarkshire only.

4736. What has been the subject, if you will define, that has been before the association?—The question of the tenure of houses and the missive system, the length of the lets of houses.

4737. And the length of time between the date of taking the house and the date of entering?—Yes. Mr Chairman informs me that in advantage to that the outstanding question was that of evictions and evictions also?—Yes.

4738. You have considered, in connection with this question, the question of how the rates and local taxes are to be paid?—We have.

4739. Are your members unanimous or divided?—So far as we have been able to gather they are unanimous. I have never heard anyone speaking in favour of the present system so far as we know.

4740. Are the Lanarkshire miners different in any essential matters, so far as the conditions of work are concerned, from Ayrshire miners or Fife miners?—I think the position in all the mining counties of Scotland is pretty much the same. As far as I can gather from the leaders of the men in other counties, the feelings of the men are pretty much the same.

4741. Lanarkshire, Fifeshire, and Ayrshire, these are the chief?—Ayrshire, Fifeshire, Lanarkshire, Mid and East Lothians, West Lothian, and Stirlingshire. I am president of the Scottish Miners Federation, which embraces all these counties.

4742. As far as you have been able to learn, the view all over is the same?—Yes.

4743. First of all take the long lets, to what extent are your men under yearly tenure?—I think that fully 50 per cent. of our men are under yearly tenure. Nearly the whole of the other 50 per cent. are living in houses owned by the employers, and they have them as a condition of employment from week to week.

4744. Is there any considerable number not in employers' houses of that kind on short lets?—Very few.

4745. Where our miners are not in employers' houses, and living in burghs and small towns and rural districts, they take their houses from year to year, sometimes they require to take their houses three or four months before the date of entry.

4746. To what extent do you consider miners are shifting, compared with men in shipbuilding yards, for instance, or masons?—I think they will shift from district to district more frequently than men in shipbuilding yards, but not so much as masons. I mean from district to district.

4747. In the same county?—In the same county and sometimes to other counties.

4748. Has there been any change in respect of more or less shifting within recent years?—There is more shifting now. I think Lanarkshire, to some extent, has become exhausted, and men require to shift to other districts and sometimes to other counties where the coal is developing.

4749. When men shift, do they shift permanently or temporarily?—I think in the majority of cases they shift permanently.

4750. Or, at all events, for such a length of job that they would want to shift their houses?—Yes. Very often they shift, and they go into lodgings themselves, leaving their families behind, because they cannot go into the houses, and they perhaps go home at the end of a fortnight or a month until the let of their house is finished.

4751. To what extent is the opinion of your Union been influenced by the English members of the Union:—We have never discussed the question, and I do not think the opinion of the English members of the British Federation has in any way influenced our people.

4752. Are not all your officials Englishmen?—No.

4753. Have you any number of Cornishmen?—We have a number who came nearly forty years ago, but to all intents and purposes their children are naturalised, and in our districts they don't think of the matter much further than that they know the system is different in England.

4754. I suppose, to some extent, the belief that the short let system works well in England has influenced the Scotch opinion?—I think so.

4755. As against the present system of yearly let, what does your Union propose?—We think that monthly lets should be quite sufficient.

4756. Does that mean that lets beyond a month should be prohibited?—Well, we think that in all workmen's house, or houses under a certain rental, perhaps £20, there should be monthly rents, and that others should be left to an agreement between the landlord and the tenant.

4757. That is what I want to know. Does your proposal go to making illegal a let beyond a month?—I do not think that our association has expressed any opinion on the question of whether or not it should be allowable to have longer lets than monthly above £20. Under £20 we think it should not be allowed.

4758. Were short lets to meet your view, a clause would need to be added to any bill prohibiting contracting out?—Yes.

4759. Mr Cross's Bill has no clause prohibiting contracting out?—I notice that.

4760. What do you say to quarterly lets?—It has been suggested to us by some representatives of working men that as a compromise they would be quite willing to have quarterly lets?—We are strongly in favour of monthly lets.

4761. That is not because the payment is monthly. What is the payment?—That would be a matter, I think, of agreement.

4762. How are miners paid wages?—Fortnightly, usually; almost universally.

4763. And monthly payments of rents is quite common, I suppose, with yearly tenures?—No, it is not. It is very uncommon.

4764. Just tell us about that?—In a number of cases they pay quarterly; in the vast majority of cases they pay half-yearly in the mining districts; but there are cases in Hamilton and Motherwell, I believe, where they pay the rent monthly.

4765. These are in non-employers' houses?—Yes; of course, in employers' houses the rent is deducted from the wages weekly or fortnightly.

4766. The working man does not finger the money?—No.

4767. What would be the great advantage, in your view, of monthly lets as against yearly?—Well, the present position ties up the working-man pretty largely to the district in which he is living, for the time being. I myself have had to shift ten or fifteen miles to get employment, and had to keep my house on for nine months. I would have

given it up, if I had been free to do so. A large number of our people have been in the same position.

4768. Can no sub-let in that particular case be got?—Of course, you were held responsible for the rent, and you would require to look for a tenant, and when you found a tenant your landlord could object to the tenant you sub-let to.

4769. In your case did it absolutely happen?—In view of the fact that I had the house taken for a certain period I had to endeavour to get a sub-let.

4770. Do you think it is fair to judge merely by the actual number of sub-lets and the question of removal, or is it fair to say there are many cases where a miner, for instance, would like to remove, but does not run the risk, and so he never goes to the factor or tries to get a sub-let?—I think there are a good many cases in which they do not try to get a sub-let, where they would shift if they had the power to do so.

4771. In addition, is it merely change of employment from one district to another that involves the need to remove, or may that arise from illness or from loss of employment, making it necessary to get a cheaper house, for instance?—I have known a large number of cases where wages came down very rapidly, as they do in the mining trade. They had taken houses when times were good, and had to shift into small houses, but had to hold the higher houses until the lease was up.

4772. It will happen the other way too?—Yes, men will like to shift to a better house, and do not do so because they are bound to the house they are in.

4773. Miners' wages will vary more than any other class of work?—Yes, they fluctuate more and to a greater extent than wages in any other class of work.

4774. What are the rents that are usually paid for the different classes of one room and kitchen, two rooms and kitchen houses, and so on?—They run from £4, 10s. for a single apartment up to £10, £12, and as high as £14 for a room and kitchen, and perhaps a little closet.

4775. And for two rooms and kitchen?—Up to £15.

4776. What do you say as to the limit of £20 indicated in Mr Cross's Bill as the limit for the ordinary working man's house. Do you think that is a reasonable sum?—I think so. There is not a very large number of our people living in houses of £20.

4777. It has been suggested, for instance, in the case of a miner who has two or three sons wage earners that he might live in a more costly house, say £25 or £30. Are there many such cases?—I think there are a few, not a very large number.

4778. If there is to be a limit of £20, is that a reasonable one?—I think so. Of course, the committee are aware that rents vary very much. In one mining district you might get a very good house for £20; and in another, because of the demand for houses in the district or the fact of its being near the city, you might have to pay £25 for the same class of house.

4779. The Bill is proposed to be limited; at all events, it has been suggested that no measure should be limited to houses in burghs?—We do not think it should be limited to houses in burghs.

4780. Why not?—People who are not in burghs are affected in the very same way as people who are.

4781. You have many large mining villages which are not burghs in any sense?—Yes. The town in which I live at the present time has 12,000 inhabitants, and is not a burgh.

4782. Which is that?—Larkhall.

4783. (*To Mr Gilmour.*) Where do you live, Mr Gilmour?—In Hamilton. Mr Murdoch lives in Hamilton also.

4784. (*To Mr Smillie.*) You take Larkhall as an illustration of a different place?—Yes, one-third of the people there live in their own houses, which is a very good thing for them. They have less shifting than they would have in other circumstances.

4785. You have told us the advantage of monthly lets, are there any drawbacks?—I think the only drawback would be the chance of a person being turned out at the end of a month unless he had security that he would not; and we propose that, if monthly lets were fixed, a landlord should not be allowed to turn out a tenant unless for non-payment of rent or deliberate damage to the property. The only disadvantage would be the liberty of a landlord to turn a person out at the end of a month, a man well pleased with the house and his work.

4786. Does it come to this, that in your proposal the miner would have an absolute right to leave at the end of a month on due notice, while the landlord's right to turn him out would be qualified by failure to pay the rent or the improper use of the house?—That is so.

4787. That is a pretty large order?—I think it is a fair order.

4788. (*Mr Dobbie.*) When would a landlord's right emerge—yearly?—I do not know that he should have any right to turn a person out of his house, provided he was paying the rent.

4789. Fixity of tenure?—Practically.

4790. (*Chairman.*) Just as good as a feu?—Yes.

4791. Suppose that was so, would the landlord be entitled to raise the rent. Suppose the landlord proposed to raise the rent, and the tenant objected, would you give him the right to turn out men?—I do not see how you could prevent the landlord by any Bill we are now considering. Of course, we have a further proposal that there should be a fair rent court to which a tenant could appeal, but if we say that a tenant must have practically fixity of tenure we cannot say that he must have fixity of tenure at a certain rent.

4792. Your proposal would really involve a corollary to add a fair rent court?—Yes.

4793. I think that is all you have to say about monthly lets?—I think so.

4794. We come next to the question, what is the view of your Union about the payment of rates and taxes?—The view of our Union is that all rates and taxes should be paid by the landlord, and that they should be charged by him to the tenant in his monthly let.

4795. Coupled, however, with the qualification that the tenant should know what he is paying under each head?—Quite; I may say that at the present time the County Councils and the Parish Councils charge directly the rates on employer's houses to the employer. At one time the workmen in the employer's houses paid their rates direct yearly; now they have been charged direct through the employer. In certain cases the proprietor has deducted from 2d. to 4d. a week, an amount to meet the rates at the end of the let, paying back to the tenant the amount he has overcharged.

4796. Is the employer entitled to such a sum as will not only cover the rate but cover the trouble?—No, he is not entitled.

4797. Why should he not be entitled to that?—There is practically no trouble. He is collecting the rents at the time, and it is 2d. or 4d. per week.

4798. If the rate were collected in that way along with the rent, monthly, would more rate be got on the whole than is got now?—Undoubtedly.

4799. Many who cannot pay a large slump sum, say £5, would be better able to pay the same sums spread over twelve months?—Yes, it would be easier on them; and many of them who don't care much about paying rates would have to pay them.

4800. It would be to the benefit of both the tenant and the rating authority?—I think so.

4801. If the landlord got a fair allowance it would not matter to him one way or another?—About the allowance, we don't think any allowance is necessary for collecting the rates from the tenant.

4802. Suppose the landlord was to pay you the whole rate, and ultimately got neither rate nor rent for a certain part of the time, from the tenant being unable to pay, he would need some allowance for that?—He would have his rates collected before he paid it over to the rating authority.

4803. Would you think it fair, that if he could show to the rating authority that he had been unable to get the rate, he should be allowed an allowance?—I don't know if it would be fair to charge the landlord with the whole of the rates if he was not getting it from the tenant.

4804. Either from the tenant failing to pay, or the house not being let?—Or the house not being let.

4805. If he was protected against losses and unlets, he should get no allowance in your view?—No.

4806. We will take No. 3. That is where a garden is part of a let of any house where the tenant has been removed at the instance of the landlord. That follows from the ejectment. That is an incident of the ejectment?—This is in houses not owned by the employer. There are a large number of houses taken from year to year at the present time, and there is a little garden attached out in country districts. We consider it would be unfair, if a party is going to be removed at the instance of the landlord, that he should not be compensated for any loss he might have on his garden. But in No. 2 here, if he got fixity of tenure he would not require to remove. If he requires to remove because he was going to work elsewhere, he should be entitled to sell his garden to the incoming tenant.

4807. According to No. 2, the tenant cannot be ejected without a just and reasonable cause, and so on; that is what you have spoken to?—Yes.

4808. That only leaves the important question No. 5, namely, that workmen occupying houses owned by their employers shall have the same security of tenure as other tenants under ordinary circumstances, and such employer shall, etc. Is not that large general question just a little

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aside from our limited inquiry?—It is connected with the tenure of houses in Scotland.

4809. But it would involve, would it not, houses of rents not limited to £20?—There are no houses occupied by workmen and owned by employers that are beyond £20, unless those of managers and officials of that kind.

4810. Of course, we are talking of ordinary miners. The highest rent will probably be £15. What would be your exact proposal there? Would it be limited in time, or would it be during the existence of a trade dispute, however long it may last?—We say houses owned by employers and occupied by workmen should continue to be held as a condition of employment not to come under monthly lets, but to be held as they are at present, as a condition of employment from week to week or fortnight to fortnight; but in the event of a dispute, strike, or lock out, the employer should not have the right to turn out the workmen if the rents were paid and there was no wilful destruction.

4811. But if either of those conditions were not fulfilled, the landlord should have the ordinary rates?—Yes, we don't want in any way to take advantage of the employers.

4812. But you don't want the employers to have the weapon of owning the miners' houses?—They are in a different position from the private landlords. They dismiss workmen if they have empty houses, and they don't go to these houses. They could always have their houses filled. There is no risk of loss of rates or rent.

4813. You think the circumstances between the two parties should not be affected in that way?—We understand that a recommendation from this Committee would be of considerable advantage to us in securing a matter of this kind.

4814. That is a general question affecting the workmen all over the kingdom?—Yes.

4815. Is there a larger proportion of miners' houses owned by employers than in any other trade?—The miners and the railwaymen are the chief. These are the only two where evictions on a general scale have taken place.

4816. How does it come about that houses are owned by employers for the miners?—Because mines are often sunk in a locality where there are no houses, and they erect houses for the workmen, and it is a very good investment. That is another reason.

4817. (*Mr Cox.*) Are rents likely to be paid through a prolonged strike?—They are either paid by the tenant while the strike goes on, or recovered by the owner after the strike. There is an arrangement between the workman and the employer that he takes off double rent until he recovers his full rent.

4818. (*Chairman.*) Is there anything occurs to you to be added?—We think that all tenants should have protection against the landlord having the right to sell them out for non-payment of rent, that their household goods up to a certain amount should be protected against the right of a landlord or any creditor. At the present time the working people of this country have absolutely no protection. I have seen them sold out again and again, their household goods carried out and sold in case they did not pay anything because they were not able.

4819. You would limit that to a reasonable amount?—£30 or £40 worth of furniture.

4820. What was reasonably necessary for the carrying on of a household?—Yes; I do not think any person should have the power to sell out the furniture.

4821. You would place this in the same position as wearing apparel and tools?—Yes.

4822. (*Mr Gilmour.*) On the question of evictions I think I have had almost more experience than most people, and I have been in several disputes where the employers claimed the right to evict working people and got, through the courts, power to turn out 16,000 people to the roadside within five days. That is a sickening state of affairs. We think workmen ought to have some protection against that.

4823. Do you say independent of the question of payment of rent?—Yes. The workmen would have been willing to agree that the rent should be paid at the end of the dispute; but under the existing law the Sheriff has a rule, in our district, I know, that only gives five days for removal. One case is fresh in my memory. Power was given to turn out of the district half a mile round a thousand people, and there was not a dwelling-house to be got. That is dealing with the subject collectively. Individually, it applies almost in the same way. If a workman does something in connection with his work that displeases his employer, without giving any reason, he will be served with a notice to leave his house. I had personal experience of that myself. Six weeks after an individual dispute was ended, after everything was settled down, I got notice to leave the house, and was turned out within a week or two. We are specially interested in the subject of evictions. People have been turned to the roadsides in weather such as we are experiencing just now. We say that no employer should have any further advantage over his tenant than an ordinary landlord. We agree that he should get payment of rent, and that there should be no wilful destruction of property, but that he should not have power to turn out people in a summary fashion of that kind.

4824. Do you think there might be a difference between a strike and an individual dispute with a single workman?—Yes, there is a difference I admit.

4825. But in your view it goes the whole length?—Undoubtedly.

4826. That would really mean what Mr Smillie said, fixity of tenure?—It practically comes to that. On the other matter of the landlord paying rates, I had an experience of that kind which has wrought very smoothly. At a very large Colliery Company's place, belonging to James Dunlop & Company, Newton, about two years ago, that matter was under consideration on the posting up of a notice that a deduction would be made in respect of all rates and taxes chargeable. That lead to negotiations being gone into, and we came to an agreement that an amount was to be taken off fortnightly as nearly as possible, and an arrangement made at the end of the year. If the workmen had to pay a little more, it would be paid back. That has worked very smoothly, and the rates are paid just the same as rent.

4827. The house belonging to the employer up to what rent?—From £6 to £8.

4828. Have they tried it in any other place?—It is generally understood that in letting houses the employer, where he pays the rates, is to add to the rental such a sum as will cover the rates.

4829. In this case you don't know what you are paying?—No, we don't.

4830. You think it would be proper that that should be known?—The two things should be detailed separately.

4831. (*Chairman to Mr Murdoch*). Does anything occur to you?—I generally concur in what has been said. There is just one point, the power of the employer to put their men out. I know of a case where the men were on strike. They had 500 or 600 men, representing 1600 or 1700 people, and the company used that power. The men remained on strike; and when the company got the power of putting them out of their houses, rather than be put out, they accepted the conditions, which they would otherwise have refused.

4832. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Gilmour.*) In connection with this eviction of 1600 souls, were their rents paid?—The rents were offered. There was no question of rent involved.

4833. But, as a matter of fact, were the rents paid?—The rents were not even due. The people were taken into a court within five days of the time the stoppage began, and the Sheriff, as a rule, always gives the five days.

4834. (*Mr Smillie.*) When a strike takes place the employers hold in their hands the whole of the wages due to the workmen who live in their houses. It may be £1, £2, or £3. That is set off against the rent, and they refuse to pay any wages until the strike is ended, in order to secure them. In the case Mr Gilmour speaks of, most of the workmen had their wages lying in the hands of their employers, and when we went to court we offered to pay the rents of any who were behind.

4835. (*Mr Murdoch.*) In the case I refer to the company did not pay the money.

4836. (*To Mr Smillie.*) What you want is that the conditions of the employer should be fair, and that the employer should not have an unfair advantage over the workmen. Of course, you would recognise, would you not, that if the workmen had security of tenure in houses provided for these workmen by their employers, that would give the employee an unfair advantage over the employer, would it not?—We don't see where it would.

4837. (*Mr Gilmour.*) I have an experience in that direction too. I remember at Glenboig Fire Clay Works there was a dispute, and they applied for eviction warrants. They gave as an excuse that they needed the house for other workmen. As a matter of fact, they introduced foreigners, crowded them out in a very few houses, and it was only an excuse. Our experience is that very, very seldom does it happen that any workmen from the outside would apply for houses during the continuance of a trade dispute, and it is not a fair argument to say that they would require the house for others ready to take the place of those on strike. Very seldom does it happen that an employer will have an application from the outsiders wanting to work where a dispute is going on.

4838. (*To Mr Smillie.*) But if an employee is entitled to sit on, would not that absolutely prevent the employer securing any outside labour?—No; outside labour does not necessarily mean that they would require to put up their houses.

4839. But, Mr Smillie, you admitted that a reason for these workmen being in these houses was the fact that

they were not otherwise provided in the district. You said they sank shafts in a district where there were no houses, and therefore had to erect houses?—That was in answer to a question why there were miners in such houses.

4840. That establishes the fact that it is unnecessary to do so; and therefore, unless these houses were favourable for people willing to get employment, the employer could not carry on his business?—Your theory is quite correct on that.

4841. We all want to see what is fair and right done between employer and employee, and would not that place the employee in a stronger position than the employer?—I don't think it would. We all admit that, at the present time, the employer is placed in a stronger position; but you say if you give fixity of tenure during a dispute, it will reverse the thing, and put the workmen into a stronger position than the employer would occupy. I don't think it would; because there is this difference, the employer has in his hands the right to settle a dispute, to come to an understanding. One half of the disputes which continue from week to week would be settled if it were not for the power to evict.

4842. (*Chairman.*) Is the answer not that you propose to place employers on the same footing as those in other houses?—Yes, the employers would not be in a worse position than any landlord in the locality.

4843. (*Mr Esslemont.*) It is this, that he would not be any worse off than an employer whose employees occupy houses provided by others?—Both might be attended with disputes with workmen. One of the employers might have no employees in his house, the other might have several hundreds. They would both be placed on the same footing.

4844. (*Mr Binnie.*) You propose that there should be practically security of tenure?—Practically.

4845. Well, suppose an employer puts up a number of houses to accommodate his own working people, and that some of these people go and take employment in some neighbouring work, would it not be a disadvantage to the employer to have to go and build additional houses in order to accommodate the number of people that he requires for his own work?—We do not propose that workmen living in employers' houses should be entitled to go and work with another employer and continue in his house.

4846. Then you don't wish fixity of tenure?—Not in cases of that kind. That overcomes the difficulty in this particular case.

4847. (*Mr Murdoch.*) There is a habit becoming common with various employers of taking the rent off anyone and paying it over to another employer. A man living in the first colliery goes to work at the second and lives at No. 1. No. 2 takes off his rent and pays it over to No. 1 employer.

4848. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Smillie.*) That is because the employee prefers to pay rent some place rather than have the holding up of wages?—Yes, the Truck Act provides for that.

4849. (*Mr Gilmour.*) No, not for holding up the wages at the beginning of a dispute.

4850. (*Mr Smillie.*) Yes, an employer is entitled to keep the whole of the wages until you turn out of a house.

4851. Making it clear that you don't intend to make the tenure absolutely fixed?—No, we are all clear on that, that we don't want to lay it down that a man is entitled to stay in one man's house while working for another.

4852. (*Mr Cox.*) Your idea is that a tenant should be allowed to sit as long as he pays his rent?—Yes.

4853. And in the case of a prolonged strike should the tenant go on paying his rent, if not, the landlord would be entitled to turn him out?—Yes, I think so.

4854. It is during a dispute?—Yes. We don't mean that he should go on for a longer period, because that would place the employer in a worse position than a private landlord.

4855. Do you say the miners are more shifting than other classes of workmen?—They are more shifting than the men engaged in the shipbuilding industry.

4856. How is that?—Well, I really can give no account of it; they are paid by results. Coal getters are paid by results; they have no fixed wages. Their places very often get more difficult to work; and if they cannot get an improvement on their price, they simply leave and shift to another colliery, where they will get better employment, and it is nothing unusual for ten or fifteen men to go elsewhere.

4857. Unmarried men mostly?—No.

4858. (*Mr Howden to Mr Smillie.*) You spoke in connection with the law of hypothec. Do you favour a Homestead Act on the lines of the American Act, which would protect the tenant's goods and chattels up to a certain extent against all comers?—That is what I had in my mind. I think working men's furniture should not at any time be in the hands of an individual. Besides protecting the tenant, that would go a long way towards abolishing the present pernicious system of credit giving.

4859. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In England the limit of the value of goods exempted is £5, would that meet the views of your association?—No, it would not.

4860. Is it your opinion that the landlord and ordinary creditors alike should be excluded from attaching tools and clothing?—I think the furniture and tools and clothing should be absolutely free from danger of destraint by any creditor.

4861. Coming to the question of employers' houses, I take it that, apart from the ideal policy of fixity of tenure, you think there is substantial grievance which might be remedied, short of fixity of tenure in the direction of altering the present law in regard to tenure of employers' houses?—I do.

4862. I think you said that you did not want the present Bill to apply to houses occupied by employers. We would be content to allow the present system to remain, provided we had protection during the strikes and lock-outs holding the houses as a condition of employment.

4863. So that, apart from suspending the right to remove during disputes, you would be content to let the law remain as at present?—As far as the houses owned by the employers are concerned.

4864. (*To Mr Gilmour.*) You said that you think workmen occupying houses owned by their employers should have the same security as other tenants under ordinary conditions?—Yes.

4865. You differ from Mr Smillie on that point?—Not that I know of.

4866. (*To Mr Smillie.*) At present the intention is to give security of tenure depending on the period of let. I take it from you that the rent runs fortnightly?—Yes.

4867. He would have a fortnightly tenure?—He has it now. He holds the house as a condition of employment. He cannot be turned out without being evicted before the Sheriff, and he generally gets five days.

4868. But the moment the employment terminates the employer has a right to give notice of removal?—Yes.

4869. In the ordinary case there would be a fortnight's notice before that attempt to evict could be taken. This proposed Bill does deal with all small houses; and as it stands it would give the employee, who occupies an employer's house, a fortnight's tenacy in the case of paying the rent fortnightly?—And we would fully expect that that should be extended to employers' houses occupied by this class of workmen.

4870. You want that?—Yes.

4871. Because the Act as it stands wants that?—That is right.

4872. You would not put them in a worse position?—No.

4873. It is under ordinary conditions?—Yes.

4874. Coming to the question of trade disputes, I take it, apart from the fixity of tenure, you think the law might be changed, in order to suspend the employer's right to evict during the continuance of a trade dispute?—I do.

4875. Conditionally, of course, upon the rent being paid and no damage being done?—Yes.

4876. I suppose the grievance is a long standing one?—It is twenty-seven years since I was first evicted from my house, since we had to lie in the fields, and during the whole of that time we have been addressing Parliament for a measure of that kind.

4877. There was a Bill introduced by Mr John Colville?—Mr Donald Crawford in the first place, and Mr John Colville on two or three occasions. It is now in the hands of Mr Caldwell. It has been introduced again and again, and we have had considerable sympathy from the members of the Government.

4878. Has the question been before any of the great bodies of organised labour?—The Scottish Trades Congress has had it before them for the last seven years, and every year it has been unanimously passed by them. They have several circulars to the members of Parliament, and appeals to the Cabinet again and again that it might be taken up as a Government Bill.

4879. Have the Scottish miners, as a body, expressed any view?—Yes, in every part of every district, and the Conference has passed resolutions again and again. At the last Conference they had in Edinburgh last week the matter was under discussion, and the matter was unanimously agreed to ask legislation.

4880. What Conference was that?—The Scottish Miners Confederation. There were 100 delegates representing 70,000 miners.

4881. That is a grievance felt by the mining community?—It is one of the most serious grievances we have to face.

4882. Are there any houses in burghs owned by employers?—In Hamilton there is a considerable number.

4883. So that these would come under the Bill, even if it was confined to burghs?—That is so.

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4884. Do you see no reason why it should be limited to burghs?—No.

4885. In the same way may I take it that you get all the option against the one burgh as against the other adopting the Bill?—Yes, we are strongly opposed to that.

4886. Dealing with the Truck Act, I think the position there is this, that the Truck Act, while it strikes at the employer making deductions, permits the employer to make a deduction for rent?—By mutual agreement.

4887. It does not make it criminal?—No, it permits by agreement. It is just a foregone conclusion, because the employer presents a ticket and makes the workman sign his name.

4888. The cause of eviction by the employer is not being in arrears of rent, but the termination of the occupancy in consequence of the employment coming to an end?—Yes, it is only fair to say that our complaints regarding evictions are by no means general. The vast majority of employers never think of evicting their employees.

4889. Come to gardens. I take it that if short tenancies were more frequent, instead of leaving at Whitsunday, you think the removals would be spread all over the year?—Yes, I think so. It is very inconvenient at the present time to have a general removal in the district. Hundreds of people are flitting about the same day, and some of them lay there goods out on the streets. When rain comes down the goods of the people are destroyed.

4890. At any rate, removing between terms, a man might find that he had spent money on his garden, and that he was quite unable, on account of his leaving for work, to get any return from the ground?—That is so.

4891. Your suggestion is that the landlord should make compensation to him, or allow him to make a bargain with the incoming tenant?—Yes.

4892. You limit that very materially to removals at the instance of the landlord?—Yes. We wanted to be very moderate in our claim, so that, where a tenant leaves of his own accord, he should be allowed to make an agreement; but where he is forced to leave by the landlord, the landlord should compensate him.

4893. Assuming the landlord gets rid of the tenant, the tenant in that case ought to get compensation?—Yes, we want to be fair to the landlord; and if a person leaves his house voluntary, we don't want the landlord to be held bound to compensate him.

4894. A practical difficulty occurs in regard to compounding of rents in regard to rating. At the present time a large number of poor ratepayers get exemption on the ground of poverty. If your view was given effect to, and the landlord paid the whole of the rates, have you considered how that privilege would still be preserved?—I don't think they would require exemption on the ground of poverty in that case. As a member of the Parish Council dealing again and again with appeals, I find it is because it goes up to a certain amount that the person is not able to pay, say 6s. or 7s., but they would be able, I think, to pay it with their rent.

4895. But say a person was not able to pay these, do you think it would be practical to get some machinery laid down, in which the landlord would be obliged either to repay the proportion of rate, or that the Corporation should repay it?—If a person got exemption on the ground of poverty, then the landlord should be exempted, and pay it back to the person who got exemption, if he charged them with their rents, and then find that, on the ground of poverty, exemption had been got.

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4896. That is, you would not like anything done which would alter against the present poor tenant the right to get exemption?—No.

4897. You leave that to the Committee?—That is so.

4898. In the Bill there are various limits. In Glasgow, one sum, £20, and different rents in other towns up to which the Bill is proposed to be applied. Would you have a fluctuating scale like that, or would you prefer a fixed one?—I would prefer a fixed amount, £20.

4899. Coming back to the fixity of tenure, I think that may be a kind of gospel of perfection, but we had a witness here to-day who gave us what may be a compromise on that point. A witness suggested that while the tenant could have the right, at the expiry of each month, to leave, the landlord should not have the right to eject, except, of course, in the case of arrears of rent or damage to property, until the expiry of six months, or it might be twelve months. These don't have fixity of tenure under the present system as regards the landlord giving the tenant the right to remove on each monthly notice. How does that appeal to to you?—Twelve months' notice if the landlord wanted to turn out, that would be reasonable and fair, I think.

4900. This witness suggested that a let from the landlord's point of view might be six months, and from the tenant's point of view, one month?—I think it should be monthly lets, but protecting the tenant from being turned out without, say, twelve months, provided he paid his rent and did not damage the property.

4901. Assuming you were not able to persuade Parliament to give you an Act giving the landlord the right only to evict on twelve months' notice, as a reasonable man, you would think a six months' ticket, at the instance of the landlord, and a monthly one for the tenant, would be, at all events, a step in the right direction?—Yes. I think, of course, if my idea were adopted, there would be less difficulty in a person securing a house than at present.

(*Mr Gilmour.*) It is proposed to limit a Bill of this kind to burghs. May I point out, in regard to employers' houses, that where I live just now we have several employers who own houses inside the burgh of Hamilton. 100 yards over the boundary we have employers outside owning their own houses. To apply the law only inside the burgh might be only 100 yards from where another owner existed. It might prejudice one employer very much as compared with another. I think it is a very strong argument in favour of the placing of employers on an equal footing.

Mr John Mann, jun., and Mr John M'Laren Biggar.

Mr John Mann, jun., and Mr John M'Laren Biggar, called and examined.

Mr John Mann, jun., and Mr John M'Laren Biggar.

4902. (*Chairman.*) You, Mr Mann, are an M.A. and C.A., and secretary of the Workmen's Dwellings Coy., Ltd.?—Yes.

4903. You, Mr Biggar, are assistant secretary?—Yes.

4904. (*To Mr Mann.*) The company was formed sixteen years ago, and I think its objects are explained in a pamphlet, called *Some Experiments in Housing*, issued some little time ago?—That is so.

4905. You have also yourself published the important and valuable evidence which was submitted by you to the Glasgow Municipal Commission on the housing of the poor in April 1903, when you explained the working of the company?—That is so.

4906. Has anything occurred since to affect your view expressed in these documents?—No; there are no changes, except, it may be, that the circumstances of the company have been affected by the depression which has been prevailing latterly on all property in the city.

4907. The dividend of the company was restricted to 5 per cent., and I believe till the past year 4 per cent. was paid, after which it was reduced, owing to the depression you have spoken about, to 3½ per cent.?—That is so.

4908. And you have on your Board of Directors members of the Town Council, the city treasurer, and other prominent citizens?—Yes.

4909. You are not submitting evidence as representing these gentlemen directly, but you are going to give us some evidence of what you have derived from your personal experience in connection with the company?—The facts are official, but any matter of opinion must necessarily be personal.

4910. Although you admit there are special circumstances connected with the working of your company which don't, in all details, apply to ordinary workmen's dwellings, you think your results are instructive?—I think they are; more particularly, of course, with regard to the smaller class of houses.

4911. Always keeping in view that in respect, for instance, of your having caretakers, and other details which have to be kept in view?—Yes.

4912. Your company has expended over £54,000 both in building new houses and improving old houses?—Yes.

4913. Your object was to have dwellings which would be at least within the reach of the lower class?—Yes.

4914. Are your people generally skilled or unskilled workmen?—We have endeavoured to ascertain that in a definite way; and we find, taking it roughly, that two-thirds of them are unskilled or not in employment, one-third are what one might call skilled.

4915. You have six large blocks of new buildings built on two sites, one in the north and one in the east of Glasgow?—Yes.

4916. And twenty-six tenements that have been converted from neglected houses into decent houses?—That is correct.

4917. Thirty-two tenements in all, containing 663 houses, with an annual rent roll of about £4700, and, when fully let, housing about 2000 people?—Yes, at present 1772.

4918. None of the houses for tenants consist of more than two rooms?—That is correct.

4919. You have two new places, Cathedral Court and Greenhead Court, with a total of 247 houses altogether?—Yes.

4920. And you have renovations which are in four places, George Court, Ardgowan Place, Dundas Court, and Provanhill Street, with a total of 410 houses, being altogether 657 houses, one room and two rooms?—Yes.

4921. The rents vary slightly; but over all the net average weekly rents, after deducting a bonus, which you will speak to later on, are—one-roomed houses, 2s. 0½d. a week, say £5, 6s. 2d. per annum; two-roomed houses, 2s. 10½d. a week, say £7, 9s. 6d. per annum?—That is correct.

4922. The earnings of your tenants you have ascertained, and the one-roomed people at present average 17s. 2½d. per week, and the two-roomed 24s. per week. I see you have found that five years ago those now earning 17s. 2½d. were earning 19s. 5d., and those now earning 24s. on an average were earning 25s. 0½d.?—That is so.

4923. How is that?—It is somewhat difficult to understand, unless it is due to the general depression which seems to have existed more particularly in the lower grades of the working classes. It may also be that the more highly paid tenants have been going further afield. We take those censuses from time to time, and endeavour to take the wages of the family as a whole. Many statistics consist of the wages of the father of the family, but we find out the wages of all those who are earning anything.

4924. In the case of your tenants there is a proportion of what would be called the well-to-do thrifty artisan class?—Very small.

4925. When they get into that class they will move off from you?—Yes; our idea is that our houses are stepping-stones from the slums to other classes of houses.

4926. The wives don't often work?—Yes, they do.

4927. And the children are in every case earning something.

(*Mr Biggar.*) No; but as soon as they are able to, they are out.

4928. (*To Mr Mann.*) One special thing is that you have resident caretakers. How do you do about collecting your rent?—In every case the rents are weekly.

4929. And forehand?—Weekly, in advance.

4930. Is that insisted on? Because we were told that there were many cases with nominal forehand rent in Glasgow?—In our case it is absolutely insisted upon. The tenant may fall a little behind, but I think we are paid forehand on the whole. Some people think we are too harsh; personally, I think we are only reasonably interpreting our regulations.

4931. In addition to the forehand rent for the first week they have also to provide four weeks' rent?—We carefully refrain from calling that rent; it is a deposit.

4932. But it is equal in amount. It is calculated so that a new tenant has to pay a sum equal to five weeks' rent?—Yes.

4933. You give a bonus to tenants who pay regularly and behave well?—Yes; we find that very important. Although we say it is a bonus, we simply don't call for certain rent from the tenant, and thus very largely insure prompt payment.

4934. What led to your having weekly collections?—Generally it was that the class of tenants we had to cater for are paid weekly, and it seemed to us that our experiments would be more successful if we minimised the difficulty that tenants would have in paying our rents.

4935. What day do you collect rents?—On Mondays.

4936. So that the wages they get on Saturday you secure your proportion of at once?—Yes; and a very large proportion of the tenants leave the rents with the caretaker on the Saturday, and the collector on the Monday finds a list ready of the tenants who have already paid their rent.

4937. So that they have no temptation to use the money?—We have minimised the risk.

4938. Is that appreciated or resented?—Some of our tenants at first thought it was *infra dig.* to pay their rents every week, but now, almost without exception, they appreciate it.

4939. Was that by comparison with other people who paid monthly?—Yes; the houses are generally graded as to periods of letting. You have the daily house, that is, the farmed out house, the weekly rent, the monthly, the quarterly, and the half-yearly rent. There is a social stratum at each point.

4940. Do you think that, suppose yearly rents which are looked upon as top sawyer as at present were abolished, that feeling of social disadvantage, due to their existence, would necessarily disappear?—We know that sentiment dies hard, but if economic advantages were attached, it would die very quickly. The trouble in collecting the rent is undoubtedly very great; but you have to consider that, in many houses which are let nominally at a monthly let, the tenants get so much and so frequently in arrears that the housefactor's clerk is rarely out of the property.

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4941. In your case one call gets the rent?—No, not always.

4942. To a large extent, compared with what it was if it was monthly?—Yes. We could not handle our properties as we do on a monthly system. I think the results in that respect, as regards bad debts, are unusual. The last two years are absolutely unusual.

4943. In 1899 the percentage of rental written off as bad debts was 0·133; in 1900, 0·147; in 1901, 0·154; in 1902, 0·141; in 1903, 0·131; in 1904, 0·172; in 1905, 0·405; and in 1906, 0·555. So that it has risen from one-tenth per cent. to a half per cent.?—That is so.

4944. You say that is exceptional?—Almost entirely arising in one group of tenements known as Provanhill Street.

4945. Is that a renovation?—Yes. We have thirteen tenements in that street, and they have proved an exceedingly difficult problem, and they are the first to suffer when depression comes.

4946. Why?—The district is so disorderly.

4947. (*Mr Binnie.*) Was that formerly Middleton Place?—Yes.

4948. (*Chairman.*) If you eliminate that, your average would not be much up, would it?—I can work it out.

4949. (*To Mr Biggar.*) How much would that be?—The average would be quite as small as in any year.

4950. (*To Mr Mann.*) Suppose at the present moment you were to offer your tenants, instead of your present system of yearly let, with, say quarterly collection, what would they say?—It is very difficult to imagine that.

4951. Suppose you were to offer them the yearly let, still continuing the payments weekly, would they attach any value to being able to stay there for a year?—Not at all.

4952. Of course, they would all like to pay their rents as infrequently as ever, the improvident?—They would. If you agreed to have the rents paid at the end of the quarter, they would not be there when the rent was due.

4953. But the provident working man values the frequent payment; the improvident as seldom as possible?—That is generally correct.

4954. In regard to the changes of tenants, how do your tenants compare, from a shifting point of view, with the ordinary working men tenants?—I can hardly claim to speak with much authority as to the ordinary working men; but our tenants as a whole are distinctly migratory, with the exception of one property.

4955. In Cathedral Court new premises, what have you found?—They are wonderfully stable there. We found, on testing the period of tenure, that one half of the tenants have been there for four years and longer; while in all the other properties taken together, out of 500 tenants we had, at the date we made the inquiry, only 58 had remained for four years or longer.

4956. And these include Greenhead Court also, which is a new building?—That is so. You may take Greenhead Court as more typical of what the ordinary artisan would occupy. I should explain that the houses in Cathedral Court are considered to be specially attractive, the rents are not by any means high. The property is central, at the corner of Rotten Row, more central than any other we have.

4957. You will not have the more respectable well-to-do people living there?—They consider themselves even now a people apart. The houses are very much prized.

4958. There will be no stigma or reflection on tenants occupying these houses?—On the other hand, it would be a testimonal for good character.

4959. In Provanhill Street it is not quite the same?—If not quite, yet if a tenant explained that he was in a Workmen's Dwellings Company's house, it would go a long way.

4960. Other than Cathedral Court, how do you stand in regard to the changes? In Provanhill Street it is as high as 118 per cent.?—That is 118 changes in each 100 houses on the average of the last four years.

4961. In Greenhead Court 100 per cent.; in Ardgowan Place 114 per cent.; in George Court 76 per cent.; and in Dundas Court 72 per cent.?—Yes. I may explain that some of these changes are from one house to another in the same property. We take a tenant who may be anxious to get into our property and give him perhaps one of the less desirable houses, and if he qualifies by good conduct he gets changed into the better houses. That will explain a large proportion.

4962. And it is in some ways desirable that there may be many changes in that class of property, because the houses before occupation get a thorough cleaning?—We try to insist on that. It may mean the loss of a week's rent, but otherwise the opportunities for a thorough cleaning out are very few.

4963. Perhaps you can tell us about a disputed point. We have been told that the present system of ejectment is both slow and costly, both in actual outlay and loss of rent. What is your experience?—Speaking about the procedure in the Burgh Court, which is the ejectment court for small houses, I corroborate that.

4964. Could it be made quicker or less costly?—I think it could.

4965. About the speed, have you any knowledge?—The actual speed of the procedure itself is fairly satisfactory; but it is more, I am afraid, in the administration of the law that the grievances are felt, more especially in this way:—When a landlord does incur trouble and expense in instituting ejectment procedure his patience has generally been exhausted, and he has generally very good reason to require the keys of his house. The tenants in that case, by paying 6d. on lodging answers, get a block put upon the procedure. They appear in Court, and almost as a matter of course we have found the presiding magistrate grants a further period of delay, nominally to find a new house, regardless altogether of the reason the landlord may allege. In fact, it is very difficult for the landlord's representative to get any hearing at all.

4966. (*To Mr Biggar.*) Isn't the delay caused by the length of time given to put in answers? Have you, Mr Biggar, had personal experience of this?—Yes.

4967. You are confining your observations now to the Burgh Court?—Yes.

4968. Have you anything to say about the Sheriff Court?—No, we don't use the Sheriff Court for evictions at all. We only use the Burgh Court, because we believe in the end it works out more speedily.

4969. How is that, because there is going to be a question of that. In the case of the Sheriff Court, what delay is there? Is there any delay that can be avoided?—I have not tried the Sheriff Court for many years.

4970. We will stick to the Burgh Court. Where in the Burgh Court does the delay occur?—Between the lodging of the answers and the granting of the warrant. We collect on the Monday. Tuesday is the first day on which we can serve the notice. The tenant gets forty-eight hours to lodge answers, so that the first Court is Friday.

4971. That is reasonable enough?—It would be reasonable if the magistrate accepted our notice of having terminated the agreement on the Monday. The week's notice had expired on the Monday. If you recognised the receipt of a registered letter, and give summary ejection, there would be little time lost.

4972. Suppose answers were put in within forty-eight hours, if these answers were considered in the Burgh Court, and, they being sent by a frivolous lessee, ejectment was granted at once, that would be all right?—Yes.

4973. And so it will arise when answers are put in before you get your warrant to eject. How does that occur?—Because the process is gone about automatically, not judicially. The tenant and landlord are supposed to appear at the bar. In some cases decree is given in any case. Very often the landlord does not appear for that reason. As a matter of fact, the Assessor of Court, as a rule, for monthly tenants, will give a week, and weekly tenants three days' further grace from the date of the Court.

4974. Of that week forty-eight hours are taken up in lodging answers?—No, this is after the Court.

4975. Suppose you come up after the forty-eight hours and ask for a warrant, you will get it?—No.

4976. Why not?—Out of grace to the tenant.

4977. Suppose the tenant does not appear? He has put in answers, and does not appear to support them. Do you mean to say, if the landlord goes up and demands a warrant, he would not get it?—I believe in that case we would, but they are generally dealt with in batches. One or two men turn up, but the others cannot, and the warrant is dealt with as one.

4978. That is the landlord's doing. Take a single case. The forty-eight hours being out and the tenant not appearing, if the landlord demanded a warrant he would get it?—I believe I would in that case, but there have been cases in which I have not got it then.

4979. Supposing you got it, then you could turn him out at once?—Yes.

4980. In an ordinary case you don't have to resort to a sheriff's officer? You find the tenant walks out an hour or two before you turn him out?—Not always.

4981. Isn't it a rare thing that the sheriff's officer's fees have to be paid?—Not rare.

4982. What do you suggest in the way of improvement in that procedure?—I suggest that the Court should be of a more judicial character, and if it was of a judicial character, it would go without saying that in the bulk of cases the proprietor would get summary ejectment.

4983. But according to you it is not a non-judicial Court that does it. The Burgh Magistrate does not do it at all. It is the official who acts in his place. That is not soft-hearted at all?—Yes, but he has been so influenced by the soft-hearted magistrate that he has become an automaton giving a soft-hearted judgment.

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4984. Supposing you get your warrant right off, you would be satisfied?—Yes, quite.

4985. You talked about expense, could that be reduced?—I don't know that it can very well be reduced, if one considers the labour. Of course, we have a further suggestion which Mr Mann will probably speak to, that just as the tenant gives us notice that he will leave at the end of a week and lifts his bag and baggage, when we give notice to him that his tenancy will end at the end of the week, if he does not turn out, we should have power to remove his goods.

4986. Unless he could show a *prima facie* case that it was a six months' tenancy?—In that case he could have damages.

4987. Do you suggest that in this case you should have power to put his goods out on the street?—Yes.

4988. (*To Mr Mann.*) I see you say that procedure has been adopted in some parts of London?—Yes, we found some years ago on inquiry that this was adopted, or very nearly so, by some of the large London companies, parallel with our own. They adopted proceedings of this description and found it worked without any difficulty. But it seems to vary in different parts of London, according to the different Police Courts, and I am not prepared to say it is a legal proceeding.

4989. In point of fact, you find this is a very considerable difficulty?—It is.

4990. And the bad class of tenants take advantage of it?—They do, most thoroughly. In fact, it is the outstanding difficulty in the management of small houses.

4991. Under any administration?—Yes,—the want of proper power of ejectment of an unsatisfactory tenant, not merely a tenant who fails to pay; it is sometimes the most immoral tenants who pay their rents freely, but they are undesirable tenants. The landlord, I contend, should have expeditious and inexpensive means of getting rid of them, and, as Mr Biggar has just explained, it seems to us fair and reasonable that just as a tenant has power to say to the landlord, "I am going to leave your house on Monday week," the landlord should similarly have power to say, "I want the keys on Monday week."

4992. (*Mr Howden.*) Whether he had good and sufficient reason or not?—If the landlord is exercising that power in an illegal way, by breaking any contract, for instance, he is a man who is always to be found, and is worth sueing and will readily be sued. On the other hand, the landlord has no similar recourse against the tenant, who disappears after, perhaps, destroying the house. For instance, why should a working man not have the right to say to his milkman or grocer, "I have been getting my milk or my groceries from you; I want you to continue it." Without payment the grocer may say, "No, you won't get any more supplied." The landlord should have a similar right.

4993. You have special difficulty with his furniture?—He is in physical possession of your property.

4994. *The Chairman.* — You find that the practice of asking to be allowed to lodge answers is largely abused?—Yes, there are certain lawyers, or hardly lawyers, who make a practice of prevailing upon tenants to pay the sixpence instead of paying a week's rent.

4995. Where no answers are lodged and where the answers are merely formal?—Yes. We found on inquiry in connection with the Housing Commission, that twenty years ago, one petition in forty was objected to, whereas now, out of every three petitions one is obstructed.

4996. It has been found to pay, in short?—Yes.

4997. I suppose, even if they lodged answers, if they were made to consign a week's rent, you would not object?—That would overcome the difficulty.

4998. Supposing, as a condition of lodging answers, they had to lodge a week's rent?—But at the same time it might be a very undesirable tenant.

4999. Still, if the answers are found good, they would get back the rent?—Yes; the consignation of rent during the period of waiting seems quite good. They should perhaps deposit a sum to meet the almost inevitable destruction of the house during this period of waiting, but, taking it fairly, the consignation of rent for that period would meet the case.

5000. On the question of landlords' hypothec we have heard various views here, some people thinking that hypothec is not merely in favour of the landlord but in many cases in favour of the tenant. What is your view about the landlords' hypothec?—Generally, I have come to the opinion that it should be abolished, and particularly in regard to the small houses, where I really don't think it is effective.

5001. Because the game is not worth the candle?—Not

worth the expense and trouble. It has a certain disciplinary effect, but we simply disregard it altogether.

5002. In point of fact, what happens is that decent bidders don't go and it falls into the hands of brokers at a nominal price?—The brokers make the sale so disagreeable that no right-minded people will go near it. The people buy in the goods, and redistribute them among themselves.

5003. Are there any other cases where, through the existence of the hypothec, the landlord is able to give indulgence in the event of illness?—Oh yes; I am speaking more of small houses. It is more debatable the higher you go in the scale of rental. I speak of houses up to £12 rental.

5004. If you go up to £20 the conditions there are different, are they not?—Yes, of course one gets into a very debatable question. The landlord's right may be protected, but, on the other hand, the tenants, relying upon their furniture being immune from the claims of outside creditors, are more often tempted to incur debt, and, taken broadly, it is not a wholesome practice. There may be cases where, through illness, a landlord is enabled to be more lenient.

5005. An intermediate suggestion has been made, that the right of the landlord to sell furniture should at all events only arise beyond a certain reasonable amount, say £20, and that to the extent of the furniture as necessary for the family to exist, just like tools?—It is very difficult to draw the line. One would exempt the tools and clothing.

5006. What about furniture?—It is difficult to say what is the limit.

5007. About the collection of taxes with rent, you made experiments that have not always been on the same line. What is your experiment and what have you derived from it?—Well, after working with the present system for a few years, the directors resolved to try the experiment of collecting the tenants' taxes along with the rents, in all the houses—we then had three properties—the reason being the burden of the taxes on these tenants came on in the dead of winter, when employment was scarce and ill-health not unusual: the taxes were really a nightmare to them. We found that some of our very good tenants simply disappeared when the tax collector became pressing, and we lost good tenants on that account.

5008. Good tenants?—They paid their rent at any rate, and we had no objection to them. But they found by disappearing they could evade their obligations to the city. On that ground, and on the ground of convenience to the city, we tried collecting, and it still goes on in two properties, Cathedral Court and George Court in the east end, one being a new building and the other a renovated property.

5009. Cathedral Court having sixty-one houses and George Court also sixty-one?—Yes, they are exactly the same size.

5010. What are the rents in these, maximum and minimum?—I have only the averages here.

5011. That will do?—The average of Cathedral Court is, per annum, £4, 10s., and George Court £5, 3s.

5012. What is your highest average?—Greenhead Court, £5, 11s. I am speaking of one-roomed houses now.

5013. What other rents have you?—Turn to two-roomed houses in Cathedral Court, we have £6, 11s. per annum, and in George Court £6, 19s. 9d.

5014. Is that your highest average?—No, Greenhead Court averages £8, 13s. for two rooms. There is a much smaller number there.

5015. You tried it also in Ardgowan Place?—Yes, at the same time.

5016. What is the average there?—One-roomed houses average per annum £5, 4s., and the two-roomed houses £7, 8s. 5d.

5017. You still continue it in Cathedral and George Courts, but you have given it up in Ardgowan Place?—Yes.

5018. Why?—In Ardgowan Place, which is occupied by a more migratory class and generally, perhaps, a humbler class, we found that our tenants had scarcely ever been accustomed to pay taxes at all, and when we asked them to pay 3d. or 4d. a week in respect of taxes, they simply regarded it as an addition to the rent, and they said, "We can get another house in the next block without this extra charge." They began to leave us.

5019. Do you think you are bound to inform the tenants of the proportion of what you are getting as for the rates?—I think that is only fair.

5020. Do they ask it themselves?—They want to know the reason of any rise of rent.

5021. You would always charge a lump sum?—Yes, but I think they are really indifferent.

5022. Have you not found the same trouble in Cathedral and George Courts?—No, they regarded it as a distinct advantage.

5023. And they know what they are about?—Yes.

5024. Is any part of what you charge them for cost of collection?—No, we charge the taxes as nearly as possible to the nearest fraction. Of course, with a weekly collection we cannot go into fractions lower than a halfpenny a week. On the whole, we simply collect from the tenants what the assessing authority puts upon us.

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5025. You are putting nothing on them in respect either of cost of collection or of loss from other tenants?—No, there is no loading. I cannot hit it exactly, because the taxes are varying from time to time, rising unfortunately.

5026. Are you not, in this case, paying to the rating authorities money that you don't recover from the tenants?—Yes, more particularly in Ardgowan Place, and this was another reason why we had to abandon it. So many of our houses became empty, and as we had contracted at the beginning of the year to pay taxes for all the houses entered on the Valuation Roll as occupied at the date of the survey, we found we were paying taxes on a great deal of property that was empty, and it became a very serious loss to us in that property.

5027. Suppose you have a house which, when the survey is made, is occupied, and then within a month becomes unoccupied, and remains unoccupied for eleven months, you don't pay rates on that?—Unfortunately we do. The magistrates say we must go by the Valuation Roll at the beginning of the year.

5028. Is the 7½ per cent. you get from the city authorities understood to cover unlets?—Not unlets which are entered on the Valuation Roll as unlets.

5029. But partial unlets?—We don't get any relief.

5030. It is understood to cover losses and partial unlets?—Yes.

5031. (*Mr Howden to Mr Biggar.*) Is it not sufficient to do so?—No, not to meet the collection.

5032. How much would you put the figure at that you would need?—Personally, I think the truest and most just plan is to allow a reclamation of over-payments just as you do on the income tax now.

5033. (*Chairman.*) Overpaid in respect of unlets?—Yes.

5034. And in respect of loss also?—Yes. I would give the landlord allowance for collection.

5035. (*To Mr Mann*). That allowance, Mr Mann, should only be for the cost of collection, and the other two items, namely, loss and partial unlets, should be a matter of adjustment?—Yes, at the end of the financial year.

5036. That seems not an unreasonable idea at all. What do you think is the result of your dealing in Cathedral Court and George Court?—It works out quite satisfactorily, with the exception that we certainly should have some abatement on unlets and for cost of collection, but the principle is absolutely sound, and, were it made universal, our difficulty in Ardgowan Place, which has caused us to suspend this work there, would disappear, because the other landlords would be compelled to increase their rents or charge the tenant to cover the taxes, and the invidious distinction under which we labour would disappear.

5037. There are three possible ways of doing it. The first is to give no allowance at all and let the landlord adjust it; the second is to give an allowance which would cover everything, the three items, cost of collection, loss, and partial unlets; the third way is what you state, to give an allowance only to cover the cost of collection and leave the rest to be adjusted between the rating authorities and the owner. Why do you reject the first, leaving the owner to charge as found necessary?—The owner is made the tax-collector without any remuneration.

5038. He would make the tenant pay?—It would work round to that.

5039. There is a charming simplicity about it?—That is so. On the other hand, we have precedents in every other case for making a deduction, and the difficulty about the second method is that the loss varies on the class of house, whereas 20 per cent. might not be unfair to cover cost of collection and unlets, when you come to the well-to-do citizen, 7½ per cent. or 5 per cent. would meet it quite well.

5040. Have you fixed a rate of your own for cost of collection? Isn't it much greater in some cases?—That is so. There is the commission which the factors' charge. It varies with the frequency of collection.

(*Mr Biggar.*) In the first proposal, if you leave it to the factor to charge a sum to the tenant for having collected his taxes,—if you leave it open for him to do that,—you would open up a means of practically bleeding a tenant of a good property for a good house. He might charge him 15 per cent. Another man might do it for 5 per cent., and we don't think for a moment that the authorities wish the landlords to collect their taxes without paying them for their trouble.

(*Mr Binnie.*) The greatest increase of taxation would be on persons least able to pay.

5040*a*. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) You said precedents were all one way. The County Councils don't give you any allowance, I understand, in cases where you collect occupiers' rates?—I did not indicate that all the precedents were one

way, but those I know best are certainly in favour of discount.

5041. But you are agreed, aren't you, that a great deal in the shape of rates would be paid by frequent collections, not got under the present system, when the amount has to be collected once a year?—There is no doubt about that, in this class of property particularly.

5042. How it is to work out is quite a different question?—Yes, we have found that the tenants don't grudge—that is, apart from the exceptional conditions in Ardgowan Place—the 3d. or 4d. a week for taxes, and they are able to pay it. They don't seem to be able to keep a week ahead of the world.

5043. Is it the fact also that there are people getting relief on the ground of poverty just now, who would be able, if the thing was collected monthly, to pay their rates?—Yes, we found in the properties where we do collect the rates with the rent, that there is no exemption on the ground of poverty or inability to pay. Some of our tenants who are paupers on the roll actually manage to pay their taxes along with their rents, and in these cases, at the end of the year we succeed in getting back from the parochial authorities the poor rates and other taxes they have paid. Mr Biggar says these exemptions indicate the ability of the tenant to evade collection rather than inability to pay.

5044. In regard to poor and school rates, these are the Parish Council rates?—Yes.

5045. In the case of Cathedral Court and George Court, these are collected by you?—Yes.

5046. And 100 per cent. is the result?—That is so; there is no loss.

5047. The authorities collect in the other four places, and is the result this, that on the average of the four together, instead of 100 per cent., the authorities get 28·1? (*Mr Biggar.*) That is so, ranging from 7·7 per cent. in Provanhill Street to 49·5 in Dundas Court.

5048. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) So that even the maximum is very striking by comparison?—That is so. It is the power that the landlord has of ejectment that enables him to get his rent to within the small fraction I showed you had been lost, as compared with the ordinary tax collector, who has no power at all except selling off goods. In the case of rates collected by the authorities, (putting aside the tenants who are in receipt of poor relief), the percentages of the amount levied on tenants not in receipt of poor relief, which remained unpaid, are found to be:—Dundas Court 50 per cent., Greenhead Court 60 per cent; Ardgowan Place, 81 per cent; Provanhill Street, 92 per cent; overhead, 72 per cent.

5049. You say you have asked the municipal authorities for similar information regarding your properties, but have not yet received it?—I have a letter to-day stating that the matter is before the Committee.

5051. You can hand it in afterwards?—I think it will be valuable, because it will be a very useful table, and if my Company has no objection to showing their details, the rating authorities should have no objection to showing their success or non-success.

5052. If you get a deduction of 7½ per cent. from the Police Department, do you see any reason why you should get none from the Parish Council people?—No, there is no distinction.

(*Mr Biggar.*) The one has legal power and the other has not.

5053. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) I mean in principle?—No.

5054. In regard to water rates, in houses under £10 you collect the water rates—all landlords do?—Yes, that is, the domestic water rate.

5055. Is it under the local Glasgow Act?—Yes.

5056. Not under the Burgh Police Act?—No, a special Act.

5057. In houses under £7 the allowance is 25 per cent., and between £7 and £10, 20 per cent.? Is there any means of accounting for all these differences—no allowance at all from the Parish Council people; 7½ from the Police Department for ordinary rates; and in the case of water rates, from 20 to 25 per cent.?—There is no underlying principle at all. I cannot suggest any reason except that, in the case of the water rates, the matter must have been very specially considered, probably on some representation.

5058. Have you any material for forming an opinion as to which would be the proper allowance?—In the case of water rates, this does cover the rates on unlet properties. It is a special hardship met by the higher rate. They go on the previous year's roll, and many a time come on premises as occupied, which are not occupied.

5059. But if partial unlets are to enter into the allowance, then the percentage will be quite different?—Quite so, 20 per cent. would be too high for collection merely. It should be, broadly, the same rate of commission that a house-factor would charge for a house of that particular type. Mr Biggar states, with regard to the reason for saying the rates of the Water Department are fair, that he tested it in connection with Provanhill Street. We had an abnormal unlet, and the test showed that we paid water rates on £75 more than we had collected. We were really out of pocket in spite of this large allowance.

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5060. (*To Mr Biggar.*) Was it 20 or 25 per cent.?—Twenty-five. In spite of that large allowance, we were still out of pocket. We had paid more than we had been able to collect, but on the average I believe it is perfectly fair.

5061. You could not give us any idea, if you had got an arrangement for unlets, what allowance you would then need for the two elements, the cost of collection and losses?—Of course, it could be deduced from our losses on the annual rental. Our loss would be merely the cost of collection, which would come in Provanhill Street to from 7½ to 10 per cent.

5062. For pure collection? So that something like 12 per cent. would cover the two elements?—Yes.

5063. (*Mr Binnie.*) The landlords in Glasgow, I think, at the same time as they got this large allowance for collecting the water rate, had a special rate put on themselves, a public water rate of a penny per £ on every owner?—There is such a rate. I do not know whether it was proposed at the same time originally.

5064. There was a special water rate put on, called the public water rates, and that is still paid, a very much larger portion of the water rate than anyone would imagine, and there was an additional allowance made?—Practically a *quid pro quo* for the water rate.

5065. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) In London the rating authorities formerly allowed the large dwellings companies and other landlords allowances ranging up to 25 per cent. Recently these have been curtailed, haven't they?—Yes.

5066. What was the result?—Many of the large companies suspended that privilege to their tenants, of collecting the taxes, and allowed the ordinary tax collectors to do their best. I have not had any communication within the last two years upon the subject.

5067. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Biggar.*) What has it been reduced to?—It was formerly 25 per cent.?—I think they wanted to halve it.

5068. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) So that I understand the result of the London arrangement is that, while you think an allowance should be made, that allowance should merely cover the cost of collection and the other two items; unlets and rent not collected should be adjusted with the authorities at the close of the year?—When the factor ascertains his results.

5069. You say the cost of collection would be met very fairly by 7½ or 10 per cent.?—Yes.

5070. That is overhead?—Taken overhead, it should not be less than 7½ per cent.

5071. Do you think it would be better to have a fixed sum for houses differing in valuation, or differentiations between houses of from £5 to £15?—It would be very difficult. It would adjust itself in the rents. It might overcome some objections if a differentiation were possible.

5072. Do you see any difficulty, if it is thought desirable, that tenants should know what they are paying for rent and rates, in distinguishing the amounts?—I think it is very important that they should know.

5073. It is already done in connection with payments for stair gas and water rates?—Yes.

5074. The tenants know?—Yes.

5075. Have you got copies of these pamphlets?—Yes, we shall have great pleasure in submitting them to any of the members of the Committee who wish to have them.

5076. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Can you tell us, Mr Mann, in regard to the poor rates, under what Act you get repayment in the event of the tenants being on the Poor Roll. We have some difficulty in understanding the present practice on that point?—You see, in nearly every case in which our tenants get poor relief, they pay their poors rates and other taxes, and when we get repayment, the money is refunded to them every half year. I do not know that there is any matter of legal enactment at all, because the condition is probably not contemplated in any Act of Parliament. The money has been paid, as it were by mistake, paid by us on behalf of a pauper.

5077. Provost Keith, Hamilton, seemed to think there was no legal duty or right on the part of the burgh to repay?—It is quite possible that he was right on that, the money having been once paid. That has not come under my notice. I am inclined to believe that the collector in Glasgow who takes a strict view of his duties would not refund anything unless it was necessary to do so.

5078. I put that to the Provost, but he repudiated that as being wholly illegal?

(*Mr Biggar.*) I understood exemptions were illegal, but not to paupers.

5079. Provost Keith also dealt with another question as

to the case of a tenant whose name was on the Assessment Roll, but who left very shortly afterwards. The question was put whether the burgh could recover any part of that tenant's tax or rate from the successor in the house, and Provost Keith indicated that there were clauses in some of the Municipal Acts entitling the Corporation to come against the new tenant for rates assessed against the occupant at the date of making up the roll?—That is quite clear in the case of police rates in the city here, a well-known difficulty having arisen in cases of tenants changing houses between terms. Unless they arrange with the landlord or previous occupier they become responsible for the whole year's police rates, and probably the poor rates are in the same position. That is another strong reason for spreading them over the year.

5080. If the house is relet and the new tenant leaves shortly after, Provost Keith seemed to indicate that there was provision for giving a rebate in cases where the landlord paid?—I am not aware of that.

5081. You have told us that while your bad debts are very trifling, 8s. 4d. per £100 during the last two years of depression, where the rates were collected by the authorities the bad debts amounted overhead to 72 per cent. As matter of fact, I have been followed and preceded by the tax-gatherer to get his collections, and he is turned at a shut door where I could get in. I attribute it to the power of dealing with the tenant by ejectment.

5082. And probably the taking of the rate in small instalments?—Yes.

5083. I note in your *précis* of evidence that you use these words—"The enforcement of hypothec in a small house is the enactment of a tragedy." Explain what you mean by these words?—It is a pretty graphic expression this, but I remember once, perhaps a quarter of a century ago, when I was not so experienced as I am now, being very much dissatisfied with a small tenant and resolving, as an example to the other tenants, to enforce the law to the uttermost, that I carried out the action, sale and all, in that house, and I made a mental vow that I would never do it again. It really was barbarous and absolutely unproductive.

5084. What is the reason of that?—Well, the whole household goods are so restricted and small, and they are everything to the people. You feel you are taking away their life's blood to some extent.

5085. As a matter of fact, the price of the goods is out of all proportion?—That is quite true. The value to them is quite out of proportion to the proceeds. Mr Biggar says it is the broker that reaps the harvest. Of course, I always supplement it by this, that when the landlord has the power of ejectment, he does not need to exercise the rights of hypothec.

5086. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you still keep to your statement that you wish the right of ejectment without a sheriff's decree?—I do not think it is necessary. I do not think any magistrate or sheriff — I am speaking of the small house—is able to apply his mind to the detail. I know by experience of the very specious excuses and lies that are produced. It is not an uncommon thing for a sick child to be bartered about from house to house and a medical certificate got that a child is lying ill in a house to prevent the enforcement of a warrant of ejectment. The child is borrowed for the purpose.

5087. You would not object to anybody who had legal ejectment putting it into force?—I think if they are able to satisfy the landlord, there would be probably no execution levied.

5088. There is no such thing as poverty, where they could not meet the landlord's claim?—There is, but is that a reason why the landlord should pay for delay with them, any more than other tenants?

5089. No; but probably a reason for reasonable time?—If he pays his rent after that opportunity it may. I say he has no right to be in that house, any more than he has a right to get another week's milk supply. It looks harsh, but you must be consistent. Mr Biggar says that Mr Howden forgets that a landlord is not always absolutely unfeeling, and probably knows the tenant, by close connection, far better than any magistrate.

5090. As I understand your position, you are going to take away for all tenants the right of lodging answers as to why they should not be ejected?

(*Mr Biggar.*) Yes, that is quite true. They can get legal notice.

(*Mr Mann.*) I think in real cases of hardship the tenant would be able to find the money if the tenant wished to pay. It is generally my experience, that the more humble the tenants are, the more help they get from their neighbours, and if there is any real case of hardship, I am persuaded that help will be forthcoming to prevent hardship. The poor are much more helpful to each other than almost any other class we can come across. I am speaking in the interests of the tenants, because it is the unruly and disorderly tenants that bring into discredit all the tenants.

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5091. Don't misunderstand my position. I want to protect tenants, who have, upon grounds of poverty, some reason why they may not be able to pay at the time?—My answer is distinct. I do not see why mere poverty should entitle tenants to get credit for rent any more than for groceries.

5092. (*Mr Cox.*) The 100 per cent. to the rating authorities, I don't suppose you collect all that?—In that property I think we do.

5093. (*Chairman.*) You show your loss, don't you?—In Cathedral Court for the last year there has not been a penny of bad debt.

5094. (*Mr Cox.*) Suppose the landlords were to collect the rates all over, you in that case would not have the disadvantage of making your rent appear to be higher. Do you think in that case you would get nearly the 100 per cent. of rates?—It would vary according to our success on the general collection.

5095. (*To Mr Biggar.*) Take Provanhill Street here. Do you think you would nearly collect the whole there?—Yes, we suggest that we should get a rebate for what we do not collect.

(*Mr Mann.*) But that is not the point. The success of our collection of taxes would vary with our collection of rents.

5096. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Mann.*) What is your loss in Provanhill Street?—The bad debts last year were £12, out of a rental of £1287.

5097. In that particular property?—Yes.

5098. (*Chairman.*) What is the percentage?—One per cent.

5099. (*Mr Howden.*) Is that a bad property?—That is the worst. The year before it was £8, three-fourths of 1 per cent.

5100. (*Mr Cox.*) If you were able to collect within 1 per cent of rents, any other factor would be able?—If he takes the same precautions. Our caretaker is an important element.

5101. Do you think you would get the rates to the same extent, if not entirely, as you get the rents?—We would, but our experience is exceptional. As a rule, on houses let to monthly tenants and on monthly lets there is a fairly heavy loss.

5102. That shows the advantage to the tenant?—They can pay quite well. It comes off the weekly budget.

5103. (*Mr Howden.*) It is when it runs up?—Yes, they are not, as I said, a week ahead of the world. That is shown by their devious ways of raising a slump sum, menages, weekly pawning, general pawns, and such-like. There is no capital.

5104. You tried to get certain information there. This is perhaps not quite within the scope of the inquiry, but have you ever tried to make up the budget you propose with earnings of 17s. 2½d. a week and 2s. 0½d. of rent?—After a fashion. It is difficult to see how it can be done.

5105. But it has to be done in the city of Glasgow?—Yes.

5106. (*Chairman.*) They live from hand to mouth, so that if the 17s. is there it will go in rate or rent or anything?—Yes.

5107. Where with a big sum it can only be done by all sorts of devices?—There are menages.

5108. (*To Mr Biggar.*) What does that mean?—20 or 21 women club together and pool each Monday 1s. They agree to do this for 20 weeks. The first Monday they draw lots as to who will get the first turn of the use of the pool-money, and the one who gets it pays it up 1s. a week right off.

5109. What is the money for?—There are various things, but it largely goes in clothing, and the woman who manages the menage gets the odd shilling per week for her trouble, while the draper also pays her. It is a very ready means of getting into debt. Mr Mann adds that the woman who runs the menage is in league with the draper, and that it is a vile system.

5110. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Biggar.*) You can send an answer to this. In connection with the very great success in collecting both rents and taxes, I would like you to give us the percentage that the cost of collection amounts to, and the cost of collection such as a factor would do. You would have to put down the caretakers and the rent collectors and the keeping of the accounts and everything?—An analysis of our rental.

5111. No, the cost of collection. I just wish you to put all these things together. You have the caretakers; you have the collectors going round every week; you have the ordinary work of a factor in writing up his books. I see all the items here.—You mean for the properties as a whole. I can give it you individually.

(*Chairman.*) You can just hand in a table.

5112. (*Mr Cox to Mr Mann.*) Is this 3½ per cent. of

dividend after depreciation is written off?—Yes, we run the accounts in this way. Since the outset we have deducted from the rental 12½ per cent. to cover repairs and depreciation, and charged the actual cost of repairs against that, and to-day we have a surplus on that account of £2200—that is a provision for the inevitable depreciation and extraordinary repairs and over-hauling that periodically occur. So far we have found it more than sufficient.

5113. (*Mr Binnie.*) But you have never had to face depreciation, because you have never sold any property?—It is not to provide for fluctuations on the property market.

5114. (*Chairman to Mr Biggar.*) Mr Cox points out to me that in the examination of Mr Borthwick, the treasurer, he is asked about the 7½ per cent. allowance, and it is put to him: "You allow 7½ per cent. off that. Do you allow any further abatement if any part of the property should become unlet during the course of the year? *Answer.* Yes, we allow that. *Question.* Say in every six months of the year some of the property is unlet, you allow on that? *Answer.* Yes, we only charge rates on the period for which the house is let. Suppose it was let for six months, and he got three months' let only, we charge for six months, so that the landlord would lose the rates on three months. *Question.* His risk of loss is only a risk of not getting the rates from his tenants? *Answer.* The rent or the rates from his tenant?"—That applies to houses which are let by the year and which may not be let at May but become let at November. It does not apply to our weekly lets. We let from week to week. Probably the following Monday we are unlet. In some of the houses we have probably three changes in one half-year.

5115. You get no deduction?—No, they go by the Valuation Roll.

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Bailie M'Kerrell, David More, Robert Dunlop Tannahill, and John Haggo, called and examined.

Bailie M'Kerrell, Mr D. More, Mr R. D. Tannahill, and Mr J. Haggo.

5116. (*Chairman.*) You are a councillor and magistrate of Kilmarnock, Mr M'Kerrell?—Yes.

5117. How long?—Two years.

5118. Your own business is that you are employed as a miners' check-weigher, and you were elected to the position by a ballot vote. When was that?—I have been five years check-weigher.

5119. You are also a member of the Local Miners' Executive and attend the meetings of your local societies?—Yes.

5120. You come largely into contact with workmen and have a large experience of workmen's organisations?—Yes.

5121. Do you concur with the views that have been expressed to us, that the overwhelming majority of the working classes desire the abolition of the missive system, meaning the lengthened period between the date of taking a house and the date of entry?—That is so.

5122. Secondly, they desire shorter lets of houses, and, thirdly, payments of rates by instalments?—Yes.

5123. You say these are desired by an overwhelming majority. Have you yourself, standing for the Council or afterwards, found any number of working men who differed in these matters?—I have never found a working man who expressed himself favourable to the present system of letting.

5124. Or against shorter lets?—No, I never heard one.

5125. Or who preferred to pay the rates in one sum rather than by instalments?—Anyone I have discussed it with, favoured instalments. We brought a motion before the Council for the purpose of having the rates paid by instalments. Our chamberlain agreed to take the rates by instalments if people desired it.

5126. When you were having ward meetings, was the subject of house letting ever brought under your notice by hecklers or otherwise?—Yes, by hecklers.

5127. Often?—Several times.

5128. With what object?—Asking me if I would be prepared to support any movement to secure the abolition of the missive system.

5129. Was it that only that seemed to be in their minds, or was the question of shorter lets brought up?—The one implied the other. The abolition of the missive system implied the shorter lets.

5130. Was the prominent thing the abolition of the missives?—That was the most prominent thing.

5131. You were convener of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, and, on the recommendation of that Committee, the Council unanimously passed a resolution in favour of Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

5132. That was on the general principle?—We had a discussion on the details in Committee. There were one or two proposals made that, along with this Bill, there should be a method for ejecting defaulting tenants more speedily.

5133. What was the result?—That, with that amendment, the Town Council unanimously passed a resolution asking our Burgh Member to support Mr Cross's Bill.

5134. Have you any house-factors in the Council?—Yes, several.

5135. And on the Parliamentary Bills Committee?—One.

5136. What attitude did he take?—He warmly supported the Bill.

5137. So that, as far as Kilmarnock goes, both tenants and property owners there seem favourable to it?—That is so.

5138. Nobody would exactly bind himself to mere details?—No.

5139. What about the Ayrshire Trades Council?—They passed a resolution supporting the general principle of the Bill.

5140. Have you yourself known cases where the alleged hardship did exist?—I have known many cases where hardship did exist, of working men having to leave the town and being compelled to pay rent up to the May afterwards.

5141. Have you known cases where they had to pay double rent?—Yes, I know a case where they went to Glasgow and had to pay rent for the time they were in Glasgow and paying rent also for the house they left in Kilmarnock.

5142. Were these cases where they thought they would not trouble going to the factor, or where they had gone to the factor and used their best endeavour to get a sub-let and failed?—I have known cases where the factor refused to allow them to sub-let their houses.

5143. The sub-tenant not being in his case suitable?—I don't know the reason. I know cases of men who were victimised in certain employment owing to disputes. That took place and the factors held them responsible for the rent, and would not allow them to sub-let their houses.

5144. Were these employers' houses?—No.

5145. What are the industries in Kilmarnock?—Engineering is the principal.

5146. Anything else?—There are a number of weaving factories, cotton and carpets, but engineering is the principal. There are very few miners, probably two or three hundred altogether.

5147. The mines are some distance away?—Yes, the mines in the immediate locality have been worked done within recent years.

5148. On the other hand, you think that the proposed changes, while a benefit to tenants, would affect property owners in the end, and that on the whole, therefore, they are favourable?—I think it would affect them beneficially in respect that their rent would be more secure.

5149. By being paid in more frequent instalments?—Yes.

5150. Would that also apply to the question of rates?—Yes, I think there would be practically no arrears if they were collected in instalments.

5151. You think a large amount of rates now lost owing to the system of one payment annually, would be got if the collection was by frequent instalments?—I think that is so.

5152. And even if, suppose it were collected by landlords and substantial allowance had to be made to landlords for so doing, still in the end the amount of rates recovered would be substantially larger?—Our burgh assessor will probably be dealing with that very point. I think that what was gained in diminution of arrears would more than make up for cost of collection.

5153. What is your view, as representing the people you do, as between monthly and quarterly lets?—In my opinion what is laid down in the Bill is the best plan, to allow the people themselves to select the term they want to take their houses for, and by paying the rent accordingly. If a tenant wants his let to be monthly, he will just pay his rent monthly; if quarterly, he will pay it quarterly, or even yearly.

5154. The latter need not be considered. Nobody pays yearly. It will kill yearly lets under £20?—Still, it leaves it open.

5155. Would you be satisfied with the Bill as it stands and not be disposed to insist on monthly lets merely?—No; I would rather have it that way. I would not insist on the Bill as it stands. I would support the Bill as it stands, because it would be more drastic.

5156. Do you contemplate that if the Bill were passed it would be possible to contract out of it?—That would be rendered impossible.

5157. I am afraid there are possibilities of contracting out of it. For instance, under the present system you require a certain amount of notice to be removed from your

house?—In the colliery where I am employed, the miners are being compelled at any rate. It is supposed to be a free contract, but every miner knows that if he does not sign it he will have to look for work elsewhere. It is ejection for miners at twenty-four hours' notice. Miners are signing to allow them to deduct their rent from their wages and to be ejected at twenty-four hours' notice.

5158. That would not be affected by the Bill as it stands?—If they can do that with workmen already——

5159. Factors could not do so as well. That is just the question of ejection of workmen in connection with disputes?—No; but they can eject them even though there is no dispute.

5160. But if this Bill is to prevent yearly lets, do you contemplate that people are to be entitled to contract out, or that the Bill would involve no contracting out?—I would support no contracting out of it.

5161. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Did you hear Mr Smillie giving evidence?—Yes.

5162. Do you concur in regard to what he said about trades disputes?—Yes, that is the experience almost everywhere.

5163. Do the miners at the mine you refer to get paid fortnightly?—Yes.

5164. And the rents are kept off their wages?—Yes, in this Bill it would be an advantage to them in this respect, that as their rents are being paid fortnightly, instead of being ejected at twenty-four hours' notice, there would have to be a fortnight's notice.

5165. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you agree with the opinion expressed by Mr Smillie in connection with the Homestead Act, the same as in America?—I did not exactly take up that point.

5166. Do you favour the principle that, in regard to the right of hypothec, the landlord should have no preference over other creditors?—That is so. I think the landlord should take the same risks for the debt as an ordinary trader takes and should have no more privileges in that respect.

5167. Do you agree that the working class should be protected up to a certain amount of household goods against all creditors?—That is so. I don't think that his furniture, which is necessary for existence, should be poinded by any creditors.

5168. (*Chairman to Mr More.*) You are a solicitor and a member of the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the Town Council of Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5169. Since Mr Cross's Bill was considered in May last year by the Committee?—Yes.

5170. Was it unanimously agreed to ask the member for the Kilmarnock burghs to support the Bill?—That is so.

5171. At the same time was Dr Rainy instructed to ask that three things should be made clear in the Bill: firstly, that the owner was not to be liable for the occupiers' rates when the house was not occupied; secondly, summary ejectment, and also whether the landlord should not have the right of hypothec for the rates paid by him?—Yes, the minutes bore that.

5172. Otherwise there was general approval unanimously?—Yes.

5173. Was there any discussion?—It was passed without discussion.

5174. You brought up the question of evidence being tendered to us here, and the Committee unanimously approved of that?—That is so.

5175. And you are here in consequence to-day?—Yes.

5176. Did the minute of the Committee come before the Town Council on 12th December last, and was an amendment moved that no action be taken?—That is so.

5177. By a majority of one the minute was carried?—Yes.

5178. What was the view of those who moved that no action should be taken?—The view was that, while they approved of reform generally, they did not wish to be committed to details, and the Bill not having been discussed in the Council, they felt they could not give a proper mandate to members of Council to appear here.

5179. Was there any view in favour of the system being maintained as at present?—No.

5180. Or any cure for any grievance that exists, merely by reducing the amount of time between the date of taking and the date of entry?—I have not heard such a view expressed.

5181. You yourself, Mr More, have seen cases, have you, illustrating the alleged hardship in the course of your business as a solicitor?—Yes.

5182. In regard to what?—In regard to yearly tenants forced to leave their houses between terms, who had, of course, been served with notice to pay a year's rates.

5183. Was that in Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5184. You agree with what the Bailie said in regard to the industrial population?—I do.

5185. Are they especially shifting more than in other places?—I don't think so. There is a large proportion of the working men settled, employed all the year round.

5186. Last September did you give notice of a motion in the Town Council that it be remitted to the Finance Committee to consider and report on the powers conferred on the Town Council by Section 346 of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892?—Yes, I thought it worth while raising that point.

5187. The purport of the Act being to give power to assess owners in what cases?—I have the clause here. The object is to assess the owner.

5188. It is in cases of houses occupied for a shorter period than a year?—Yes.

5189. Apart from the value?—Yes.

5190. You have not adopted that?—The report from the Committee has not yet come to the Council.

5191. But in Kilmarnock you never adopted it before?—No.

5192. And that is under consideration?—Yes.

5193. Have you had occasion in meetings to have the subject brought before you?—The subject was not brought before me when I addressed the ward meetings. It is really a Parliamentary question.

5194. Do you think it is such an urgent question in a place like Kilmarnock as it is said to be in Glasgow?—Not quite so urgent, I should say; still, the Act, if adopted with the qualifications I have mentioned, would effect a great improvement. I think there are cases of great hardship, although they don't exist on such a large scale as in Glasgow.

5195. There may be other places with fewer cases of hardship, and more settled than in Kilmarnock?—There may be.

5196. What is your view in these circumstances about the Bill being optional?—I have the view, from what I have heard to-day, that it would be better not to be optional.

5197. That has not been discussed in the Council?—No.

5198. In Kilmarnock you have a great many removals. Can you give us a notion of how many annually?—I calculate about 900.

5199. Out of a population of?—About 35,000.

5200. What is the number of houses?—I think 8300 is a good estimate.

5201. The removals are not all of people leaving the town?—No.

5202. In between terms how many removals are there?—I calculate about 400.

5203. The greater proportion of them dealing with rentals of £10 and under?—Yes.

5204. What do you say about the limit of £20 in the Bill?—I think £16 is too high for Kilmarnock.

5205. Do you approve of a differentiation?—Yes, I think £10 would be a reasonable sum to start with. If it proved beneficial it could be extended.

5206. You would rather take the view that Mr Henry put forward of Glasgow?—Yes.

5207. Can you tell me what number of your total householders would be affected, suppose the limit was £10?—There are 4468 tenants whose rents are £10 and under out of 8300.

5208. To sum up your views, they are as follows:—

First, that the class of houses coming within the scope of a reform of the nature of Mr Cross's Bill should be those of a rental under £10?—Yes.

Second, that Clause 4 of that Bill should be altered to read as follows:—"The term of let for any dwelling-house within a Burgh shall be held to be the term fixed for the periodic payment of the rent thereof; Provided that where such rent is paid at shorter periods than quarterly, the term of let shall be held to be quarterly, unless otherwise agreed upon in writing for a shorter term." Why is that?—I think quarterly lets would meet the case, leaving freedom of contract for shorter periods.

Third, that in the case of houses of a rental of £10 and over, the date at which missives shall be signed should be not earlier than 15th March in each year. That you would propose without alteration upwards?—Yes.

5209. To apply to all houses above £10?—Yes, I would not bring it nearer than forty days.

5210. Would not that apply to all houses, whether above £10 or not?—It would. The question is not so urgent with houses under £10 if the reform in Clause 4 of the Bill as amended were carried out.

5211. There would be no harm in making it a general provision?—No.

5212. (*Mr Binnie.*) It would hardly apply, because you see you could not let houses that were to be let quarterly under the preceding provision before the 15th March. You must be able to let them all over the year. Some of them must be let before 15th March?—The date 15th March would not apply. It would only apply to yearly lets.

5213. *Fourth*, that the rates be collected by the landlord in the case of houses rented under £10, the landlord being allowed a commission as provided in Mr Cross's Bill. You have not applied your minds, have you, to the allowances under Mr Cross's Bill?—They were approved of by the Committee.

5214. Had you any investigation?—No.

5215. Generally approved?—Yes.

5216. Fifth, that the landlord should not be liable for the tenant's rates where the house is unoccupied? That would be either totally or partially?—Yes.

5217. He should not be liable to the extent to which it is unoccupied?—No.

5218. Sixth, that the right of hypothec should cover the rates?—Yes.

5219. Seventh, the tenants of houses of £10 and over should have the privilege of paying rates by instalments. Paying direct to the rating authority?—Yes.

5220. You agree with the general evidence we have had that there would be indirect benefits from shorter lets—absence of pressure of work, and not the same number of removals at one period of the year?—Yes.

5221. You think that under some provision or another the system of many tenants found entitled to relief should be preserved?—I think that should be preserved.

5222. Is it your view that whatever system is adopted the tenants should know what they are paying as rates?—Decidedly.

5223. (*Mr Esslemont.*) In connection with No. 7—"that 'tenants of houses of £10 and upwards should have the 'privilege of paying rates by instalments," do you think legislation is necessary to secure that?—Well, at the present time it can only be done as an act of grace by the Corporation. I would allow them the privilege by Act of Parliament

5224. You think it is not sufficient to leave that to the discretion of the Local Authority?—No, because I think the Local Authority in some cases is not favourable to it. In Kilmarnock we have agreed to allow that privilege; still that would not affect the case in other towns.

5225. (*Mr Howden.*) How do you arrive at the figure of £10 as sufficient as to rental?—Because it includes 50 per cent. of the inhabitants of dwelling-houses. Another reason is that the water rate is paid by the landlord on houses of £10 and under. Another reason might be stated, that as the landlord does not know in May what the rates are going to be, the larger the rent the greater the loss in the event of the rates being raised. Putting it at £10, any loss in the event of an increase of rates would be infinitesmal.

5226. What class of house does the artisan usually reside in in Kilmarnock. What rent do they usually pay?—I think £10 to £15.

5227. You would exclude all these men from the benefit?—No. I mean that is the maximum.

5228. But you exclude all these according to your information?—Necessarily I exclude those over £10, but you must draw the line somewhere. The migratory classes are to be found in houses of smaller rent.

5229. You told us something about the water rate being collected on rentals of £10 and under by the owner. How long is it since that enactment?—Since the water was introduced into Kilmarnock about 1850. They got this clause in their own Act of 1892 when the Corporation purchased the concern.

5230. Have rents risen considerably in Kilmarnock during the last twenty years?—No, not considerably; but the class of house the working man now lives in has improved. The same class that paid £10 are now paying £15. I draw the line between £10 and £15, as the tenants are more stationary than under £10.

5231. Have you any figures to prove it? It happens to be the reverse here?

(*Mr Haggo.*) I can prove it in this way: As will be seen in his *precis*, the amount of rates written off in Kilmarnock last year was £172. Sixty-seven per cent. of that was attributable to loss on rents of from £4, 1s. to £10.

5232. (*To Mr Haggo.*) Apart from the question of rates, it is on the point of people shifting I would like information. Could you get that information for us?—I do not see how I could. Mr More says he has given you that information in his *precis*.

5233. (*To Mr More.*) Can you give us the total?—Well, I can state that twice as many remove between terms who reside in houses of £10 and under as in houses of over £10.

5234. That is the position in Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5235. It is an exceptional position.

5236. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What is the present custom in regard to the payment of rents between £10 and £15?—I believe in many cases it is collected monthly, and weekly too. But the let is an annual let, as a rule.

5237. In these cases if this Bill was passed as it stands, these lets would be reduced to weekly and monthly lets?—They would be.

5238. I see one suggestion you make is that hypothec should cover the rates. Do you think hypothec is an effective weapon to a landlord in the case of houses under £10?—I do not think so. I am against the abolition of hypothec in the interests of the tenant, because I think ejections would be more frequent if the landlord had not the knowledge that to keep a tenant in hand he has the furniture as security for rent. If he had no security in the shape of his right of hypothec, he would more readily eject a tenant.

5239. That is not the argument available for the view that hypothec should cover rates as well?—I think that if the landlord pays the rates it should extend to them.

5240. In his interest this time?—Yes.

5241. But as regards the rent, you only view hypothec from the point of view of the tenant?—Yes; because it is a remedy, I believe, landlords are very chary in using. It is not often used.

5242. You may agree with Mr Mann that in smaller houses the hypothec is not a successful means of recovering rent?—That is so. I cannot speak from a very lengthy experience on that subject.

5243. At all events, the view of your Council is that the hypothec should extend to whatever sums the landlord gets from the tenant for rates or rent?—Yes.

5244. (*Chairman to Mr Tannahill.*) You are the Assessor under the Income Tax, Lands Valuation, and Registration of Voters Acts, and you are a Fellow of the Surveyors' Institution?—Yes.

5245. Your assessorship applies to north Ayrshire and the burgh of Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5246. And you are speaking here of the burgh of Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5247. The total number of houses occupied and unoccupied in Kilmarnock for 1906-07 was 8364?—Yes.

5248. At £4 and under, 5 per cent. of the whole; £4, 1s. to £7, 24 per cent.; £7 to £10, 24·25 per cent.; £10 to £15, 27 per cent.; £15 to £20, 7 per cent; £20 to £50, 12 per cent.; and £50 and upwards, ·75 per cent.?—That is so.

5249. The number of dwelling-houses in Kilmarnock that would be affected by Mr Cross's proposed Bill, which makes the maximum applicable to Kilmarnock £16, would be 7016 out of the total of 8364, fully 83 per cent.?—That is so. The number of dwelling-houses over £16 rent is 1348, nearly 17 per cent.?—Yes.

5250. Do you agree that up to a limit of £10 fully 50 per cent. would be affected?—Yes.

5251. Exactly; it would be 53·25 per cent?—Yes, the addition of these percentages.

5252. How do you stand for empty houses? Last year you had an abnormal number, had you, 457?—Yes, that is so.

5253. In 1901 you had only 75?—Yes.

5254. Due to overbuilding and slackness of trade?—Yes.

5255. The number of houses under actual short lets is not large, you say. By short lets, what do you mean?—That is on actual monthly missives.

5256. About 500?—At the outside, yes; about 6 per cent. of the whole.

5257. On the other hand, the tenants pay rents quarterly, monthly, or even fortnightly?—That is so, between 3000 and 4000.

5258. These would become fortnightly, or monthly, or quarterly tenants?—Yes.

5259. Suppose the Bill passed, would the result be that in order to make a let longer the period of payment would be made less frequent?—I do not think it would affect the period of payment much.

5260. If the period of payment was made the same as the let, and the landlord wanted to get as long a period of let as he could, he could make the period of payment in certain cases less frequent?—He might.

5261. What is your view about the usual date for issuing missives—a little later, I see?—February 3rd.

5262. In some cases they may be issued a little earlier than that?—That may be taken as the general date.

5263. Do you agree that the period is too long between the period of taking and the period of entry?—I think that is generally felt.

5264. It seems to be universally felt from all points of view?—Yes.

5265. Are missives sent out once a year to tenants up to £10?—Yes, generally to all tenants.

5266. Whether yearly or not?—Yes.

5267. When the rent is over £10 the missive is only signed at the start?—The stamp duty comes in there, having to pay the extra 1s. 6d.

5268. If the rent is under £10, and it is paid monthly?—The missive is only signed once, at the taking of the house.

5269. Have you any cases of forehand rent in Kilmarnock?—I say in my *précis* here it practically hardly exists.

5270. Except for undesirable tenants?—Yes, aliens and other undesirables

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5271. There is a question about the application of the word "dwelling-house," where it should include "shop." Have you some cases in Kilmarnock where the subject really is a house although there are some articles in some of the windows?—A good many; and it would be difficult to define what is a shop. It is often a house, with a few articles displayed.

5272. If the privileges given by the proposed Bill were extended to Kilmarnock, you think it would be hard to deprive people of that privilege merely because they put a few articles in their front window?—I think it would.

5273. You have the actual number of removals. Last year, as shown by the Valuation Roll, the number was about a thousand?—Round about 1000.

5274. You concur with the evidence we have heard from Bailie M'Kerrell as to short lets applicable to the smaller class of houses?—Yes.

5275. Have you any views yourself as to whether it should be £10 or £16?—I think £16 for Kilmarnock is rather high. I don't think that direct taxation should be unduly tampered with, but only where the shoe pinches.

5276. You think the shoe chiefly pinches under £10?—After the fullest consideration I think it does in Kilmarnock.

5277. That class is more of a shifting class?—Yes, they are. Their circumstances are perhaps the worst in regard to facing a big payment for either rent or taxes.

5278. That would be the limit. If a landlord wished to pay the rates direct, the same limit would apply?—Yes.

5279. Do you concur with the view that it would be a clear benefit that the rates should be paid by frequent instalments?—The same as the rent is at present.

5280. On the general question about the congestion at one general removal term you agree with the evidence we have had?—I think it would help to alleviate that.

5281. In regard to the rating authorities, you are clear that the gain to them, at all events, is indisputable?—Yes. Of course, in estimating what the annual cost must be, it will be more or less problematical until we have had some experience; but as I said in my *precis*, I have attempted a calculation, and it is easily calculated what the cost is to be, giving the large percentage of 10 per cent. under £4, 7½ per cent. at £4, 1s. and under £7, and then the 5 per cent. and 2½ per cent. Of course the question is, how much of that might be saved on what is now lost in the shape of reliefs and irrecoverables. I put the cost in Kilmarnock, leaving out what is exempted in the shape of empties and public institutions between the burgh and parish rates round about £700. I think it is a fair assumption that if the rates were uplifted in easy instalments a large proportion of that £700 or £800 would be saved to the rating authorities.

5282. Do you think, in the case of relief being granted, a great deal of that would never be granted?—A tenant by an easy method of payment of his rates would find that he could pay them, and I have mentioned further down what I consider would be perhaps the most practical way of granting relief by way of refunding. I do not think that refunding would be applied for in a great many cases where they would find a capability of paying the rate by the easy method.

5283. Do you think that would make a substantial difference?—I have no doubt it would.

5284. In regard to the limit I see you indicate something like £12, but then you return to the £10 on the view that it would make the other tenants' rates analogous to the water rate?—I do so very much. It is in the way of an experiment; and with a limit of £10 to £12, the margin is not very great, and considering it would make all the tenants' rates analogous to the water rate, I think the £10 would cover, to begin with, the large percentage that the Bill seeks to ameliorate.

5285. You say, to begin with, you don't keep out of view the bond Mr Howden made with the £10 applied to that period long ago when rents were lower?—No, I keep that in view; but 50 per cent. covered by the limit up to £10 is largely including, if it does not wholly include, where the shoe pinches worst in regard to rent and taxes.

5286. You think the effect would be, of any such proposal as Mr Cross's, that forehand rent would come to be prevailing?—I don't think so, unless in the case of the most undesirable tenants; that is, always providing the present law in regard to hypothec was not interfered with.

5287. Do you agree with the evidence we have had here, as to its being desirable to simplify the practical law of ejectment?—Yes, I think that would be fair.

5288. In regard to disfranchisement: you have figures showing how it stood in the burgh of Kilmarnock last year for the parliamentary and municipal vote in respect of relief, exemptions from or failure to pay poor rates on or before the statutory date 20th June. There were 366 disfranchised?—That was the number.

5288*a*. The details being 79 in receipt of relief, 115 exempted, and 172 failed to pay?—Yes.

5289. Then the two items that would be affected there would be the 115 and the 172. Of the 115 exempted, a great many would not be exempted or would not apply for exemption, and of those under the 172 who failed to pay a great number would find themselves able to pay?—Yes, by an easier method of collection.

5290. You think any legislation should make it distinctly clear that it is actual rent minus the taxes which is to be returned to the assessor annually, otherwise great confusion will take place. Is there any risk of that?—We find at present very often that the proprietor returns the rent plus the taxes, and we have often to amend the entry, perhaps on complaint by the tenant, after the notice goes out. It gives rise to trouble afterwards.

5291. Your only other observation is, considering the extra work which will be involved on the assessor in tracing tenants, you would also advocate that it should be made a statutory obligation on landlords or their factors to give the dates of entry of all tenants when making valuation returns. That is not done now?—No.

5292. What would be the effect of that?—Just now it very often happens, when making inquiry at the registration season, that the date of entry is 28th May, but I can quite see, under any alteration of the law of lets, that that would get to be a very complicated matter. The tenants would be making entry of their houses at various periods, and we would have great difficulty in getting at the date of entry; and in making the return it would be a simple matter for the landlords in a column perhaps of the valuation schedule to state the dates of entry.

5293. (*Mr Howden.*) In your evidence you give here, you complain very much of the congestion due to Scotland having only one general removal term day; and further over you favor a general missive day being fixed for Scotland to be brought as near the 28th May as from the evidence on this point might appear practical. It seems to me in the one case you are condemning a removal term on the 28th May, and in the other you are upholding it?—The general missive question would be greatly minimised if the system of short lets obtained in Kilmarnock up to £16, and in Glasgow up to £20, and it follows that the general removal term day congestion would get much less.

5294. Did you say up to £16 in Kilmarnock? Are you in favour of that?—No; I am merely referring to Mr Cross's Bill.

5295. You are not referring to your own opinion?—I adhere to my own opinion as regards £10. I am putting it generally. If over Scotland, in certain groups of burghs, Edinburgh, Glasgow, etc., the limit is to be £20, under the second grading the limit is to be £16, and in Police Burghs £12, I say that if a system of short lets is brought about by legislation to the extent of these limits the congestion will be greatly removed on any general removal term day.

5296. You don't think Kilmarnock should have exceptional treatment from neighbouring burghs?—Do you mean in regard to the general missive day?

5297. No, in regard to the amount of the rental?—I think the limit we have spoken to will greatly relieve the condition of the tenant whose condition it is meant to ameliorate.

5298. The point is that the group you are put in with under Mr Cross's Bill is a reasonable group as regards how they should be classed as to rental?—I should not think so. If you go beyond £10 or £12 in Kilmarnock there is no desire to be treated otherwise than by direct taxation. The desire, probably, if you go beyond the limit we mentioned is to have a restriction of the time, to bring the time of signing the missive nearer the term.

5299. (*Mr Dobbie.*) To deal with the practical point you mentioned about the house and shop, are there many premises occupied as shops alone under £16?—Oh yes, a good many in Kilmarnock under £16.

5300. And under £10?—Not a great many under £10. If you come near the limit of £10 you very often come to the kind that I say will be difficult to define, house and shop.

5301. But this Bill, assuming it was to be limited to dwelling-houses or dwelling-houses and shops, would there be a class of shop solely, of shop under £10, that would require to be specially dealt with?—I should think not.

5302. Some of our expert witnesses have mentioned earlier in the inquiry that there might be two assessment rolls made up, and that there might be six-monthly collections?—I think that is quite impracticable.

5303. Supposing there were just more frequent collections, isn't that merely a case of collecting the present rate by instalments?—Yes, but you have neither the machinery nor the power at present to collect before the time of fixing the assessments. You see from the beginning of May the assessor is busy in connection with the Valuation Roll. That is not a completed ducument until after the Valuation Appeal Court, say the middle of September. After that, where the roll is not a printed one, or whether printed or

not, the Assessment Roll has to be written from it. It means that the earliest time the rating authorities can put the Roll into execution is presumably the first or second week in October. So that the rating authorities have not the machinery to collect assessments before the middle or end of October.

5304. When does your assessment year end?—The Valuation Roll is a document from 15th May to 15th May.

5305. In regard to the question of franchise, I listened with interest to your view about the exemption on the ground of poverty, and you suggest there the production of a relief certificate at the close of the assessment year.

5306. That is at the end of the assessment year?—Yes.

5307. What date would that be?—Any time after 15th May. That is when the burgh rates apply to. It could only be, I think, by way of a refund, as I have submitted, without causing great complications.

5308. Would that be practical?—I don't suggest that it would not.

5309. In dealing with the poor rates, which are, I believe, up to 20th June, is it practical at the end of the assessment year to have either the rate paid or the certificate in the hands of the assessor who makes up the voters' roll. You see, it is for the franchise. How are you going to get these men to disqualify?—I must take the view that if short lets are to obtain, and the rates are to be collected by the landlord, we must hold that disqualification practically ceases.

5310. Even although ultimately the tenant, the voter that is, has to get this certificate, and get re-payment of his money?—Yes, that is in cases of those really deserving to be exempted. In any circumstances we cannot deal with the able-bodied man however much we don't want to see him going on to the voters' roll. He will be a very small quantity. The facility for payment of rates will do away with the number shown as having failed to pay. The other class really entitled to exemption, I think, can best be dealt with by way of refund.

5311. Still, it is a criticism of your scheme of reliefs that it would result in ratepayers being entitled to vote who might afterwards claim exemption under this proposal?—You see, we have at present two officials, the official collecting the burgh rates, and the official collecting the Parish Council rates, who is generally the inspector as well. From the Parish Council clerk we get a list of all paupers, of all who have been exempted from the poor rates, or failed to pay poor rates on or before 20th June. The only list I see that can now be available with short lets will be the list of defaulters from the Parish Council Clerk. We could deal with that, but we could never get from each individual proprietor a list of those who had defaulted in payment to him; and suppose we assume that it was practicable to get such a list from proprietors in the burgh of Kilmarnock, it would be open to the serious objection that it puts too much power into the hands of the proprietors.

5312. (*To Mr Haggo.*) You are Town Chamberlain and Collector of rates for the burgh of Kilmarnock?—Yes.

5313. How long have you been so?—Twenty years.

5314. We want an explanation from you about the water rates. You are under the general Burgh Police Act?—Not for water.

5315. Is it a local Act?—Yes.

5316. Of what year?—1892.

5317. The water rates up to £10 are imposed on owners?—That is so.

5318. Are the owners paid any allowance?—None whatever.

5319. Do you mean that they have to pay both the occupiers' proportion and their own proportion, or is the whole rate, as imposed, on the occupier?—The whole rate is imposed on the occupier, and there is a provision under the local Act that if the domestic rate exceeds 11d. in the pound, it is competent for the Corporation to impose a penny per £ on owners. Our domestic rate is 1s., therefore we have the right of imposing a penny on owners; but all occupiers' domestic rates, where rents don't exceed £10, are imposed on the owner.

5320. So that he pays the 12d. of the occupier, and his own penny, and gets no allowance?—Yes.

5321. Have you had any complaints about that?—None.

5322. All the other rates are charged to tenants, whose rents are above £4, and on owners where the rents are £4 and under, who receive 10 per cent. for collection in terms of Clause 344 of the Act of 1892?—Yes.

5323. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Does this section 344 fix the commission of 10 per cent.?—Yes.

5324. (*Chairman.*) Do you agree with what has been said that if there are short lets, as proposed in Mr Cross's Bill, it will follow that the assessments on all lets affected must be imposed on owners?—Necessarily so.

5325. You agree with Mr Tannahill's view that it would not be possible to collect by frequent instalments?—No, you could not.

5326. About the amount written off the burgh rates as irrecoverable, if allocated according to landlords?—Last year the sum written off our burgh rates as irrecoverable, if allocated according to rentals, would be as follows:—

Rents of £4, 1s. to £10 . .	67·3 per cent.
Rents of £10 to £16 . . .	14·2 per cent.
Rents above £16	18·5 per cent.

Over a series of years an analysis of this kind would bring out the percentage of loss on rent over £16 as the lowest of all.

5327. Previously what was it, roughly?—I did not make the calculation.

5328. But if the Bill was limited to £10, the irrecoverables would be affected to the extent of 67 per cent.?—Yes.

5329. Would you expect a very large amount at present considered irrecoverable under a system where you have one annual payment only would be recoverable under a system where the landlord collected by frequent instalments?—I think so, although I don't quite understand it; but it is quite the case that many ratepayers object to one payment. They seem to find that a grievance; it is a big sum of money, sometimes. I might explain that, as you have heard, our Corporation agreed to accept instalments. That is a practice I have followed ever since I became Chamberlain. There are not many who ask it, but I always grant it where it is asked.

5330. Do you think a provision ought to be retained for dealing with cases of relief on the ground of poverty?—I think it follows

5331. Although you agree in thinking they would be less numerous?—They would be minimised. A great many people just now are allowed off, on the ground of poverty, who ought not to be, and would not. Many who now apply would not apply; and some who now apply, and are let off, would not apply.

5332. (*Mr Binnie.*) We have got in Mr Tannahill's statement the number of houses that are under certain rents, but you have not given anything, so far as I can see, comparing the amount of rental up to £16?—No, that has not been gone into.

5333. It would be very valuable from some points of view that we had that?—I will make a table of that and send it in—houses up to £16, analogous to the table that Mr Tannahill has drawn up as to rent.

5334. The gross rental in these cases answers very well.

5335. (*Mr Tannahill.*)—Averaging out a case in the way of rentals, I estimate that under £10 they represent £32,000?—Yes, about £32,000.

5336. Isn't that a very large sum on which to lose 67 per cent.?—But it is 67 per cent. of the sum lost. I take the same loss, and I say we lose on rentals up to £10, 67 per cent. of it there.

5337. But what we want is the percentage of the assessment that you have lost?—Yes, I follow.

5338. I could not understand these figures, because of the others who have given any details of this kind have given us a percentage of assessment that was lost?—Yes, I took the total sum.

5339. You are dividing the total loss into different percentages?—Yes.

5340. But what we want is the percentage of loss you make of the assessment under that limit. About relief of poor tenants, I am rather anxious about them. The proposal as I understand from Kilmarnock is something like this: that the landlords should levy the taxes for the year from the tenants along with the rents, and then at the end of the year the tenant should apply to the rating authorities to be relieved, and they should then get a notice of relief, and the money would some way or other be returned?—Yes, it would be difficult; but that is the general line: it is difficult to draw out a scheme.

5341. But were a person going to an assessing body, and saying, "We are so poor we cannot pay the rates; we must get relief," would not a complete answer be, "You have already paid for part of them"?—Yes.

5342. And so the poor people would not get relief at all?—Yes, that is the difficulty you are met with.

5343. Your proposal would prevent the poor people from getting relief?—We put that in because there is no proposal in the Bill.

5344. But you are making a proposal to us that appears to be no proposal at all?—What would be a practical proposal?

5345. We are here to ask you?—Considering it from that point of view, I hardly see how you are going to accomplish relief in a direct way to the tenant except by refunding.

5346. I have not thought it out, because it was not my

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business to think it out, but would it not be a much simpler way to let the tenants come at the very beginning of the assessment year, and say, "We will not be able to pay; give us a line to the landlord to show that he is not to charge us"?—I don't think that would work.

5347. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Why is exemption got? Is it on the ground of poverty?—Considered on the ground of poverty, out-door relief carries relief with it.

5348. (*Chairman.*) Suppose a lady who let lodgings comes forward in the end, and says that she has not had a single lodger the whole time, and has only been able by selling off some of her furniture to pay the little she had to pay: she would still be in a position to claim that she ought to get relief.

(*Mr Binnie.*) But the poorer people of the pauper class could not be relieved, because the answer would be that they have already paid.

5349. (*Mr Dobbie.*) But it is not inability to pay the rate, it is poverty—being so poor as to deserve exemption?—It is on the ground of poverty; these are the words of the Act. A person may be in dire poverty and still find money to pay the rate, and if he can show that he is so poor as to be entitled to exemption, I presume he would be entitled, even although he had raised the money.

5350. (*Mr Tannahill.*) Any system that could be devised to give relief to the poor party is very desirable, but you have to keep in view the position of the proprietor. The tenant comes and says, "I am in poor circumstances; relieve me of my rates." That tenant is sent to the landlord, and the landlord discharges the rates on the understanding that he will be recouped by the rating authorities. The proprietor perhaps the next week lets to a tenant who is not impecunious, and straightway goes on to charge his monthly uplift of rent and taxes.

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Mr J. Ewart and Mr W. Tait.

Mr John Ewart and Mr William Tait, called and examined.

Mr J. Ewart and Mr W. Tait.

5351. (*Chairman to Mr Tait.*) You, Mr Tait, are President of the Airdrie and District Landlords Association?—Yes.

5352. (*To Mr Ewart.*) And you, Mr Ewart, are Vice-President of the same Association?—That is so.

5353. You are an ex-magistrate of the burgh, and an owner of considerable heritable property there.

5354. Have you two gentlemen been authorised by the Association to appear on their behalf?—We have.

5355. Is it representative of all classes of proprietors in Airdrie and district?—Yes.

5356. Does the district embrace any town?—No, wholly within the burgh. We are quite convenient to Coatbridge, which has an association of its own.

5357. One of the aims of the Association is to resist all attempts at unequal or unjust taxation of house property, to endeavour to remove the burdens by which it is at present unfairly oppressed, to give mutual advice and counsel in cases of difficulty, to protect its members from any unjust infringements to their rights, and against bad tenants, and generally to take cognisance of all legislation affecting house property. Has the Association considered Mr Cross's present Bill?—They have.

5358. At a meeting of the Association?—They did.

5359. How many members are there in the Association?—About 100, I think.

5360. In your view, would the Bill, if passed, have a serious effect on the district with which you are concerned?—It would.

5361. Yours is an industrial district. What are the workers there?—Mostly iron-workers in the vicinity of Coatbridge, residing in Airdrie.

5362. You have a large number of low-rented houses?—Yes, the large majority of houses are let at a low rental.

5363. What is the population?—Municipal burghs, 22,288; Parliamentary burghs, 16,288.

5364. What is the number of tenants and occupiers below £16?—4565.

5365. And your valuation is £81,945?—Yes.

5366. The total assessments leviable for municipal burghs for the present year, payable by occupiers, are 2s. per £, and by owners, 7d. per £. These are the municipal assessments?—Yes.

5367. Poor and school rates are 1s. 2d. per £ on owners, and 1s. 3d. on tenants and occupiers?—Yes, I see I have empties there, but the landlord is assessed for water rates up to £10.

5368. In the burgh you have at present 274 empty houses?—Yes.

5369. Isn't that large?—It is very large at present.

5370. Of your houses you have 234 lets under a £4 rental; 1982 from £4 to £7; 326 from £7 to £8; 780 from £8 to £10, and 969 from £10 to £16?—Yes.

5371. Under £10 what is your total?—3596.

5372. What percentage is that, Mr Binnie, out of 4565? (*Mr Binnie.*) About 75 per cent. roughly.

5373. (*To Mr Ewart.*) If anything like this Bill were passed with a limit of £10, it would affect 75 per cent.?—It would.

5374. From £8 to £16, there are 1749 houses practically. Are all these yearly lets?—From £7 to £9 and from £8 to £16 practically all yearly lets.

5375. What is the rent a working man engaged at iron-works comes up to?—£8 to £10.

5376. Above that, are there foremen, and so forth?—Mostly that and small shopkeepers.

5377. How far is Coatbridge from Airdrie?—From centre to centre two miles, but they adjoin one another.

5378. Have you a number living in Airdrie who work in Coatbridge?—The bulk of our population work in Coatbridge.

5379. For what period are the lets under £8?—They are mostly monthly lets.

5380. Have you any notion of what they are between £8 and £10?—Mostly yearly lets, and there are a number, of course, under £8 which are yearly.

5381. But to a large extent this Bill would chiefly affect up to from £8 to £10?—Yes.

5382. What do you find in regard to people paying £8. Can you tell us what their view is about a yearly term as against shorter terms?—I do not find any crying out in our neighbourhood for shorter lets.

5383. Has it been up in connection with municipal elections?—It was not.

5384. At Parliamentary candidates' meetings was it brought up?—It was spoken about, but not greatly taken up.

5385. Who is your member of Parliament?—Mr Murray Macdonald. It was mostly on the missive question.

5386. As far as you have seen, do you think there is any demand for shorter lets apart from the missive question?—I don't think so.

5387. What is the view on short lets? On what ground do you find that a longer period is a failure?—Well, for a longer period you will find that the tenants in Airdrie invariably stay on. In fact, some of that population I know to have stayed on as long as thirty years in one house.

5388. Is that dependent on the length of let? Is it not that a case of the superior class that they are moral and otherwise?—Yes.

5389. Would that be affected, do you think?—They would resent it coming round to getting monthly lets.

5390. Because it would rather get them into the position of those who have already monthly lets?—Yes.

5391. But if they were all made monthly lets, would that disappear?—The same thing applies to the Scotch drapery trade, with its instalment system, which has taken a hold. The good class of tenants resent people coming about their houses.

5392. Do you mean that there are places in Scotland where that applies?—It is becoming applied to Scotland.

5393. Have you considered that question, if the short lets are found to act in England, why they should not act in Scotland?—I have not studied the English question.

5394. On page 5 you make some observations about that, and point out that you think the comparison cannot fairly be made because you think the habits and characteristics of the people in Scotland are different?—Yes, I think so.

5395. You think it is not an accidental but a natural difference?—Yes.

5396. Have you any view about the necessity for speedier and cheaper ejectments?—Yes, I have mentioned that.

5397. You say you have not even as good facilities as Glasgow?—By no means. We have to go to the Sheriff.

5398. I hope you don't say the Sheriff is worse than a magistrate?—It happens during the holidays, and you are off in the holidays.

5399. Have you not a Burgh Court in Airdrie?—No, there are no facilities in the Burgh Court for ejectments.

5400. You have a Burgh Court?—We have, but it has never been done.

5401. Is the question of expense also one that has emerged?—It costs from 10s. to 12s. to take them before the Sheriff Court.

5402. Have you any suggestions as to simplifications and more speedy carrying out of the law? Of course, if the Bill is adopted we have a fortnight to do it; but it is a loss of this 10s., and perhaps two months' rent. It is generally two or three months before I go that length.

5403. You agree with the evidence that there is a grievance there on the part of the landlords?—Yes.

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5404. How do your rents compare with those in Glasgow?—They are much below them. There are two-room and kitchen houses. I have one myself standing empty: the two rooms and kitchen and the W.C. at £12, 10s. to £13.

5405. What would that be in Glasgow?—I hear them talking here of £14 to £20.

5406. If there was to be a distinction in the maximum, as Mr Cross proposes, you think it would be reasonable that Airdrie should be lower than Glasgow?—I don't think the working classes of Airdrie stay in houses above £12.

5407. Do you find any cases of hardship from a working man who has taken his house for a year finding, say in June, that he requires to change his residence. Have you had experience of that?—I have had no experience personally as landlord. It may be more so within the last two years, more difficult to get a re-let.

5408. (*To Mr Tait.*) You say you have not found it difficult. You have found cases of that kind where a man wanted to change and asked you to sublet?—Well, a few.

5409. What have you done?—In general cases most of the landlords either exempt them or let them go.

5410. If you have a lot of houses empty, as just now, it would be more difficult to get a sublet?—Yes, I have had two this half year already, and I have let them go.

5411. (*To Mr Ewart.*) In Airdrie there are 700 tennants exempted from the payment of rates on the ground of poverty, or other causes, out of 22,000. Is that about usual?—Yes, about the average.

5412. Do you think it is right that the power to exempt should be continued in the case of poverty?—Yes.

5413. Are you careful about seeing that they are not taken in in these cases?—Well, we are taken in: we are not free from that.

5414. You are sometimes pretty easy, I suppose. It is proposed that suppose the Bill was passed in substance an allowance should be given of 7½ per cent. on landlords of £4 to £7. Do you think that would cover your necessary outlay?—I don't think so. I have some houses from £4 to £6, but the whole give 10 per cent. for collection alone.

5415. Apart from losses or unlets?—If they will guarantee my rental I will give them 10 per cent. for collection. I would give that if I could get them to guarantee that I would get my rent. I don't receive it within 10 per cent.

(*Mr Tait.*) I have a number also.

(*Mr Ewart.*) Above that we are fairly let. In low rented houses from £8 to £10 the law of hypothec is not of any use to us, because there is nothing to take.

5416. (*Chairman to Mr Ewart.*) You referred to the universal feeling that there was something wrong in the missive system. What date would you have?—I mentioned the 1st of April.

5417. You say you would suggest that the issue of early missives about the 1st of April and the warning away on or about the 28th of April, would meet the situation?—Yes.

5417*a*. Is it your view that but for this missive difficulty we should never have heard about the short let difficulty?—Not in our district.

5418. That is really the substantial grievance into which the other has emerged?—It has emerged into it.

5419. Is it your view that if this missive term you suggest were made compulsory on all, it would be accepted by everybody as reasonable?—I think so.

5420. At present there is a difficulty in one factor doing it if the others don't?—That is the difficulty. The tenant wants a desirable house, and may look for one at the beginning of the year, and the landlords come in and he gets his house taken away or left on his hands.

5421. As to the limit of £16 rental, you think that three-quarters of the houses let in Airdrie are £10 and under, and £16 is quite too high?—Quite too high for the working classes.

5422. For Motherwell and Coatbridge, how do the landlords in Hamilton compare with Motherwell and Coatbridge?—From the evidence I heard to-day they are not to be compared.

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5423. You think Airdrie is lower?—Very much lower.

5424. You think Coatbridge people cannot afford the rents, so that the limit should rather be the other way?—Yes.

5425. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ewart.*) How many houses are there in Airdrie altogether?—I only took statistics from £16 downwards: I didn't go above that. From the Valuation Roll that number, 4565, was taken by Mr Tait.

5426. You cannot give us what percentage of the total houses are under £10?—From the whole inhabitants—well, take it on the average of four per house, you have 4565, that represents somewhere about 18,000 people.

5427. You have 22,000 inhabitants. I rather think there is some misunderstanding. You indicate in the notes that 75 per cent. of the houses were under £10. Make that clear. You were talking of the total under £16?—Yes.

5428. Then you don't think the hypothec is of very much value?—No.

5429. Provided there should be a more drastic method of ejectment?—Yes, that is what is wanted.

5430. Would you go as far as to suggest that there should be no warrant of any court at all required?—No, I would not.

5431. Perhaps your view is that any frivolous or obstructive defence should be brushed aside?—Yes, I do think so, because most of them are mere frivolous objections. I know of a woman who was to be put out, and she went and got a baby from some one, and said she had had a baby two days ago, and got liberty for other ten days longer.

5432. You are against the proposal to compound the rates. Is that because it would not pay the proprietor?—I do not see how it would, under the proposal Provost Keith made here. I was enlightened out. If the losses on recovery and unlets got taken off, I would favour it.

5433. Supposing for a moment, as a condition of the landlord paying the rates, say under £10, the landlord was to get repayment of the proportion of the rates for empty houses, for a proportion of the year, and, secondly, that the present practice of exemption on the ground of poverty was to continue, so that the landlord would not pay in any case where the tenant did not pay?—We are on a different footing from what I have heard here. Our Relief Court is in October, so before the half-yearly rent is paid they have got exemption of rates, and in the case of the landlord collecting rates, they would have that from the October Court, an Appeal Court, on the ground of poverty.

5434. Before the November term?—Yes.

5435. And if it were monthly?—It would be the same thing, before October.

5436. Not the month of May?—No.

5437. Nor even quarterly?—No.

5438. If there was this exemption practice continued, if the landlord got a rebate proportionate to the empty houses or the part empty, and, thirdly, if he got a fair allowance for the trouble of collecting, I should think any material objection on the part of the proprietor would disappear?—To a great extent it would.

5439. (*Mr Howden to Mr Tait.*) You told me that during the currency of the present six months you had two persons who came to you and wanted relief of their houses and to grant them relief?—Yes.

5440. What were your powers in regard to these, to keep your hold on them?—If I had wanted to.

5441. If it had been a less sympathetic factor than yourself he might have done that?—He might.

5442. And have put these people to considerable trouble and inconvenience?—He might.

5443. Were they wanting to remove from Airdrie?—No.

5444. Just wanting to shift?—To a better house.

5445. You agreed to let them go on that condition?—Yes.

[ADJOURNED.]

SIXTH DAY.

FRIDAY, 4TH JANUARY 1907.

At the Municipal Buildings, Glasgow.

Present:

SHERIFF CHARLES J. GUTHRIE, K.C., *Chairman.*

MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR EDWARD COX.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.
MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr Robert Renwick.

4 Jan. 1907.

MR ROBERT RENWICK, called and examined.

Mr Robert. Renwick

4 Jan. 1907.

5446. (*Chairman.*) You are a Depute Town Clerk in Glasgow?—Yes.

5447. You have acted as Assessor in the Burgh Court since 1885?—Yes.

5448. There are some explanations that we want from you as to the work in that Court. We have been having some evidence about it, and we want to know the exact facts. You hand in a report, dated 21st December 1904, being a report by the Town Clerk as to the procedure in cases of ejectment brought before the Burgh Court?—Yes. (*Hands in Report.*)

5449. How did that report come to be prepared?—The magistrates are always varying, new ones being appointed each year, and I thought it would be a good thing to have information before them which they generally inquire for when they are appointed. This was just to supply information to them.

5450. In addition to the memorandum which is prefixed to the report, you have in the appendix given excerpts from different documents?—Yes.

5451. Showing the practice and the statute law on the subject?—Yes.

5452. I suppose we may take it that that report is correct?—Yes.

5453. Ejectment we have been told may be applied for either in the Burgh Court or in the Sheriff Court?—Yes. I can only speak for the Burgh Court.

5454. Your experience is confined to that Court?—Yes.

5455. Is it the case that it may be applied for on account of three things,—First, on account of the expiry of the period of let; second, on account of insufficient security for the rent; and third, on account of the rent falling into arrear and a conventional irritancy being thereby incurred in terms of the conditions of let?—That is so.

5456. As regards the first case, namely, expiry of the period of let, there are two cases, in the absence of express stipulation you may have the case of forty days' notice before a Whitsunday or Martinmas term, which is required in the case of yearly lets?—Yes.

5457. In the case of houses let for any period not exceeding four months, you have, under the terms of the Removal Terms (Scotland) Act of 1886, as many days' notice as are equivalent to one-third of the period of let?—Yes.

5458. Is there a large number of applications under the first head, the expiry of the period of let?—There are not many cases.

5459. In such cases is warrant of ejectment given at any time after the expiry of the period of let?—Yes, but the tenant is usually allowed at least a couple of days to remove. We have two courts in the week. If a case comes up at the Tuesday Court, then the tenant is allowed till Friday; if the case comes up at the Friday Court, then the tenant is usually allowed till the Tuesday.

5460. When there is insufficient security for rent, the landlord is entitled to insist that his tenant either have sufficient plenishing to secure the rent or find security for payment?—Yes.

5461. You find that petitions coming before you have hitherto been confined to yearly lets and are comparatively rare?—Yes.

5462. There were only 98 last year in which about 200 individual cases were involved?—Yes.

5463. The third head is the important one, namely, rent falling into arrear. Now in that case, we will take first your figures for the year ending 31st October 1906. There were 5369 petitions under that head lodged in the Burgh Court?—Yes.

5464. Each petition included the names of six tenants or under, making 20,687 individuals affected?—Yes. Perhaps I should explain that although there are 20,687 cases included in that number, there are tenants who come before the Court more than once, so that there are not so many individuals as 20,687.

5465. You can give no idea how many individuals there are?—No, that information can be better supplied by the factors.

5466. Have you persons coming several times before the Court in the course of the year?—I understand that to be the case from statements made.

5467. Out of these 20,687 cases, 12,951 did not lodge any answers or intimate a desire to have an extension of time beyond the forty-eight hours?—That is so.

5468. After a petition has been lodged, is there always a period of forty-eight hours allowed after service has been affected?—Yes, always.

5469. In the case of the 12,951, what length of time intervened between the obtaining of the order of service from the magistrates and the warrant of ejectment? What is the smallest amount of time, and what is the longest?—After the expiry of the forty-eight hours, without any answers being lodged, the petitioner is entitled to go and extract his decree and to put it in force at once,—there is no delay.

5470. He gets an order on the Tuesday, and he serves it at once; he comes back on the Friday, and he gets his warrant, and he can then eject within what time?—At once.

5471. So that having applied on the Tuesday he can have the tenant out on the Friday afternoon?—Yes.

5472. Either by the tenant voluntarily going, or by getting the Burgh Officer to put him out?—Yes.

5473. That leaves 7736 cases, and it is only in regard to these that you know that there has been some complaint made. These are the ones we have to deal with?—So far as complaints are concerned, we have complaints on both sides. The petitioners complain that the tenants get too much time, and the tenants on the other hand almost invariably complain that they get too little.

5474. Are the 7736 cases, cases in which the tenants ask and get delay?—In a few cases formal answers are lodged,—perhaps about twenty cases.

5475. Does that mean cases or petitions?—Cases, individuals, because there may be half a dozen in one petition and only one out of the six, so it is twenty individual cases. Of course, that is only an approximation.

5476. They lodge written answers?—Yes.

5477. The others request delay?—They ask for more than the forty-eight hours.

5478. Is that done when the petition having been served the warrant for ejectment is asked for, and they come up and ask additional delay?—Within the forty-eight hours they come to the clerk's office and hand in their paper.

5479. Or make a verbal request?—They just hand in the paper that has been served upon them, and they are told to appear at the following Court, either on the Tuesday or the Friday, as the case may be.

5480. Suppose the order for service was got on the Tuesday, and they appeared on the Thursday and asked delay, to which Court would they be ordered to go?—On the following day, the Friday.

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5481. Suppose the order has been got on the Friday, and they appear on the Saturday or the Monday, to which Court would they be ordered to go?—The Tuesday Court.

5482. Are there other cases where request for delay is not made till the warrant for ejectment is asked?—The warrant for ejection cannot be asked till the expiry of the forty-eight hours, and any request coming from a tenant after that is disregarded.

5483. Let us understand. Suppose an order for service is got on the Tuesday, and the warrant for ejectment is applied for on the Friday. Suppose the tenant takes no notice till the Friday and comes up on the Friday and then asks delay, is it granted to him?—No, it is too late. We do not take them in after the forty-eight hours.

5484. Suppose the warrant has been got on the Tuesday and he asks delay on the Thursday, and he comes up on the Friday, does he get further delay?—When the case is called in court, the date of service of the petition is looked at. If it is a monthly let, then he gets delay till the eleventh day from the date of service if the rent is in arrear more than the current month. The period of eleven days is fixed in this way: we take the precedent of the one-third of the period of let as indicating a reasonable time, although it is not exactly what is referred to in the Removal Terms Act. Monthly tenants who are in arrear with no more than the forehanded or advance rent for the month then current are allowed either (1) to the eleventh day from the date of service, in cases where the month expires within that time; or (2) to the end of such current month if that period extends beyond the eleventh day.

5485. But why, because a man does come up and ask delay, why does he get more delay than a man who does not go up? Does he get it whatever his reason is?—In the case of those who don't come up it is to be assumed that they do not want any more than the forty-eight hours,—they either are leaving voluntarily, or are making a new arrangement.

5486. And the warrant in their case is granted straight off if they don't come up?—Yes, that is so.

5487. If they do come up, are any reasons considered, or is the delay granted as a matter of course?—The magistrates have considered the thing from time to time, and they think that possibly a landlord might, in some circumstances, be entitled to get a warrant earlier, but they consider that eleven days from the date of service is a reasonable time.

5488. Even although the man has no reasonable reason to assign?—The tenants generally ask this time to gather money wherewith to settle the matter.

5489. It comes to this, that whatever reason the tenant chooses to put forward, if he chooses to turn up, he gets eleven days' delay from the date of service?—Yes.

5490. Do you think that is convenient? Why does not the magistrate consider the reason assigned and apply his mind to whether it is sufficient to warrant delay or not?—The almost invariable statement made by a tenant is this, "If you give me time I will be able to settle."

5491. That is what we all say?—The magistrate thinks that it is rather unreasonable just to put out a tenant on forty-eight hours' notice if he has no other house to go to.

5492. Why does not the magistrate think the same in the case of the tenants who do not turn up?—Because their cases are not brought under his consideration. On that point you will observe the recommendation of the Municipal Housing Commission. They recommend that the allowance of that time should be granted to tenants whether they ask it or not.

5493. We will just take that. In reporting on the practice followed in ejectment cases before the Burgh Court, the Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor in 1904 recommended that tenants, without being required to lodge answers, should be allowed one-third of the period of let, except in the case of weekly tenants, who should be allowed not less than four days. Have you got that report?—You will find it in the statement that I have put in.

5494. When the eleventh day falls on a Saturday it is usual to extend the time of ejectment till the following Monday, I understand?—Yes.

5495. Take the case of weekly tenants, one-third of the period of let having already expired before the cases are called in Court, it is the practice to give such tenants whose cases are called at the Tuesday Court till the following Friday, and those whose cases are called at the Friday Court till the following Tuesday?—Yes.

5496. Does one of the magistrates specially take this business, or may it be any magistrate who happens to sit?—They take the Court by rotation. The dates are fixed at the beginning of the year, and each magistrate has his day on which he has to attend.

5497. How many magistrates are there in Glasgow?—Fourteen.

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5498. Is there a magistrate always on the bench both when the order for service is granted and when the warrant for ejectment is applied for?—The application for service is lodged with the Clerk of Court who writes out the warrant of service, and it is then taken to a magistrate for signature. At the time for holding the court for granting ejectments a magistrate may have another appointment; he may be at the Licensing Court or he may be from home, and in such cases we do our best to get a substitute.

5499. Who do you get?—Another bailie. Then of course, if we cannot get a magistrate, no Court can be held; but we have a great many people present, the factors attending on one side and the tenants on another,—we sometimes have 100 persons present.

5500. When no magistrate can be got, is the Court not held?—It cannot be called a court, but the people are there, and what we do is this, we call the names and announce the date on which, according to the practice of the Court, warrant of ejectment would fall to be granted. That is to save both parties the trouble of coming up again. Then, if no objection is made and both parties are agreeable, the time so announced is adopted by the magistrate who signs the warrant. The warrant is made out by the Clerk of Court. If an objection is stated, then the case must just be reserved until it is heard personally by a bailie.

5501. How often does it happen that that is done without a magistrate being present?—It happens every now and again. For instance at last Municipal Election the bailies were otherwise engaged, and we had one or two court days, but I do not think we have had one since without a magistrate.

5502. To sum up your figures, in the year ending 31st October 1906:—

The number of ejectments applied for was . .	20,887
Of these about 200 were yearly lets . . .	200
The remainder being monthly or weekly lets . .	20,687
There were answers by monthly and weekly tenants and applications for extension of time, numbering	7,736
There were no answers for the remainder . .	12,951
There were nine cases dismissed	9
The result being that warrants of ejectment were authorised against monthly and weekly tenants to the number of	20,678
The warrants extracted were	9,917
The remainder either leaving voluntarily or arranging with landlords	10,761

That is correct?—Yes.

5503. How long have you been in the service?—You mean as regards the Burgh Court?

5504. Yes?—Since 1885.

5505. Is it the case that at one time the practice was for very few requests to be made to lodge answers?—They have always been growing. At one time there were no regular courts held, but the practice, mainly at the request of the factors, came into operation by which regular courts were held, and they seem to have increased ever since.

5506. We have been told that at one time very few people asked delay, and when it became known that people could get delay, the number who came forward enormously increased. Is that so?—I think for a few years before 1885 there were no formal Courts held.

5507. But you say that the number of people who asked delay has been growing?—Yes.

5508. Why is that, do you think?—I do not know. I suppose there will be more applications, for one thing.

5509. (*Mr Binnie.*) We were told that some lawyers made a point of going to people and advising them that by lodging answers they were certain to get delay, and that ever since that class of lawyers had been in existence the number had largely increased?—Yes, one tells another.

5510. (*Chairman.*) The only other thing we want to know about is as to expense. You have given in your precognition a note of the table of fees?—It is as follows:—

BURGH COURTS EJECTMENTS.

	s.	d.
(*a*) *Lets of not more than One Month.*		
Warrant of Service—1 or 2 Respondents . .	1	6
„ „ —More than 2 Respondents .	2	0
Warrant to Eject—1 or 2 Respondents . .	0	6
„ „ —More than 2 Respondents .	1	6
Lodging Answers for each Respondent entering appearance	0	6
(*b*) *Lets of more than One Month.*		
Warrant of Service	2	0
Warrant to Replenish	1	6
Warrant to open Lockfast Doors	1	0
Warrant to Eject	1	0
Lodging Answers for each Respondent entering appearance	0	6

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5511. That does not of course include the expense for the burgh officer if he requires to be employed?—No.

5512. Do you know how much is paid if the burgh officer requires to be employed?—I cannot tell. The factors pay that.

5513. (*Mr Howden.*) I did not grasp your statement as to how long you allowed a yearly tenant in the warning away. You told us there were 200 yearly tenants before your Court. How long do you allow in those cases? You told us it was eleven days with a monthly let?—In the case of yearly lets there is an order given to either have sufficient furniture in the house to secure the rent, or otherwise to find security within forty-eight hours. Then there is nothing done until we get a report as to whether the order has been implemented or not. If the order is not implemented, then a warrant is forthwith given for ejectment. Some two or three days are given. Very few of these cases come back to us; the parties seem either to leave voluntarily or else to have arranged the matter by finding security.

5514. You have no set number of days, as you have with a monthly let?—No, if they failed to fulfil the order they would just get two or three days more.

5515. They are summarily ejected?—Yes.

5516. (*Chairman.*) I should have asked you this as to the expense,—the gross amount of fees collected by the clerk for the year ending 31st October 1906 amounted to £857, 11s. 6d., being an average of slightly under 10d. for each of the 20,887 cases?—Yes.

5517. Suppose in lets of not more than one month the full fees claimable by you are exacted, they would be as follows:—Warrant of service, 1s. 6d.; warrant to eject, 6d.; making 2s. That would be all, if no answers were lodged?—Yes.

5518. Then, in lets of more than one month, you have the warrant of service, 2s.; the warrant of replenishing, 1s. 6d.; the warrant to open lockfast doors, 1s.; and the warrant to eject, 1s.; making 5s. 6d. That would be the utmost, if no answers were lodged?—Yes, that is in the case of yearly tenants.

5519. Suppose it were the law that before delay could be got the rent due should be consigned, what effect do you think that would have?—If they had money to consign the rent, they would have money to pay it. The usual cause is just the want of money.

5520. Do you think that any such regulation would involve real hardship in a certain number of cases?—I do not think it would be workable amongst that class of tenants. There is a large number, and it is just pure want of money. There is never any unwillingness to pay rent as a rule—it is very seldom that that is the cause.

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5521. But suppose people had a good defence to the action?—If they had a good defence it would be given effect to at once in a summary way.

5522. How? I understand that when the tenant asks delay he gets delay. It is not a case of his asking delay and the magistrate applying his mind to whether he has a good reason for delay and giving effect or not to the request as he thinks proper after applying his mind to what ought to be done. The defence is never given effect to straight off?—If a defence is given that the money is not owing, then the magistrate can inquire into that and settle it right off, and then the case is dismissed.

5523. Does he ever do that?—Sometimes, but very seldom. There are only nine dismissals.

5524. These were cases where the magistrate applied his mind judicially on the spot?—Yes.

5525. And dismissed the cases?—Yes. If there is any special defence, it is always considered, but, as a rule, it is merely a statement that they are unable to pay and that they hope to be able to pay if they are allowed a little time.

5526. (*Mr Esslemont.*) It is just asking for time?—Yes. There are so many cases that the magistrates act on a general rule, and they think the eleventh day is a reasonable time.

5527. If any special defence is stated it is inquired into?—Yes.

5528. (*Chairman.*) Have you cases where the ground is bad conduct on the part of the tenant, disorderliness, or destruction of the landlord's property?—These are not grounds of complaint before this Court. The only grounds are arrears of rent, insufficient security, or expiry of the period of let.

5529. Cases on the other grounds would go to the Sheriff Court?—Yes.

5530. (*Mr Howden.*) They must go to the Sheriff Court?—Yes. We have not dealt with such cases in the Burgh Court.

Mr W. J. Wood.

Mr William James Wood, recalled and examined.

Mr W. J. Wood.

5531. (*Chairman.*) I think you have some explanation to make?—Yes. My first duty is in reference to that memorandum of which you have all got copies.

5532. That is the memorandum on behalf of the Parish Councils of Glasgow, Govan, and Edinburgh?—Yes. A question was put to Mr Cochran, who was with me in the box at the time, as to whether that memorandum had received the formal approval of the Council——

5533. Which Council?—The Parish Council of Glasgow, and Mr Cochran said that it had not been formally approved of by them, but it was understood that they generally approved of it. I am asked to-day to submit the fact that in the minute of the meeting of the Law and Finance Committee of the Glasgow Parish Council on 28th November last there appears this entry,—"Glasgow, House-'Letting (Scotland) Bill. In view of the evidence now 'being taken by the Departmental Committee, it was 'unanimously agreed to recommend the Council to affirm 'the principle of the Bill and formally to adopt the 'memorandum already issued and authorised by this 'Committee in May last." Then, following upon that, in the minute of the meeting of the Council itself on 4th December there appears this entry, "Law and Finance 'minutes of 28th ulto. read, and, on the motion of Mr Baird 'seconded by Dr Maclachlan, approved of." I think that is all you wish in regard to that. Then there were two statements which I was asked to send in on matters about which I had not got the explanation at the time I was in the box. I sent that information to your Secretary on 27th November in the following letter:—

PARISH COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, 266 GEORGE STREET,
GLASGOW, 27*th November* 1906.

Departmental Committee—House Letting (Scotland) Bill.

DEAR SIR,—I now annex the two statements I promised at my examination yesterday.

No. 1 is in reference to the comparison of the £295,121 at foot of page 1 of my precognitions with the £78,265 in paragraph 3 of page 2. You will observe that the first figure is the *total* levied for poor rate for 1905–06, while the second is the amount levied on *tenants* only for 1902–03. I now give also the rates and amounts assessed for the intervening years.

No. 2 is in response to Mr Binnie's request, and gives, for the year 1904–05, the total number assessed and the total amount assessed (both owner and tenant), also shows the number and amount exempt for unlet property (occupiers' proportion), statutory, etc. exemptions and irrecoverables, with the percentage that each is to the total. I am sorry I cannot give this information for 1905–06, as the collection for that year is not yet completed.—Yours truly, (Signed) WM. JAS. WOOD.

STAIR A. GILLON, Esq., Advocate,
116 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

No. 1.

TOTAL POOR RATE ASSESSMENT LEVIED.

Year.	Rate per £1.			Assessment Levied.		
	Owner.	Tenant.	Total.	Owner.	Tenant.	Total.
	d.	*d.*	*s. d.*	£ *s. d.*	£ *s. d.*	£ *s. d.*
1902–03.	$5\frac{22}{32}$	$6\frac{2}{32}$	0 $11\frac{24}{32}$	73,043 14 3	78,265 3 7	151,308 17 10
1903–04.	7	$7\frac{14}{32}$	1 $2\frac{14}{32}$	94,200 0 11	100,574 14 7	194,774 15 6
1904–05.	$8\frac{3}{32}$	$8\frac{28}{32}$	1 $4\frac{31}{32}$	112,016 2 10	123,667 4 8	235,683 7 6
1905–06.	10	$10\frac{24}{32}$	1 $8\frac{25}{32}$	140,666 16 7	154,454 4 3	295,121 0 10

Mr W. J. Wood. 4 Jan. 1907.

No. 2.

Mr W. J. Wood. 4 Jan. 1907.

STATEMENT giving for 1904–05 the Total Number Assessed and the Total Amount Assessed (both Owner and Tenant), also showing the Number and Amount exempt for Unlet Property (Occupiers' Proportion), Statutory, etc. Exemptions and Irrecoverables, with the Percentage that each is to the Total:—

Details.	Number.	Per cent. of Total Number Assessed.	Amount.	Per. cent. of Total Amount Assessed.
Unlet (Occupiers' Proportion), . . .	10,139	5·784	£9,846 9 0	2·361
Statutory Exemptions, ...	946	0·539	4,814 11 7	1·154
Paupers, ...	3,314	1·890	1,271 7 5	0·304
Inability, ...	12,248	6·976	3,807 8 11	0·912
Irrecoverables, ...	12,710	7·251	5,058 16 8	1·213
Totals, ...	39,357	22·440	£24,798 13 7	5·944
Paid, ...	135,914	77·560	392,205 18 8	94·056
Total Entries on Roll and Total Assessment,	175,271	100·000	£417,004 12 3	100·000

Note.—The total number of receipts involved in the £5058, 16s. 8d. irrecoverable was 15,063. Of these, 12,710 were wholly irrecoverable, and 2353 partially irrecoverable. The *amount* of these 2353 receipts, so far as irrecoverable, is included in the £5058, 16s. 8d., but the *number* of them is not included in the 12,710, because they are already included in the 135,914 paid, for the portion so paid.

5534. (*Mr Binnie.*) You give the amount that is not recovered in Table No. 2. Does any of that apply to the owners' proportion?—No.

5535. So it is all tenants'?—Yes.

5536. And the percentage of loss will be approximately just double the percentage that you show here, if we are dealing only with the tenants?—I don't quite follow you.

5537. You give here the percentage of the total amount assessed that was irrecoverable?—Yes, and that is wholly tenants.'

5538. 2·361 per cent.—the tenants' proportion—is only a half of the whole, so that on that the loss——?—I follow, yes.

5539. We just double this?—Yes. The owners' proportion is included in the assessment. That is your point?

5540. Yes?—Yes, that is so.

5541. Is there anything else?—Yes. I took the liberty of writing to the Secretary the following letter of 26th December:—

PARISH COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, 266 GEORGE STREET,
GLASGOW, 26*th December* 1906.

House Letting (Scotland) Bill.

DEAR SIR,—I intended submitting the enclosed summary of the attitude of this Council to the above Bill at the close of my evidence, but the questions put to me by the various members of the Committee caused me to omit doing so. I send it on now in the hope that you may be able to bring it before the Committee at the proper time, and that it may be of service.—Yours truly,

(Signed) WM. JAS. WOOD, Collector.

STAIR A. GILLON, Esq., Advocate,
116 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

House Letting (Scotland) Bill.

The Bill will increase enormously the facilities for removing.

It is based on the assumption that these increased facilities are called for, and will be taken advantage of.

It leaves the poor, etc., rates of the houses to which it applies still to be collected from the tenant under the present law.

The present law is founded on the lines of the terms of let then and still in force, and is quite inappropriate and inadequate to meet the circumstances the Bill will create.

Under the Bill, therefore, the collection of poor, etc. rates in burghs from tenants to which it applies will be jeopardised, and Parish Councils in burghs will suffer a serious monetary loss.

Concurrently, therefore, with the passing of this Bill in its present form, appropriate and adequate powers must be granted Parish Councils to obviate this loss.

The simpler and more effective way, so far as the Parish Councils' interest is concerned, would no doubt be to enact that the poor, etc. rates of the houses to which the Bill applies should also be payable by the landlord, but that would nullify the provisions of Section 19[2] of the Franchise Act of 1868, and Parliament would not sanction such a result being brought about by a House Letting Bill. The only alternative to this would be such concurrent amendment of the Franchise Act as would ensure the continued disfranchisement of those at present disfranchised, and this would be difficult to obtain.

5542. (*Mr Esslemont.*) The Bill you refer to is Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, as presented to Parliament in the last session.

5543. (*Chairman.*) There is just one thing I would like you to explain, namely, the two first figures. Do you understand that it is contemplated that the total number of removals in a year will be increased or merely that the removals will be spread over the year? Which assumption are you going on?—On the assumption that they will be spread over the year, and that they will also be more in number. For instance, one tenant might, with a monthly or weekly tenure, remove several times in the year.

5544. Apart from the total number of individuals removing, the cases may be more?—Yes. I think the total number of persons removing would be more, otherwise there is no real ground for Mr Cross bringing forward his Bill, if it is not that a great many people want to remove who at present are prevented from doing so.

5545. (*Mr Binnie.*) Not necessarily. Mr Cross says that a good many people who change their employment are obliged to remain until the following Whitsunday and then remove, but facilities should be given to these people to remove in the course of the year preceding Whitsunday. It is not, as I understand it, that there would be more removals, but that the removals should be made at the time most convenient for the tenants and not at the fixed term of 28th May?—I think that is met by the question that the chairman has put to me, that a person removing, say in June or August, would now have a facility for removing again, if circumstances demanded it, and so in that way he might remove three times in the year, whereas he can only remove once now. That is one of the points.

5546. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Those who are occupying houses at present on weekly or monthly lets have the facilities?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

5547. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you not think that there is something in the contention that has been spoken to repeatedly by witnesses before us, including the housefactors, that the house-letting fever which takes place about this season of the year has a good deal to do with the amount of the removals?—I would not think so.

5548. We have had it from a good few of the rest of the witnesses?—I have not heard what they have said, but I would not think so. I believe a great many would like to remove at some other time than 28th May, but they are at present prevented by the present law.

5549. You don't think there is anything in the statement that the house-letting fever takes possession of people at such a time as this and they go hunting for houses?—I do not think there is much in that. If that takes place at this time, then it would take place at any time the removal might be.

5550. Not if there was a greater facility for removing in the course of the year?—They would not all be looking for houses at the same time, but the fever would be spread over the number of removal terms. My only point is to point out the position in which we, as a Parish Council, and I, as Collector, would be placed under the Bill in its present shape and the difficulties that would require to be met in some way.

Mr W. C. M'Bain. 4 Jan. 1907.

Mr William Cross M'Bain, called and examined.

Mr W. C. M'Bain. 4 Jan. 1907.

5551. (*Chairman.*) You are President of the Glasgow Landlords' Association, Limited, and you have been authorised by the directors thereof to express the views of the Association?—Yes.

5552. You yourself are a property agent and heritable proprietor in Glasgow, and you have been President of the Association for six years?—Yes.

5553. That Association was incorporated in the year 1897, but it came into existence in the form of an unincorporated Association in the year 1862?—Yes.

5554. May we take it as representative of different classes of proprietors in the City of Glasgow?—I think so.

5555. How many members do you have?—They fluctuate. I should say that at present we have between 300 and 400, but of course many of those represent trusts which have large amounts of property. When any special agitation is on we are recognised as representing the property owners, and funds come to us, and appeals are recognised by even non-members.

5556. You do not include any factors who are not proprietors or agents for proprietors?—No, all the factors included are proprietors to my knowledge.

5557. The objects as set forth are the usual objects?—Yes, to look after the interests of the members.

5558. Has the Association taken a particular interest in the question now before us?—Yes.

5559. Namely, the letting of small houses?—Yes.

5560. When did it first take up the question?—I think in 1887.

5561. At your annual meeting?—Yes. It was brought up by a member; he brought up the missive question, not the question of short lets. He brought up the early issue of missives and that was considered by us.

5562. In what view did he bring that up?—He brought it up in this way, that there was some writing in the newspapers about it, and he thought the date was a little too early. He was not a housefactor, and he did not profess to know much about it. He asked the Chairman why it was that this was done, and he was told that it had grown up through use and wont, and that the real difficulty was that the warning period was so long, that you required to begin pretty early although it might be later if the warning away period was shortened. Generally, there was a little conversation, and it was remitted to the directors to consider. It was the missive question purely.

5563. At that time was the larger question before you, viz., yearly lets as against short lets?—Not at that time.

5564. Nor any question as to compounding the rates?—No, not at that time.

5565. So far as the minutes are concerned, the matter does not appear again till 1894, when the annual report bears as follows:—

"A letter was received early in the year from one of the District Liberal Associations, suggesting that the present legal warning-out day and fixed removal term be done away with, and the law so made that a let might be entered on at any time and for any period which might be agreed on by landlord and tenant: where no definite period is agreed on, or where a tenant has been in possession for a longer term than the original agreement, forty days' notice to be required from either party to terminate the occupancy. That Association also offered to draft such a proposal for legislative purposes as might be satisfactory to both parties. Your Board replied, pointing out that amongst proprietors and factors throughout the city they had failed to trace the existence, to any appreciable extent, of a demand for a change in terms of let; that there are a large number of houses let by the month, and that tenants generally of better-class houses would resent the request for monthly and quarterly rents or lets. The matter, however, was taken up by the Trades Defence Council, who stirred up the question in different wards of the city, many of which, it is to be feared, expressed sympathy with the movement without due consideration. A deputation from the Council waited on Sir Geo. O. Trevelyan, Bart., M.P., Home Secretary for Scotland, and in consequence thereof your directors forwarded memorial, and waited upon him in support thereof."

5565*a*. Did you understand that the District Liberal Association brought before you anything more than had already been under consideration in 1887?—I think so: I think that would be the beginning of the question entering into the larger phase of shorter lets.

5566. Observe this, you see the Liberal Association proposed that a let might be entered on for any period which might be agreed on between the landlord and the tenant—they did not propose that there should be a restriction on the period?—No, but that introduced the question of a different letting system apart from the missive system altogether. The agitation or movement—give it any name that will describe it—has always been called the missive question, although it has largely drifted away from the mere issuing of missives.

5567. Was that both on the part of the District Liberal Association and also on the part of the Trades Defence Council—in both cases it was the larger question?—We can only assume what they sent to us. We took it up to mean that.

5568. Who are the Trades Defence Council?—The Trades Council, I think it is. That is the wrong name.

5569. (*Mr Howden.*) The Glasgow United Trades Council?—Yes, it is wrongly named here. Probably it is not an inaccurate way to call it the Trades Defence Association.

5570. (*Chairman.*) You have a copy of the memorial that was presented by the Association at that date to Sir George Trevelyan?—Yes, I can hand it in if it is of any use.

5571. You have referred to the question having been always called the missive question and still called that. I suppose even that has never been an accurate expression,—the mere granting of missives in itself, as distinguished from a verbal contract, has not been objected to?—I think the "missive question" originally did describe it accurately enough in so far as it meant that the period was to be altered.

5572. But it did not describe it accurately, if it meant that there was an objection to missives as distinguished from verbal contracts?—No, we always understood it to mean the missive question.

5573. That is to say, the way and the time at which missives are executed?—I follow the point now. There is the other system, the arles system, but that goes along with the missive question.

5574. It was not the custom of having written contracts that was objected to: it was the period at which the written contract was entered into?—The period at which you were asked to sign it. That was the missive question as we understood it.

5575. When Mr Provand's Bill was introduced in 1890, was it considered by your Association?—Yes, I think so; but we had no special mention of it. We talked about it at our meetings, but we did not forward any special memorial about it.

5576. Then in 1894 we know that Mr Cross introduced his Bill for the first time, and he introduced subsequent Bills altered to some extent. You have had these before you from time to time?—Yes.

5577. And in particular the principle of the present Bill, viz., to substitute for the present custom of letting houses by the year, a system whereby the duration of the lease should be corresponding with the term fixed for the payment of the rent?—Yes, we have considered that. I think it has been three times before Parliament.

5578. And you have had in view the differentiation in rent between the different classes of property?—Yes.

5579. You have kept before you Clause 4, the main clause as to the term of let?—Yes.

5580. What does your Association say about that proposal?—We think, in the class of house dealt with, it would be impossible or very difficult for people to enter into a contract for a year if they desired it, as many do desire, for reasons which I think have been stated, and which I might emphasise. It is a superior class of houses, even of the smaller houses, of £12 and under that are let by the year, and the large number of houses which are let by the month are older houses and not such a good class of house. There are undoubtedly working men who want the better class of houses, and they are quite prepared to take them by the year. Now this would prevent that being done.

5581. In the first place, it would, of course, interfere with freedom of contract?—Yes.

5582. Is that because of this,—although the Bill seems not to interfere with freedom of contract, it does so,—it allows people to enter into any term of let corresponding with the term of payment, but practically there are no payments once a year?—That is so; no rents are paid by the year, but if you wished to take a house by the year, then under this Bill you would require to pay by the year, and to pay in advance.

5583. Therefore the practical result would be to kill yearly lets?—Yes.

5584. In regard to yearly lets, to what extent are there payments for houses under £20 half-yearly?—Houses taken by the year and the rent paid half-yearly?

5585. Yes, are there any number?—Yes, there is a small proportion, although the tendency nowadays is to make the payment quarterly. I could not give the exact figure.

5586. It is a small number?—Yes, it is getting smaller. The tendency is to collect rents quarterly.

5587. Will there be 10 per cent. that will pay half-yearly?—It depends to some extent on the locality. Take Pollokshields: I don't know of any quarterly payments there, although there are rents of under £20 there. It depends on the district.

5588. That must be so, because some witnesses say that they know of none paid half-yearly, and in other districts we have had witnesses who say that they are quite familiar with half-yearly payments?—That is so.

5589. You cannot tell what it is all over?—It is largely a question of locality, and it also is largely a question of the position of the tenant. Some tenants have sons at sea, or they get their money from a distance, and even in a house of £10 they prefer to pay their rent half-yearly. Perhaps they have a pension,—a woman, for instance, gets a pension from the police fund; it is paid to her half-yearly, and she pays her rent half-yearly.

5590. Take the ordinary working man getting paid weekly,—is there any considerable proportion of such men in houses under £20 a year at yearly lets that pay half-yearly?—I would say that there are very few working men who pay half-yearly.

5591. That is the point. What we want to get at is this,—it is quite clear that this Bill would kill yearly lets: would it also kill half-yearly lets for the ordinary working man getting paid weekly or fortnightly?—There are very few of these paid half-yearly.

5592. (*Mr Esslemont.*) I understood Mr M'Bain to say that there were no half-yearly lets?—That is so, but I am now speaking of half-yearly payments.

5593. (*Chairman.*) We want to get at the effect of this Bill. Does it come to this, that in the case of working men getting paid in the ordinary way, weekly or fortnightly, in houses under £20, very few of them who have a yearly let pay half-yearly?—That is so.

5594. They pay quarterly or monthly?—Yes, the better class pay quarterly, and the class who are not considered quite so good pay monthly.

5595. When you say the better class, would that also come to this, that the nearer you come to the £20 the proportion will be larger of those who pay quarterly?—The nearer you come to £20, the larger will be the proportion of those who pay half-yearly.

5596. But as between quarterly and monthly, the nearer you come to £20 the larger will be the proportion of quarterly payments?—Yes, the higher the rental the longer the term of payment.

5597. Does that also vary with the district?—It varies with the district and with the kind of property. I don't know any proprietor who would put monthly tenants into a new property of room and kitchen and single-apartment houses,—which is a very common property in Glasgow. He wants yearly tenants with quarterly payments, because there would be more fixity about it.

5598. And less trouble of collection?—Yes.

5599. Have you any notion what would be the comparative number paying quarterly and monthly with annual lets of houses between £15 and £20?—In regard to houses over £15, there would be none paying monthly unless in rare cases, cases of men who draw their salaries once a month, and who say that they would rather pay monthly; but that is a very exceptional thing.

5600. Take houses between £10 and £15; what would be the proportions paying quarterly and monthly?—The proportion paying monthly would be very small; the larger proportion will be quarterly payments.

5601. And between £5 and £10?—They are all monthly.

5602. They are just the other way?—Yes, unless in a case of single-apartment houses in the newer kind of property, where there is just one single-apartment house in the middle, and a room and kitchen on either side. A superior tenant is wanted who will take that house by the year and pay quarterly.

5603. Under £10 the immense proportion are monthly payments, and above £10 the immense proportion are quarterly payments?—Yes.

5604. And when you come to the £20 houses?—They become half-yearly. It varies with the district.

5605. I thought you told us that there were practically no half-yearly payments in the case of ordinary working men?—That is so.

5606. It is only working men that we are dealing with here?—I have very little experience of working men occupying houses of £20 or near that. These are cases where they have families grown up, and they have sources of income other than their own wages.

5607. You are now talking of Glasgow?—Yes.

5608. Take the case of a working man, not a foreman, who has no wage-earning children. What would you say was a fair limit to place on the rent that he would pay?—You have them just now in the newest up-to-date room and kitchen houses with a range at £16, but these are very superior working men, men you can depend upon to devote their wages to the best use and have some aim in life.

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5609. Would you say £15 in the ordinary case?—Yes, but, of course, there are exceptions the other way.

5610. You told us that the practical effect of this Bill was to interfere with freedom of contract. You said there was a large number of working men who valued the security afforded by a yearly tenure?—Yes, that is my experience.

5611. What do you derive that view from? We have had a very large representation from working men and their associations who have all said the opposite?—I think my view is derived from the very clear and, I think, natural way of looking at it. You have got to take the experience of other cities besides Glasgow. We had a strike on the Clyde lately which affected not only the men on strike but also the allied trades. We had to wait for the men in yearly houses, and we were content to wait till the strike was over and then take the rents in instalments. In the case of monthly tenants, very many of them were ejected. I find that working men do value the security of tenure. They may have illness or they may be out of work, or there may be a strike, but they can hold on to their houses and the factor will be content, if he is otherwise satisfied with their character, to wait, and he does wait. That is one thing that operates very greatly in the fixity of tenure. Then there is the character of the house. There is still a large number of men who take some pride in their houses. They get a house to their mind in a certain locality and they like to keep it in a clean, tidy condition. But I think what operates with them is this, that they are liable to be out of work, they are liable to sickness, and there are occasional strikes, and being a yearly let they have a security that they would not otherwise possess if what they had was a monthly let.

5612. Are these the better class of working men as distinguished from the shifting and improvident class?—Yes.

5613. Your observations apply to them?—They apply to working men who are anxious to pay their way.

5614. They are the better class?—Yes.

5615. Have they, to your knowledge, given any public utterance at ward meetings or parliamentary meetings by passing any resolution in favour of this Bill,—have they given utterance to these views anywhere?—I think indirectly they have. They have done so here. Reading from the newspapers, I gather that they have said that they are very anxious to have fixity of tenure, but they add a proviso that they want to be able to quit on a month's notice. That is wanting to eat their cake and have it.

5616. But they have added that they think that by respectable conduct and punctual payment they achieve security of tenure even although the let be for a month or a quarter?—But if they do not take their houses by the year and they are unable to pay through causes beyond their reach, then they have no security of tenure; they are liable to be ejected. I understand that at all the public meetings there has been some little confusion. I find from my experience that they all think that this is a question of shortening the missives. All these working men, Mr Smillie and the others, want fixity of tenure, but they want to be able to quit on a month's notice. What about the hardship on the man who is left with his house empty

5617. You think there is confusion in many cases between two questions, the missive question and the question of short lets, which, as you say, are separate questions?—Yes.

5618. In addition, do you think that those who are in favour of short lets are proceeding on the assumption that there will be no rise in rents consequent thereon?—Yes, they never seem to think of that.

5619. That, in your view, is a very important question?—Yes.

5620. That is to say, many people might be in favour of short lets if the rents were not to be raised, but they would not be in favour if it was to involve a raising of the rent?—I am afraid a great many people never seem to think that housing is a business and a form of investment. House owners want a wage from it; they want something after everything is paid, and they find it increasingly difficult to get it.

5621. What do you say about the grievances? Take first the missive question. Do you agree with the view that has been generally expressed, that the period might fairly be shortened before 28th May?—I think so, very materially shortened.

5622. Will you give us your views on that and tell us what you understand is the practice in Glasgow?—The practice in Glasgow for several years past has been to issue them early in January. All the missives for working men's houses will be out about the middle of January. That

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proceeding is based on this, that you require to know the market before the warning-away period comes on.

5623. How far back do you go in your experience?—About twenty-two years.

5624. Has there been any alteration in that procedure?—Four or five years ago missives were sent out a little earlier, because at that time the property market was booming and there were more tenants wanting houses than there were houses for tenants. Now it is the other way; it is difficult to get houses let, there are so many empty houses. There is no difficulty as regards tenants getting houses, and therefore it has cured itself. There is no use sending out missives just now. It has come back again to the old system, but it is not quite so early.

5625. In point of fact, what is about the last date that the tenants have to say whether they are going to remain or not?—I believe I said four or five years ago, when the property market was booming, missives were asked to be returned as early as 21st January—I think that was about the date. I personally never asked them to be returned any earlier than Candlemas.

5626. How is it now?—They are put out later now. I cannot speak for all the factors of Glasgow, but I think in many cases they will be wanting the missives back when they go round for the quarter's rent at Candlemas.

5627. I suppose there is no doubt that there are inconveniencies and drawbacks connected with that system?—While on that subject I would say that we drafted a one clause Bill. We were quite willing to have the missives put back; it would have suited us very much better. It would be better to have the Candlemas collection of rents over before the re-arrangement came on, and for that purpose we thought that this absurd system of requiring to tell a man who had already given up his house that he had to go away forty days before 15th May or fifty-three days before the removal term should be done away with. That system was framed in the interest of fixity of security. We thought an alteration must be made, and we framed a Bill which would result in the issuing of missives being materially altered. The following is the Bill:—

A Bill to Amend the Law relating to Removal from Houses in Scotland.

Be it enacted, etc.:—

I. This Act may be cited as the Removal Notices (Scotland) Act 1906, and shall extend to Scotland only.

II. In this Act, the expressions "lease" and "burgh" shall have the same meanings respectively as in Section 3 of the Removal Terms (Scotland) Act 1886, and the expression "house" shall mean a dwelling-house, shop, or other building and their appurtenances.

III. In the case of a house within burgh, a lease of which for a period of not less than one year and not more than two years having a Whitsunday ish shall have been entered into after the passing of this Act, notice of warning away shall be valid and effectual if given not later than twenty-one days before the date of removal, and law, custom, or bargain to the contrary notwithstanding.

IV. This Act shall not apply to a dwelling-house let along with land for agricultural or other purposes.

Our Association had further arranged that if this Bill could have been pushed through we would have acted hand in hand with the Corporation of Glasgow in issuing a recommendation to the citizens that the missives should not be issued earlier than a certain date. We thought that a recommendation coming from the Corporation of Glasgow, as it came in previous years from the Corporation of Edinburgh, would have acted as well in Glasgow as in Edinburgh.

5628. Did you consider the other proposal that has been made to us by certain persons, namely, that there should be a restriction on the period within which it should be illegal to take a house before 28th May?—Yes, but our Association has never approved of making it a crime for a man to take a house or for another man to let a house.

5629. Your idea is that there might be a recommendation issued to that effect?—Yes, as was done in Edinburgh. There was a recommendation from the Corporation which was a very prominent factor in influencing public opinion. Our Association would have got its members to do it also, to put back the date of issuing much later if the warning away was altered.

5630. You think that the passing of a Bill such as you have handed in, coupled with a recommendation by the Corporation, would have removed the admitted inconvenience arising from the present system?—That is our opinion.

5631. Your view is that if the missive grievance was removed, then practically in substance this agitation would be met?—That is my opinion. It floated in on the missives, and it is called the missive question.

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5632. Now we come to the question as to the short lets and the alleged inconvenience. What is your experience in regard to houses under £20, owing to the fact that there is practically only one removal term in the year?—Do you mean the number of cases of people who find they have to remove and find this stand in their way?

5633. Yes?—That is a matter that our Association have had under their consideration for quite a number of years. Personally, I have made inquiry of members who are large property owners—the largest in the city—and I have had my own experience. I find that the number of *bona fide* cases of people actually wanting to leave the city for work elsewhere, in contra-distinction to people who say they want to leave the city and simply go to the next street, is a very small percentage,—I would not put it higher than 3 per cent. I want to qualify that by this: I should say that this 3 per cent. of people who want to remove, or who do remove, during the yearly let is divided into two classes,—a small percentage of the 3 per cent. who honestly come forward and give you notice; and a larger percentage of the 3 per cent. who go away and say nothing about it,—that simply remove and give you no notice; you find the house is locked up, and the keys away, and you have some little trouble. The door is locked, and the neighbours tell you that the furniture has been taken away by train, but still you have no legal right to enter that house, and a considerable time has to elapse. You have then to get a joiner to open the door. So I am not inclined to put the number of cases where changes are made during the year any higher than 3 per cent., and I divide that 3 per cent. into two classes, a small number who honestly come forward and say that they want to go, and with whom arrangements fall to be made, and a larger number who go away without letting you know, what are commonly called moonlight flittings.

5634. Do you make any distinction between the low rented houses and the higher rented houses in this way that the greater number who want to move would be under the £10 limit?—Those who are under the £10 limit are mostly monthly lets, and there is no trouble with them; they go at the end of the month. I should say that two-thirds of the people under £10 are monthly tenants.

5635. There is a large number coming on to £10, who are yearly tenants?—Do you mean under £10?

5636. Yes, between £8 and £10?—I am not inclined to put it higher than one-third.

5637. Well, take one-third. Is it in that class that you would find the largest number of persons who wish to move as compared with those who are above £10?—Yes, probably that is so. Certainly the largest number of moonlight flittings are about that rental.

5638. Suppose people want to leave, is it your view that there is no hardship in their case at all, and that their desire to move is met by sublets?—I think so. I have been surprised to hear it put otherwise. There is a greater hardship on the landlord of the house,—he is left with the house on his hands, and he is liable for the rates. He has to pay the rates for the year all the same, whether he has got a tenant or not. If there is a hardship on the one side, then there is just as great hardship on the other. The one man has his capital at stake, and has to pay the year's taxes, and if the other man goes away, then the landlord is left with his empty house.

5639. Is the point that you are making this, that the landlord's interest is to get a sub-tenant?—Yes, undoubtedly. It is his interest to get a tenant into the house.

5640. But if he has a tenant already, has he a direct interest to get the house sublet?—He has an interest to get a tenant.

5641. But he has one already?—Yes; but, as a matter of fact, he is quite willing to oblige him. I never knew of a case where a man was unwilling to put up a sublet board. Probably the best way to put it is that landlords are traders, and they have to please their customers as much as they can, especially as it must be recognised that there are now 14,000 empty houses in Glasgow. The hardship is no greater on the man that wishes to leave than on the man who has his house left on his hands and has to pay all the taxes.

5642. Can you give an idea of the number of cases in your experience where the principal tenant removing has had to pay, not only the rent of the house he is going to, but the rent of the house he is leaving between terms?—It is extremely small.

5643. You have no figures?—No. I have been over twenty years in business, and I have not known of one case but where, if it came to that, the tenant took care that he put it right. If the tenant went to England, the legal difficulties were too great for me to attempt to recover anything, and he simply got away. As a lawyer, you must know that I would require to cite him in England, and it would not pay me in the case of a small house. The legal cost of recovering rents in England or in Ireland, after a

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certain number of days, more than swallows up what can be recovered.

5644. Have you got the figures of the number of people who already have monthly lets in Glasgow?—Yes, I have the figures of Mr Henry

5645. They are admitted figures?—Yes, I think Mr Stewart put these in. I have only to say that I agree with them.

5646. What do you say to the point that is made that when a workman gets employment elsewhere, it may not be very far away, he necessarily wants to move his family? Is that so?—No, not necessarily. He may have his family employed in the town, or he may be anxious to keep them in the town, because, as his children grow up, there are better chances of getting work in the city than in the suburbs. Besides, I make this statement quite confidently, —I have experienced the fact that there are large numbers of workmen who, having got into different districts in Glasgow, become connected with ward committees or other associations, and they won't leave those districts. They have got a certain status and influence in their particular district and they don't want to leave it.

5647. You have other cases where a man may have several children at work, and his object is not merely to have his house near his work, but to have a central house that will meet the wants of the wage-earners?—Yes.

5648. At Clydebank you have enormous numbers of men who travel regularly?—Yes, to and from Glasgow. They prefer to live in Glasgow.

5649. Clydebank is not the only place. What other places are there round Glasgow where men travel from the centre of Glasgow?—They travel all round about, to Renfrew, Clydebank, and Yoker, all up the two sides of the Clyde. Glasgow is distinctly growing westward.

5650. (*Mr Binnie.*) There are workmen's trains to Newton?—Yes, to the steel works there. The Steel Company of Scotland's employees travel daily.

5651. (*Chairman.*) And there are greatly increased facilities in the way of tram-cars?—Yes. The whole question has been materially altered.

5652. Do you find that there is a distinct sentiment—we know how the world is ruled by sentiment—in favour of the yearly tenure as distinguished from the monthly tenure?—I think so. I find people beginning to talk about yearly tenures, but they give up the yearly tenure, because they want to quit at a month's notice, but still they want the house by the year.

5653. They look upon it as having a certain social advantage?—Yes. If a man has his house by the month, his rent is payable by the month, and he has rent collectors calling on him more frequently for rent. Now, no one likes to see people calling for debts. In that way a difference of status does arise.

5654. Suppose you were to offer monthly lets to your yearly tenants at the present moment, what in your view would be done by the most of them?—Monthly lets and monthly payments go hand in hand.

5655. But a monthly let, as distinguished from a yearly let?—My impression is that it would not be popular.

5656. Even though the rent was to remain the same?—In amount?

5657. Yes?—Yes.

5658. And if the rent was to be raised in consequence, do you think it would not be taken advantage off?—I do not think it would be taken advantage of. There is one point which I don't know has been mentioned, and that is, the cost of factorage commission has to be raised on monthly lets. The factorage commission on half-yearly lets is smaller than it is on quarterly lets. On monthly lets you have a higher factorage commission, because there is more labour; the factorage commission becomes a distinct item in a proprietor's budget; it runs up to as high as 6 per cent. on monthly lets.

5659. Take that head now. Your view is that monthly lets would involve higher rents?—Yes.

5660. You have given us one head, viz., the factorage commission?—Yes.

5661. Would the higher rent be next accounted for by this, that there would be an increase in the cost of repairs to the property?—That is so; the water fittings, plastering, plumber work, paper and painting, would all require to be done on a larger scale than now. When a man goes into a house, if it is for the year, whatever is required to be done is done; a man going into a house generally stipulates for what he wants to get done. My experience is that they write it on the back of the missive, and there is no dispute about it.

5662. Are these the two heads that would involve higher rents in your case, viz., the greater cost of repairs and the increased factorage commission?—Yes.

5663. Would these be substantial?—Yes.

5664. What is the factor's commission in the different kinds of collection, viz., half yearly, quarterly, and monthly?—It ranges from 2½ per cent. upwards.

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5665. In which case?—It depends on the rental and on the collection. The higher the rental, then the smaller the commission. Under £20 the lowest commission that I know is 2½ per cent.

5666. What does it go up to?—I would say that it is 2½ per cent. in the case of rents of £15 to £20, and 3 to 3½ per cent. in the case of rents between £10 and £15, but these are very keenly cut rates. When you come to smaller rents in the case of monthly lets, then I do not know anywhere it is less than 4 or 5 per cent.

5667. What does it go up to?—I have been told of one or two cases where they are paying 8 per cent. You may take it that the factorage commission on monthy lets is nearly double what it is on the ordinary lets.

5668. On the quarterly collection?—On the quarterly and half yearly collections.

5669. That is to say, if the collection be altered from quarterly or half yearly to monthly, then the factorage commission will be practically doubled?—Yes. The factor has to keep a tenants' book and get payments by the week and fortnight, and there is a great deal of trouble.

5670. Can you give any idea of the increased cost in the way of repairs?—There again it is very difficult, because the tenants vary so much. There are tenants who, when removing, leave the water running and flood the house.

5671. You cannot give any idea, but you say that it would be substantial?—Yes. An experienced property man will be able to tell you by the outside of the property whether it is a monthly or a yearly tenure property. If he cannot do that, then he is not a very experienced property man.

5672. What do you say to the answer that the difficulties you apprehend are not found in England with monthly lets? What is the view of your Association about that?—I think it is all the other way. The difficulties that we say would be experienced here are experienced there. We are talking of similar houses for working people. Take the London burghs for instance: our Association has made very extensive inquiries from the Town clerks in the London burghs and other burghs in England about the letting of houses, and we are in touch with the Property Owners Associations in England. I was an office-bearer in the United Property Owners Association of England. One of our statements here about Glasgow is that, if monthly lets were to come into operation, the benefit that working men get now in the way of fixity of tenure when there is a strike or illness or a raising of rents would be lost and they would be liable to be ejected and would suffer considerable inconvenience. That is a complaint that we have found in the London burghs.

5673. Have you any evidence of it in the way of newspaper reports or otherwise?—I have seen it, but, you will excuse me, I have not finished my sentence. In these burghs where houses are let on monthly lets, we find that when a large number of, say, Polish labourers or foreign immigrants come in there is a demand for houses, and up go the rents. If the present occupants of the houses won't pay these rents, then they can be put out, and they are put out on short notice, and in come the immigrants. I find from the property people themselves and from paragraphs which I have seen in connection with the great annual gathering that complaints are made——

5674. What gathering are you referring to?—The gathering of the United Property Owners Association of England. That is an owners' and occupiers' society, because, as you are aware, in England a great many people there are both owners and occupiers. In addition to the people who let out houses as we do in Glasgow, there are a very large number of men who occupy their own houses and their interests are the same as occupiers and owners. I find from the reports of these associations that the monthly system is not considered to be a satisfactory system when there is a demand for houses; the tenant feels that he can be screwed for more rent in a way that he cannot be here.

5675. If you have got any of these we would like to see them?—Yes, I will take a note of that.

5676. Anything you can submit to us in the way of evidence, to the effect that in England there are grievances which may be greater even than the grievance under the Scottish system we shall be glad to see. We have perfectly open minds on it, and we want to know how the facts stand?—Quite so.

5677. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Are there any rent-paying tenants, members of your English associations?—Yes, there are tenants and occupiers.

5678. Proprietors who occupy?—Yes.

5679. But are there any tenants who pay rents who are members?—Yes, I think so. The English system is so different from the Scottish system.

5680. Is the Association that you refer to an Association

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of owners or an Association of owners and tenants who pay rent?—That is so, the United Property Owners Association of England.

5681. You gave me the impression that it was confined to owners?—I was endeavouring to show you how there could be tenants in an association of that kind. In addition to there being the ordinary tenants we have here, there are men who occupy their own houses. There are more of that kind in England than there are in Scotland.

5682. It is not confined to proprietors?—No.

5683. (*Chairman.*) So far as the question of the amount of rent is concerned, it is said that in England the effect is not to raise the rent, because the English rents are much cheaper than in Scotland. What do you say to that?—It is very much the other way about, considering the cost of the structures here, and having regard to the workmanship and the style and the cost of building, the ground burden and other things; I think the rents in London are no cheaper than they are here.

5684. You mean if you look to the value given?—Yes.

5685. But the actual amount paid apparently by an ordinary working man in England, with say £1 a week, seems to be less than it is in Scotland?—That I could not say, but the opinion of practical men is that for value given the rents are not cheaper. I never heard anyone say that they were cheaper for the value given. The point, of course, is, that in London there is a distinct grievance about short lets.

5686. We want that proved, you know?—Yes, I shall take a note of that. Our opinion, and my opinion as an office-bearer in the United Property Owners Association of England, is that the grievance is very keenly felt.

5687. You might also note that we are going to meet later in Edinburgh and possibly elsewhere, and we will be glad to have any English witness or witnesses you choose to bring before us to speak practically as the result of actual experience?—I understood that you were going to summon English witnesses?

5688. That is quite true, but at the same time we would be very glad to hear any other witnesses besides those that we might summon?—I shall keep that in mind and endeavour to have some witnesses who will speak to these points.

5689. Now, on the bottom of page 8 of your *précis* you say that you think that short lets will tend to discourage the free investment of capital by investors in that class of property. Will you kindly explain that?—Our view is that houses let by the month distinctly tend to become an inferior class of property. At present there is no practical man but would say that houses let under £10, let by the month, are of a decidedly more or less inferior character. They tend to become so by the constant changes that are going on. No man would advise his clients to invest their money in new property that was to be handed over at once to monthly tenants. I would not advise anyone to do it, and no one would do it who knows what it really means in the way of upkeep, wear, and tear.

5690. You cannot say that there is a difference in the percentage charged, that there is a higher rate for loans over monthly property than over yearly property?—In some cases there is.

5691. You have actually found that?—Yes, I have found in the course of time, where monthly lets had left their mark on the buildings, the bondholder's agents came and had a valuation, and a higher rate was asked.

5692. Are you talking both of old and new property?—I am talking more or less of older property, because people won't let new property on monthly lets. No one would advise his client to give a new modern building with all the modern sanitary requirements to monthly tenants.

5693. We are talking of houses let under £20?—I understand.

5694. I suppose that necessarily is on the footing that monthly lets lead to more frequent removals?—That is so.

5695. Of course, if removals were not more numerous, then it would not affect the property whether it was let for a month or for a year?—No, but the people who take by the month seem to get into the habit of shifting about.

5696. Will you kindly explain that?—The tenants we find—and this applies to a large number of tenants—if they find a house that they think is a little better and they can get into it, then they are apt to go away and take advantage of it. Certainly the experience in Glasgow is that there are a great many changes with monthly lets. It is rare to find tenants who stay on from year to year.

5697. Is that not because monthly lets are at present applicable to cheaper houses? Suppose the better houses, the £10 to £20 houses, were let on monthly lets, would there be more removals?—Yes, I think the tendency would be to use the power given to them.

5698. It is said, on the other hand, that with the yearly lets, there being one period in the year when removals take place, there is a kind of removal fever on then which brings about many removals that would not take place otherwise and would not take place if you had monthly lets?—There again the people who say that do not have regard to the fact that the owning of property is a form of trading, and, like other forms of trade, it is regulated by the supply and demand. Within the last two or three years houses have been in excess of the number of tenants, and there has been this effect, that we have a large number of new empty houses. Tenants who have houses just now go about and take these new houses because they are empty, and they get the papering and painting done before the term comes on. There were as many removals as usual this last Whitsunday, and the great bulk of the people removed because there were empty houses that they could get into. There will be variations according to the supply and demand like what there are in any kind of trade.

5699. Then we come to the question of the rating. Is it your view that, if short lets were substituted for the longer lets, there would necessarily follow some provision in regard to making the tenants' rates collectable by the landlord?—We object to that.

5700. But that is not the point. I know that you object to it. First of all, is it your view that, if there are to be short lets, then compounding will be very apt at least to follow?—It might, but I would put it the other way.

5701. Suppose that the legislature, contrary to your view, thought that short lets should be inaugurated, do you see any necessity why that should lead to compounding; or even if short lets were inaugurated, is there any reason why the rating authorities should not themselves collect more frequently?—That is our opinion most decidedly, that if you are to have short lets you would require to have more frequent collection of rates. Our Association had that subject under consideration, and we communicated with all the leading burghs and cities of England and the town clerks and Property Owners Associations in these cities. I have a table here dealing with all the leading towns and cities in England, telling how they collect the rates, and I find that they are collected half-yearly, quarterly, and in some cases yearly. Glasgow stands in an isolated position in insisting on a yearly collection of rates. Barrow-in-Furness is quarterly and half-yearly. That is a very important table. There is a quarterly collection at Hackney South, half-yearly at Norwood, half-yearly at South Shields.

5702. Let us see this, because it might be very useful.—Yes, it is. (*Hands in.*) We spent a considerable amount of time and labour in getting these results from the various town clerks and Property Associations in England, and the result was that very interesting table showing how rates were dealt with in other cities.

5703. This deals entirely with towns in England and Ireland?—Yes.

5704. The towns in Ireland are Belfast and Dublin?—Yes. How the rates are collected is a very special feature of your inquiry.

5705. There is Liverpool, for instance, which is a somewhat similar town to Glasgow. The collection of rates there is yearly?—Yes. I should like to add that the Royal Commission on Local Taxation had this point under consideration, and they condemned it. Lord Balfour of Burleigh has written letters to the *Times* and other newspapers condemning the system. I want to state that emphatically, because Mr Cross writes repeatedly that no one has ever objected to compounding, and he does not seem to be aware that the Royal Commission and Lord Balfour of Burleigh objected to it.

5706. Yes, in principle, but the Royal Commission said that they did not see how it could be avoided?—Yes, but its principle was bad.

5707. I want to ask you this: do you see any reason why more frequent collection of rates should not be done by the rating authorities? You approve of that?—Yes.

5708. Subject to whatever arrangements might be necessary in the way of increased staff?—Yes.

5709. And you agree, I understand, that just as frequent collection of rent is a benefit to a working man, so would frequent collection of rates be also a benefit as distinguished from one collection in the year?—It may be more easily paid in that way. Then there is this point, the terms which they propose to allow.

5710. I am coming to that afterwards. What do you say in regard to whether it would not introduce a very awkward relation between the landlord and tenant if he were the rate-collector?—Undoubtedly. It would result in this, that you would have more money to collect from the tenants whether you called the thing rent or partly rent and partly taxes; the feeling that part of this was for outlays incurred by voters would get very weak, and the increased sum that fell to be collected by the landlords would be looked upon as a landlord's impost. On certain classes of property we pay the water and stair gas, and we

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recover it from the tenants. It is made a separate charge, but we find that it is very difficult to handle. The water rate is simply an ordinary debt and not very easily recovered. The stair gas may be recovered the same way as the rent, but it comes to this, that it is looked upon as a landlord's charge and sometimes it is left over,—you will ask it to be paid in November and you get it shunted over to February, and very often they say that they will pay everything at Whitsunday. If they do not pay it you cannot take their furniture for it. We find that the water and stair gas are not so easily collected as some have said. If we had a larger sum to deal with, it would simply be looked upon as a landlord's charge ; it would be forgotten that they themselves as voters were responsible for it.

5711. Have you any right of hypothec in your collection of the water rate and stair gas?—We have none for the water rate, but we have for the stair gas.

5712. Would it make any difference if, in regard to the water rate, you had a right of hypothec?—I do not think it would : in this way, it is a distinct and separate charge on the receipt. I have had cases, and I know that other factors also have had cases, where this part of the payment was postponed, and if it came to be a matter of sueing, it was no use, because it was too small a thing to enter into litigation about.

5713. If it was extended to a collection of the other rates, then the difficulty would be greater?—Yes, it would be looked upon as a mere affair of the landlord, and we know the sort of opinion that prevails about that.

5714. Is it also the case that in England, in addition to the objections you have mentioned, there is a feeling that the occupiers don't know about the municipal expenditure?—They know nothing about it; at least that is our information, that they know nothing about it, and it goes up, and the result is business people like Yarrow, leaving and coming to Scotland.

5715. Would that not be met if the tenants continued to get the notices from the authorities of what the rates were, even although the landlords paid them?—I think not. They know when they leave a house, they are away from that landlord, and it has cost a great deal of expense to hunt them up, and in many cases it would not be worth it.

5716. You do not think they would take the same interest as they do now, when they pay the rates themselves?—We find that in London.

5717. Suppose compounding were gone in for, and an allowance were to be fixed for the landlord, you have seen the proposed allowances in the schedule of Mr Cross's Bill. Confining yourself to Glasgow, what do you say about them?—They are totally inadequate.

5718. Do you say that in regard to all three?—Yes, they are totally inadequate.

5719. In each case?—It proceeds on entirely ignoring English experience. In England, where compounding prevails, there are two series of commissions: there is the first, the very necessary commission of 15 to 20 per cent on small rentals for the labour of collecting the rates, and there is next a commission, varying from 15 to 20 per cent., for guaranteeing them. The landlord there guarantees the rates just the same as he would be held liable for them here.

5720. Does the guarantee cover anything more than loss ; does it also cover unlets?—It guarantees the actual rates imposed.

5721. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Is that not optional?—Yes, and some burghs have not adopted it. The feeling in London is to get quit of it. Our information is that in these London burghs where compounding prevails, there is first a commission of 15 to 20 per cent. for actual collection, and, second, a commission of 15 to 20 per cent. for guaranteeing the rates imposed. These commissions run from 30 to 35 per cent., and there is now a feeling that this is too costly a system, and it would be better for the authorities to do the collecting themselves. I think that has been entirely lost sight of, and I was surprised that Mr Cross did not seem aware of that.

5722. (*Chairman.*) Do you also found an argument on the percentages that are allowed in Scotland in certain cases?—Yes.

5723. For instance, in certain cases it is as much as 20 and 25 per cent.?—Yes. I have not much actual experience of it, because I have never had anything to do with it. I based my objections to this on the actual English facts, where, in addition to paying percentage for actual collection, they pay a commission for guaranteeing the rates. These are two sets of commissions which run up from 30 to 35 per cent. Of course, it is a voluntary arrangement ; but, as you are aware, the feeling in these burghs in England is to get quit of it.

5724. (*Mr Esselmont.*) But is it not optional on the part of the proprietors to guarantee?—No.

5725. He gets his 15 per cent. for collection. If he is prepared to take the risk ——?—The second thing is optional.

5726. That is what I asked?—Yes, it is optional.

5727. But, as a matter of fact, they usually take the commission, because they make a good thing of it?—Yes ; the cry on the part of the municipalities is that it is too expensive. Of course, these are very different commissions from what Mr Cross proposes. I don't know any total commission less than 30 per cent. Now, that is a very different thing from 10 per cent.

5728. (*Chairman.*) Suppose the commission to be allowed where he recovers the cost of collection only, even in that case you think that the commissions suggested in the Bill are quite inadequate?—Yes ; even from the figures which have been supplied to you by Mr Borthwick I would say they are totally inadequate.

5729. We are talking of the cost of collection, first?—Yes.

5730. In addition to cost of collection, you have to add losses and also unlets?—Yes.

5731. Now, suppose an allowance were thought proper by Parliament, it has been suggested that the best way to do it would be that the allowance should only cover cost of collection, leaving the proprietor to show to the rating authority the amount of losses and the amount of unlets, and to get a deduction for that. If that system were agreed on you would suggest for the cost of collection something like 15 to 20 per cent.?—I object to compounding altogether.

5732. But that is not the question. If the legislature approves of it, and sanctions it, would it be your view that the cost of collection alone would warrant something like 15 to 20 per cent.?—Yes, quite.

5733. Would you not propose to differentiate between the higher rented property and the lower rented property?—Yes.

5734. On houses between £15 to £20 the cost of collection would not be so great?—No; not in half-yearly collection of rents. There is the tenure to be considered as well.

5735. Does it come to this, that the differentiation would rather depend on the length of tenure so far as the cost of collection is concerned?—Yes.

5736. So far as the amount of what was not recovered was concerned, that would depend not on the length of tenure, but on the amount of rent?—Yes.

5737. Is it the case that you would have as good remedies for recovering rates as the Corporation have?—No.

5738. Then you think that if the Corporation lose a certain percentage, you would lose more?—Yes ; no private individual would get the same powers as the Corporation have.

5739. So you think your case would be stronger than that of the Corporation, so far as incurring heavier losses is concerned?—Yes. We hear a great deal about the English system. The English system is much more favourable to the landlord. The law of distraint is much more favourable than the law of hypothec. The law of distraint puts man in possession, and he takes the things after a certain time.

5740. In your view would it introduce great complication, and in some cases even a tendency to dishonesty, if a lump charge were made against the tenant, not distinguishing between rent and rates? Would it put a premium on the factor who was not scrupulous, to charge more than he might actually be entitled to?—I could not express any opinion on that. I know that, unless special arrangements were made, factors would not be in a position to say what the taxes were to be when they let their houses.

5741. Would the position therefore not be this, that the tenant would not have the check that he now has, because he now knows exactly what he pays for rent and what he pays for rates?—Yes. It would be very difficult for the factor to tell what the rates were to be.

5742. It is said that while you would not have all the remedies that the Corporation have, you, by more frequent collection, would be able to get a larger amount in the shape of rates than is got at the present moment by the one collection by the Corporation?—I don't see that there is the slightest practical experience to warrant any such assertion. As I say, we have the practical experience of having to pay the water and the stair gas as separate charges for goods supplied by the municipality.

5743. Once a year?—Yes, and we have the experience of that in quarterly lets. The tenants in many cases recognising that they are a totally different thing from rent, and that they are something that they don't want to pay, delay the payment while they pay their rent.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) You have told us all that already.

5744. (*Chairman.*) But that is a single payment. What I put to you is, that it is said that you, collecting the rate periodically, would be able to get more than the Corporation

who only collect once a year?—I don't see that it would have that effect. The Corporation can do it themselves. I don't see that calling on a man frequently will make him pay if he does not want to pay.

5745. Is there also a point which in your view should be kept in mind by the committee, viz., the effect on enfranchisement by the proposals in the Bill?—Yes.

5746. And also the difficulty that would arise in continuing the very proper practice of giving relief?—Yes; the practice of giving relief to poor people unable to pay.

5747. Another point on which we want to hear you—although it is really rather incidental to our inquiry—is the question of the process in regard to ejectment. In your practice do you go to the Sheriff Court or to the Burgh Court?—Sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other, but mostly to the Burgh Court.

5748. Why?—I don't know. It is more a matter of practice.

5749. We have heard great complaints about the delay in the Burgh Court and very little at all in regard to delay in the Sheriff Court. If these complaints are serious, why does it not result in the Sheriff Court being gone to?—People go to the Burgh Court because being the Burgh Court it is cheaper than the Sheriff Court. The Sheriff Court is in the main—I don't say altogether—a better court, but it is more costly; the citations cost more.

5750. In the Burgh Court is the complaint a complaint with regard to the delay and also with regard to the expense, or is it chiefly with regard to the delay?—The charge against the Burgh Court is that they have no system that I can find out. We have from time to time endeavoured to make arrangements with them for, working the Court on a different basis, giving so many days' notice and getting tenants out without a warrant, but they won't hear of it. Our complaint is that the Court is often conducted by a magistrate who comes in and bows and hears the first case and then goes away. If you go up and state any particular reason why the tenant should be put away on so many days' notice from the date of *inducice*, the clerk cannot hear you, because the magistrate is not there. At one time there used to be very few appeals, but of recent years a system has grown up whereby a tenant simply comes in and pays sixpence, and that is an appeal. He may write nothing; he simply lodges his paper and pays sixpence, and that is an appeal.

5751. It is a request for delay?—Yes, it is called an appeal. If he did not lodge that sixpence, and his case came on, after ten days' notice had been given to him, a warrant to eject him would be given on short notice.

5752. At once?—Yes.

5753. Mr Renwick told us that where they don't pay their sixpence, and ask for delay, the warrant is granted at once?—Not in every case. They have latterly been falling into the system of dating the tenancy from the 28th of the month; and in many cases, no matter the date of the appearance, the tenant cannot be put out earlier than the end of the month. If the tenant pays this sixpence he does not require to appear, and he gets other eleven days.

5754. Whether he has plausible reasons or not. He is not asked to give any reason?—The case is called, and it is known that he has paid the sixpence, and whether he comes forward or not these eleven days are given.

5755. (*Mr Esslemont.*) That is from the date of serving the notice?—Yes. It is inaccurate to say that they have any fixed rule about giving days, because we have members who complain about tenants getting fourteen days.

5756. That might be in some special case.

Mr (Binnie.) If the eleven days expire on the Saturday they continue it to the Monday?—Yes, and the tenant has that longer period through paying the sixpence. He does not give any defence. If the landlord fails to appear, the case goes against him by default. Then they won't assist us in dealing with obstructive and immoral tenants.

5757. (*Chairman.*) You have to go to the Sheriff Court for that?—We cannot do that either. We have frequently asked the magistrates through the Town Clerk, if they would introduce some clause for enabling us to remove people keeping brothels, who are very objectionable tenants. If you go to the Burgh Court there is no consideration for that there; if they pay their sixpence then they get their time. I have gone down myself with a couple of policemen, to show that it was a brothel, but it does not matter; they pay their sixpenee, and get their time. We have frequently asked a clause to remedy that, but they have never done anything.

5758. The result is, that tenants knowing this, merely with the view of getting time and continuing to occupy the premises rent free, pay their sixpence, the magistrate never applying his mind to whether there are any reasons, or to whether they are good or bad?—That is so.

5759. Do you see any reason why tenants should get that indulgence while those who do not pay their sixpence do not get it?—No.

5760. You don't object to the magistrate, if reasons were assigned which he thought good reasons, granting such delay as he thought fit?—I would not object if he heard the case, but he never hears any case.

5761. Suppose the tenant alleges that the rent is already paid, and offers, if an opportunity is given him, to prove that, then that would be a reason?—Yes, and sometimes a case like that occurs. I have known tenants come forward and say that they had paid their rent. I have known the matter examined, and it has been found that the tenant was under a mistake. I don't object to that at all.

5762. Do you think that, without alteration of the procedure in these courts, the evils would be intensified if short lets were made statutory?—I think so.

5763. So if any measure like Mr Cross's Bill was to pass you think that a cheaper and more summary method of ejection against bad tenants ought to go along with it?—It not infrequently happens that factors get petitions from tenants on a stair saying that they cannot sleep at night for the unruly conduct of some other tenant.

5764. (*Mr Howden.*) Mr Renwick said that these cases were not dealt with in the Burgh Court at all?—They won't take up these cases, nor will they give you any special form of ejectment for these cases. I have gone to the Burgh Court with petitions signed by tenants wanting to get quit of some other tenant.

5765. (*Chairman.*) Your view as to a simplification and cheapening of the procedure has been approved of by the recent Commission on the Housing of the Poor in Glasgow and by the Commission appointed by the Presbytery in 1891?—Yes.

5766. Suppose that any measure such as is proposed were passed, do you think that it would involve fore-handed rents?—I think so, or security.

5767. We have heard a good deal about the question of hypothec. Do you see any reason for any alteration in the law of hypothec?—Personally—and I think I speak for our society—we have no objection, if you give us adequate control. It is not much of a right just now; it is a costly process.

5768. Take a larger house, say a £15 house?—It is more valuable there.

5769. Is it not the case there that very often it is really valuable in the interest of the tenant, because it enables the landlord to give him indulgences that he would not otherwise have?—Yes.

5770. It is said that it is very apt to encourage extravagance, your having this right and other suppliers not having it?—I thought their main grievance was that men could not be touched, that men stayed off their work for a certain number of days so as to come within the limit as to wages.

5771. It has been suggested that without abolition it might be modified to this extent, that the necessary furniture for the existence of a family should be made like tools and wearing apparel up to a small sum?—My answer is that in regard to small rentals, if you give the proprietor adequate control of his own property he does not care about the law of hypothec.

5772. Take higher rents, £15?—It becomes more valuable there.

5773. Up to £15, should the furniture be subject to the law of hypothec?—I do not think there would be any objection if he was covered for the rent. A landlord is dealing with goods quite different from other goods. Just now the landlord has only the right of hypothec for the amount of his debt, that is all.

5774. You say that he is not like an ordinary tradesman who stops his credit straight off?—That is so.

5775. A tenant, owing to the tenure, can stay on?—Yes.

5776. You say that Clause 6 of the Bill is badly framed?—Yes, I think Mr Stewart dealt with that.

5777. You are quite right. We will refer to his evidence about that?—Yes.

5778. Then I understand the net result is that you think the grievance, so far as it exists, would be met by an enactment that the period of warning-away for yearly lets should be reduced to twenty-one days prior to 28th May instead of as at present forty days prior to 15th May?—Yes, that is the missive question.

5779. And in your view that is really the substantial question?—Yes. That is what it is always designated, the missive question.

5780. You object, I think, to the optional clause if the Bill is passed as being liable to introduce great confusion between one burgh and another?—Yes.

5781. (*Mr Dobbie.*) With reference to the law of distraint to which you referred, would you be satisfied with a corresponding change in the law here?—Yes, I think so.

5782. Would you give to Scotch tenants the right to have furniture exempt up to, say, £5, as obtains in England?—Yes; if you give us the one thing we want,—if you give

us the proper eviction clauses. All we want is adequate control of our premises.

5783. The only proposal that you recommend is this one clause bill of yours restricting the period of notice to quit to twenty-one days?—That is so.

5784. That is, instead of the forty days which exist just now?—Instead of the fifty-three. It is twenty-one instead of fifty-three.

5785. Do you think that would automatically put forward the day for issuing missives?—I think so. I think it did so in Edinburgh. Our information was that when the Edinburgh and Leith Factors Association agreed to a certain date, and got the Corporation to give it their imprimatur, the public fell in with it. If we got the warning-away date forward, and agreed to put forward the missive date, and the Corporation gave their imprimatur, then the public would follow it.

5786. You think that the change would be desirable?—Yes, I think so, because you would be past the Candlemas collection of rents.

5787. To prevent the public falling away as they have done in Edinburgh, it would need to be done by Act of Parliament?—I don't want that.

5788. Why not?—I have just given my reasons for it.

5789. Do you think that shorter lets would increase the rents?—That is my view.

5790. Of course, that would not do your profession any injury?—As an investor it would hurt me very much. I am a property owner.

5791. But you would get extra rent?—Yes; and the property would be deteriorated by the class of tenants that would come in, by the shifting that was going on.

5792. You would get increased rents? And there would be increased outlays. Very probably the one would not balance the other. Our point is, that it would be more costly to the tenant and more costly to the landlord, and the increased rents would not be sufficient to make up for the extra outlays that we would be put to.

5793. The more important question to you would be how you were to get increased rent?—Yes, you cannot always get it.

5794. You take the best rent that you can get just now?—Yes.

5795. And there is no competition for houses at present?—Very little.

5796. Assuming that when your expenses are added to, you might have some trouble in getting the increased rent?—I understand you are assuming this to be done all over by Act of Parliament. That would alter the situation. If everybody had to bear this extra outlay, then everyone would have to act in the same way. If it was only here and there, then your point would hold.

5797. You think there would be a general increase as the result of short lets?—Yes, there is always a tendency to get increased money for increased cost of goods supplied.

5798. And you would get that, you think?—We would have to try to get it.

5799. You said that most houses up to £7 were let monthly at present?—Yes.

5800. What is your explanation of that? Why should that be the fact?—Houses of that kind are mostly not quite such a good class of property, and you cannot get into them men who are in a position to take houses by the year and pay quarterly.

5801. Why should such a man not take a house under £7 by the year?—I would not give it to him.

5802. Why not?—He would be much more troublesome to handle if he did not pay his rent. At present, it is bad enough at the end of a month to get him out, but it would be worse if I had to wait three months, and get no rent and then give him forty days' notice.

5803. So the short let is in favour of the proprietor?—In getting quit of a bad tenant.

5804. And in getting your rent?—No, you put the inferior bad-paying tenants into monthly houses. If they were good-paying tenants, they would get yearly houses. You cannot get these houses let to any other kind of tenants. If you offered to let them to yearly tenants you would not get them.

5805. You prefer to let monthly and get the rent monthly?—It is better than nothing at all.

5806. If you let yearly, you would have less chance of getting your rent?—You would have more chance of making a bigger bad debt.

5807. You, speaking as a proprietor, and for other proprietors, approve of the principle of fixity of tenure?—Yes, I approve of long lets in the interest both of the tenant and of the proprietor. It is better for both,—the tenant is clear from being put out if he is ill or on strike.

5808. You think that short lets would not be popular among the tenants?—My experience of the better class of working man who holds a yearly house is that he does not want collectors coming to his house once a month for his rent.

5809. If there were breaks in favour of the tenant either monthly or quarterly which he could take advantage of, assuming his work required it, would there be any objection to that, provided he paid the rent and maintained the property, the landlord not being entitled to take advantage of these breaks, while the tenant would be entitled to do so?—What the one gets the other should have also. The one has as much right to it as the other. You ask if I would be in favour of the tenants having fixity of tenure with power to break. That would not be a good system at all. It would be introducing monthly lets under another name. A man might take a house from me for a year, and then next day he might give me notice that he was going away at the end of the month.

5810. (*Mr Howden.*) Your Association places great stress on freedom of contract. That is one of your reasons against the Bill—you say that Mr Cross's Bill does away with freedom of contract?—Yes.

5811. How do you account for the fact that in 1894, when there was a very good agreement drafted by one of the local Liberal Associations that the period of let should be entered into as agreed between landlord and tenant, your Association objected to it?—Where is that stated?

5812. On page 4 of your precognition?—I see that. That is introducing monthly lets under another name.

5813. But this is giving absolute freedom of contract—at least that was the object of the letter, to produce freedom of contract?—Yes, but in reality it is monthly lets.

5814. On the other hand, what you call freedom of contract is yearly lets in reality?—No, it is yearly lets or monthly lets.

5815. No. Would you let a house erected in one of the more respectable working-class districts in Glasgow on a monthly tenure?—No, I would not do so in one of the better-class houses. If you go to a certain tailor for a suit of clothes he may charge you double the price that another tailor will charge you, but there is freedom of contract there.

5816. The question is whether you would let that particular house for a month?—Certainly not.

5817. There is no freedom of contract there, because you say that a yearly let is the only let that you will let that house for?—That is for the superior class of house. If you want a monthly let, then you must take an inferior house.

5818. And that is your idea of freedom of contract?—It is the same with any other trader; you must always differentiate between the good and the inferior.

5819. You referred to moonlight flittings and to the cases where you had to break open doors. Does it not occur to you that that is practically one of the results of yearly lets?—No.

5820. I put it in this way: the tenants who have these moonlight flittings carry them out with an object, and that object is the getting rid of the payment of the rent. If it was a small sum that was at stake, they would probably not go to that expense and inconvenience of having this method of removal?—You will find on making inquiry that all the change that many of these cases make is to go some two or three streets off.

5821. But it is not a matter in the meantime of where they are living: it is a matter of what causes these people to remove?—A change of house.

5822. No, that would not account for it. They run away without paying their rent?—Yes.

5823. If it was a small rent, then there would not be the same tendency to go away?—They would go away for any kind of rent. I have known people run away with a quarter's rent of £2. The amount has nothing to do with it.

5824. You told us that this agitation was the result of the early issue of missives, and it has gradually become a question of the tenancy of houses, *i.e.*, the monthly lets. If there is any truth in that contention, why did not the landlords take the root causes away and abolish this agitation altogether?—They did all they could to get the missives put later on, but they could do very little in view of the fact that they had this long period of warning away. They have deputationed members of Parliament to introduce Bills to alter that, and they drafted a Bill themselves.

5825. That is really your explanation, the long period of warning away?—Yes, entirely.

5826. This period of warning away has not altered for a considerable time?—At one time the house-letting in Scotland was in November.

5827. But for a considerable time it has been 28th May?—Yes, it will date from the time of the Removal Terms Act, viz., 1886.

5828. At that time you thought 2nd February was soon enough to get your missives?—Not very long before that, in country districts, houses were taken six months before

the term, so anxious were people to secure their house and garden. They took their houses at Martinmas.

5829. That would be where gardens were attached to the houses?—They generally gave notice in November.

5830. You told us that you would not object to the law of hypothec being done away with in regard to houses at £10 and under?—Provided you give us adequate control.

5831. Above £10 you said it acted differently?—Have you realised that the law of hypothec is a somewhat expensive thing to work, and unless there are adequate funds it resolves itself into a loss, so you require to go into a fairly well plenished house?

5832. Who values the goods that you poind for rent?—The sheriff officer.

5833. And he may over-value the goods or he may under-value them?—He has to take into account this factor, that the people who buy are mostly the neighbours.

5834. What is the net result, so far as finance is concerned, in connection with a house up to £15?—If you take them between £10 and £15, it works not quite so badly, but I would never use it with a house under £10 of rent. I have been obliged to use it sometimes to get quit of a tenant. In a small house at a rent of under £10 there may not be £1 worth of furniture, and to get them out you have to sell them out and then ask for a warrant.

5835. But the value of the furniture to the tenant would be greatly in excess of what you would get out of it?—The neighbours buy it and hand it back again.

5836. We were told that respectable neighbours stayed away from these sales and the furniture fell into the hands of brokers?—In some cases there are neighbours, and in other cases there are brokers, but I understand in many of these cases the neighbours buy them in.

5837. You don't agree that it is practically a tragedy in the lower-rented houses?—It is always a tragedy if people cannot pay their debts and you have to resort to that.

5838. You referred to a Bill being introduced to give workmen fixity of tenure during a strike. Do you approve of that principle?—Yes, if they are respectable men. During the last strike on the Clyde there were several thousands out of work. I had a fair proportion of such tenants, and I am prepared to state publicly that I allowed these men to stay on, and they are now paying up their rents by instalments. If a man is a decent man I am willing to trade with him in a fair way.

5839. You told us there were many ejections during that same strike. Can you give us any idea how many there were?—I had none myself.

5840. But many were ejected because they were on monthly lets instead of yearly lets?—Yes, that is so.

5841. I think you told us that?—Yes, and I can get it substantiated.

5842. As regards collection of rates, we had evidence yesterday to the effect that a landlord, as a matter of fact, had better facilities for collecting rents than what the Corporation have?—In what way could he have better facilities than trained officials who are accustomed to go round there with a sheriff's warrant?

5843. The result that was brought out yesterday was that there was less than 2 per cent. of a loss on the net rental and rates, and according to the Corporation they lost 26 per cent. on exactly the same class of house. These figures were brought out yesterday?—I should like to hear the property specified.

5844. It was property belonging to the Workmen's Dwellings Company. They attributed this to the fact, or partly to the fact, that their collections of rates and rents were made easier to the working class than if they had been made at longer periods?—The Workmen's Dwellings Company are the very last to object to take up the whole collection of rates, but I am not aware that they are in favour of it.

5845. In the properties where they have it in operation it has worked out in that fashion?—You miss out a very important element. The Workmen's Dwellings Company is a company of philanthropists who have banded themselves together, and they don't want more than a very small return on the money invested.

5846. Five per cent.?—Four per cent.

5847. Five per cent. is what their limit is?—Yes, but they have not been able to earn more than 4 per cent. It works out in this way: they take a certain class of tenants that no private trader could take in, and it is quite possible for them to make collections that we could not make.

5848. (*Mr Dobbie.*) They select their tenants?—Yes, and they can do things that we cannot do.

5849. They compound in the case of two tenements and they leave the other three to the Corporation?—Yes, they know better there.

5850. (*Mr Howden*) You told us that you had some difficulty in collecting the gas rates?—Yes, in the smaller houses.

5851. You have a right of hypothec for the gas rate?—Yes.

5852. And you are allowed to charge up to 10s. per burner, whereas in reality you only pay 7s. 6d. to the Corporation?—You get discount, which brings it down.

5853. To 7s. 6d.?—Yes.

5854. Do you not sometimes put on more than 10s.?—I never knew of it. I have heard that allegation made, but I have never heard name or date for anything of the kind.

5855. It happened in my own case. I objected to pay more than 10s. per burner. Was I not right?—It is allocated *pro rata* among the tenants.

5856. But the landlord has no right to claim more than 10s. per burner?—That is so.

5857. And if he was asking more, then the tenants would be entitled to object?—Yes.

5858. (*Chairman.*) There is just one question: suppose that there had been a large demand by the better class of working men for monthly lets, do you think that that would have been met on the law of supply and demand?—No, landlords or traders in houses are not disposed, if they can help it, to increase the monthly lets because of the taxes difficulty. That is a serious difficulty placed on houses.

5859. I don't think you are attending to the question. Confine yourself to the better class of working men. It is alleged that they have been wanting to get monthly lets instead of yearly lets. Now, suppose there had been in the past a large demand by such men for monthly lets, why should it not have been satisfied on the ordinary laws of supply and demand?—They can get plenty of monthly houses, but a superior working man will not take that kind of house.

5860. Suppose there had been that demand and the people wanting monthly lets, that better-class working men came to you in numbers, would it not be a mere question of the rent you would charge them?—No. My experience is this, that when men come to you for monthly houses and you give them your list of monthly houses they then say that they want better houses than these.

5861. But if you had a large class of decent working men insisting on having monthly houses, they would have got them?—Yes.

5862. I should have thought you would have maintained that that would have been so, and that the absence of such monthly houses suggested strongly that there had been no such demand?—You said if there was a demand; but there is no demand.

5863. That is what I want you to face. It might have been argued that if there had been such a demand it would have been met?—Yes.

5864. And if it has not been met, the reason is that there has been no such demand. Have you yourself ever had working men of the better class coming to you and saying, "I won't take that house for the year; you may charge me 'rather more rent if you like. I want a monthly let, and I 'am quite willing to pay whatever rent you think should 'be put on if you will convert it from a yearly let into a 'monthly one"?—No, I have never had such an application from a superior man. My experience is that they all object to the monthly collector going round.

5865. The circumstances have always been that they could not get monthly lets except of an inferior class. You have never known a person to put up a better class of tenement, and advertise the houses for monthly lets?—No.

5866. So the thing has never been submitted to actual experience?—You have them empty by the thousands.

5867. Of an inferior kind?—Relatively, but they are good enough houses.

5868. (*Mr Howden.*) Good modern houses?—Modern houses.

5869. The Glasgow Corporation have a considerable number of houses let on monthly lets?—I don't know; I cannot speak for them; they are in a different position.

5870. And they have no difficulty in getting respectable men to go into these houses. In fact, there is a great demand for them?—That may be, but I would not advise you to put your money into such houses.

5871. (*Mr Binnie.*) You said there was a likelihood that if monthly rents became common the rents would rise. Mr Dobbie put it to you that you were getting as much as you could just now, and that you could not raise the rents. Was your remark intended to apply to the ordinary case of a fair demand and a fair supply, and not to exceptional cases, where there is a very great over-supply of houses?—Undoubtedly, that is so.

5872. It was intended to apply to an ordinary demand?—Yes.

5873. To the normal state of matters?—Yes.

5874. Then there is another thing which I think Mr Dobbie misunderstood a little. You said there was a loss to the landlord in consequence of the great repairs on

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monthly lets, and Mr Dobbie put it to you that you would get, as you yourself said, additional rent against the additional repairs. Would a property of that kind sell at the same number of years' purchase of the rental as a property let to yearly tenants?—Certainly not.

5875. So there would be a loss to the landlord and there would be a greater amount of trouble connected with the management of the property, even although he got a rent to cover the extra repairs?—Yes.

5876. There would be a loss of capital because of the reduced capital value of the property?—That is so.

5877. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Are your views deduced from your present experience of monthly lets?—From twenty-two years of experience of all kinds of lets.

5878. You say that from your experience you find monthly houses are more expensive to keep up and are valued at less?—Yes, in a valuation.

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5879. And accordingly you think that the introduction of monthly lets of the better class of houses will be followed by the same effects in regard to disrepair and deterioration of value?—Yes.

You have no date to go on; you have only the experience of inferior houses. I should like to explain that I had experience of new property in the Gallowgate district, let on monthly tenure, but yearly tenure had to be resorted to, owing to the deterioration of property through frequent changes.

Mr William Hunter and Mr John Russell Thomson, called and examined.

Mr W. Hunter and Mr J. R. Thomson.

5880. (*Chairman to Mr Hunter.*) You are President of the Bute Landlords and Factors Association, Chairman of the Rothesay Burgh School Board, and a Justice of the Peace for Buteshire?—Yes.

5881. (*To Mr Thomson.*) You are an architect in Rothesay?—Yes.

5882. (*To Mr Hunter.*) You have been a house builder in Rothesay for the last thirty years?—Yes.

5883. And you have built 266 houses in Rothesay and Port Bannatyne, including a number of tenement houses at rents running from £5 to £17. You sold 109 of these from time to time, and previous to selling off you have always factored them yourself. You have had a long practical acquaintance with house letting in Rothesay and Bute generally?—Yes.

5884. As we know, Rothesay is a popular seaside resort, with a resident population of about 10,000. In the summer months that population will be trebled or quadrupled?—Yes, and even more.

5885. Have the resident population any industry except what you generally find in such places?—No. There is a large florist's business, but there is really no industry.

5886. Adding together the first three columns on page 2 of your *précis*, namely, the houses at rents up to £15, you get a total of 1692. Then adding to that the total number of houses up to £20, namely, the total of 495, you get 2187 houses under £20?—Yes.

5887. You have got a total number of 2980 houses?—Yes.

5888. 2187 of the total number are rented at £20 and below?—Yes.

5889. 56 per cent. are rented at £15, and under 73 per cent. are rented at £20 and under?—Yes.

5890. If you take the houses at £10 and under, they form about 35 per cent. of the whole?—Yes.

5891. You have, of course, a large number of houses which are used for summer visitors, either being let to them entirely, or they are cases in which people take in lodgers?—Yes.

5892. Rothesay depends very much on that business for its prosperity?—Almost exclusively.

5893. The shops as well as the lodging-house keepers?—Yes. Many of the shopkeepers would gladly close their shops in winter.

5894. Where do your visitors come from chiefly?—From all quarters, but mostly from Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock.

5895. Do you find that very properly the number of visitors of what may be called the working class has increased very much?—Yes.

5896. And it is still increasing?—Yes.

5897. In regard to houses that are taken by those that are better off, do you have people who take houses unfurnished for the whole year and occupy them to a certain extent in summer?—Yes; part occupy them and part let them.

5898. These are yearly lets?—Yes.

5899. They are partly occupied by the tenant and partly sublet?—They are let very much as the other tenants do—they are let to visitors and not sublet in the ordinary sense.

5900. Suppose a house is taken for the year, and is let to visitors, what term do the visitors take it for?—Anything from days.

5901. Up to what?—Three months; but speaking of these smaller houses, there would not be many up to three months.

5902. There are not so many at £20 and under which are let to visitors for as long as three months?—No.

5903. If a person in Rothesay is a tenant of a house, when does the summer visitor take the house for the part of the year that he is to occupy it in?—It may begin in April, and with considerable variations it will extend on to the end of September.

5904. I know that is the case with regard to the occupation; but suppose a visitor is to occupy a house in June, how early in the year would he take that house?—It depends entirely on circumstances.

5905. When does the advertising of the houses begin?—Almost immediately after the New Year.

5906. And it goes straight on?—Yes. Some visitors may have taken their houses a year beforehand.

(*Mr Thomson.*) Furnished houses are taken about a month before occupation. If the visitor wants a house in June, then he will take it in April or May.

5907. (*Chairman to Mr Thomson.*) What is the busiest time in Rothesay?—July or August, and more or less from the end of June to the middle of September.

5908. (*To Mr Hunter.*) Suppose a Bill were passed making short lets compulsory and preventing any letting of houses under £20 beyond a quarter, what effect would that have on a place like Rothesay?—It would ruin the whole place.

5909. Why?—Because there is a large percentage of these houses let for summer occupation alone. At present the tenants occupy houses for odd weeks and odd week-ends, but that is because they have them for the year. If they could get their houses for three months, then they would take them for three months, and the houses would be unlettable during the other nine months.

5910. Is not the rent really paid for these three months, the other nine being thrown in?—That is so in a sense, but they occupy them during the whole time.

5911. The principal tenant does?—Yes, and in some cases with that class of house they don't take their house as a money-making business; they take it with the view of getting coast accommodation at a fairly cheap rate; they get cheaper and better accommodation than they could get by taking a house from another tenant. If they could get their house for three months then they would take it for three months, speaking as a general rule, and the house for all practical purposes would be entirely useless during the other nine months.

5912. Take the case of a person in Glasgow, who wants to be able to be at Rothesay as much as he wants in the summer time. He may take a house at Rothesay for the whole year?—Yes, and he does do that.

5913. And he does not occupy the house in the winter time?—That is true.

5914. Does he let it in the winter time?—Not as a rule. It is not lettable.

5915. In the summer months he either occupies it himself or he sublets it?—Yes, both.

5916. What difference would it make in his case. You say he would merely take it for the summer months?—Yes, if he could get it.

5917. Would the rent be in any way different?—We would have to ask a full rent for a three months' let; and I daresay you know it is often difficult to get a year's rent for a year's let, let alone for three months.

5918. But do you think the rent would be in any way different from what it is now?—Proportionately, they would expect it to be the same, but the owner would only get three months' rent instead of twelve.

5919. But if he got in the shape of three months' rent, the same as he gets now for the twelve months, there would be no difference to him?—No.

5920. Would that not be just what he would get?—No, I think not. From what we know of human nature and house-letting at the coast, it would be simply impossible. There have been instances where two-thirds of the rent has been got.

5921. For the shorter period?—Yes.

5922. But not the whole?—I never heard of more than two-thirds being got on any occasion. There may have been odd instances, but I don't know of them. At other times furnished houses are to be got at much less money than the unfurnished rent. There are any number of

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furnished houses to be had at much less rent than even the unfurnished rents, when the letting season is over.

5923. Suppose, instead of three months, the Bill allowed six months' tenancy and prevented anything beyond that, would six months meet your view?—No.

5924. It requires to be a year?—Yes. As we view it, it would simply mean the ruin of the whole of that class of property; and in addition to that, they would require to enter on a different line of action altogether, and it would mean that a large number of outlying tenants at present would be entirely shut out from that.

5925. How?—Because they could not afford to let them for three or six months.

5926. But to a very large extent the property that is let for a year just now is only occupied for three or six months?—Yes, but the rent for the whole year is got for that house.

5927. You don't suggest that any substantial part of the rent paid is paid for the winter period, when the place is not occupied?—No, it is simply paid because they require to pay it in order to obtain the house.

5928. Is it not very like a grass field, where you pay the rent for the whole year, but the rent is really paid for the occupancy of the summer—and the law holds that the winter occupancy is simply thrown in? Is not your house occupancy like that?—I don't think so. The grass field is improving all the time, while that property is deteriorating immensely during the time it is shut up, namely, during the winter months of the year.

5929. That is quite so. You state in your *precis* that the property would deteriorate when not occupied, and neither aired nor fired in the winter months. Is that not the position just now with most of the houses—they are not occupied?—It is only partly true, because, seeing that the tenant has his house for the year, it is opened up frequently during the winter.

5930. By the principal tenant?—Yes.

5931. It would just throw that expense on the owner; he would have to air and fire the houses?—He might have to do so, and that would be an additional loss.

5932. You also note that the result would be that the building industry would be discouraged if the let was to be under such unfavourable conditions. That is to say, the building would not take place?—That is so. There are 700 or more houses of that class let to outside tenants.

5933. Non-resident?—Yes. The landlords would have to devise some means of letting these houses to some one else. These 700 would be shut out from the privilege of owning coast houses themselves. They go there with their own people, and they can get them for less money than they would pay for one month to a principal tenant.

5934. Do you not think that a great many people would not mind if they had no security of tenure; they would just trust to the renewal quarter by quarter?—Yes, but the landlords would not trust when they knew that it was a summer house.

5935. Would the landlord not get them to take the house except for the summer?—That is what we believe, and he would not give it to them.

5936. Unless for a whole year's rent?—Yes, which we deem impossible.

5937. (*Mr Thomson.*) I think that is the leading characteristic of it. For a three or a six months' let, you get so much rent, but it would be impossible to get a year's rent. Rothesay is different from a city where you have a steady population. We have no population to draw upon to fill up those 700 houses in winter time.

5938. (*Chairman to Mr Thomson.*) They would be either empty through non-occupacy, or they would be shut up and destruction would take place?—Yes, they would deteriorate.

5939. (*Chairman to Mr Hunter.*) You think it would make a great difficulty in the collection of rates because you would have this temporary occupation?—Yes, we think it would be very difficult.

5940. The assessor's rolls are not made up till September?—That is so. The first paper issued to us is about the beginning of November.

5941. By which time the summer visitors are all away?—Yes.

5942. Has there been in Rothesay, so far as you know, any demand for a change in the method or time of letting houses?—No, not so far as I know.

5943. The question has never been raised at any ward meetings?—No.

5944. Is there any complaint as to the missive question in Rothesay?—No. My experience is that people are anxious to get fixed as soon as ever they can when the New Year is fairly in.

5945. In short, whatever may be the interests of an industrial population, you think that you are in no respect in the same position; first, because you are not industrial, and second, because you have the special summer visitor element?—Yes.

5946. Would the result be that if the Bill were to pass with the optional clause, you would not expect Rothesay to adopt it?—That is so. There is no public representative body in the place which would adopt such a clause, because the Bill not only strikes against the landlords, but it strikes against the whole community. It would practically mean bankruptcy.

5947. Your views would be met if the optional clause remained?—Yes, we felt quite confident that the Bill would not be adopted.

5948. You are speaking for Rothesay. It might be suitable for other places,—you don't know, and you don't care?—We don't say that we don't care, but we are anxious to place before the Committee a view that has not been before them as yet.

5949. Rothesay does not stand alone in this matter. Other seaside resorts would be in the same position?—I should think so.

5950. Unless they are partly industrial and partly resort places?—I should fancy that Dunoon, Largs, and Millport would be in the same position. There is no industry in any of these places. Then there is Tighnabruaich, where there is a considerable population round about.

5951. In regard to lets for a year, of houses with gardens attached, you think these must continue to be arranged at Candlemas?—Yes.

5952. What do you say to the date for arranging lets for other houses without gardens attached? Do you think they might be postponed till the middle of March if it was made universally obligatory?—Personally, I feel that people anxious to take a house should be at liberty to take it.

5953. And freedom of contract should remain there?—Yes, in that respect. If they are prepared to fix with the landlord, then they should not be prevented. It would be an immense convenience to a number of tenants. A great difficulty with tenants is the difficulty with those who are hoping to get something better than they have, and are hunting round by every device they can think of to get a house, and are holding on to their house and won't give it up.

5954. Suppose the giving of this right to these few people involves all the others who don't want to take their house so early, and compels them to do so?—I would leave it optional on the part of the landlord and the tenant to fix if they wanted to.

5955. But suppose the result is that the great mass of tenants are, in point of fact, forced contrary to their desire to take their houses at a very early date, do you think the convenience of those few should be allowed to interfere with the benefit to the large majority?—No, not if I thought they were few, but I think they form the vast majority.

5956. Do you concur in the evidence put before us that if the landlord's hypothec is interfered with, greater facilities for ejections should be provided?—Yes. We should be placed on the same footing as other merchants who supply goods, and we should be able to stop the supply of a house, just as a baker can stop his supply of bread. All the same, I think it would be a positive hardship on the tenant who can go somewhere else and get a loaf, but who cannot go so readily somewhere else and get a house.

5957. Do you have any workmen in Rothesay who are working at other places?—Yes.

5958. You have workmen employed at Port Bannatyne, which is 2½ miles distant?—Yes.

5959. How do they travel?—On their feet, and then there are electric cars.

5960. If a man who has been previously working in Rothesay gets work in Port Bannatyne, he does not want to change his house?—No.

5961. What do they charge on the cars?—1d. each way.

5962. (*Mr Binnie.*) Would it be possible to arrange with any certain communities like Rothesay who elect to be outside of the Bill, and if so, would that satisfy you?—Yes, it would satisfy us. We don't want to interfere with the arrangements of other communities who may be convinced, and may be right in their opinion, that, on the whole, a change would be beneficial. We simply say that if the law is applied to us, it will mean practical bankruptcy.

5963. You are so satisfied with the weight of opinion being in your favour in Rothesay that you would be quite content with a clause that enabled a community to contract out of the Bill?—Yes, I think so. We don't want to bring any influence to bear in any direction. We think we are peculiar, and we want our peculiarity to be fairly faced. We don't think that this Committee or Parliament wish to do an injury to any body of people.

5964. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Can you tell us what reform you suggest in regard to getting rid of tenants?—I would suggest a ready and effective process in, say, the Sheriff Court. With us it is practically impossible to get rid of a tenant. I have tried for six months to get rid of most

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objectionable tenants, and I have sold them up with a view to helping that on, but they sat in the empty house till 12 o'clock on the 28th of May.

5965. Would you be in favour of giving the magistrates power to deal with actions for removal?—Yes, if arrangements could be made. It certainly ought to be cheap; because, after all, the tenant, if it is possible, has to pay for all these burdens.

5966. Assuming there are to be short lets, you don't feel that hypothec is much of a remedy, and you think there should be a much more direct means of getting rid of tenants whose tenancy has expired?—Yes, I am clearly of that opinion. If we could stop the supply of a house as readily as a merchant can stop the supply of his goods.

5967. That might be done by giving that power to the magistrates of the burgh?—I fancy it could be done. It is more a question for a lawyer than for the like of me, but I think there should be some cheap court that could act promptly.

5968. You would not go so far as to suggest that the tenant should be removed without some judicial warrant, either a magistrate's or a Sheriff's warrant?—No; although I confess I have done it, as being the only way with a more obstreperous tenant. One does it at his own risk, and I think it should be left like that. A tenant ought to have redress against any arbitrary action on the part of a factor or landlord. I think it would be very irregular to leave it in the hands of the landlord or proprietor. I think the tenant is entitled to the same fair-play as the landlord.

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Mr John Richardson.

Mr John Richardson, called and examined.

Mr John Richardson.

5969 (*Chairman.*) You are Chairman of the Fifth Ward in the burgh of Dumbarton?—Yes.

5970. You were appointed by the United Wards Committee of Dumbarton to attend here and give evidence before this Committee?—Yes.

5971. You are a joiner to trade, and you have been for long interested in friendly societies and in the Co-operative movement and other matters affecting the wellfare of the working people as well as in municipal matters in Dumbarton?—Yes.

5972. What is the chief trade in Dumbarton?—Shipbuilding and engineering.

5973. Are most of the Dumbarton houses let on yearly lets?—Yes.

5974. Any houses let for a shorter period are in the poorer districts?—Yes.

5975. What do you mean by the shorter period?—They may be let by the quarter, and in very poor districts they are let possibly by the week and fortnight and month, and the rents are collected in a like manner.

5976. Are there any let half-yearly?—I don't know of any.

5977. What figure do you put as the limit for short lets in Dumbarton; would you say £10?—I would put it up to £9.

5978. Substantially the houses above £9 are yearly lets, and below £9 they are mostly short lets?—Not mostly. There are only a few houses in Dumbarton that are let on short lets.

5979. Below £5 are they all shorts lets?—Yes.

5980. And between £5 and £9?—They are all yearly lets.

5981. Then the only short lets are below £5?—Very small and very inferior houses.

5982. Suppose, at the present moment, a working man in Dumbarton is willing to pay £10 or £15, and he prefers a short let, can he get it?—No.

5983. Have you yourself found any drawback from the present method of letting?—Personally I have.

5984. What rents have you paid at different periods?—I have paid £8 for two rooms and kitchen, and £10, 10s. and £11, 11s. I am in a house belonging to the co-operative movement, and there is possibly a little privilege attached, but nevertheless the let is yearly, with quarterly collections. The usual run of rents is up to £16.

5985. In your £8 house it was a yearly let like the others?—Yes.

5986. What is the limit for rents in Dumbarton in the case of an ordinary working man as distinguished from a foreman or a man who has a number of wage-earning children?—The accommodation for a man with a large family necessitates his taking three apartments. A foreman might be content with the same, namely, three apartments, and would pay a similar rent.

5987. But I am talking of ordinary working men. What would the ordinary working man with ordinary wages be able to pay?—I think £10, 10s. for a room and kitchen and £14 to £16 for a two-room and kitchen house.

5988. You think that the limit of £16 in Mr Cross's Bill for Dumbarton as distinguished from £20 for Glasgow is reasonable?—Yes.

5989. In that circumstance have you found inconvenience yourself?—Some two or three years ago I had to remove owing to my family growing up, and I had some difficulty in getting a three-apartment house.

5990. Was that a removal from one part of Dumbarton to another?—It was a removal from one of the same proprietor's houses to another, and yet I had difficulty. After I had signed the missive for the house, I discovered that the house I now occupy was offered to me, and then I made an offer to get rid of the house that I had signed for, and the difficulty arose then. They attempted to hold me responsible for the rent of the house that I had signed for. I was anxious to secure the house that I am at present in, and I suggested a sub-let. I suggested one individual and then another, a working man like myself and making a good wage; but the factor demurred. Latterly another man came to me and asked for a sub-let. I told him to go to the factor and get the let on his own account. Ultimately the factor gave the let to this other man, and relieved me of my contract, but it was not until I had been at some expense.

5991. You did not have to pay any rent?—No.

5992. What expense had you to pay?—I paid 7s. 6d. to the factor.

5993. Have you known cases where a tenant changing for one cause or another has had to pay double rent?—Yes. I know one case that happened last year.

5994. Do you remember if it came to much?—I could not say what the rent was.

5995. Is it the case in your view that there are many tenants who would like to remove, and who have good cause to remove, but who, on account of the risk, do not go to the factor at all, but stay on?—There are quite a host in Dumbarton.

5996. And about whom the factors don't hear?—The factors may be applied to by the tenants, but I am sorry to say that the tenants do not even get courtesy.

5997. And on that account there will be other cases where the people do not go to the factor at all, but just stay on?—Yes.

5998. To sum up, what are your suggestions to get rid of the present difficulties? First of all, you take the missive question, and you state that proprietors should be prohibited from sending missives out so soon as they do?—Yes.

5999. You now come to the short lets?—Yes. In my precognition, I have detailed it according to my own views and opinions. In all houses let on yearly lets of £9 and under, the period of let should be determined by the periodic payments of rent, that is to say, if the rent is paid weekly, the let shall be weekly, and if fortnightly, the rents shall be fortnightly, and so on. Then for houses let at a rent between £9 and £17, the period of let shall not exceed six months, with an option in favour of the proprietors to uplift the rents quarterly. In houses let at a yearly rent, in excess of £17, the proprietor is to be at liberty to let or lease for a period with power to uplift the rents as may be arranged between the proprietor and tenant.

6000. What leads you to alter Mr Cross's proposal and make a distinction between the £9 and the £17 houses?—I must admit I did not go carefully into that point, but I think the difference between £9 and £17 was practically what we might call houses that ought not to be let for more than six months.

6001. But you see, in regard to houses at and under £9, you just take Mr Cross's principle, that the period of payment is to determine the period of let?—Yes.

6002. Whatever the period of payment be, weekly, quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly?—Yes.

6003. Between £17 and £19 you limit it to six months?—Yes.

6004. That would meet the situation?—Yes.

6005. Of course under £9 there are no cases of payment of rent half-yearly,—they are all much shorter?—Yes.

6006. Do you think that any desire for security, apart from the security that flows from reasonable conduct, would be met by providing that between £9 and £17 they might have six months' tenure?—Yes, I think so.

6007. And above £17 you would leave parties just as they are now?—Yes.

6008. You are now talking, of course, in regard to Dumbarton?—Yes.

6009. Then you add, in regard to the notice of removal and the question of ejection, that you suggest that in the

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case of weekly lets, one day's notice to remove should be sufficient from the proprietor, and the like time from the tenant of his intention to remove. That is pretty summary?—Cases do arise where a man may have to shift his employment on very short notice, and possibly there are family conditions that necessitate the taking of his wife and family with him.

6010. But that would seem to imply that the landlord would be entitled to turn a tenant out on a day's notice?—I think so, if the tenant is not as he ought to be.

6011. Then, for fortnightly lets, you suggest three days' notice on either side; for a monthly let, one week's notice; for a six months' let, one month's notice; and lets for a longer period, you suggest the notice should be a matter for arrangement between the parties. You think that that would meet the situation also?—Yes.

6012. (*Mr Howden.*) You are a joiner?—Yes.

6013. In what class of houses do men working at your trade stay?—We get men who live anywhere, even in the joiner trade, but taking the average working man who likes to live in a respectable house, then he will take a room and kitchen house at £10, 10s. If he takes a two-room and kitchen house, then he will go as far as £16, 16s.

6014. That would also apply to the engineering and ship-building men?—Yes.

6015. Your reason, I think, for wishing the alteration in the present system of let is, that people might have to shift their employment?—Yes, we find they have to shift, and they do shift very often in the ship-building industry.

6016. Do you think you have covered the ship-building industry when you have limited the extent of your proposals to monthly lets of £9?—I don't look at shifting from one town to another only, but a man's income may fall and he may not care to run into extra debt with his rent, and he may desire to get into a smaller house.

6017. But assume he lost his employment and had to shift, you are still binding him down, a reasonable tradesman, by limiting the rent to £9, because, according to your own statement, they usually live in houses at rents above that?—Yes, but I have made the limit there six months.

6018. Does that meet it?—I think so.

6019. Why should it not be monthly in connection with these houses?—Most working men prepared to pay a rent above £9 have a nest-egg laid past to assist them to get out of a difficulty of that sort.

6020. And you would prefer to hand over the nest-egg to the landlord?—No, not necessarily.

6021. I do not understand why you should have departed from the principle which you admit is a just one up to £9, viz., that the period of payment of rent shall fix the period of tenure. You cannot give any reason for your alteration?—No.

6022. What effect has the present system of house letting on the building trade in Dumbarton?—I do not think it affects it very much. A great many of the people in Dumbarton are what you would call tenant proprietors; they are going in for houses of their own. There is a society called the Dumbarton Building Society, which builds tenements of superior dwelling-houses. The tenement will cost £1800—I do not know whether that is the value or not—and the upper houses will be so much, the middle flat will be a little more, and the ground flat a little less. Now there are quite a number of such houses in and round Dumbarton,—in fact, most of the tenements that are being built in Dumbarton are being put up by the Dumbarton Building Society, except in one case, where the speculative builder is coming in.

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6023. 28th May is the removal term in Dumbarton?—Yes.

6024. Most people want to get their houses ready for occupancy at that time. Does that not create an inflated demand for labour?—That has occurred, but not very often.

6025. It does not affect you in Dumbarton?—Not very much.

6026. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Is there much house building in Dumbarton?—Of late there has been a little in a new place up at the joint station. I don't know who the property belongs to.

6027. But there is not enough building to gauge whether or not the building trade is affected by any conditions of letting,—there is not sufficient building to enable you to make up your mind as to whether or not the amount of it is affected by the conditions of letting?—I should think so; there is sufficient building going up to enable me to make up my mind.

6028. Then it is affected adversely by the present system of letting?—It is this way: if houses have to be hurried up before 28th May, then they leave working men on the market afterwards that have to look for employment elsewhere.

6029. Do any of your tradesmen emigrate after the busy season is over?—No.

6030. They just go slack until the next spring?—We do not take it in rushes like that in Dumbarton.

6031. Are rents cheaper in Dumbarton than they are in Glasgow?—I don't know the rents in Glasgow.

6032. Taking the £9 limit, I suppose you have no very serious objection to all houses occupied by working men being put under the same rule in regard to short lets. Suppose the Committee thought that it was inexpedient to have different limits for different places, do you think there would be any prejudice done to Dumbarton by fixing £20 or £16?—No.

6033. You have no strong feeling in favour of £9 as against £15?—No, there is no strong feeling in favour of £9.

6034. You just took £9 as a standard of your own?—Yes.

6035. The arguments in favour of £9 operate equally favourably in regard to £16?—Yes.

6036. You would be prepared to apply the same principle up to £16?—Yes.

Mr J. W. Cleland.

Mr James W. Cleland, M.P., called and examined.

Mr J. W. Cleland.

6037. (*Chairman.*) You are Member of Parliament for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow?—Yes.

6038. When did you enter Parliament?—At the last General Election.

6039. You reside in London?—Yes.

6040. What is the character of the population in Bridgeton?—I should say practically entirely industrial,—with the exception of one or two terraces on the Green it is absolutely industrial.

6041. And the industries are of a varied description?—Yes, very varied indeed.

6042. Some of them are probably more shifting than others?—Yes, that is so.

6043. Was the question that is now before us at all brought under your notice during the election?—Repeatedly.

6044. How?—At almost all my meetings, not merely the indoor meetings, but also the many meetings that one has to have in a constituency like that at the work gates, I was asked the question. It appeared to be perhaps next to the one or two very acutely controversial questions like Free Trade, one that very deeply interested all sections of the electorate. It was very marked.

6045. At the instance of completely different people, not merely a stage army?—That is so. It was quite different from many questions; the handwriting was different.

6046. Were you convinced that there was a general belief, right or wrong, in a real grievance?—Yes. No one could have passed through any similar experience without feeling that a very large number of the electors felt that they had a grievance.

6047. Had it anything to do with politics or political parties at all?—I would say no.

6048. Is it the case that candidates in different constituencies, belonging to different political parties, had the same experience to your knowledge?—Yes.

6049. What was the question or the questions?—The usual question that was put up to me was, "Are you in favour of the principles of Mr Cross's Missive Bill?" That was the gist of all the questions.

6050. It has been suggested that the real grievance is limited to what has been called the missive system, namely, the practice at a very early period before the date of entry to have a hard and fast contract entered into?—May I answer that in my own way? I am a Glasgow man, and I have had some slight previous knowledge of this. When I found the question coming up so frequently, I made some personal inquiries about it, and I found that the grievance was not so much as apparently it has been suggested—I am only speaking for my own constituents; but it lay in the fact that they thought they were tied for a long time previously, and their work might necessitate their leaving the district and having a house on their hands,—that, I think, was the real hardship.

6051. If, instead of being bound for twelve months, they were bound for sixteen months, then the hardship would be aggravated?—Yes.

6052. If it be the fact that there is a very large body of working class opinion in favour of the present system, do you see why that should not have had vocal expression?—I can see no reason at all.

6053. Did it have written expression in the way of letters to you, private or otherwise?—No. Among the many communications I received, I never received a single one in favour of the present system either directly or indirectly. It may be a coincidence, but that is the fact.

6054. The conclusion you draw is that the opinion is as you have found it expressed?—Yes.

6055. It is said that the body of opinion on the other side is founded partly on two things: first, that the present system gives security of tenure; and, second, that under the present system you have a social standing if you are a yearly tenant, which you have not if you are a short let tenant. Did you find these views given expression to?—Not at all.

6056. It has been suggested, in answer to the first point, that a respectable tenant has sufficient security of tenure in the way of the self-interest of the landlord to retain him?—I should have thought so, without professing to be an expert.

6057. And it is said that any social disability would, of course, disappear if lets became all of one complexion?—I should have thought so.

6058. Was the English practice founded on, or did you come across the question?—Incidentally the question arose as to what was the practice in England. I was asked it because, I suppose, I am a member of the London County Council, but I do not think they founded it on that; they founded it on the very real grievance that they felt in their everyday experience.

6059. It has been suggested that, while there may be advantages in the English system, there are counterbalancing drawbacks and grievances there. Have you come across these in your experience?—Of course, no system is perfect; but, without speaking as an expert, I think that, so far as London is concerned, the existing compounding system works pretty well.

6060. But it is the fact, I suppose, that the difficulty attending the question practically is the compounding part of it?—I should think so.

6061. Have you found in England there is any grievance or agitation from the short let system being the practice; have you found any grievance or agitation, apart from compounding altogether?—No. I think, generally speaking—so far as I can speak for London—there is no grievance at all.

6062. It is suggested that, apart from compounding, there is a grievance felt owing to the want of security there. You have not heard that?—No, not so far as regards London. If there had been such a grievance, I think I would have heard of it, because I have a constituency of over 20,000.

6063. Of what character?—It is very varied.

6064. Is it not Belgravia?—No, we have all sections of the community in it.

6065. You mentioned compounding. It has been suggested that, so far as the support that working men have got in this matter from the corporation is concerned, that is merely because it would pay them better to have the short let if it involved compounding?—I should think that the Corporation has two aspects with regard to that. Of course, a Corporation must represent the electors who send them there, otherwise the electors will change the complexion of the Corporation; but equally it is to the interest of both to get as much as they can in the shape of rates.

6066. Our Committee must have regard to all three interests: the interest of the landlord, of the tenant, and of the rating authorities?—I hope so.

6067. Is the alteration proposed put forward, in your understanding, in the interests of all three in the end?—I think if an alteration in the system, in the direction of shortening the lets, were brought about, it would operate to the interest of the community.

6068. It would be to the direct advantage of the tenant and the rating authorities, without doing substantial injury to the landlord?—That is my view.

6069. Of course, as a member of Parliament, so far as details go, you keep an open mind?—Certainly.

6070. And you have seen, I suppose, that there were previous Bills before Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, and I believe previous editions of Mr Cross's Bill.

6071. In regard to differences in detail, that is all a matter for Parliament to adjust and for Committee?—Yes.

6072. Incidentally one or two questions have been introduced, which have no direct relation to the matter. First of all, there is the question of hypothec and its proposed abolition, absolute in one case and qualified in another. Was that brought up at all at any of your election meetings?—I have been asked at various times whether or not I was in favour of the abolition of the landlord's right of hypothec, but I may say that that question did not bulk anything like so largely as the question of the shortening of the term of lets.

6073. Was anything made, in your knowledge, of the present difficulty of a landlord getting rid of undesirable tenants or of non-paying tenants speedily and at small expense?—No, that did not crop up at all.

6074. Was anything made, further, of the great general question about the power of landlords, who have houses for their employees, to turn the employees out immediately during a strike?—Yes, that question was brought up, and I was asked about it.

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6075. I suppose that is a great general question of a very much larger kind than some of the matters remitted to us?—I should imagine it was, but I should also imagine that it presses more acutely in the mining villages than it does in Glasgow.

6076. Are there in your constituency any cases of employees' houses owned by the masters?—To the best of my knowledge there are not. There may be some, but I do not think so.

6077. You notice that in Mr Cross's Bill there is an optional clause? I suppose the people that were interested in the question in Bridgeton were looking to the interests of Bridgeton?—Yes.

6078. And, so far as you saw, was there any disinclination, if the interests of other places were different from those of Glasgow, to allow these other places to take their own course?—Of course, I personally dislike all permissive legislation, but I think the feeling of my own constituents and, I think, of the bulk of the electorate of Glasgow is, that they feel this question so acutely, that they would be prepared to accept this optional clause.

6079. Did you find, in regard to the question of rating, that the view was entertained that it would be an advantage to a working man receiving his wages at short intervals, that he should be in a position to pay his rates to the rating authorities, or through the landlord, oftener, at all events, than once a year?—Yes, that view was pressed upon me, and it appeared to me to be reasonable that a man might be able with very little apparent sacrifice to himself to spend say 5s. once a quarter, who would have difficulty in paying 20s. at the end of twelve months.

6080. So far as your constituents were concerned, I suppose it would not matter to them whether they paid the rates to the rating authority with a more frequent collection or to the landlord?—I should imagine not at all.

6081. Is there anything else you want to add at this juncture?—No, except this significant fact, that the memorial to the Secretary for Scotland was signed by members of Parliament, representing all sections of the Imperial Parliament. It was signed by 53 members, and it would have been signed by more had we been able to get hold of some of the others. I mention that to show that it was not a party move.

6082. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Have you considered the effect that the Bill might have on the enfranchisement of people at present disqualified?—Yes.

6083. We have been told by the officials that something like 19,000 at present have no votes, and if the landlords of their houses were assessed there would be an addition of 19,000 voters to the Glasgow divisions?—I am very glad to hear it.

6084. Does that occur to you as a result that should be desiderated or otherwise?—In my own view it is entirely a desirable result.

6085. I think you live in London?—Yes.

6086. Could you tell us in detail the working of the London system in regard to compounding?—I could, but I am not an expert on the question, and I understand that you are possibly to have expert evidence on it. I think it would be better and clearer if you got the exact figures from the experts, as I might make a slip.

6087. (*Chairman.*) It would enable us to examine the experts better if we had any information beforehand?—All I can tell you is that the compounding system in London works so well that, up to the present, out of the 28 metropolitan burghs of London which make up the administrative County of London, there is only one which does not go in for compounding, and that has only stopped compounding within the last two years,—my own burgh. I have never realised the reasons for its stopping yet. They seem to think it was an advantage to the landlord to go on with the compounding system. That was their view.

6088. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do you know what allowances were made in the different cases?—I think I can give the exact allowances. The percentage allowed varies from 16 per cent. to 25 per cent. It is 16 per cent. in Westminster, 17½ per cent. in Deptford, Hackney, and Stoke Newington, 17½ to 25 per cent. in Holborn (because it is split up into different rating parishes), 20 per cent. in Battersea and Hammersmith, and 25 per cent. in Hampstead, Poplar, and Wandsworth. That refers to the compounding under Section 4 of the Act. In Lewisham the average deduction amounted to about 18 per cent.

6089. You think that the authorities have considered that too generous to the landlord?—That was their view. I don't make any comment upon it.

6090. (*Mr Esslemont.*) What does this discount cover? We were told that there was a certain amount for collection and a further amount for risk?—Of course, I cannot say

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what were the views in the minds of the local authorities in arriving at the percentage they allowed. They may have said 15 per cent. will cover it, being 10 per cent. for this and 5 for that, but I cannot say.

6091. These are the gross discounts allowed in any case?—Yes.

6092. I think we were told to-day that in some of the London burghs the commission amounted to 15 per cent. for cost of collection, and 15 per cent. for guaranteeing?—I think there must be some misconception there.

6093. You referred to a section of an Act. Which Act?—Compounding for rates in London comes under the Burgh Rates Assessment Act of 1869. There are two sections, Sections 3 and 4, which govern compounding in London. Section 3 provides for the case of owners of houses not exceeding £20 rateable value, and allows them to become liable for the rates instead of the occupiers. Section 4 empowers the authority to make an order that the proprietor shall be rated instead of the tenants. Certain of them are under Section 3, and others are under Section 4. I can put in the figures under both sections, which will give an exact picture of the state of things in the metropolis at present.

6094. (*Mr Howden.*) We have heard something about the law of hypothec. Do you favour the abolition of the landlord's right of hypothec?—I do.

6095. Why?—I think it places the landlord in a privileged position which I do not think he has any right to occupy.

6096. Do you not think that it presses heavily on the tenants too?—I think it works out in that way.

6097. Would you be prepared to extend it also to this, that there should be exemption up to a certain amount as regards tenants' goods being taken, for instance as regards furniture?—Personally, I should be disposed to agree, but I should not like off-hand to fix any amount.

6098. But you are favourable to any such system?—Yes.

6099. (*Mr Binnie.*) You say that you think hypothec should be abolished?—I think the landlord's right of hypothec should be abolished.

6100. Because?—Because I think it places him in a privileged position.

6101. Would you place him in all respects in the same position as other creditors?—I should be disposed to do so.

6102. Would you propose that a landlord should be able at once, without process of law of any kind, to cease giving credit to his tenant?—I do not quite follow that question.

6103. In Scotland, before a landlord can cease to allow a tenant to occupy a house, even if the rent is not paid, he must have a process of law which is expensive and causes delay. The tenant continues, in spite of the landlord, to occupy the house during that period. Since you wish to put the landlord in the same position as other creditors, are you prepared to abolish that right of a tenant?—I think the simple solution would be to simplify the process of law so far as regards the landlord, and not to put him to the needless expense he is put to at present. I have no desire to penalise the landlord.

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6104. How could that be done if he has to go through any process of law before he can cease to give credit to a tenant?—I believe some processes of law are more expeditious than others.

6105. Is there any other creditor that you know that requires to go through a process of law before he ceases to give further credit to a person who is already in his debt, and is not paying?—To the best of my knowledge there is not.

6106. So you would propose to that extent to put the landlord in a worse position than any other creditor in existence?—No, pardon me.

6107. Yes, you would.—I suggested that it might be possible so to simplify the process of law as to remove what appears to be an injustice.

6108. But he would still require to go through a process of law?—And it might be very short and extremely cheap.

6109. But you would still require to go through a process of law?—It might be possible to obviate that by various arrangements.

6110. Will you suggest an arrangement that you think would be fair?—I am not prepared to do so off-hand.

6111. You see the position?—I see the point.

6112. And you have no solution to offer?—I do not say so.

6113. But at present?—I do not say so.

6114. Well, will you tell us what you have to offer?—I think it would be perfectly feasible to invent a simple process.

6115. But if there is any process, however simple, that a landlord requires to go through, to that extent he would be in a different position from another creditor?—It is a question of degree.

6116. Is there any degree between nothing and something?—I should have thought so.

Then I cannot go any further.

6117. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Suppose you contracted to give a supply of coal in six deliveries during the next twelve months, you would be bound to supply the coal even although you were dubious about your customer's credit?—I am afraid so.

6118. You would require to carry out your contract?—Yes.

6119. (*Mr Binnie.*) If your creditor did not pay you when he promised to pay you, would you require to continue delivery?—It would depend on the terms of my contract. I might have entered into a wise or an unwise contract.

Mr R. Kirk and Mr W. L. Kirkwood.

Mr Robert Kirk and Mr William L. Kirkwood, called and examined.

Mr R. Kirk and Mr W. L. Kirkwood.

6120. (*Chairman to Mr Kirk.*) You are President of the Paisley Property Association, and you have been so during the last six years?—Yes.

6121. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) Are you one of the Directors of the same Association?—Yes.

6122. And you appear along with Mr Kirk to give evidence on behalf of the members of that Association?—Yes.

6123. (*To Mr Kirk.*) Are you interested as an owner or part owner of a considerable number of tenement properties in Paisley?—Yes.

6124. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) And you have been for twenty-five years engaged in the management of house property, and ten years in business for yourself as senior partner of the firm of Kirdwood & Goudie, Paisley?—Yes.

6125. Your office has been established for over seventy years?—Yes.

6126. (*To Mr Kirk.*) How many members are there in your Association?—They are composed of all the proprietors of property in Paisley.

6127. Not all?—Most of them are members either through their factors or personally.

6128. So we may take your views as representing the views of the house proprietors of Paisley?—Yes.

6129. How long has your Association been in existence?—This present Association has been going on for ten or twelve years.

6130. Has it taken an interest in the different measures brought forward on the subject of house letting?—Yes.

6131. And has it considered them?—Yes.

6132. And among them the Bill recently brought in by Mr Cross?—Yes, and the previous Bills brought in by him.

6133. In your view, has any occasion arisen for passing any such measure?—Do you mean is there any special need so far as Paisley is concerned?

6134. Yes?—No, I do not think so.

6135. You notice that Paisley is specially dealt with in the schedule, as are other towns, the limit of which is to be £16?—Yes.

6136. How do the rents in Paisley compare with the rents in Glasgow?—They are somewhat under the rents in Glasgow, but in the newer properties they are pretty much the same.

6137. Has there been any agitation at ward meetings or otherwise in favour of short lets?—There have been a number of questions at ward meetings and at the General Election in regard to the missive question.

6138. What do you mean by the missive question?—I mean the issuing of missives so early in the year.

6139. Is your practice in Paisley as to that the same as in Glasgow?—No, it is usually about the middle of February before they are sent out, and they are returnable by the end of February, but for some years past we have entered into some arrangement with the recently formed Tenants Association to issue them at a certain date, and with their concurrence we have done so.

6140. Is it the case that there is a desire to have missives issued later?—Yes.

6141. Do you see any reason why that desire should not be given effect to?—No.

6142. Suppose the date of warning away were made, say, 8th May, instead of 4th April, as has been suggested, how late could you have your missives issued?—They would require to be issued about the middle of April and returnable by the end of the month.

6143. And that would not interfere with anyone's interests?—No, not if it was made universal.

6144. It is not a fair system, in your view, to have some factors not going in with an arrangement of that sort which others have agreed to as reasonable?—That is so, and we

suffer from that in Paisley. There are a few factors outside our Association, some two or three, and some large owners who have remained outside for no other reason than to benefit by the issuing of their missives at an earlier period than we issue them, and they thereby get an undue advantage.

6145. Any change of that kind would, I suppose, be one that would be naturally applicable all over Scotland without any optional clause at all?—That is so; and so far as I understand the Bill, it would require to refer both to counties and to burghs. I understand it only refers to burghs just now.

6146. Have you anything more to say on the missive question?—No.

6147. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) Or you?—No, nothing special.

6148. (*To Mr Kirk.*) Now, in regard to the short lets, that is in your view quite a different question from the other?—Yes, it is outside the question of missives.

6149. Which do you think was really at the bottom of this whole business, the missive question or the short lets?—The missive question.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) The sending out of the missives so early led up to it anyway.

6150. (*To Mr Kirk.*) What do you say about the short let business interfering with the right of a landlord and tenant to agree to a lease say for a year?—I consider that the question of short lets as under the Bill would interfere very greatly with the question of free contract: that is to say, you would be unable to agree with your tenant for a yearly let or lease, and you would thereby be debarred from taking into consideration the question of letting your heritable subjects for a longer period than the rent payable.

6151. Every one agrees that freedom of contract is desirable, but there is such a grievance that it is said that that principle must go to the wall. You are only speaking for Paisley?—Yes.

6152. Do you think that in Paisley there is any such grievance as would warrant the legislature interfering with the freedom of contract?—I don't think so. There is a large number of houses in Paisley which are monthly lets, and the class of people in these is not of the same status as those housed in yearly lets. I consider that if a person who at present is in a yearly let was to be asked to take his house by the month, he would be considerably hurt in his feelings.

6153. Do you find, in addition, that people with yearly lets attach importance to the security of tenure that they thereby have?—Yes; security of tenure is very desirable, because if they have a house that they are satisfied with, they wish to be free from interference in the way of raising the rent or disturbance of any kind.

6154. What are the industries of Paisley?—They are mixed. The principal industry is thread-making; then there are engineering, starch, flour, ship-building, and soap-making.

6155. Are there any of these industries that are specially shifting in their conditions?—No.

6156. The large number of employees there are permanently employed?—Yes.

6157. But there is a good deal of shifting in ship-building?—We have a very small amount of ship-building; it is not worth considering.

6158. If the difficulty arises from the shifting nature of the population, that would not apply to Paisley to the same extent as it applies to Glasgow?—No, because the employment is more permanent and more local.

6159. Looking to the variety of conditions that there are in different places in Scotland, you think, if the Bill does pass, the optional clause in it should be allowed to remain?—Yes.

6160. If it did pass, what would be your own idea as to what Paisley would do?—It would be likely to adopt it.

6161. Would they be likely, under the optional clause, to adopt the Bill if passed into an Act?—I think so, because the representatives on all Town Councils have very little sympathy with, or concern for, owners of heritages. We know well that we suffer from many grievances, and we never get very much given back. We are supposed to stand a good deal at the hands of a member of a Town Council. It is a very popular theme, "to go for the landlord," and I have no doubt that if this Bill became an Act of Parliament it would be adopted.

6162. If there is a large amount of working men's opinion in favour of longer lets, as we are told there is, why would not that opinion go against adopting the Act?—That may be so, but those folks who are at present secure in long lets are not always represented at ward meetings.

6163. Why should that be? If there is this opinion among the working men in favour of the present system, why should they not express it at ward meetings as well as the others?—I contend that the people who are crying out for this in Paisley are very limited in number. There is an association in Paisley, the Tenants Association, which does not extend to more than 200. I don't think the general householder is crying out.

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6164. If that is so, the general ratepayer would vote in favour of the present system and refuse to adopt the Bill?—Yes. If a man was quite secure he might be willing and anxious to have a short let, but I don't see that he would benefit in any way by it, because security of tenure is a very important matter.

6165. I see the Paisley Tenants Association has about 620 members. That is more than you were thinking it had?—Possibly; I know it had a very small number at one time.

6166. Do you find that there is a great drawback from the one term of removal in Paisley, namely, 28th May, and removals not being spread over the year?—I am not aware of that.

6167. Does it not lead to a great over-pressure at that time and want of work at other times?—I cannot say that that is my experience.

6168. Does it not lead to a difficulty in getting houses into order and cleaned.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) Not so much in Paisley, because there has been so much new building and improvement. People are able to shift before the term, and that enables them to shift easier.

6169. (*To Mr Kirk.*) Have you not had cases of men coming and saying that since they took their house they have got employment elsewhere and they want to remove and give up the house, and where you have told them that you would still have to hold them responsible?—There have been cases of that.

6170. Have you any idea what the percentage will be?—Very small indeed.

6171. What will be the percentage of those that did remove and were ultimately held liable from failure to get sublets?—Speaking for myself, I don't think it will be 1 per cent.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) In my experience it is about the same. There is very little sub-letting in Paisley.

6172. (*To Mr Kirk.*) How many empty houses do you have in Paisley?—1565.

6173. What is the population of Paisley?—About 85,000. There are 95 shops empty and 259 stores, etc. The value of the unlets is £17,762.

6174. Have you any men resident in Paisley who work outside?—Yes, a number go to Govan.

6175. What do they pay for travelling?—1s. per week.

6176. What are they working at?—Various trades, the building trade.

6177. Have you people living in Glasgow who work in Paisley?—Not to the same degree, but we have a few.

6178. Why is it that those people living in Paisley and working in Glasgow do not remove to Glasgow?—Possibly their families may be employed in the mills. Ready employment is found by them at the mills, and the head of the house may have to find his work in Glasgow.

6179. These are voluntary cases?—Yes, they continue from year to year. I may say that there is a very large number of workmen's trains going from both stations night and morning.

6180. How many of the houses in Paisley are on monthly lets?—Fully 3000.

6181. What will be the maximum rents?—Anything up to £12.

6182. Between £8 and £12 will they be mostly yearly?—Monthly rents are common up to £7 and £8, and then there are yearly lets at £8, £9, and £10.

6183. May I take it that below £5 they are all monthly?—Yes.

6184. And between £5 and £10 you have both monthly and yearly lets?—Yes.

6185. And above £10 they are all yearly?—Yes.

6186. Do you think that short lets would have any effect on the value of the premises?—Yes, they would deteriorate the value of the subject very much.

6187. Why?—Because they bring in a different class of tenant, a less careful class.

6188. You are talking about things as they are at present. Suppose you got monthly lets for the better class of tenant and the better class of property, would it be deteriorated?—We have no experience, but still we can assume that a person who is only on a monthly tenure would hardly have the same consideration and care for his house that he would have for a house on a yearly tenure.

6189. Do you find that where a man has a house for a year he is inclined to do a little to it himself when he goes into it?—Yes.

6190. What kind of things will he do to it?—He may ask the owner or the factor to assist him in the way of painting and papering. He might supply the labour if you supplied the material.

6191. And he would not do that if it was only a monthly let?—That is so.

6192. Do you think that short lets would put up the rents?—Yes.

6193. On account of what?—The loss in rental would be greater, and then there is the question of repairs and maintenance.

6194. Would it be both that the factorage would be more costly and the repairs would be more costly?—Yes, and the collection would be more costly, the loss of rent between tenant and tenant would be greater. It would all tend to raise the rents.

6195. In regard to the question of ejectment of undesirable tenants, is it your view that if shorter lets were introduced there would require to be some corresponding provision to enable the landlord to get rid of undesirable tenants more cheaply and quickly?—Yes. We suffer very much from that in Paisley. We petitioned the magistrates to resuscitate the old Burgh Court, but they refused to do so We appealed to the Secretary for Scotland, but no further steps have been taken.

6196. At present you have to go before the Sheriff?—Yes. You have to give a notice of forty-eight hours, and then there is every possibility that the Sheriff in the case of non-appearance will give five days to remove.

6197. The forty-eight hours seems reasonable enough, if at the end of that time you can get a warrant to eject?—Yes, but you must warn them out and give ten days' notice.

6198. And then you get an order for service with forty-eight hours' notice?—Yes.

6199. If you got your ejectment straight off at that point, then you would be well enough off?—That would be a fortnight.

6200. Instead of getting your warrant straight off, if the tenant puts in an appearance you don't get a warrant?—Usually.

6201. In Glasgow it is said that in the Burgh Court the magistrates do not consider the tenant's reasons, or whether there are any reasons, but they give him the delay straight off, simply because he puts in an appearance. In the Sheriff Court the Sheriff considers the question?—Yes, and if the reasons are not sufficient he grants a warrant at the end of five days.

6202. Why five days?—It is to give the tenant time to remove and look out for other premises. My own opinion is that the burgh magistrates sit daily in Paisley, and possibly that Court could be made use of for the turning out of tenants on forty-eight hours' notice. You have always a sitting magistrate, but you have not always a sitting sheriff. We have in the Sheriff Court vacations of a month or five weeks, and these tenants are quite as well aware of the vacations as you are. So there is a loss there of two months, not to speak of the former loss.

6203. You are assuming that you have a burgh magistrate every day. In Glasgow they only sit twice a week?—But I am taking the ordinary court.

6204. That would involve a statute?—Yes. I am taking advantage of the sitting magistrate.

6205. Do you think that the five days is reasonable or not?—Somewhere between three and five.

6206. Is the expense serious?—Between four and five shillings.

6207. Then what do you say to the compounding?—I am quite against that. I may say that Paisley has instituted a provisional order this session, and they are asking for the compounding of rates. Now, there is no reason for it so far as Paisley is concerned. My objection is that it is a very odious and disagreeable duty to impose on any owner of heritage.

6208. Do you not do it already to any extent?—Under £4 only.

6209. Are you under the general Police Act?—Yes. As I have already stated, it is a very nasty duty to perform. In Paisley and in other burghs the Corporation have considerable power for collecting the rates. In Paisley we have an outside collector whose duty it is to keep at the people who are bad payers. They have the benefit of not being under the Wages Limit Arrestment Act of 1870, and they can imprison a man. Now, that power is not proposed to be conferred on the owners either in this Bill or in the provisional order of Paisley, and that would make it impossible to collect the rates.

6210. You don't object to the proposal that the rates should be collected more frequently than once a year?—Not at all.

6211. You object to their being collected by the landlord?—Yes.

6212. The proposal seems reasonable that a working man would be in a better position to pay his rates if he had not to pay them all at once.

(*Mr Kirk.*) That is adopted to a certain extent already in Paisley. The collector takes payments to account.

6213. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) You have no objection to Parliament ordering the rating authority to collect four times a year?—No. The overlapping that exists with regard to the rating authorities could be done away with by having one rating authority for all the rates.

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6214. What benefit would that be?—It would do away with one set of rating authorities. Under the Poor Law Act you have the School Board Assessment levied by the parish authorities who assesses on behalf of the School Board. Now, an attempt is made to bring School Board matters and unify them under the Town Council. I do not see why there should not be a unification of the rating authorities. There should be just the one rating authority. At present you are only putting the one against the other. You are drawing the money from the same sources. If there was just the one rating authority then the expense would be reduced to a minimum, which is a proper thing to do.

6214*a*. The other suggestion is that there should be unification by making the landlord collect the whole lot?—He can hardly collect his rent at present. There is a very great loss. Under £4, where we have to collect the rates, there is a loss of something like 50 per cent. Now, that should not be extended, because, if it were, then property would become a very serious burden.

6214*b*. Where is the 50 per cent. loss?—Under £4 owners have to lift and pay all the rates, and there is a loss there of about 50 per cent.

6214*c*. Have you arrived at that by any investigation?—By experience.

(*Mr Kirk.*) That is the case. We have about 250 houses under £5, and the loss works out at about 50 per cent.

6215. (*To Mr Kirk.*) That is both on rates and rents?—No, just on the rates.

6216. You don't get your rents?—They will pay their rents but not their rates.

6217. You are attributing the loss just to the rates?—Yes.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) In many cases it would be a loss of both.

(*Mr Kirk.*) In many cases the people are poor and they won't pay any more.

6218. (*To Mr Kirk.*) You would not expect a loss like that with the better class?—At present the landlord lifts the water rates, and I think the loss is about 20 per cent.

6219. Under £4 the landlord lifts the whole rates?—Yes.

6220. And the loss is about 50 per cent.?—Yes.

6221. What other rate does he lift?—The water rates.

6222. Up to what?—Up to any rent.

6223. And what else?—The burgh roads and improvement rate.

6224. Is that all?—Yes.

6225. What is his loss in these?—15 to 20 per cent.

6226. You are spreading that all over?—Yes.

6227. Of course when you go to the higher rents it is less, and when you go to the lower rents it is more?—Yes, the loss is 15 to 20 per cent.

6228. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) Under £4 you get no allowance?—Yes, we get 10 per cent.

6229. And the water?—10 per cent.

6230. And the roads and improvements?—I think it is about 25 per cent.

6231. Why is there that difference?—I could not say.

6232. Do you know anything to justify why you should not get 25 per cent. under £4?—Would not the loss be greater in connection with rents under £4 than the loss on rates like water, which apply to all rents? One would expect a bigger allowance on the rents under £4?—It is just the same. It used to be £3, but they altered it to £4 some years ago.

6233. Have rents been rising in Paisley?—No.

(*Mr Kirk.*) Rents have not been rising. The large numbers of unlet houses has made it impossible to raise the rents.

6234. (*To Mr Kirk.*) Do you think that the optional clause would lead to confusion?—Yes. There would be confusion in removing from one particular district to another, if the Bill was permissive.

6235. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) In your office you have fully 700 monthly lets?—Yes.

6236. What is the biggest rent?—We have them paying monthly up to £15.

6237. That must be exceptional?—It does not happen in many cases.

6238. What is it due to?—The class of property—old properties.

6239. Is the proportion of the monthly lets going down?—No.

6240. You say that some years ago you had more?—Yes, when there were more old properties, but with the rebuilding the monthly lets have decreased.

6241. You have about 250 houses at £5 and under?—Yes.

6242. In Glasgow we are told that houses at £4 and under are rapidly decreasing in number. Is it the same in Paisley?—Yes.

6243. You say that in the ten years you have been in business you have not had more than three cases where tenants had to pay the rents of two dwelling-houses. How had these arisen?—The people took their houses first and then wanted better houses, and said that they would take the risk.

6244. They were warned?—Yes, they were warned that they were liable.

6245. Do you agree that short lets would cause the rents to go up?—Yes.

6246. Do you think that it would be a substantial increase?—Not very great, but still it would always be something; we would require to put something on for the extra tear and wear.

6247. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Kirk.*) What number of houses have you charge of?—I have belonged to a family of property-owning people for the last sixty years, with about 500 tenants.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) I have about 400 properties and 2400 tenants. Of course, a good many of the properties are old and small.

6248. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) Are there many houses in Paisley that are owned by the employers of labour?—Not very many—just Messrs Coats', and these are mostly self-contained.

(*Mr Kirk.*) They have a small village with houses for foremen in a district called Meikleriggs.

6249. (*To Mr Kirk.*) But for ordinary working people are there any of the employers of labour that have houses for their employees?—Not that I am aware of. There is a mining village, but it is outside the burgh and has nothing to do with the burgh.

6250. (*Mr Howden to Mr Kirk.*) I notice you say that factors have a considerable amount of work to do at one time in the shape of preparing for the term. What do you mean by that?—I mean to say that there is a considerable amount of preparatory work in the way of preparing for the term and incoming tenants and rent collecting.

6251. Would it not be better if it was spread over the year?—You would require a larger staff if we collected more frequently.

6252. What is your staff doing when they are not doing this work at the term time?—I mean by preparing for the term that we have to balance at the term and prepare statements.

6253. The fact is that all this work comes on at the one season of the year.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) It comes on twice in the year.

6254. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) If it was spread over the year, would it not be much more convenient for you?—No. You get time to work up the laggards in the quiet season. We are collecting every week.

6255. You told us that rents would go up if you had monthly lets?—Yes, because monthly tenants are sorer on the houses.

6256. The factors would not object to that, as they would be paid commission on that?—I don't think so. Our commission is going down, and we have to work harder for less money.

6257. If there was more money taken out of the property, whatever the percentage was, the factor would get more?—Yes.

6258. (*To Mr Kirk.*) You told us there would be a loss, on the rents principally, from a house standing empty if we had monthly lets. Did you mean in individual cases?—I meant all over. If there were monthly lets and there was a tenant going out, you could hardly expect to have a tenant ready to come in. With the monthly lets that we have now we frequently lose a month before we get a new tenant in.

6259. They will be taking houses elsewhere and paying rent?—Yes, but the loss to the owner is not made good.

6260. In the gross the amount of rent you would extract from the tenants would be the same?—I don't think so.

6261. How would you take an increase of rent out of them?—The rent would require to be increased to make good the loss.

6262. What effect has the 28th of May on the building trade?—Very little in Paisley. The building trade has subsided in Paisley.

6263. But there is a rush for the term time?—There may be a rush during the few days previous to the term, but as a rule a building which is started early in the year should be in quite good readiness for May, and there should be very little rush required.

6264. Does that apply to the painters?—To painters, plasterers, and joiners.

6265. What do you do with the painters when they come in to do up houses at that time of the year? The tenants have usually to wait a considerable time to get their houses done up?—At that time of the year most housewives get their cleaning done, and that is the reason of the rush.

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6266. Is the reason not this, that people are shifting at that time?—There is not much painting done at that time.

6267. Is it not the case that some factors promise to do up houses when new tenants take them?

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) Yes, that is the case. Before the New Year there is a rush to get houses done up for the New Year.

6268. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) It does not extend only to that one period in your experience?—No.

6269. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Kirk.*) Do you know anything about the old Burgh Courts?—No, not beyond the fact that there was a Burgh Court. Provost Brown has written a history of Paisley, and in that he tells about the Burgh Courts. We had a deputation before the magistrates and pointed out the usefulness of this court. They gave us no reason for their refusal. We then appealed to the Secretary for Scotland, and he sent for further information from the Town Clerk, and he left us at the point that he was about to see the Lord Advocate and see if anything could be done. The only solution that the magistrates gave was that there should be more frequent Sheriff Courts. That is not practicable, because they are fixed by statute.

6270. It would meet your views if there was some machinery by which the magistrates would be able to grant ejection warrants?—Yes. That is an objection to Mr Cross's Bill,—there is no machinery in it at all. Without any machinery you are simply at the mercy of the tenant.

6271. You suggested that something might be done to prevent the overlapping of the rates?—Yes, by making one authority for the collection of all the rates.

6272. Would that not result in one large sum being demanded from tenants annually?—Yes, but if it was made payable four times a year.

6273. But in the absence of any change of the frequency of collections, it would aggravate the grievance that we have had before us?—That may be so, but, while it is not statutory, arrangements can be made in the way of part payment in cases either of distress or want of work.

6274. Are you in favour of a more frequent collection of rates by the Corporation?—Yes, four times a year.

6275. Do you think they would make less loss?—Yes, because there would be more frequent and smaller payments. The larger the sum, the greater the difficulty to pay.

6276. If the factors collected monthly or quarterly, they would not expect to make as much loss as the burgh makes just now?—Are you referring to rates?

6277. Yes?—I think the loss would be greater then, because we have no power conferred upon us. We are limited under the Wages Arrestment Act of 1870, and there is no imprisonment. The rating authority can arrest the whole of your wages and can imprison you for non-payment of rates.

6278. Is your position this, that the threat of the enforcement of these penalties impels the ratepayer to pay his rates?—Yes.

6279. As a matter of fact, you know that it is only very rarely that a man is imprisoned?—There is a large number of people in Paisley that have not paid rates. There are 2700 who failed to pay their rates, and 1273 got exempted.

6280. If these means of recovery were so efficient as you indicate, there would not be about 3000 who did not pay.

(*Mr Kirkwood.*) There would be more, because they are not to give us the power to recover the rates.

6281. (*To Mr Kirkwood.*) It does not speak much for the efficiency if there are about 3000 whose rates are not recovered?—That is the case.

6282. It looks like this, that tenants pay who are willing to pay and the rest are allowed to slip?—Over and above the exempted there are 2700 who take exemption.

6283. They would pay more regularly to the landlord?—I don't think so.

(*Mr Kirk.*) I may say that in the provisional order that is being promoted, the compounding clause is just a copy of what is contained in Mr Cross's Bill, and we are going to oppose it. At a deputation we pressed the Town Council to drop it in view of the fact that your Committee was considering this question, and if it was thought fair, then they could get the benefit of it under this Act; but they are still pressing the clause, and so we will go on with our opposition.

6284. (*To Mr Kirk.*) Have you found the right of hypothec to be of any practical use?—Yes, frequently. It is only right that you should have some little security.

6285. In what class of house?—In the smaller houses there is no hypothec—you have nothing to sequestrate—but in the higher-rented houses, I think it is only fair that the owner should have some preference over an ordinary creditor, because he cannot cease giving credit at a moment's notice, and he must go through this process, which is very

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difficult and long before he can apply it and measures are taken to evict. I would have a sitting magistrate.

6286. You would not put so much stress on your hypothec? —No, because with a sitting magistrate we would have the use of the Court daily.

6287. (*Chairman to Mr Kirk.*) Take a working man with a £10 house in Paisley. First of all, what may his furniture have cost him?—£20 to £30.

6288. What would it bring if it was sold under hypothec? —Very little in some cases.

6289. But, roughly, would it bring £5?—About one-third of the value.

6290. If it cost £30, then it would bring about £10?—Yes, the sale has so little publicity.

6291. Is it worth while to sell under your hypothec? Suppose the furniture had cost £10, would it pay you to sell it?—Yes, you might get about a quarter's rent out of it.

6292. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What is the expense of a sale?—20s. to 25s.

6293. If you got £3 for the value of the £10 worth of furniture, you would pay away 25s. at least?—Yes.

6294. (*Mr Howden.*) You would really get 35s. out of what cost the tenant £10?—Yes.

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Mr George Pringle.

Mr George Pringle, called and examined.

Mr George Pringle.

6295. (*Chairman.*) You are President of the St Rollox Co-operative Society?—Yes.

6296. How long have you held that position?—About eight years.

6297. How long has your Society existed?—Over forty years.

6298. It is composed of over 4000 householders resident in the northern district of Glasgow, the great majority of whom occupy houses, the rents of which are between £10 and £20?—Yes.

6299. I think your members are regular, steady working men?—Yes.

6300. You don't have many of the improvident?—Not very many.

6301. Has the question we are now dealing with been considered by the Society or by a Committee?—It was considered by the Society at the last meeting. It appeared in the minutes that I had been appointed to come here and give evidence, and I was questioned as to the attitude I purposed to take. I explained the lines on which I was to go, and they unanimously approved.

6302. May we take it that your members are fairly representative of the best class of working people?—Yes.

6303. And what would be their views would be the views of the best class of working people?—Yes, their views represent the views of the respectable working classes in Glasgow.

6304. What, in the view of the Society, was the question that we had to consider?—There are two questions involved, the first being the having to bind oneself so early in the year, and the second being the difficulty in being relieved of the contract.

6305. Which do you think bulks largest in the minds of your members?—I think the latter is the more serious grievance. The working people themselves contribute to the former to a certain extent, in this way,—there is a very large number of houses having objectionable characteristics. People who are unfortunate enough to occupy these, naturally wish to get a better house. Although the accommodation may not be better, still there will be advantages, such as better outlook, and they try to get the best house they can, and they contribute very largely themselves to the early demand for houses.

6306. Are there features about that class of property about which the better classes know very little, features such as dark rooms, damp rooms, etc., that you do not associate with west-end houses?—Yes. Take a house situated at the corner of a street. The probability is that there is a wall about 10 feet away from the window and that makes the room very dark. The accommodation is quite the same, but the outlook is very poor.

6307. And the health conditions are inferior?—Yes, whereas the house on the other side of the stair may have a fine open outlook.

6308. And it may be quite natural and proper in the interests of the family to make a change, although the cubic space may be the same?—Yes. I made a change myself in that identical circumstance, the rent being exactly the same, but the comfort and the health conditions were altogether different.

6309. You refer in your *précis* to changes that are necessary owing to the fluctuating conditions of employment. There are changes also desirable owing to such conditions as those you have just referred to which have nothing to do with employment?—Yes.

6310. Both ought to be taken into account?—Yes.

6311. The net result is that there are many occasions on which it is impossible for a working man to be able on short notice to change his residence?—Yes.

6312. Is it found that the present system interferes disadvantageously with that?—You cannot do it except at a very heavy premium under any circumstances, and more especially at the present time, when there is a sort of glut so far as house accommodation is concerned; it is almost impossible to get a house taken off your hands.

6313. The demand may vary and the supply?—Yes.

6314. Would it be sufficient, in your view, to remove the existing grievance if there was anything more done to shorten the period between taking the house and the period of entry?—No.

6315. That would be good so far as it went?—Yes, but it would simply make the congestion all the greater at the time of taking the house. If you shifted back two or three months, the rush would be all the greater when the letting time came. At the present time it is well to bear in mind that the month of January is practically the letting time, and it is about the worst possible time of the year for house-hunting. It would be better in that respect, but I believe the pressure and the anxiety to get a good house would be as great at any other part of the year.

6316. Suppose Parliament gives a remedy for that grievance and does not go any further, you think that the agitation would still continue?—Yes.

6317. You have yourself seen examples, and you are prepared to give illustrations of cases where rent had to be paid for more than one occupancy?—Yes.

6318. And other cases where, whether rent had actually to be paid in the end or not, the tenant was held responsible? —Yes.

6319. And he had the anxiety of the possibility of having two rents to pay?—Yes. The worst of the present system is that the tenant is absolutely at the mercy of the factor. Provided he is willing to oblige by the payment of a small fee, then he can do it, but if the factor wishes to be nasty he may make you pay double rent.

6320. In regard to the collection of taxes, however it is to be done, are your people strongly desirous of the taxes being collected more frequently than once a year?—Yes. As you can easily understand, it would be a decided advantage to people with small incomes. On 11th November you have £4 to pay; at the end of December you have £3, 10s. for taxes, and then perhaps a fortnight's holiday at the New Year, and on 2nd February you have other £4. Now, in the case of a man with 35s. a week—and that is above the average—it is a very large drain on his income during a comparatively small period of time.

6321. So there is the double element: first, the collection only once a year, and, second, the collection being at the worst time of the year?—Yes. At that time of the year there is more money required for lighting and fuel, and perhaps extra for clothing if it can be got. The whole expenses are most heavy at that particular time of the year.

6322. You calculated that the municipal rates, the poor, school, and water rates, in Glasgow amount to something like 22 per cent. of the actual rent?—Yes.

6323. Is that everything?—Yes.

6324. It does not include gas, however?—No.

6325. You know about the practice in England?—Yes.

6326. Are you yourself aware of any conditions in Scotland that would make that practice unworkable in Scotland?—I know of none. I understand that Glasgow Corporation in certain of their properties have worked very largely on these lines.

6327. But there there is the speciality of their selecting their tenants?—Every other landlord has the same privilege.

6328. But in England you have cases where there can be no specialities of that kind?—That is so.

6329. It is said that this agitation is the work of English workmen in Scotland. What is your experience of that?—My experience with respectable working men is that you will never have a substantial agitation without a substantial grievance.

6330. Whatever the remedy may be?—That is so.

6331. Of course you may have a real substantial grievance which it may be very difficult to remedy in certain cases without producing other grievances?—Yes.

6332. In this case you are not aware of any other grievance that would result through remedying this particular grievance?—The only grievance that might present itself to me would be that, in doing away with hypothec, you might be disposed to give the landlords too great

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powers of ejection which might be used injuriously. I think it may be done with a measure of restriction. If hypothec were done away with, I think that landlords should have a little more liberty than they have just now, but I am decidedly of opinion that the wish to do away with hypothec is not very strong among the class that are agitating this removal of the present grievance.

6333. How many Englishmen do you suppose you have among your 4000 householders?—It would be very difficult to estimate.

6334. (*Mr Howden.*) Are there any Englishmen on your Committee?—No. I think it would be a big estimate to say that there were 5 per cent. in the Society.

6335. (*Chairman.*) Are there any particular trades where there may be a special number of Englishmen?—No. The principal trades in the district are the publishing houses of Messrs Collins & Co. and Messrs Blackie and Sons, and then there are the Caledonian Railway Works.

6336. (*Mr Binnie.*) There will be a few in the gasworks?—Yes, but comparatively few.

6337. (*Mr Howden.*) What would you like done with such a law as the law of hypothec?—I think if the landlord had power to remove more speedily, then he should come in as an ordinary creditor.

6338. You have heard expressions of opinion as to the amount to be derived from the sale of a tenant's goods. Is there not a grievance that exists there that might be remedied as in America, viz., by protecting the tenant's goods up to a certain limited amount against all creditors?—The same as is done with tradesmen's tools?

6339. Yes?—It would be very good in the interest of the workers; but if people are deliberately taking things without an intention of paying for them, then I think some provision should be made for getting at them in some way.

6340. You belong to the co-operative movement?—Yes.

6341. You have nothing to do with bad debts?—We do find one or two.

6342. How does this system of letting in Glasgow affect the building trade?—There is no doubt there is always a slackness in the joiner trade after a term. One of the most keenly contested Trades Union fights was with the Builders Association to alter the date from before the May term till afterwards, with regard to their agreements.

6343. You think it would have a beneficial effect on the building trade if this season rush were done away with?—I think it would make it more even.

6344. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Can you tell me on what terms, as a rule, your householders pay their rents just now?—Mostly quarterly.

6345. So, assuming Mr Cross's Bill passed, it would reduce yearly lets to quarterly?—Practically.

6346. Would that meet with the approval generally of your Association?—I think so.

6347. You mentioned that the rents ranged generally from £10 to £20?—That is so.

6348. If Mr Cross's Bill was limited to rents of £10 and under £10, then it would not remedy the grievance as regards almost any of your members?—Comparatively few.

6349. So to grapple with this question any Bill would require to deal with rents up to £20?—Yes. Take houses of three apartments, I don't know of any under £14, and these are only in the older properties. In the more modern properties the rent runs up to £17; and for the very latest houses, with all modern improvements and conveniences, the rent goes up as high as £20, a very common rent being £19, 19s.

6350. You state that you are authorised to support the proposals contained in Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

6351. That is just a general approval?—Yes.

6352. You say you approve of rates and taxes being collected along with the rents?—Yes, or at least quarterly.

6353. Mr Cross's Bill does not deal either with Imperial taxes or with school rates or poor rates?—Having been reading the proceedings in connection with this, I saw that that was raised.

6354. Your view is that all taxes and rates should be treated alike and be collected by the landlord?—I consider it would be a decided convenience in the interests of the tenant.

6355. Have you any views on the optional clause in the Bill under which different burghs may in their option adopt the Bill?—So far as Glasgow is concerned, there would be no doubt as to its adoption. I had not given any consideration to it because of that.

6356. A Glasgow man requiring to go to Paisley or Partick might have trouble in getting a house between terms, if the Act was not in force?—The serious trouble is to get rid of the obligations that they have. The getting of a house is not the serious matter.

6357. At present?—Yes. I have been in Glasgow these twenty years, and I do not remember a time when it was not possible to get a house.

6358. (*Mr Dobbie.*) It might be argued that the difficulty was aggravated by the fact that tenants living in Paisley and elsewhere were not in the habit of leaving between terms, and therefore you would have a very small market if the Bill did not apply all round?—Take the case of Clydebank and district, for years and years thousands have had to be conveyed from Glasgow. Recently a very large number of working men's houses have been erected in that district, and the people have moved down, but I do not think any alteration in the tenure would affect these.

6359. You would get a more complete remedy if the Bill applied to Clydebank and Glasgow than you would get if it only applied to Glasgow alone?—I do not know that it would matter very much.

6360. You are quite content that it should be made optional?—Yes.

Mr W. S. Cochran.

Mr William Stevenson Cochran, called and examined.

Mr W. S. Cochran.

6361. (*Chairman.*) You are a solicitor in Glasgow, and a partner of the firm of William Cochran & Son?—Yes.

6362. For the last fifteen or sixteen years you have been engaged as election agent in elections, parliamentary, parochial, and municipal in Glasgow and North-West Lanarkshire?—Yes.

6363. The constituencies you have been working in are principally Bridgeton, Tradeston, and Tollcross, regarding parliamentary elections?—Yes. I have also been engaged in municipal elections in Bridgeton, Camlachie, and Springburn, and I have had to do with county council and parochial elections in Shettleston, Tollcross, and Millerston districts.

6364. These districts are all in and around the east end of Glasgow, with the exception of Tradeston, which is in the south side, and Springburn, which is in the north-eastern district of Glasgow?—Yes. A large number of the houses in these localities are room-and-kitchen houses and single apartments, and I would say that a large proportion of the tenants in these districts are occupants of houses ranging from £15 and under.

6365. Have you, in your experience in connection with these elections and otherwise, been able to draw certain conclusions with regard to removals?—Yes.

6366. Take Bridgeton?—I have the figures here. In 1900 the electorate in Bridgeton was 11,739, and there were 1762 circulars returned at the general election. These circulars were returned as "Not found," and that indicated that the tenants had removed.

6367. It does not include cases where the circulars were refused?—No; no one refuses election literature.

6368. These are actual removals?—Yes; and in canvassing we traced a great number of these people that had removed. In Bridgeton, in 1906, the removals numbered 728. I account for the difference in these two figures in Bridgeton by this, that in 1900 the election was fought in July, while in 1906 the election was in January; and therefore in the 1900 election we had included all the removals that took place at the May term. I would say that the figures for the whole of Glasgow generally include the average removals that take place in the first six months of the year. The roll is made up on 31st July, so that the figures I am giving are the removals from 31st July until November or December.

	Electorate.	Returned Circulars.
Bridgeton (1900) . .	11,739	1762
„ (1906) . .	11,421	728
Tradeston „ . .	10,449	520
Camlachie „ . .	10,174	475
St. Rollox „ . .	19,309	550
Central „ . .	15,616	250
College „ . .	15,741	400
Blackfriars and Hutchesontown .	9,761	320
North-West Lanark—		
Shettleston and Tollcross	3,735	400
Springburn . .	1,744	200
Govan		
Partick—		
Whiteinch and Partick	10,680	627
Maryhill . . .	6,338	
Possilpark . . .	1,590	

With regard to St Rollox, I would say that two-thirds were in the Garngad district, where there is the largest

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proportion of the smaller rented houses, viz., room-and-kitchen houses.

6369. You have not worked out the percentages?—No. I have checked these figures with my political opponents, and they agree that my figures are correct.

6370. In addition to the ordinary causes for removal, do you find that from certain causes that you can speak to, there is a necessity for working men to remove from one district to another, owing to the formation of large works, for instance?—Yes. We have had recent examples of that; for instance, the motor works down in Alexandria and other works in Clydebank. A number of houses were put up in Clydebank after the Singers' Works were built there a number of years ago, and, of course, tenants going down there to houses built in the locality could not get in until the May terms. From the fact that these houses were practically filled at the May terms, I concluded that if tenants had been able to leave earlier they would have gone down, because it would have been a great saving to these men in travelling.

6371. Would you say the same with regard to Alexandria?—Yes. There is a hardship there at present because the Argyll Motor Works had a work in Bridgeton which was shut up for working purposes in September.

6372. Employing about 300 men?—Yes; and these men had to travel to Alexandria for their work, and I do not presume that they got any more wages. Then Messrs Beardmore had a work in Govan last year, and in the middle of the year it was transferred to Dalmuir, and the men had to go there, back and forward, to their work. They would have the extra expense of travelling without any extra compensation in the way of extra wages.

6373. At the same time, it is the case that you find men, year after year, voluntarily travelling from Glasgow to Clydebank and other places?—Yes.

6374. Why is that?—I suppose it is through their women folk having employment in Glasgow in some cases.

6375. And it is also because of the shopping facilities?—Yes.

6376. And the amusements?—No doubt that will have something to do with it. Of course, there are works going up for women in these localities. There is work for women at Clydebank.

6377. Do you find the number of these men decreasing? Are there not as many travelling still as there used to be?—I would say that about ten years ago there would be about five or six trains coming up from Clydebank, and I do not think there are so many now.

6378. Of course, you have the cars now?—Yes, but the workmen all travel by train, because they get cheaper facilities, and they can travel more quickly.

6379. Is that Singers' people?—Yes; I would say that all the men working down there travel back and forward to Glasgow by train. I do not know of any cases of workmen travelling from Clydebank by the cars.

6380. Are the cars dearer?—Yes, the workmen's tickets by the train are cheaper than the car fares.

6381. How is it that the railways make so much complaint about opposition?—That is as regards the ordinary travelling facilities. I am dealing with special workmen's trains that go down in the morning and come back at night.

6382. And give special rates?—Yes. Of course you cannot get a car further down than Dalmuir just now.

6383. Is it your view that the working classes through necessity for removal from different causes have urgent need to obtain some remedy that would enable them to change at shorter periods than they can do now?—Yes, I think so, and I have heard that at all the elections I have been engaged in during the last fifteen years.

6384. You have come in contact with working men with all kinds of views. It is said that there is a large body of feeling in favour of the continuance of the present system?—I would not say that. I would say that the majority of the respectable working men are in favour of shorter lets.

6385. Are there a certain number who are in favour of the present system?—I cannot say I ever knew of a man expressing that opinion.

6386. If they do exist, you have not come in contact with them?—That is so.

6387. Do you see any reason why you should not have come in contact with them?—I would be surprised if I had not, because I am mixing with the working men in these localities and I would be bound to hear it.

6388. (*Mr Howden.*) You referred to the facilities for travelling, and you went as far as Alexandria. What does it cost to travel there?—I cannot tell.

6389. Have you any idea how early in the morning workmen must leave in order to go down to their work at Alexandria?—I think the workmen's train is at five o'clock.

6390. The fact is they have to leave at five o'clock in the morning and they are not back till seven?—Yes, I know that the train comes in about 6.30 or 7.

6391. So far as Alexandria is concerned, the men would go down there to stay if they could?—Yes.

6392. (*Mr Binnie.*) On what do you found your opinion that there are fewer travelling to Singers' Works now than formerly? The work has been enormously increased?—Yes. There are not so many trains coming up at night with workmen as formerly.

6393. Are the trains not better filled?—I do not think so. I would also say that a large number of the working men in Bridgeton are now staying in Clydebank. I know of a great many men employed in Singers' Works who used to live in Bridgeton and who are now down in Clydebank. Then there is the question about confining the Act to burghs. There are large places round about Glasgow, like Shettleston, Cambuslang, and Alexandria, that are not burghs, but are under the County Council. I certainly think that any proposals dealing with house letting should apply to these populous places, because in the majority of cases there is tenement property there. The great proportion of Shettleston is tenement property.

6394. (*Chairman.*) Is there any technical expression that would cover these? Are they "populous places" in the sense of the Act?—Yes, we have 3500 voters in Shettleston and Tollcross.

6395. What is a "populous place" in the sense of the statutes?—I think it is 2000.

6396. So that would cover all the places you refer to?—Yes.

6397. (*Mr Binnie.*) But would there be a local authority that could exercise the option?—Do you mean if it is to be optional?

6398. (*Mr Dobbie.*) There is the Parish Council?—So far as the local authority is concerned, you have the landward part of the Glasgow Parish Council. That is the most direct local authority.

6399. (*Mr Binnie.*) But is it a local authority to which it would be at all a usual thing to refer such a question? Parish Councils have never taken up a question of this kind?—Personally I am not in favour of making the Act optional.

6400. We had a very strong objection from Rothesay, because their position is very peculiar. Would you approve of giving such a place as Rothesay the right to exercise an option to be outwith the Act?—I could not express an opinion about Rothesay. Then there is that matter of compounding. At the present time the poor law authorities collect the whole of the school rates and hand them over to the School Board; the police authorities collect the lunacy rate and hand it over to the Parochial Board. I heard Mr Kirk of Paisley advocate a central authority. Personally, I think it would be a good idea; it would be cheaper, and it would be better for the working men to know that there is so much money to pay in rates. It would be cheaper in collection, because at the present time we have two sets of men, one for the police and one for the poor law, going after the same people to collect their proportion of the rates. If we had them all in the one sum, I think it would be cheaper.

6401. (*Mr Binnie.*) In that case would you advocate more frequent collection, because it would be more difficult to pay the larger sum?—I think if there is any change, the collection of these rates would need to be put on to the landlords.

6402. (*Chairman.*) You answer Mr Binnie's question in the affirmative, that the collection should be more frequent?—Yes, I have frequently heard working men express an opinion in that direction.

[ADJOURNED.]

SEVENTH DAY.

MONDAY, 7TH JANUARY 1907.

In the New Court, Parliament House, Edinburgh.

Present:

SHERIFF CHARLES J. GUTHRIE, K.C., *Chairman.*

MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR EDWARD COX.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.
MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr W. S. Brown. Jan. 1907.

MR WILLIAM SLATER BROWN, examined.

Mr W. S. Brown. 7 Jan. 1907.

6403. (*Chairman.*) You have been a member of the Town Council of Edinburgh for about seventeen years, and you were for a number of years a member of the Improvements Committee of the Town Council, which included the question of the housing of the working classes, and for three years, up till November last, you were Treasurer of the City?—Yes.

6404. In connection with the work in the Improvements Committee, you had occasion to obtain information regarding the housing question at various times, and as treasurer you had also occasion to become acquainted with the rates, and in that way you are in a position to give us evidence as to certain points which may be of value?—So far as I can.

6405. I understand that you do not in any way represent the Town Council, which have not as a body dealt with this question at all?—That is so.

6406. Neither in regard to the Bill called Mr Cross's Bill nor any of the measures previously passed?—That is so. Once and again in Committee, when the Bills would be sent to the Town Clerk, there might be a general conversation, but there has been nothing minuted and nothing before the Town Council.

6407. Has there been any petition presented to the Town Council on the matter?—The only petition was some years ago, on the action, I think—if I remember aright—of the Secretary of the House Agents Association desiring a change in the period of taking houses on yearly lets, and as the result of that petition the Town Council recommended—because that was all the power they had—that for the future, instead of houses being let as from the 15th of February, they should be let as from the 15th of March. A few weeks ago the Town Council in that connection were again approached by the House Agents Association, asking the Town Council to recommend the going back to that prior date, because they found that certain owners and agents were not adhering to the honourable understanding that there was, but the Town Council up to the present time have not recommended that that change should be made.

6408. Has the question of house letting, so far as you know, been up at any of the ward meetings in connection with recent Edinburgh Town Council elections?—I am not aware of a single ward in the city where the question has been raised. I believe that some years ago—perhaps eight or ten years ago—there was a discussion in the Trades Council. I am not aware even from that date that there has been any public discussion in the Trades Council; there may have been, but I do not recollect it.

6409. About two years ago, had you, as treasurer, occasion to refer in the Town Council to the question of power being asked from Parliament to levy both the owners' and the occupiers' rates upon the owner?—Yes, I had, and that was because of the great loss which the city collector year by year had to write off under two heads,—first, where relief was granted on the ground of poverty; and, second, where the collector failed to recover. I may mention that in that year, 1903–04, the loss of assessment under those two heads was £4829.

6410. Being appeals for relief on the ground of poverty, £2975; and irrecoverable, £1854?—That is so. I should say also under that head that £450 was loss of assessment imposed upon rentals above £20. I gather that your inquiry is more regarding houses with rents at £20 and under.

6411. You produce a table which we will call Table A. That is applicable to 1903–04?—Yes. (*Hands in.*)

6412. In the second column, you have a number of charges; what is that?—That is the number of individual properties for which there was a charge made, and you will find that the number is 51,008.

6413. Up to £20?—Yes. You will find that the amount of rentals is entered in the first column.

6414. And those above £20, 27,795, being 78,803 properties altogether?—Yes.

6415. You have a later table, Table 1. Would you kindly look at it? That is titled "Table showing the number of occupied and unoccupied houses within the burgh as at Whitsunday in each year from 1887 to 1906 inclusive, arranged in the following order of rental." On page 2 of that the total number of properties in 1906–07 is 74,870, whereas in Table A you have 78,803 in 1903–04, three years before. How does that discrepancy come about?—This second table which you have referred to, Table No. 1, not only deals with dwelling-houses and shops with dwelling-houses attached, but it also deals with business premises. That is the entire properties in the city.

6416. No, because that would make it the other way. That is the later table, and it has 4000 fewer than the earlier table, which has 78,000?—Table A represents the business premises.

6417. Quite. Then, to revert to Table A, is Edinburgh under the General Police Act, or has it special Acts of its own?—It has special Acts of its own.

6418. Under the special Act of its own, do owners pay the whole rates up to £4 as under the General Police Act, or what?—Under £5.

6419. It is £5 under the special Act?—Yes. That is, the owner pays that, but if the owner also occupies, then the occupier pays.

6420. He being the owner?—Yes, quite.

6421. Just look at Table A. If you take the rentals under £5, how much do the irrecoverables come to? Will you add together these five figures? It is £29, is it not?—Under £5?

6422. Yes, it is £29, isn't it?—Yes.

6423. So that out of the total rates irrecoverable, which is £4829, only £29 applied to the cases under £5?—That is so.

6424. And of that £20 was irrecoverable and £9 was relief?—That is so.

6425. Then I would like another figure, and I will tell you for what purpose. It has been suggested in Glasgow by certain of the Corporation witnesses that the proposed Bill might be limited, at all events at first, to rentals under £10. I would just like to know what of the irrecoverables was applicable to rentals under £10?—I have it specially prepared in Table B 2. From that you will find that over £4 and under £7——

6426. We will look at this immediately, but I would like my figure first of all. Take the figure abated by appeals and then irrecoverable, and then total, etc., add up these figures?—From £5 to £10?

6427. From £1 to £10?—£2769.

6428. £2769 of the irrecoverables was applicable to rentals at and under £10?—Yes.

6429. Then I also want this: how many of the charges,—that is to say, what properties were included under the rentals up to £10?—22,936.

6430. That is out of a total of 78,803?—Yes.

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6431. I may say that in Glasgow, if you took the latter calculation, it appears that about 50 per cent. of the charges in Glasgow are applicable to properties at and under £10. Here the proportion is what?—It is about 30 per cent.

6432. Does that point in itself to the conditions in Glasgow being somewhat different from Edinburgh?—Yes, it does, very considerably.

6433. Because, as you understand, we have to consider in this matter the conditions of different parts of the country?—There is this in common between Glasgow and Edinburgh, that within recent years there has been a great reduction in the number of very small houses, say houses under £5. I think that is in common with Glasgow.

6434. Evidently the number in proportion is very much larger in Glasgow than in Edinburgh?—Very much larger, and the proportion is very much in favour of Edinburgh as against Glasgow when you come to houses of £50 and upwards.

6435. In your view, is the population as shifting in Edinburgh as in Glasgow?—No.

6436. Why should there be that difference?—The condition of trade is so different.

6437. Is that connected specially with the river and shipping?—I am not sufficiently aware of the condition of things in Glasgow, but there is not the opportunity for the shifting about in Edinburgh for the people who live in £10 houses—Edinburgh is so comparatively small.

6438. I am told that the percentage is rather under 28 per cent.?—Yes, approximately.

6439. You have told us how the matter stands, and you refer to that table. That Table A has been made up from the regular statistics?—It was made up in 1903-04 for a different purpose altogether.

6440. From statistics?—Yes, in the hands of the collector.

6441. And I suppose, if we want any special statistics, we can have them readily available from the town officials?—I wish to say that if there is any information which the Corporation through the Town Clerk or any of its officials can give you, you have only to ask for it; they will give it with pleasure.

6442. That table shows a remarkable loss due to the two heads you told us about: appeals for relief on the ground of poverty, 2975; and irrecoverable, £1854?—Yes.

6443. Did you draw any conclusion from that table as to what would be the advantage of the rating authority?—I did.

6444. What was that?—There would be £4829 additional to the rating authority, less the amount that would be paid to the factors or owners under Mr Cross's Bill.

6445. That is to say, if the rate was exacted from the owner direct, there would be a gain of £4829, less whatever allowance was made to the factor, I suppose under the three heads: first, cost of collection; second, actual loss from unpaid; and third, from unlets?—Yes.

6446. And also, of course, exemptions?—Yes. I also drew this conclusion, which I think you must consider—the great hardship that it might be to many of the very deserving poor, who would require to pay under Mr Cross's Bill.

6447. Quite. I will ask you about that afterwards, but I will note it in the meantime. You have prepared a table showing what, on basis of the allowances contained in Mr Cross's Bill, would be net gain to the rating authority, and that table is Table B?—Yes.

6448. That is a statement showing the total amount of charges for burgh assessments on rentals: (*a*) over £4 and under £7; (*b*) £7 and under £10; (*c*) £10 and not exceeding £20; second, amount recovered; and, third, amount written off under each group of rentals applicable to the same year 1903-04; and, fourth, amount which would be allowed in deductions to owners under Mr Cross's Bill. You are working there on the same amount of £4829, are you?—Well, I should say that that includes the exemptions, and also the amounts written off on business premises as well as houses, but there are so very, very few of the business premises that are exempt, that you may take it as substantially correct.

6449. I see, but we are taking in the case of Table B the figure £4369, in place of the figure £4829, in Table A?—Yes.

6450. Taking £4369, how much do you consider would have to be allowed under Mr Cross's Bill to the factors? You think £1568?—Yes.

6451. Deducting £1568, the allowance, from £4369, the existing loss, that would give a net gain to the Corporation of £2801?—That is right.

6452. That allows nothing for exemptions. That is on the footing that there are no exemptions allowed?—That is so.

6453. If you turn to the other table, Table A, and suppose that some method were devised for allowing the exemptions, that would wipe out the gain to the Corporation?—That is so.

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6454. So that on the footing of exemptions remaining, there would be no gain?—No.

6455. But if exemptions ceased to be, there would be a gain of £2800?—Yes.

6456. Would there not be in the case of the Corporation this gain, that they would have a reduced cost of collection?—I don't know that the staff could be very much reduced.

6457. But suppose they got taken in a lump sum from each factor for all the properties that he factored, there would be a considerable saving, would there not, in the clerks that go round, and the book-keeping staff, and so on? You have no means for estimating that?—No. I did speak to the collector about it, but he would not admit that there would be any saving. Perhaps I should make this observation in case it does not occur to me afterwards—there are probably 3000 owners and occupiers of property under £20. I don't know whether you propose, in the case of an owner who was also the occupier, to deduct the percentage under Mr Cross's Bill.

6458. That would require to be kept in view?—There are 3000 of them. That is assuming the Bill were to become law.

6459. You cannot tell me what effect in figures that would have?—I would require to get it worked out under the various headings, and I can do it if you desire it.

6460. You might just do that. This calculation of yours in Table B is on the footing, I understand, of the landlords paying 100 per cent.?—Yes.

6461. Except what may be in the allowance in Mr Cross's Bill, you make no other allowance for unlets?—No.

6462. You take Mr Cross's Bill as covering everything?—Yes.

6463. In your view would it be fair to have a system under which, in order that the Corporation might benefit, the exemptions should be wiped out—on the ground of poverty, I mean?—Yes, but there must be some tribunal to try those cases.

6464. What I am asking you is this, would it be fair to abolish the exemptions altogether, as would be the result of Table B, in order to benefit the Corporation?—No, I do not think it would be fair.

6465. Do you think that the exemption clauses of the statutes are on the whole fairly worked?—I do think so.

6466. For the relief of real poverty, and not for the encouragement of improvidents?—I am quite satisfied, from one's own experience, and from the method by which every case is considered, that there is every desire to get from any person who can afford it or who ought to pay the full amount of rate.

6467. Suppose collections of rates were made at frequent intervals, for instance monthly, would not a number of people who obtain exemptions now from an exaction that comes all in a lump once a year be quite able to meet their rates at short periodic intervals?—Many of them I don't think it would be fair to take from. I have always held for many years, and this Town Council also, that assuming a man or woman is getting relief from the Parochial Board, and that their case is a good case, that is a class that should not be charged with monthly rates.

6468. But taking those who are not paupers, are there not a considerable number of people who would not require exemption if there was a periodic collection?—If the statements are to be relied upon that are presented to the Corporation as the result of an investigation by the assessor's assistants, there may be one or two who, from the kind-heartedness of the town councillor, may be passed, but as a general rule I do not think they are in a position to pay.

6469. They may quite not be able to pay an assessment which comes all in a lump, but might there not be many of them who would be in a position to pay if it were coming at frequent intervals?—Those who drank might, but there are plenty who do not drink, and have not the money. There is a certain proportion unquestionably that fall under that category, but I think that there is a very large proportion who do not fall under that category. The struggle is such that every 3d. or 6d. is needed to keep body and soul together.

6470. Of course, it cannot be denied that they are getting the benefits to produce which the rates are spent?—That is very true. I am afraid that if there were more exactions many of them would land in the poorhouse.

6471. These figures for 1903 and 1904 substantially represent each year?—Yes.

6472. And they were made up without any question of this sort in view?—Yes; it was to see if we should seek Parliamentary powers in our own Bill. We did not go any further, because we were so struck with the facts. I found, from members of the Town Council after that statement was made, that any proposal of the kind would not have passed.

6473. Of course, if the view put forward by the landlords and house-factors to the effect that Mr Cross's allowances are totally inadequate, and would need to be doubled, is correct, then the benefit to the town would disappear?—Entirely.

6474. To the extent to which the figures required to be increased?—Yes.

6475. It is said by the factors, I think pretty generally, that Mr Cross's allowances would require to be doubled. Now, suppose you doubled them, and took £1568, you would then have £3136?—Which table are you referring to?

6476. Table B. If you doubled the allowances, and deducted the result from the £4369 of irrecoverables, that would leave £1833; and if you took into account that the irrecoverables had included exemptions of £2975, of course still more it would be evident that the Corporation would gain nothing?—Yes.

6477. It would really then come back to what I have said, that the Corporation would only gain at the expense of the people who are now exempt?—I think that is undoubted. If I might be permitted, there is another way in which it occurred to me how it would affect the owners of property. I take an example of a house with a £6 rent, let weekly, remaining, as many of them do, unoccupied for a certain period. The amount of the occupier's rate for the year on a £6 rent would be 10s. 10½d. Assume the deduction to the owner in terms of the schedule was 10 per cent., that is 1s. 1d., the owner would pay 9s. 9½d. Assume, which is very often the case, that the owner recovers from the occupier the half year, that would be 5s. 5½d., and the house remains vacant for another half year, the owner would make a loss of 4s. 4d. on that house. Assume that it was only for a quarter—and there are very many cases such as that—the loss would be 1s. 7½d. on a £6 rent. On a £9 rent, applying the same principle, let monthly, remaining unoccupied for six months, the owner would lose 7s. 3¾d.; for a quarter he would lose 3s. 1d.; and for a month—and that is very very frequent—he would lose 4¼d. On the other hand, I think there is a danger that the owner gains in some cases, because the difficulty of putting the amount upon weekly rents and monthly rents is that you cannot put the exact sum—you cannot divide it, and therefore you take the nearest fraction that you can get. I will give one or two cases where I think it would be a great hardship on the poor people, because we must expect that the proprietor would undoubtedly take care that he recovered the whole of the amount, as far as he could, from the occupier for the time being. I have said that, in cases where the same tenant remains in one house during the whole of the assessment year, the owner might recover in lieu of assessments more than the amount of the occupier's proportion levied. For example, a tenant of an £8 house, let fortnightly, pays to the owner at the rate of 7d. per fortnight, or during the assessment year 15s. 2d. The amount of the assessment levied is 14s. 6d. Under that head the owner gains 8d. But there are worse cases. Take a tenant of a £5 house, let weekly. He pays the owner at the rate of 2½d. per week—I don't suppose you are going into farthings—and that would be 10s. 10d. during the assessment year, the amount of assessment levied would be 9s. 0¾d., and the owner there gains 1s. 9¼d.

6478. I see. Then it has been put another way; it has been said that Mr Cross's allowance would be a fair allowance for the cost of collection merely, and that in addition the landlords would be entitled to come to the town, and on an accounting claim a deduction for all rates which they have not been able to recover at all, and, secondly, for all cases of unlets. Now, if that were done and allowed, the benefit to the Corporation would pretty much disappear?—Yes; but, at the same time, I think there is a great deal to be said for it, if the thing was to be done.

6479. May I take it, if such arrangements as are proposed were to be made that strikes you as the most reasonable method, to give the factors an allowance to cover cost of collection merely, rather than to allow the factors to adjust with the town year by year for all losses, rates that they don't recover and should not pay, and, secondly, rates applicable to houses which it turned out were either totally or partially unlet?—I think it would be a fair and proper thing to do; but, at the same time, I personally—and I believe the Town Council, though I am not speaking for them—would prefer things to remain as they are.

6480. But in your view, if it were worked out, but in the way I have mentioned, the inducement to Town Councils to go in for compounding would disappear?—Yes.

6481. You have told us that in Edinburgh you have local Acts. What is your main local Act?—1879.

6482. Is that a Consolidating Act?—Yes, and there has not been a Consolidating Act since 1879. There is a talk at the moment of having a Consolidating Act.

6483. But it is under the 1879 Act that burgh assessments are not levied on the occupier?—No, that is an amending Act.

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6484. I would like to have that?—I think it is 1891.

6485. We will get that?—Yes.

6486. Is there any allowance in these cases?—No allowance. Shall I put in the copies of the Act and the amendments under it?

6487. You might do that. In addition to that case where owners pay, are there any other rates, water rates or stair gas lighting, or anything of that kind, where owners pay the whole rates? We have had them mentioned in Glasgow. How does Edinburgh stand?—The stair gas is levied on the occupiers.

6488. Who pays it?—It is collected from the occupier.

6489. Then the water rate?—It is upon the occupier.

6490. Collected direct?—Yes.

6491. Then the only case in Edinburgh where the owner pays the occupier's rates is on premises under £5?—And by the amended Act houses which owners let for a short period.

6492. Up to any rental?—Yes.

6493. There are these two cases?—Yes. I shall put in a state, showing the clauses of the Act of Parliament upon that.

With reference to questions No. 6483 to 6493, it is to be noted that the Act of 1879 provides that burgh assessments are not to be imposed on occupiers (not being owners) of subjects rented under £5. It should be clearly understood that in those cases no occupier's assessments are levied. See answer 6544. The amending Act of 1891 provides that in cases where premises have been re-let during the assessment year, the owner, as well as the actual occupier is responsible for the occupier's rates, and this, of course, only applies in cases of rentals of £5 and upwards (Edin. Act, 1879, §§ 67, 71, 73).

6494. Could you tell me, or find out, what amount of rate is applicable to that second class you have mentioned of lets under a year?—Yes, we have that.

6495. We have got the five-pounders already. That would apply to lets under a year with a rent above £5?—Yes.

6496. Have you got that?—Yes, I think I have. I think it is about £800. I have a table which shows that last year the sheriff officer recovered 388 such cases that you have been speaking of.

6497. Above £5?—Yes.

6498. Not for shorter periods than a year?—Yes. Representing nearly £400 direct from the owner, and it is estimated that a similar number were paid by owners to the collector before the end of February, so that you may take it at about £800. I hand in a table which I think really represents what you want, Table C. That is for 1905–1906.

6499. Under the Act have you power, in every case where the let is for less than twelve months, to insist on owners paying?—When they have sub-let it for a short period.

6500. What does this mean, "The owners notified that they would be responsible." They were responsible in any case. Are these not for short lets?—Yes, under twelve months, but some of them desire to pay it themselves. We have it against either owner or occupier; we can go against either of them.

6501. In point of fact, what do you do?—First of all, we go against the occupier; we exhaust him, except in those cases which I have just mentioned. I should say, perhaps, that under £9 you will notice they come to 1506.

6502. That is £9 and under?—Yes. 1506, and one-third of those may be taken as properties belonging to the Corporation themselves. The other two-thirds is other owners.

6503. What would be the reason that would induce the other half to make this notification?—Because they were collecting the assessment along with the rents, and it was to save trouble at the end.

6504. But what made them collect the assessment along with the rent?—I suppose they found it convenient with short lets.

6505. Would it be because they would expect that in many cases they would not be paid, and they would then be held responsible, and they thought they could get it better?—I cannot tell the reason.

6506. Would it not rather suggest that in these cases they thought frequent collection would enable them to recover it from the tenant, and thus save their own pockets in the end?—I don't know. It is the practice, I think, with the weekly and fortnightly lets—and those are largely weekly, fortnightly, and monthly lets—to let the houses at an additional rent to cover the rate.

6507. On that question, isn't it the fact that there would be convenience, looking to working men getting their wages at short intervals, and looking to the practice of their paying rent at short intervals—would it not be convenient for them to pay rates at short intervals too?—I

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agree that, with rentals under £10, it is desirable, but above that I do not think so. I think that the ordinary working man desires to pay his rates direct. I do not think he wants to pay his rates through the landlord or through the factor at all. In Edinburgh there are something like 35,000 members of the stores, and they draw their dividends twice a year, just for the paying of their rents. I have never heard it suggested that those people desired short lets.

6508. To recur to what you began with, that under £10 it would be desirable. Why?—Because that is a floating population. They are not remaining very long in one place; and so many of them have to be turned out of their houses, because they are not able to pay even their weekly and fortnightly rents, that you must provide some other place for them.

6509. Taking it under £10, do you not think it is desirable, in everybody's interest, that they should pay their rates frequently?—Yes.

6510. There is no magic in £10, but that is a kind of rough average, that you think would meet the case?—Yes. I think that under that rent all the figures that we deal with show that the trouble is in those under £10.

6511. Are the rents in Edinburgh—I don't know if you know—fairly comparable with those in Glasgow, or are they higher or lower?—I am afraid I cannot say.

6512. Then you have prepared a table in regard to the occupied and unoccupied houses in Edinburgh?—Yes, Table No. 1.

6513. At present are things in a normal or abnormal condition?—There never was, during the last nineteen years, such a number of habitable unoccupied houses as there is at present.

6514. Mostly old, or a considerable number of new?—Both.

6515. I notice that in 1906-07, while the occupied houses are 70,446, the unoccupied are 4424. That is more than a proportionate increase, looking to the increase of the total number apparently?—I worked it out, showing the total percentage of unoccupied houses for the last ten years. That is interesting. If you go back to 1896-97, the percentage of unoccupied houses there was 1·9; next year it was 1·9 also. Then on page 2 it got up to 2·4, that is in 1898-99; next year it was 3 per cent., the following year 3·7, and the following year there was a little drop to 3·4. The next year, 1902-03, it went up again to 3·9, the next year 4·2, 1904-05 it was 4·7, next year 5·4, and in 1906-07 it was 5·9.

6516. So this is the highest it has ever been during all those years?—Yes.

6517. What do you attribute that to?—Overbuilding; and a large number of the big jobs being finished, the people had to go elsewhere. I should say under that, that I looked over the table, I got a return of the houses in the various parts of the city, and those unoccupied houses are distributed pretty well over the whole city. I can give you the details, if they were wanted; but it is sufficient to say, that in the various wards of the city there are unoccupied houses of all rentals.

6518. You could not give us the proportion of the 4424 under £10?—I could give it you under £6. There were 360; and over £6 and under £10 there were 924; and £10 and under £20, 1677.

6519. That is 2961 altogether?—Yes. I should say that this is at November 1906. The figures may not absolutely tally with May, because this was taken in mid-term.

6520. Roughly, about 3000 out of 4500 would be under £20?—Yes.

6521. You also gave us Table 2, showing the grading of houses, "Number of houses at £4 and upwards classified under different heads"?—Yes.

6522. I see that total includes only dwelling-houses?—Yes. This was prepared specially, having regard to the terms of Mr Cross's Bill.

6523. I notice you show in the amended table you have just given me totals £4 up to £20 inclusive, 49,584?—Yes, of which so many are unoccupied,—3024, leaving 46,560 as occupied.

6524. Then you show that £21 and under £25 there are 4293, with 318 unoccupied; £25 and upwards, 17,120, with 1898 unoccupied?—That is so. We have not mixed it up with anything but dwelling-houses. In the other table you had houses and shops.

6525. In regard to the figure, the limit, in Mr Cross's Bill as applicable to ordinary working men's houses—what is your experience in Edinburgh as a fair limit for an ordinary working man's house, not a foreman, not with a large wage-earning family, but an ordinary case?—You can take it this way, that a one-room house is £5, a two-room house is £10, a three-room house is £15, and a four-room house is £20. I think, probably, the rent for a large proportion of working men, unless they take in lodgers, is something like £15.

6526. That is roughly?—Yes.

6527. So that £20 would certainly cover it?—Yes; but there are men above £20.

6528. £20 would certainly be a fair limit in the ordinary case?—I think it would be above the ordinary case.

6529. You have handed in a certain table,—B2. What is that?—That was simply the separate amounts, so that you might have before you the exact amount that was abated on the ground of poverty and what was irrecoverable on account of people disappearing and bankruptcies and so on. It is only an amplification of Table B. If you take the irrecoverables alone that amounted to £1657. The total allowed to owners under Mr Cross's Bill is only £1568, so that even under the irrecoverables there would be a small loss to the owners. For £4 and under, then, the loss was £535, and under Mr Cross's Bill the owner would only get £181. For £7 and under £10 the irrecoverable was £596, and under the Bill the amount would be £338. For £10 and not exceeding £20, the irrecoverable was £526, the amount allowed to the owner under Mr Cross's Bill would be £1049. It is under that largely that I say that probably you have 3000 of the owners who are also occupiers, and therefore under that head it requires some consideration if the Bill was to be passed.

6530. Has the other method—apart from owners collecting occupiers' rates—the other method of more frequent collection by the rating authorities ever been before the Town Council?—It has not.

6531. So far as you know is any rate collected by any rating authority anywhere more than once a year?—I don't know.

6532. In England or Scotland or anywhere?—I could not say.

6533. Does that point to anything?—That it is more frequent?

6534. That there are practical difficulties?—Yes, there are practical difficulties.

6535. Apart from statutory obligation, do you favour voluntary arrangements under which short lets and short collections of rates should be entered into?—I do. I think it is quite sufficient that there should be permission to make the arrangements that any tenant desires. For many years in Edinburgh there has always been such a large number of unoccupied houses that I do not think that anyone has any difficulty to make an arrangement to suit himself.

6536. If you have voluntary arrangements under which the landlord collects the rates, how would you propose that he should get any allowance?—I do not propose it. He is not compelled by law. He enters into it himself, and he knows that in Edinburgh at the present moment he is responsible for the rates, and therefore I have no doubt he takes care to make arrangements to recoup himself.

6537. You are now talking of under £5?—I would favour it up to £10.

6538. Have you any objection to extend the statutory limit from £5 to £10? Up to £5 the landlord collects and pays just now?—But the landlord is responsible above £5, if he enters into a short let.

6539. But in the case of a let for a year he is not responsible?—No; and therefore I would leave it alone, so far as I am concerned.

6540. Take it this way, do you think that the statute works well so far as it makes landlords responsible in all cases of rents under £5?—I think that is right.

6541. You think that was a fair statutory provision to make?—I think it was.

6542. Why should that not have been left to voluntary arrangements also?—It is only owners' rates, you know, that they pay.

6543. But the whole rate is paid?—No, it is only the owner's rate, not the occupier's rate. It is only where it is short periods of let.

6544. Under your local Act are not all rates of houses let under £5 paid by the owner?—Not the occupier's rate. There is no charge on the occupier under £5.

6545. Let us see how the statute puts it?—"Provided 'always that the burgh assessment shall not be imposed on 'the occupiers, not being owners of lands and heritages 'rented or valued under £5."

6546. But then, that does not mean that the occupier does not pay rates?—He does not pay rates.

6547. They are not imposed on him, and not exacted from him, but has he not to pay in one shape or another for the benefits he gets along with the others because his rent is under £5?—Unless you put it that the landlord charges a bigger rent because he is free, but he does not, in point of fact, pay an assessment himself direct. He may indirectly. The landlord having the great trouble with that class of property he may be getting a bigger rent in proportion to the accommodation which the tenant has. He may take into consideration the fact that he does not

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pay rates. I think that is a matter which house-factors will be better able to tell you about.

6548. If the statute has so provided up to £5, and if you have a shifting population up to £10, do you see any reason why that £5, especially looking to the fact that now, since these Acts were passed, rents are a good deal raised—why that £5 should not be heightened to a certain extent?—I say in my *précis* that I do not object to it; but I do not see any reason, so far as Edinburgh is concerned, because things are working, as I understand, perfectly satisfactorily, and I have taken a good deal of trouble to ascertain it.

6549. In short, there is no substantial grievance?—I think not, so far as Edinburgh is concerned. I hope that I have made it perfectly clear that we do not get occupier's rates under £5.

6550. That is your reading of the Act?—Yes, and it is the practice.

6551. You get only from the owner, so far as you get?—Yes, under £5, owners' rates only and not occupiers' rates.

6552. If there was to be an alteration of the limit, instead of being £20, your view is that it should be £10 in Edinburgh, at all events?—I think it would be unfortunate to go higher. I think it would be dragging the better-class working man down to a position that would be unfortunate. My experience of small house and short lets has shown me that those with short lets do not keep their houses in the same condition as those with long lets—twelve months. That is very marked. I think I went through almost every house that was pulled down during the improvement schemes operations for ten years, and that circumstance was most marked. I have repeatedly seen, over and over again, that where an old woman or an old man had a twelve months' let of his house it was a pretty clean and tidy house, but where you had three monthly or two monthly or weekly tenants, then, as a rule, the houses were deplorable.

6553. But do you think that proves anything? Is it not the fact that when a factor gets a good class of tenant he insists upon his being a yearly tenant?—You cannot insist, I am afraid. I think I would leave it that if a tenant wants it he should have the privilege of saying, "I am 'going to have a twelve months' lets. I am not going to 'live here on a monthly let. I want to have a twelve 'months' let."

6554. But do you think you can infer anything from the condition of the houses, if it be the fact that a factor will not give, as we have been told by different factors that they wont give, to a good class of tenant anything except a yearly let?—My answer to that is this, that they have only to go to another factor, and say they want a three monthly house, or a monthly, or a weekly house, and they will get it.

6555. Is that your experience?—There is no doubt about that, in small houses.

6556. We have been told by some factors that if the tenant came and said, "This has been a yearly tenure 'hitherto, I want this house on a monthly tenancy, he 'would not get it"?—That may be so with houses above £10. I was rather thinking of houses under £10.

6557. May I take it that if short lets were enacted by a Bill such as is now proposed with a limit, let us say, up to £10, do you think it follows that compounding up to that extent must ensue?—I think so.

6558. The one, in your view, involves the other?—Yes.

6559. Apart from the limit?—Yes.

6560. Even under the present system, whatever the rent may be, the owner is responsible if the let be for less than a period of twelve months?—Yes, after we have exhausted the occupier. There is a great danger from another point of view that a man, in the first month he is on the roll, may remove, and yet that is the man who would have a vote, and those who came later would have no vote at all. There are so many side issues.

6561. You think that all these side issues require to be considered in the main question?—Yes, it is very necessary.

6562. Now, is there a difficulty also owing to the fact that it would not be possible to know the exact rate that had to be paid, in May for instance, and indeed not till when?—September.

6563. It is fixed in the end of September?—At the present time the factors who are collecting rates and rents must assume that the rates are going to be a certain sum; and I suppose I am not doing the landlords and the factors an injustice when I say that they take very good care that the sum they put on will be sufficient to meet the likely rate, and the poorer the tenant the more he suffers if there is no increase of rates or if there is a decrease.

6564. You are now talking of short lets above £5?—Yes.

6565. It has been suggested that the difficulty might be got over by the rates being fixed on the previous year's rates?—That could be done. It would dislocate matters for the year, but only for the one year.

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6566. I think you have not considered what, if there were to be an allowance, would require to be the exact percentage?—No, I have prepared those figures, and I allow the Tribunal to judge of the effect from the figures I have prepared.

6567. Now, the only other table was Table No. 3, about the Corporation's houses. This was prepared by the City Chamberlain?—Yes.

6568. In reference to the houses which the Corporation owned. How do they come to own houses,—was it improvement schemes?—Partly improvement schemes, in the widening of Bristo and other places, and partly the clearing out of slum areas under the Housing of the Working Classes Act.

6569. Have they properties, both of the class of new houses that they have built and of old houses that they have improved?—Yes; and of the total number of 972 there are 841 of those let on weekly rents, there are 60 on monthly lets, and 71 yearly lets.

6570. Then take the rents: they are as follows:—

Rents up to £5	79
Rents between £5 and £10 . . .	802
" " £10 " £15 . . .	76
" " £15 " £20 . . .	6
" " £20 " £25 . . .	9

A total of 972?—Yes.

6571. 824 are let by house-factors under the supervision of the City Chamberlain and 148 are let direct by the City Chamberlain. All that he rents are on yearly tenure?—Yes.

6572. How long has this gone on? Since Provost Chambers' days?—This began, I think, in 1891. It began in the Lawnmarket. There have been various improvement schemes,—I think it began in 1891 or 1892.

6573. Are you going to retain them permanently?—I hope not. We want to sell them badly.

6574. We have been told about the Corporation property in Glasgow, where they select the tenants and have caretakers. Have you arrangements of that sort?—Yes, we have tried all ways. We have had caretakers and we have had the Social Union. I regret they gave up factoring. I think they were better managed by the Social Union than they were by caretakers or by factors.

6575. Why did they give it up?—I think largely because there was certain uncalled for criticism by some Town Councillors regarding what they termed the interference of ladies going into houses and asking if they were kept clean, and if their persons were clean, and so on.

6576. In the case of properties let by the City Chamberlain, is security taken?—Sometimes.

6577. What is the practice generally in Edinburgh on that?—As a rule, I think the practice is that there is security taken or fore-handed rents. I am taking it generally and not merely of short lets. There is security or fore-handed rents for the first twelve months. I think that after the first twelve months, if they have proved to be good tenants and paid their rents, they do not ask a cautioner's line for the second year, but they allow them to go on from year to year.

6578. What is the practice there with regard to short lets?—I will put in a book showing the actual conditions applicable to the city's properties and I think to others also. There are a large number of those I have referred to before that belong to the city, and they have to leave a deposit of four weeks' rent of the house.

6579. I notice, as an illustration, it is stated in regard to William Morrison and Hugh Munro, that all tenants must pay a sum equal to four weeks' rent. Is there not very often a requirement of cautioner?—Not for that class of house.

6580. For what class of house is it required?—For houses that are let by the year.

6581. I have noticed in some of the *précis* that we have, complaints by the working men of the requirement of a cautioner is often a difficulty, especially with strangers coming into the town who do not know anybody to apply to?—Yes; but I think if those strangers produced the receipts of their rents from the city where they have come from, I do not think there is any difficulty.

6582. In the Corporation property, can you say whether there has been any desire on the part of the tenants who are on weekly tenure to have any other tenure?—No; I think they wish to remain as they are, and I do not think we desire anything else ourselves. In regard to that I might mention as a great hardship the expense that the city is put to in turning out a bad tenant. I do not know whether you are dealing with that question?

6583. Yes, incidentally we are?—It is a very very serious inconvenience, because sometimes you do not get your four weeks' rent in advance; but supposing you do,

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and you have exhausted that, it will cost you about 15s. to turn out a bad tenant if he wants to be troublesome.

6584. That is to say, if you require to get a sheriff officer to do it?—Yes.

6585. When they see the game is up, don't they generally go?—I don't know that they do. The difficulty is to clear the house. The sheriff is sometimes very soft-hearted, and he gives them a fortnight to clear out. He comes back and says that he has not got a house, and so on. I think that for short term houses, if that is to become compulsory, you will have to deal with the question of expense and a simpler method of turning out.

6586. You refer to both expense and delay?—Yes.

6587. Is that matter dealt with in Edinburgh only in the Sheriff Court?—No, it sometimes goes before the Burgh Court.

6588. We have heard that in Glasgow, owing to the expense being less, most of the cases go to the Burgh Court, and what is complained of is the delay?—My impression is that the expense is the same, because you have to employ a sheriff officer.

6589. In Glasgow there was no suggestion that any of the sheriffs had soft hearts, but it was rather the burgh magistrates that were afflicted with that complaint?—I should think it is the reverse here. I think it is the sheriffs who are soft-hearted, and the magistrates are—well, the reverse.

6590. I suppose the sheriff does not grant delay, such as you refer to, unless there is some reason assigned?—A poor creature comes up crying, and saying that there is sickness in the house, or she cannot get another house, and I think that very frequently tells. I have seen that myself. I am not able, from my own personal experience, to say very much about it.

6591. You have done it yourself, I am afraid?—Yes, I have undoubtedly from time to time given time, when I thought it was a genuine case.

6592. Do you think any statute would interfere with that class of case effectually?—What are you to do, supposing, as it does happen, that you do not get fore-handed rent at all, and a person comes in, and the first week he is due 3s. for the room, and is not able to pay it or does not pay it? He is a bad tenant, and the worse the tenant the better they know about the law; and you cannot get these people turned out, although you have not fingered a penny of their money, without spending 12s. or 15s. I think there is something very far wrong, and I am afraid there is quite a number of cases.

6593. So you think, if short lets were enacted, that would require to be accompanied with some provision for speedier and cheaper ejections?—Yes. I know there is another side to it, but I do think it is a very hard thing.

6594. I suppose, if there was hardship resulting, it would not be on the good class of working men but on the improvident?—That is so.

6595. So you don't think that the decent working man would have anything to fear?—I don't think so.

6596. You can tell us about the changes. In the 824 houses under the charge of house-factors the changes were about 280 last year?—280, yes.

6597. That is an average of a change in every three houses?—Yes; the changes in the 824 houses were 280, being an average of one change in every three houses.

6598. Contrast that with the changes in the houses under the charge of the City Chamberlain—out of the 148 on yearly tenure there are not more than ten or twelve in each year?—That is so. Then there is this important statement, that of the 280 tenants who removed during the year about one half of them may be said to have been ejected in consequence of non-payment of rent.

6599. Just let us see. Of your total houses, 972, how many are on yearly tenure?—71.

6600. But then I thought you said that all that the City Chamberlain factored were on yearly tenure. He lets 148?—Then some of his must not be yearly. We made the abstract from his statement.

6601. You say the houses let by the City Chamberlain are all let on yearly tenure, and then you say he lets 148?—Some of what we term yearly tenants pay their rents quarterly, some monthly, and some half yearly.

6602. How many yearly tenants, apart from payment of rent, will there be out of your 972? There is evidently some little confusion somewhere. You can look into that, and let us know the exact number of yearly lets?—When I say a yearly let there are a certain number who pay their rents quarterly rather than give security. They will say, "Well, we will pay you a quarter's rent in advance." But still we call that a yearly let.

6603. We want to know whether the statement is correct that out of the total there are only 71 yearly lets, or whether the other statement is correct, that the City Chamberlain lets 148 houses, and they are all yearly lets?—I will see about it.

6604. Then I understand your view is that whatever the requirements may be in regard to the Glasgow and the Clyde district, the proposals contained in this Bill are not required in Edinburgh?—So far as I know myself, and so far as I know public opinion as expressed at ward meetings, etc., etc., I don't know that there is any desire for any change.

6605. There is one other matter, viz., the length of time between the taking of the house and the entry into the house. The view in Glasgow I may say was universal that there is room for an alteration there?—I agree.

6606. We heard that from all sides?—And as far back as 1895 the Town Council were approached by the house-factors themselves, as the result, I think, of some talk in the Trades Council. I am not sure how the matter arose, but they approached the Town Council, and asked them to recommend, and they recommended that, instead of it being February, it should be March.

6607. Quite. You have told us also about that having been gone back on. We have been told that the difficulty has arisen because certain people would not abide by that arrangement?—That is so.

6608. Does that not seem to point to the desirability of a statute making it obligatory?—I agree with you; and instead of it being February, it ought to be March.

6609. It has been said that the way to begin the matter is to alter the date of warning away. At present it is 4th April. It is suggested that that might be made substantially later. It is suggested that if that were so, then the date for taking houses would be substantially later. You agree with that?—Yes.

6610. In order to prevent people kicking over the traces and taking unfair advantage, it ought to be compulsory all over?—I agree with that.

6611. Of course, the detail as to what amount of difference should be made is a matter that we need not go into?—That is so. There is one other thing I should like very much, if it could be done, and that is, while I am strongly in favour of twelve monthly lets, I should like very much that strangers coming from England to Edinburgh, who having been accustomed to quarterly terms of removal, they should be able to take their houses at any of the quarters, instead of having to go out in May.

6612. At present there is really one term of removal?—Yes, 28th May.

6613. It has been said apparently all round, that that leads to practical inconvenience. What is your view on that?—I think that there is a pressure both on the part of tradesmen getting work done, and there is also a certain pressure with removals all happening on the one day.

6614. What you would like to see would be four terms?—Four terms, but in each case a yearly term.

6615. A yearly let?—Yes; but I think that if I take a house at Lammas, I should be entitled to take that on for a twelvemonth, and I think that would get over a good deal of the difficulty that there is at present.

6616. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In regard to the houses owned by the Corporation, I see that the ejections are something like 17½ per cent., through non-payment of rent?—Yes.

6617. Could you tell us what the recovery of the rate might be upon the total number of these houses—how much do you lose?—I will put it in. I am ashamed to say how much we do lose.

6618. What do you think it would come to? You say that the factors state that this arrangement is satisfactory to the tenants. We would like to know what the landlord loses through this object lesson in the collection of the rates?—I am afraid I cannot tell you just now. I will put in a state. They differ very much according to the factor who factors the property. I do not think you will find two factors alike as to the loss, but I will put in a table showing exactly what the loss has been.

6619. In your experience have you heard of tenants removing to avoid paying their rates?—No, I have never heard of it.

6620. That does not account for any part of the loss caused under the present system?—You mean to the Corporation?

6621. No, generally?—I don't think so. Nobody wants to pay more money than what they have to, but I suppose there is a certain satisfaction in paying their rates.

6622. You are satisfied that the making up of the assessment roll four times a year is practically impossible?—It would require a very much larger staff.

6623. We were told in Glasgow that it took about four months to make up the annual roll?—I can tell you the time it takes here, I think. The burgh assessor's annual survey of the city begins immediately after the 28th of May. He completes the valuation after the statutory meeting of the Appeals Court on the 10th of September, and, on the rate of assessment being announced, he begins the preparation of the assessment roll.

6624. So it is physically impossible to have four rolls in

the year?—I should say so. At the same time the collector starts the preparation of the demand notes, and he proceeds about the 11th of November to serve the same in the order of the wards.

6625. Do your Burgh Courts have many cases of ejectionment before them?—I am sorry I cannot tell.

6626. Can you suggest any practical remedy for the delay to which you referred? What would your remedy be?—I think I must leave that to the lawyers.

6627. Of course, as a public man, you might voice public opinion. In England a landlord, whose tenant is in arrear may put a man in possession, and at the expiry of some five days simply remove the furniture, without any warrant from any magistrate or judge. In your view would some such procedure as that be desirable?—I think it is too drastic. There might be justifiable reasons for a longer time than that.

6628. Between that procedure and the appeal to the tender-hearted sheriff——?—Or magistrate.

6629. What would be the course you would suggest?—I have not applied my mind to that. I could not say. I believe there is a clamant necessity for something being done, but I am not prepared to state what that something should be.

6630. Then you referred to the effect of any change on the franchisement of votes. Can you tell me the number of people who are disqualified in respect of failure to pay rates?—I can let you have that, because we have been applying our mind to that.

6631. (*Chairman.*) The Town Clerk can let us have that?—I can let you have it.

6632. (*Mr Dobbie.*) As the Bill stands at present, if the landlord paid the rates direct, the whole of those occupying houses under the limit would be enrolled as voters?—Yes; and a man might only pay a month or a week, and he might be a voter, although others were paying rates for many months and would not have a vote.

6633. The practical difficulty there is, assuming short lets, there is both trouble in regard to the franchise and also to the recovery of the tenant's rates from the proper party under any change of the law?—Yes.

6634. Was I right in gathering, from what you told the Chairman, that the owner pays no more rates per pound on houses under £5 than he does on houses above £5?—That is so.

6635. He is not assessed doubly?—No.

6636. I do not think you have clearly answered the question put by the Chairman. He asked you what you thought was a reasonable limit in Edinburgh for a working man's house?—I understood the average of the ordinary working man, what he would pay.

6637. What would you say was the average amount which a working man in Edinburgh pays for his house?—I should say something like what I said before, £15. From £5 and under £10 there are 18,000, from £10 to £15 there are 16,000, from £15 to £20 there are 13,000, and then it begins to drop.

6638. There are 28,000 houses in Edinburgh between £10 and £20, whereas below £10 there are 23,000 houses; so that if any change were made, and were confined to houses below £10, it would only affect 28 per cent. of the houses?—I take the figure from you.

6639. And it won't affect 28,000 houses under £20?—Yes, that is under the Bill.

6640. Under the Bill?—Yes; of course, there are a considerable number of houses beyond that attached to shops.

6641. May I take it that the 28,000 houses between £10 and £20 are largely occupied by the working class?—The learned Sheriff distinguished between the working classes, the difference between the foreman. Of course, in that later figure of which you now speak there are many foremen.

6642. May I take it that under £20 the occupants are of the working class?—With that explanation, yes.

6643. One clause in the Bill has not been dealt with. Assume that there is to be an Act, do you approve of that Act being optional?—No. We have had sufficient of that with the ten o'clock closing and other things. If it is going to become an Act, let Parliament decide themselves and not put it on the Town Council.

6644. Does that mean that if Glasgow, feeling very keenly upon this question, persuades Parliament that it has a grievance there to be redressed, it must follow that the same change should be made in Edinburgh?—I am afraid that to be consistent I must say yes, for this reason, that if this was to become law there would be a certain number who would want the change, and they would make themselves so conspicuous at the different ward meetings of the city that the poor Town Councillor would have a nasty time of it.

6645. That would rather suggest that the majority are in favour of the change?—No. I wish the majority went to the ward meetings. The noisy people go to the ward meetings.

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6646. The majority go to the polling booth?—I am sorry to say that a very large proportion do not go to the polling booth.

6647. Assuming that there was to be optional legislation, I would like to know this—under this Bill, Edinburgh and Leith are treated differently?—Yes.

6648. Do you think that, assuming there is to be a Bill, and there is to be an option in each area, Edinburgh and Leith should be permitted to have a separate option each, or would that result in disorganisation in the case of people removing from the one city to the other?—Well, I am afraid I cannot answer you. I do not know how many changes there are from Leith to Edinburgh and from Edinburgh to Leith. I am afraid I cannot tell you that.

6649. You do not profess to criticise the rates suggested in this Bill?—No.

6650. But looking to the loss at present caused to the Edinburgh Corporation by irrecoverables alone,—19 per cent. under £7 and 7 per cent. under £10, it is obvious that the proprietors will lose unless they get an allowance equivalent to the loss at present made by the different corporations?—Yes, that is the first answer. The amounts allowed to owners under Mr Cross's Bill are calculated in Table B^2 upon the actual recoveries under the present system, but were the owners to be made liable for all charges, except those abated on the ground of poverty, the commission allowed on the amount recovered would slightly exceed the amount at present found to be irrecoverable. But there is not only the difference betwixt what you propose to give under the Bill and the irrecoverables, but the certainty that in all those houses there is a large number of them stand empty for a certain time each year.

6651. They would require to get, in the first instance, something equivalent to what the Corporation cannot recover at present from existing tenants?—Yes.

6652. And they would require to get a refund or an allowance equal to a proportion of the rates on empty houses during the year?—Yes.

6653. Do you agree that something should be given for the trouble of collecting?—They are collecting their rents,—I don't know that there is very much difference when they are collecting their rents. Yes, they are entitled to something, because there is separate book-keeping.

6654. The town loses 15 per cent. on the ground of exemption for poverty, and that would require to continue, and that allowance also made in addition?—Yes; and I think it would be unfortunate, while it would be a gain to the city, if those poor people, many of whom are decent honest people, if they did not have the opportunity of appealing again to their assessment. I know many of them struggle to pay it, and like to pay it if they can.

6655. Assume the exemption provision exists, if an allowance is made in respect of failure to recover, and an allowance for trouble in collecting, it is obvious to you that the Corporation cannot possibly gain?—They cannot gain.

6656. (*Mr Cox.*) Did I understand rightly that in the case of short lets, and between the rental of £5 and £10, you think the owner is responsible for the occupier's rates?—Not only between £5 and £10, but between £5 and any rental, if he lets his property in short terms.

6657. Then, if that is so, how should you have the amount written off as loss. In Table A, rents of £5 and under you have written off 38 per cent. of the total rates, 33 next year, and so on?—This refers to all charges, as I explained before, and not merely the question of dwelling-houses, but all charges, bill-posting stations, cellars, shops,—everything.

6658. (*Chairman.*) They are almost all short lets. How do you account for that enormous jump of 14 per cent. to 38 per cent.?—The £131 is an appeal, and the Corporation have given it up. The irrecoverable, 19—these are bankruptcies and disappearances. I think that there are certain landlords who have a doubt—I did not want to go into that, but there are certain landlords who have a difficulty in agreeing with our collector that they are responsible. They rather take the view that if it is only let for three months they should only pay for three months, and it has been decided by the Sheriff that they are responsible for the twelve months. There is a difference of opinion, however, and I am afraid, in some cases, they are very lenient.

6659. (*Mr Cox.*) You gave us a graphic description of the difference in appearance between houses that were let on short lets and houses let on yearly lets, the ones let on short lets being very dilapidated?—Many of them. I hope I did not classify them all so.

6660. Would that not be accounted for in this way: We were told in Glasgow by an owner that he would not, on any condition, let new houses on anything but a yearly tenure; that it is only when houses begin to get dilapidated

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that he will let them in short lets?—I was describing what I saw with my own eyes when visiting slum areas about to be pulled down; and I described that, in some of those slum areas, some of the worst districts in the city, you did come across cases—I do not say many—where the house was all that could be desired, and you made inquiry about it, and found—I do not say it was always the fact—that it was because it was a yearly let. I remember perfectly well an instance of one of them when we asked the meaning of this delightful little house, and we found it was the result of going to the salvation army. But in some of the cases I referred to it was the yearly let that accounted for the house being in a cleaner and better condition.

6661. You spoke as an argument for long lets about people letting their dividends at the stores accumulate, taking them half-yearly to pay their rents?—There are some 35,000 members of the stores at present who very largely owned this class of houses, and they draw their dividends half-yearly.

6662. Do you suppose that the half-yearly dividend would be a substantial proportion of the half-yearly rent?—Yes, I think so.

6663. What do you think would be his dividend?—It is not an unusual thing for a working man to get £3 and £4 every half year towards his rental.

6665. (*Mr Binnie.*) If short lets were introduced, could you not arrange for frequent collection of rates?—We could do it, of course.

6666. You could do it?—Of course, you can do anything; but it would certainly mean an enormous increase of expenditure if you were to put that on the collector.

6667. How is the gas collected now?—Three times a year, I think.

6668. And why should the taxes not be collected also if you can collect the gas?—I say that there is nothing to prevent it being done, but it would cost the Corporation more.

6669. And you would put that trouble on the landlord?—I am wishing things to continue as they are.

6670. But if there was a change, if short lets were introduced as proposed in this Bill, then what would you propose?—I would put it upon the landlord.

6671. Because of the expense that it would save the Corporation?—Yes, the expense, and the difficulty of getting it carried through; but because of the expense largely.

6672. It is a question of expense?—Yes.

6673. And nothing else? You do not suggest anything else but the saving of expense, do you?—I would leave it at that, the saving of the expense.

6674. Will you explain the course of procedure at present in cases above £5, when you make the landlord responsible for the occupier's rates?—We do not make him responsible, except in cases where he himself chooses to have short lets.

6675. In cases where there are short lets, such as are proposed by the Bill, you first say you serve a notice on the tenant?—Yes, if we can get him.

6676. Where do you serve that notice?—Wherever we can get a hold of him; wherever he is.

6677. When do you serve it?—In the month of November.

6678. How long do you allow before you take any proceedings against the tenant?—Three months. It is now the month of March.

6679. That is four months. And then you intimate to the landlord that you have not recovered from the tenant and ask him to pay?—Yes.

6680. How does he recover it from the tenant?—I do not think he recovers it at all. The tenant has disappeared.

6681. Up to the month of March you have not given him a hint that you have not succeeded?—I would not like to say that. I am told by the collectors' assistant that you tell him simultaneously. Whenever the collector realises that there is to be a difficulty, he lets the landlord know.

6682. And when is that?—On the report by the sheriff officer.

6683. And when will that be?—In the month of April.

6684. So that eleven months of the year have elapsed and he has only a chance in one month to recover what you have failed to get in five?—Yes, that is so.

6685. We were told by a gentleman from Rothesay that, to impose upon the owners and occupiers in Rothesay and the other coast towns on the Clyde, the conditions of this Bill would be most disastrous, because they only get their rents during the summer months, and he pointed out difficulties. Would you, if this Bill passed, think that an option should be given to such places as Rothesay, Dunoon, Largs, and the other watering-places—and possibly there are some on the east coast in the same predicament? Would you think that they should get the power to contract out of the Bill?—I have never thought anything about it, and any answer I could give would be without due consideration.

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6686. But you have told us that you have thought about the question about different parts of the country being treated differently under the Bill, and you said that you thought that the Bill should apply to all parts?—I had not thought under that heading.

6687. What do you mean by "under that heading"?—I have never considered about Rothesay and these other places,—I do not know the circumstances.

6688. But if they are satisfied that their circumstances are so different from the circumstances of other towns, do you see any difficulty that would arise from giving them the right to contract out of the Bill?—I am afraid I cannot give you any assistance. I am afraid that that is a matter on which the Tribunal must make their own minds.

6689. (*Mr Howden.*) You have told us that the average rent which the artisan classes in Edinburgh have been paying is £15. Have the artisan class in Edinburgh security of employment?—I think that in Edinburgh they have very substantial security. Of course, I know that what may be in one's mind when you ask a question of that kind is that a man may be six or nine months in one shop and perhaps three months in another. I do not think there is a fluctuation in the various trades in Edinburgh. There will be among the labourers, but not among the artisans.

6690. Not among the skilled labourers?—I don't think so.

6691. Have you any idea of the proportion of unemployed in the skilled artisan class?—It is comparatively small at the present time. I saw the figure a few weeks ago, and it is comparatively small. It is less than last year and less than the year before. I think that the total unemployed at the present time in Edinburgh is something like 1000; and the skilled artisans—of course, I am speaking only from memory—I do not think were above 15 per cent. of the 1000. I can put that in if you like.

6692. My point is this, would you deprive those men of the right to look for a job elsewhere because they had a house standing in their hands?—I would not like to deprive him of that right. I have been a working man myself, and I know what I am talking about. Supposing a working man has been unfortunately thrown out of a job, and he cannot get another job in Edinburgh, suppose that man goes to Glasgow or Greenock or some other place, I think he would be a very foolish man if he were to throw up his house to-morrow. I think what he would do, and what he does in point of fact is, he will go to Greenock and go into lodgings for the time being.

6692*a*. Why?—Because he has got a family,—he has a boy or a girl or perhaps two boys in a situation in Edinburgh or at school, and there is no desire till the end of the session to interfere with those arrangements.

6693. And that entails on that working man that he has to pay a rent for lodgings in Glasgow and a rent for his house here?—But it would be a more grievous hardship on the man if he was at liberty to give up his house, take his children away from school and away from their work, would it not?

6694. Would it entail a hardship on him if he had the option of doing the one thing or the other?—I say that in Edinburgh, so far as I have heard and so far as I know, I have never heard of the matter being raised, and I do not think there can be many such cases. If there were many of them we would have heard of them at the ward meetings long before this.

6695. What method do you take for the collection of your water rates in Edinburgh?—We send round the collector.

6696. In Glasgow under £10 the water rate is collected by the owner; is that the case in Edinburgh?—Yes, it is the same here.

6697. Could you tell us what percentage is paid for collecting the water rate in Edinburgh? I understand you to say that the owner or the factor pays the water rate under £10 for the tenant?—Yes.

6698. What percentage do you allow him for collecting that?—I think it is only the public water rate; it is not the occupier's rate. When he pays his rent he takes that deduction off the landlord. I think I am right in saying so.

6699. Do you allow the landlord any percentage?—No.

6700. Mr Binnie put to you a question in connection with the unfair treatment that you deal out to the landlords in not making that compulsory on the owners paying their taxes until eleven months of the year had run, and I think you admitted that it was a substantial grievance?—No; I do not admit that, for this reason, he knows the law when he enters into this arrangement with his tenant. He is supposed to know it as well as we do.

6701. And he makes provisions and looks after himself, in fact?—Yes.

6702. And the town tries to get it out of the occupier, and leaves the landlord with what he has collected from the tenant?—If they fail to get the balance they will try and get it from the owner.

6703. Don't you think it would be a much fairer plan to make the owner responsible from the beginning of the year, and to come on him at the end of the year for the whole?—No, I cannot say that I do.

6704. You do not think that would be a fairer plan?—No. I would leave matters as they exist at the present time in so far as Edinburgh is concerned.

6705. You told us that the members of co-operative societies in Edinburgh, so far as you were aware, were not in favour of any change?—No, I did not say anything of the kind, with all deference. I did not make that statement.

6706. I thought you did?—No.

6707. I am sorry, if I misinterpreted you?—What I did say, when I referred to the stores, was that at the present moment I think I am right in saying that there are about 35,000 members of stores, and a very large number of those apply their dividends, which they get twice a year, to their rents—just in time for the rents, it is part of the arrangement that it is given for the rentals—because at one time they used to get it quarterly and now they get it half-yearly, and many of them apply that towards the payment of their rent. That is all I said about it.

6708. Did you not also add that, so far as you were aware, there was no agitation or feeling amongst these co-operators?—I have said half a dozen times that, so far as my own knowledge goes, so far as ward meetings are concerned, so far as I have seen in the press in regard to discussions in the Trades Council—I go the length of saying discussions of any kind in Edinburgh—I am not aware, with I think one exception—I think some eight or ten years ago there was a discussion in the Trades Council—I am not aware of anything else.

6709. You did not make that statement which I unfortunately took up?—No.

6710. (*Chairman.*) It was a general statement with regard to the Edinburgh working class, without any special reference to co-operators?—Yes.

6711. (*Mr Howden.*) Would it be news to you to know that the Leith Provident Co-operative Society have petitioned in favour of Mr Cross's Bill?—They may have done so. The Edinburgh co-operators may have done the same thing.

6712. There would be no difference between the Edinburgh and the Leith?—I have seen no public notice of it—there may have been, but I guarded myself by saying I had not observed it.

6713. You told us that there were 280 tenants who shifted during the year in your properties, and that about a half of them were ejected in consequence of non-payment of rent. Do you ever exercise your right of hypothec?—I do not suppose there is 5s. worth of stuff in many of those houses and it is of no use. I wish you would visit some of them yourself and see them. I think you would be of the same opinion.

6714. We may take it from you that you never exercise your right of hypothec?—Because it would not pay.

6715. In one of your statements here, dealing with your own properties, you tell us that, in most of the houses let by the factors, the tenants' taxes are collected by the factors along with the weekly rents. The factors state that this arrangement is considered satisfactory by the tenant?—Yes.

6716. Don't you think, if it is considered satisfactory by the monthly tenants, that it would be considered satisfactory by the bulk of the people in Edinburgh in the same station of life?—It may be.

6717. It would be a fair assumption to take?—I am afraid we have the worst of the tenants. When we are speaking of that number I think we have the worst of them.

6718. If the worst of the tenants, those who escape payment of taxes as a general rule——?—They do not escape; they have to pay.

6719. But if the worst class of tenant under your scheme have to pay their taxes, and they have no objection, we could certainly assume that the better class would not have any objection?—I do not know how you arrive at the assumption.

6720. (*Chairman.*) You referred to the objection to the optional clause? Suppose that Glasgow has a demand and a need for a measure that Edinburgh does not want and that other parts of the country do not want, would you see the same objection to Glasgow accomplishing its object as it has done in other cases by a local Act?—I think that is the proper method to adopt.

6721. Your objection would not apply at all events with the same force in that case?—No.

6722. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You referred in one of your statements to the large number of unoccupied houses last year as compared with what was the case a few years ago, and I think the percentage has risen from 1896–1897, when it was 1·9, to 5·9 in the last year?—That is so.

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6723. And, in answer to the Chairman, you attributed that to over-building and removals?—Yes.

6724. Does that point to a decrease in the Edinburgh population?—No. There is alway a fluctuating population, and numbers coming in. There is no decrease, but the increase is not so marked this last year or two.

6725. We may take it that it is largely due to over-building, and not to the other reason that you gave, people leaving the district?—There are large numbers of people leaving the district, but there are others coming in.

6726. But that is a normal condition of things?—There were a great many big jobs going on for some years. These have been finished, and within the last two or three years quite a number of people have gone away.

6727. That would mean that the population was inflated for a short period in consequence of large works in the city?—Yes.

6728. I am sorry to trouble you again about a table which you have presented, Table A. Under your local Act you informed us to-day that you levied no burgh assessments on rentals of £5 and under on occupiers?—Yes, that is right.

6729. And that on the owners of these properties you do not assess them at any higher rate than on properties of a higher value?—That is quite true.

6730. I see that in Table A you give a statement here in regard to the number of charges and the assessable rental and the amount of the occupier's assessments and other headings on rentals from £1 to £5?—Yes.

6731. Now, if you do not assess them, how can you have any percentage irrecoverable?—Because there are other things besides dwelling-houses. There are hundreds of other things, boards for bill-posting, cellars, etc. The difference is not on houses, it is other properties, stores and so on.

6732. This table does not refer exclusively to dwelling-houses?—I said so. I explained that already.

6733. I am sorry I did not understand that. There is no doubt about it that, so far as rentals up to £5 are concerned, Table A does not refer in any single case to dwelling-houses?—That is so; but if the occupier of such property is also the owner, it does apply; and, secondly, where the aggregate rentals of the property amount to £5.

6734. Yes, I notice that qualification. Does the occupier of a house of rent from £1 to £5 have the same immunity from poor and school rates?—I do not think so.

6735. Can you tell me whether this mode of treating rentals under burgh assessments is exceptional so far as Edinburgh is concerned?—I do not know.

6736. I think you said you were strongly in favour of quarterly terms?—Did I say "strongly?"

6737. You said you thought it would be a great improvement, and that we should all be strongly in favour of great improvements?—I think I said I would prefer to leave things as they were.

6738. I certainly did not gather that?—I said so.

6739. Then why did you introduce the quarterly terms?—I did not introduce it—it was in answer to the Chairman. What did I say?

6740. (*Chairman.*) Generally, you would leave things as they are; but if there are to be changes, you indicated what you would prefer?—Yes.

6741. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You are not in favour of quarterly terms? You would prefer to leave things as they are? That is the situation?—Yes; I think there is in Edinburgh such a number of houses—such a variety of class of houses—and the willingness on the part of owners to meet tenants of all descriptions that I do not know of any need for any change.

6742. I certainly understood you to say that you were in favour of quarterly terms, but yearly tenures?—What I did say was—I beg your pardon—what I did say was that I would like to see—but this is outwith this property—I would prefer to see a person coming from England able to get a house on any of the quarterly terms, but to have a twelve monthly let.

6743. But you surely would not exclude that privilege from people not so well-to-do?—I would be delighted to have the same privilege, but I said a twelve-month tenure. I do not object to it being all over, but what was in my mind was the better class of tenants.

6744. If you are in favour of four removal terms in the course of the year, where does your objection lie to quarterly terms of let?—Because I think the people want fixity of tenure. They do not want quarterly lets. I do not think that the better class citizen of Edinburgh wants——

6745. But keep all classes in your mind?—I cannot. You must distinguish between the one and the other.

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What may be perfectly good for the poorer people—what they may want—is one thing, and what other people want in a different social position of life is a different thing. I must distinguish the one from the other.

6746. You advocate quarterly terms, four terms in the year, for a certain class of citizen, and the existing state of matters for the others?—No. I have no objection to have it for all, so long as you have it for a twelve months' let. I do not care whether it is £1, or £50, or £100.

6747. But you have many cases of weekly and monthly lets in Edinburgh?—Yes, that is true, by a voluntary arrangement.

6748. And you have other cases of yearly lets with monthly and quarterly payments of rent?—Yes, we try to meet the requirements of all people. A stranger comes to the town, or a person does not want to be under the obligation of getting security from his neighbour, and he says, "I will pay you quarterly rent in advance." Well, that is good enough, and it is taken. Some pay half-yearly in advance, and some pay a whole year in advance.

6749. But you think these arrangements must be of a voluntary character?—I do not see any reason why it should be otherwise.

6750. (*Mr Binnie.*) Mr Howden and I would like to know if you have thought of any way by which the very poor could be exempted if the rates are collected by the landlord?—Exempted?

6751. Yes. It is a difficult question. If you charge the landlord with the rates, and some of his tenants are very poor, and would in ordinary cases be exempted, have you thought of any way by which that exemption could be continued?—I suppose it would require to be put on the landlord, and he would probably raise the rent.

6752. But that would just be making the poor persons' neighbours pay in addition to what they already pay?—I do not know. I am afraid, from our own experience, and from the experience which one learns from time to time, there is not such a big return on that class of property, and I do not see how you are going to do otherwise than increase the rents if you are going to put the burden of the taxes or assessment upon the landlord.

6753. But how does that exempt the poor?—It does not, unless you raise it from £5 to £10, and relieve the whole up to a certain rent, and let the broad shoulders of the community at large pay the difference.

6754. But there are cases even above £10 of widows who are letting lodgings who are getting exemption just now, up to a considerable rental. Have you not thought of any way by which, the landlord being made responsible for the occupier's taxes, relief could still be given to the deserving poor?—He might, of course, make a representation instead of the tenant.

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6755. How could he?—I have not thought of it.

6756. (*Mr Howden.*) Could not the tenant make a representation on his own behalf, and get exemption from the Corporation, and show it to the landlord or to the factor?—I think, if you knew the number of tenants who disappear and so on in houses of that kind, you would see how difficult it is.

6757. These are not the tenants that disappear, the ones that get exemption. These are quite distinct. The persons you relieve are the only ones I refer to?—You mean that a man is in perhaps for three months, and you want to exempt him?

(*Chairman.*) No, a man for twelve months.

6758. (*Mr Howden.*) You see, you exempt all paupers. Take this as an example. Is there no way whereby he could apply at the rating office, and show his card, and be entitled to exemption by a receipt from the collector?—I don't think that would be a safe thing to put in the hands of any official. I think it must be through the rating authority themselves.

6759. (*Mr Dobbie.*) One of the Glasgow officials, following up Mr Howden's question, suggested that the present appeal courts should continue, that the tenant should get a certificate of exemption if he deserved it?—From whom?

6760. From the appeal court. And he should give that to the landlord or to the factor, and he would then get credit from the Corporation for those?—That is quite workable.

6761. Can you refer me to any figure showing the aggregate loss upon all rentals under £10?—£2769,—that is from £1 to £10.

6762. What percentage is that of the total amount assessed up to £10?—About 17 per cent. The figure is £16,011. (Table A.) Charge of the occupier's assessments from £1 to £10 amounts to £16,011.

6763. (*Chairman.*) Including £10?—Yes, and the amount written off is £2769, and that works out about 17 per cent.

6764. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What troubles me is this, that in this table B the percentage of loss between £4 and £7 is 34 per cent., and, between £7 and £10, 17 per cent., and I cannot see at the moment why the total should be less? You might put that in?—Yes. You will see that it is from £7 and under £10. We would require to work out a certain proportion of this £10 and not exceeding £20 in Table B, which I shall do and give it to you.

Mr A. A. A. Murray.

MR ALFRED ALEXANDER ARBUTHNOT MURRAY, called and examined.

Mr A. A. A. Murray.

6765. (*Chairman.*) You are a Writer to the Signet and a member of the Town Council of Edinburgh?—Yes.

6766. Like Mr Brown, you do not speak officially for the Town Council, who have not considered this matter as a body?—That is so.

6767. You have been a member of the Town Council for six years, and you have been on the Treasurer's committee and on the sub-committee on property?—Yes.

6768. You have special experience in connection with this matter, not only from your connection with the Town Council, but also in connection with your own property?—Yes; I manage a good many properties held by my family and myself to a fairly large extent in Edinburgh.

6769. I think you have 1048 houses?—Yes, of these 142 are let by the week, 44 are let by the month, and 862 are let by the year.

6770. Under £7 there are 142 let by the week?—All the weekly houses are under £7.

6771. Yes, that is the way to put it. Of the 44 houses let by the month, 12 are under £7, and the remaining 32 are under £10?—Yes.

6772. And of the 862 houses let by the year, 52 are under £7, 92 are under £10, 557 are under £15, 155 are under £20, and there is just a small balance of these above that?—Yes. While saying that 92 are under £10, I would point out that a considerable number of these are houses of two rooms, which are very very little under £10,—you may say £9, 10s. and so on.

6773. To what extent do you, as owner, pay occupiers' rates?—As owner I am liable for occupiers' rates upon all houses let for shorter periods than a year, whatever the rent may be. So far as the rest are concerned, the owner is not liable for them, because there is no liability upon the owner to pay occupiers' rates for any except those let for less than a year. I might explain that while it is true that the owner is liable for the occupiers' rates when he lets for a shorter period than a year, that does not apply to all cases in which he lets for a year, for this reason, knowing the liability I take care to provide against it by not taking a house off a tenant's hand. I want to be quite fair to the Committee, and to say what happens. When a tenant wants to sub-let, I say, "I will sub-let on your behalf, 'but not for myself; you must give me authority to sub-'let on your behalf"; and in the majority of the cases there is no difficulty about that. I have very little difficulty, but it still leaves the tenant with his liability for his rates.

6774. You agree that on houses under £7 there are no occupier's rates?—On houses under £5 there are no occupier's burgh rates, but there is liability for poor rates. In Edinburgh the landlord pays all the water rates up to £10. He does not pay any poor rates on any property except his owner's poor rates—that is apart from shorter lets. Then, with regard to the burgh rates, he only pays his owner's rates upon houses under £5 and his owner's rates on houses above £5.

6775. Does the owner pay the poor rates?—He pays his own poor rates and nothing else.

6776. In what case or cases in Edinburgh does the owner pay direct occupier's rates? Does he do so in any at all?—I am not aware of any, except the water rate. He pays the water rate, and he may or he may not collect it from his tenants. In point of fact, so far as my experience goes, and I have a fairly large number of these small houses, I do not collect the water rates from the tenants. As a rule you don't do it,—you treat that as part of the rent of the house.

6777. In the case of lets for less than a year, have you cases where you pay the occupier's rates?—Yes.

6778. Have you many?—No, not very many.

6779. Is that by arrangement with the town that you pay in the first instance?—No, it is simply a voluntary arrangement.

6780. Between you and the tenants?—Yes. I may say that the cases I refer to are mostly in Leith. In the other cases the town go against the occupier primarily, and they have a right to go against you if the occupier fails to pay. I heard ex-Treasurer Brown's evidence on that point, and also the evidence brought out by Mr Binnie, and I

must say that as owner I have felt very strongly the harshness of the town coming down on the owner at the eleventh month for rates he never knew to be exigible, or which he may not have realised were exigible. It is a distinct hardship on the owner to be called upon at the eleventh month to pay rates which he has no chance of getting repaid to him.

6781. What was the reason for those voluntary arrangements principally in Leith that you spoke of in the case of short lets?—Largely because the rents are small rents, up to £6, 10s., which is 2s. 6d., a week. In these cases the tenants are labouring men, and it is desirable to collect weekly. It is a matter which has arisen just by custom, and it has been found to work reasonably well.

6782. Does it work well in the interest of the landlord, because there are cases where there would be considerable risk, if that was not done, of the ultimate liability being on the landlord?—I must frankly confess that there is an advantage to the landlord in that.

6783. I now ask your view on what is called the missive question, the long period between the time of taking a house and the time of entry?—My view is that the missive system has risen largely as a matter of public convenience, largely from the custom and the habits of the people, and I am not aware of any great demand for its abolition. So far as my experience goes, there is no real necessity for doing away with it, nor has any such necessity come to my knowledge. I have tabulated the removals and tested them within the last two or three days, and I cannot find, in my experience of twenty-five years, that there have been any serious cases of hardship owing to a man having to take his house for the year.

6784. Do you differ from the view which has been hitherto expressed to us by all sections, that there is a certain amount of inconvenience through a tenant being forced to take his house so long before the period of entry?—There is a certain amount of inconvenience theoretically, but in my experience the thing works out the other way. My habit has been to send out the missives in the beginning of February, roughly, in the first fortnight of February, and to send the runner round to ask if the people are staying on, perhaps a fortnight after the missives have been sent out. He does not care very much whether he gets all the answers in or not; he takes as many as he can get and calls back again shortly after. During all that time, perhaps a month or six weeks or even more, the people in the houses are looking out if they can get better houses. If they say they are staying, then good and well; and if not, then we know that the houses are to let. If a tenant says that he is not sure, then I claim the same right as he has, viz., if I find a tenant I am free to let my house to him, and if he wishes to go he is free to go. I never let a house over the head of a tenant without telling him that I have another tenant for it.

6785. (*Mr Cox.*) About what date do you consider yourself free to re-let?—I consider that if a landlord gets a good proposal for a house in January or any other date, why should he be compelled to give it to the tenant that is in?

6786. (*Chairman.*) You have not joined with the others in their view that the letting should be made later?—No. I have always stuck to the same system, sending out in the beginning of February and taking my own time. I get to know that my houses are to let as soon as possible, and my tenants have plenty of time to look about; whereas, according to the other way, a pistol is put at their heads, and they are bound to say yes or no. They have no chance of knowing what houses are in the market, and for that reason I think the other system is preferable.

6787. How do you account for it that the opposite view seems to be universally taken, so far as we have heard yet, by factors and landlords?—I quite understand it in the case of the house-factors, because it means that they have a very much shorter time within which they must have an extra staff and be put to extra trouble. But I am speaking from the point of view of a generous landlord, who wants to let his houses to the best tenants and to do reasonably well by his tenants.

6788. Your view is, that while there may be inconvenience in particular cases both ways, there will be more inconvenience in the proposed new system than under the present system?—I have tested it during the past twenty-five years, and I have only had three cases of what one might call a quarrel or disagreement with the tenant on account of re-letting during the period from February to Whitsunday.

6789. But I suppose you have had cases of people finding, after having re-taken their house in February, that they require to leave and get employment elsewhere, actually before the date of entry in May?—Yes, and I have never had a single case of trouble with such a tenant. In some cases, nearly in every case, I may have to pay the factor 2s. 6d. for putting the house on his list or something of that kind, but it is a mere trifle. I have never had any trouble with re-letting in such cases, nor during the period of tenancy.

6790. If it happened at a time when there was a large number of houses standing vacant from over building, there might be trouble then?—It is quite conceivable that there might be trouble in certain circumstances.

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6791. But you think on the balance the convenience is greater the way you suggest than the other way?—Yes; I am only speaking from my own experience.

6792. You assume that, whatever system is in existence, there may be individual cases of inconvenience?—Yes, and therefore I say that you should just let the loss lie where it falls.

6793. We now come to the question of the short let, the larger question. In the first place, apart from whether it is desirable or not, will you tell me your view as to whether it is wanted?—It is not wanted, to my mind. I have personally discussed that question with a considerable number of my tenants, many of whom have been in the same houses for the whole twenty-five years, and some of whom have grown up in the same houses since I succeeded my father in business. I found almost no desire for the Bill after its provisions were explained. There is naturally a desire to go away if they can get away at any period of the year; but when the provisions of the Bill are explained, I do not find that the feeling in favour of the Bill is so strong.

6794. If they could get security on their side, there is no doubt that they would all go in for an option to them only to terminate at a month's notice?—Yes; and that is what they think they are going to get.

6795. Do you find that they are assuming that the rents would not be raised if the tenure were shortened?—Yes.

6796. Do you agree with that?—I do not think so. I think that there will undoubtedly be more cost, which will have to be met somehow.

6797. Naturally, if a man thought he could get a certain advantage at the same rate, his view might be different if he were told that it involved the rent being raised?—Yes.

6798. Then you say next that you do not think they apprehend the effect of the compounding on the rates?—I do not think it has ever been explained in Edinburgh. I do not know if it has been thought over in other places, but I do not think it has been fully thought over in Edinburgh. We have certainly considered it both privately in committee and among the members of the Town Council, although it has not come officially before us. We have discussed the subject among ourselves.

6799. If it is realised that that is the necessary result of short lets, do you think it would commend short lets to the working class?—I do not think it would, if they thought it was to raise their rents.

6800. What about ward meetings as a means of testing the feeling of the people?—Have you been heckled on the question of short lets?—No, never in any way.

6801. Has it never been raised at all?—No, neither before I was elected nor after. I do not recollect of any question of that sort being raised.

6802. Have your elections been all contested?—I have run at least three contested elections,—I think four, but I am not quite sure.

6803. So far as you know, has the question been raised at the ward meetings of other councillors?—I have not heard of it.

6804. Have you seen it agitated in the correspondence columns of the Edinburgh and Leith newspapers?—I cannot recollect any great agitation.

6805. You have not seen the ordinary evidences of a grievance being ventilated?—I am aware that there has been discussion about it—at least, I have seen a discussion about it in the Glasgow papers—but I am not aware of any public discussion in Edinburgh except very incidentally.

6806. So, if it be the fact that it is wanted in Glasgow, you have not seen the usual evidence that you would expect to see of it in Edinburgh?—No.

6807. Are your houses all in Edinburgh, or in Leith, or Portobello?—They are mostly in Edinburgh, in the centre of Edinburgh, Gardner's Crescent and in the Abbeyhill district and out near Haymarket. There are a large number of them just at Easter Road.

6808. Is there anything in the conditions of Edinburgh that might make it natural as distinguished from Glasgow, that there might be a want felt in Glasgow that would not arise in Edinburgh?—I think rather the reverse, so far as I can judge. The staple trade of Edinburgh is, so far as I am aware, if anything the building trade and next to that there is the printing trade. I think the building trade of Edinburgh employs some 12,000 men—I really forget the figures—and it is a trade where a man usually settles down in a locality, and he goes to whatever part of the town in which he wishes to do his work. The printing trade is a very settled trade too, except as regards a certain floating number, as in every other trade, consisting largely of the younger men who shift about. I think

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that the shifting in trades is largely a matter for the younger men, and not for the family men.

6809. Such other works as the indiarubber works would come under the same designation?—Yes, but I have not so much familiarity with them.

6810. In your view, the shifting population comes largely under two heads, the young unmarried men who are lodgers and the more or less improvident class who are already provided for by short lets?—Yes. So far as the unemployed are concerned, I find that out of the 1000 which ex-Treasurer Brown spoke to this morning, 772 are heads of households and the number with no dependents, or who live in their homes, or in lodgings, is 253.

6811. (*Mr Howden.*) Are these the figures of the Burgh Distress Committee?—Yes. They may not represent the full number. It is only those who come to the knowledge of the Distress Committee.

6812. The terms that are offered are not such as to tempt many?—I quite agree.

6813. (*Chairman.*) You say that in your view the class who shift about are already provided for sufficiently with short lets?—Yes; out of some 20,000 houses of the smaller class in Edinburgh there are at least 900 under the Corporation, and, if you take the houses belonging to other proprietors, you will find that the vast majority of the houses under £6, 10s. are weekly lets.

6814. Is it the fact that at present in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, if people of a good class and willing to pay, say £15 a year of rent, wanted to get short lets, they could not get them?—That is so. I tested several properties with regard to that. In a property in Dalry Road there are thirty-two houses altogether; in thirteen years there have been only seventeen cases altogether of any changes of tenancy, and that means that there have been only 4 per cent. of changes in this property. In no case, so far as I am aware, did a tenant, in the case of a change for work, lose more than about £1 on his half year's rent or his quarter's rent. That means, probably, that the houses were in demand, and at a reasonable rent, and so on. In another property in Morrison Street, I find that the percentage of removals in the same period is only 2 per cent.—that is, multiplying the number of houses by the number of years; and in the Easter Road district I find in twelve years, that out of seventy-two houses there were only fourteen changes, which is $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. I find, on inquiry at my overseer there, that in no case was there any loss, so far as he knew. The demand for houses was so keen that there was always a tenant ready to take his house. Of course, this may or may not be a good guide for other places, but these are matters within my own experience.

6815. Are you talking of changes between terms?—Yes, between terms only.

6816. Suppose that there was a large demand for the better class of houses at short lets, would that not, on the ordinary footing of supply and demand, have been met if it existed?—I doubt it. I think the system of yearly lets is so much the custom and habit here that a landlord would be very chary of letting a house above £10 to a tenant who said that he wanted it for three months.

6817. The result of that is that in one sense there is no freedom of contract at the present moment?—That is true.

6818. Then you told us about whether you thought it was wanted. I think you further are of opinion that it is not desirable to encourage short lets for the better class of houses in the interests of the working men themselves?—That is so; because, after all, the ordinary family man that is settled in a place is a man who has a wife and family, and he has family connections in every way. If he goes in for a number of removals then he suffers socially; he loses the sense of settledness in his home life. I frankly discourage removals from that point of view where I can.

6819. The education of his children suffers, and there are other considerations of the same kind?—Yes.

6820. But there are cases where a man cannot help it?—And these are met at the very little loss which occurs. Of course, there are cases where there is hardship,—no one can deny that.

6821. You are again talking on a balance of considerations; you are admitting that there must be individual cases of hardship here and there?—Yes.

6822. Now, that leads us to the rates. Is it your view that if short lets are enacted for houses under £20, compounding for rates must follow, because the other system of more frequent collection by the rating authority is not reasonably practicable?—I don't think it is practicable; but I am aware that the Gas Commission do collect three times a year—I was a member of that Commission till lately—but there is no making up of a valuation roll, the thing is settled once for all by a mere reading of the meter. The runners are going round at any rate reading the meters, and there is no great expense incurred. It is a different thing when you are making up a valuation roll; and you have your appeals and so on. I think it is practically impossible to collect the rates unless you compound and take them from the one man.

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6823. If it was reasonably practicable, it would be quite a good system?—For houses under £6, 10s. I personally would not object. I think the limit of £10 is wrong; but I would not object to £6, 10s., which is 2s. 6d. a week, and means a house of one room, with a closet, here in Edinburgh and Leith. It would only be putting into effect a system which practically exists just now.

6824. Do you say that, because £6, 10s. is a fair limit of what you would call the most shifting part of the population?—And the labouring man who has a very small wage, under £1 a week. He cannot afford more than 2s. 6d. a week for rent.

6825. Why is it that the gas rate is collected three times a year?—That is for convenience.

6826. And in result it yields a good deal more than would be got if there was only one collection?—I cannot say, because I don't know.

6827. You have never looked into it?—No.

6828. Of course, if the men are there reading the meter anyway, there is no extra expense?—That is so. It is necessary to have the meters read frequently, so as to see what is going on.

6829. Putting aside the frequent collection by the rating authority as reasonably not practicable, why should there not be compounding? What is your objection to the landlord paying the rates?—In the first place, there would be a considerable loss, which would have to be met. That is to say, the landlord, to be fair with him, would have to get the same concession as the Corporation at the present moment is making directly in the way of relief to poor tenants. It would be only fair that the landlord should get the same right. If you don't do that, or institute some system whereby the poor people get off, then the landlord, if he is to pay, must take his pound of flesh out of the poor tenants, and that would be rather a hardship.

6830. Do you approve of the present system of relieving poor tenants?—Yes.

6831. You don't think it is abused?—No; I know from my own knowledge how carefully it is done; how we do our best for cases, not exactly of paupers, but say poor widows with lodgers, or some one whose husband has died, or cases of sickness, or out of work. They are all carefully looked into. There is a report given by the assessor's man, and one of us is sent to go over the cases with two assistants. I am in the position to say that every case is very carefully looked after, and we try to do justice, tempering it with mercy.

6832. You don't think it would be fair if the Corporation drew more money, that that money should be drawn at the cost of the poor tenants?—I am dead against it.

6833. Then, in addition, you talk of the loss that would take place to the poor tenant. What about the landlord's position?—I don't think the Corporation could save very much upon its book-keeping, but the landlord would practically have to do the same book-keeping a second time.

6834. Suppose the Corporation continued in one form or another the present relief that is given to poor people, and suppose they gave a sufficient allowance to the landlord to cover the cost of collection, losses, and unlets, complete and partial, do you think that in the net result they would make anything?—I doubt it. I have heard ex-Treasurer Brown's evidence on the point, and I doubt if they would make anything. It is conceivable that they might get more; but, if they did, it would be taken from the poor people who at present get off.

6835. But on the assumption that it is not taken out of the poor people, that they will still get relief, and the landlord gets an ample allowance to keep him safe?—The Corporation would not gain anything—it would be quite the reverse.

6836. From the landlord's point of view, what do you think about the relation that that would bring him into in regard to the tenant?—On the question of relief—a suggestion has been made that it could be made by giving them a ticket at some office, but I don't think that the meaning of that is quite realised. Suppose you had monthly lets and weekly lets, and so forth, and it is assumed that the Appeal Court will be always sitting—it is not at present—is a weekly tenant to go up there every week for his ticket, and present it to his landlord every week, or is the monthly tenant to go up every month?—It means a very large amount of trouble, both to the Appeal Court and to the tenant, if you are going to institute such a system of relief.

6837. (*Mr Dobbie.*) These people won't be assessed?—But the landlord is only going to relieve the tenant when he gets a certificate from the tenant that he is a fit subject for relief, and he gets that from the Appeal Court. You propose to assess the landlord on the full year's rent; you propose that he should get that from his tenant; you

propose that the tenant should be free of it on production of a voucher or certificate which will be available to the landlord in part payment of his rate. The result of that will be that, when the landlord comes to collect his few pence every week, he must get every week a voucher from his tenant, and his tenant may be a different one every week or every month. Therefore, under the unsumed system of the tenant going to the Court always for it, it will be necessary for the tenant to go every time for his certificate, or to get a permanent one so long as he continues to be tenant of that house.

6838. (*Chairman.*) Supposing, at the end of the year, he went to the Appeal Court and showed that he had not been in a position to pay during the previous year, and that he was resident all the year, then the difficulty might be overcome?—Yes, it might be overcome; but there are a considerable number of changes among weekly tenants, and I don't think the thing would work out practically.

6839. (*Mr Dobbie.*) How do you do just now?—I am assuming that the rate is to be put on under a certain rent.

6840. Take tenants between £5 and £15, weekly tenants, or short let tenants, do they pay just now?—The occupier pays.

6841. The hardship you indicate of the man paying every month exists under the present system?—Yes.

6842. (*Chairman.*) It would aggravate it?—Yes.

6842*a*. There are cases of relief above £20?—Yes, up to £50, I believe. There is a very great objection among the tenants to have the landlord mixed up with the rates at all. I have been speaking to some of them, and they think that they should be in direct touch with the municipality; they have the feeling that the landlord has nothing to do with the rates. That is the better class tenants

6843. Suppose it were enacted that the rate and the rent should be shown separately on the receipts, do you think that would introduce considerable risks of trouble between the factors and the tenants?—It would involve a great deal more book-keeping. I don't think there should be any disagreement about it; but there is this objection, that for a long period of the year, as our roll is at present made up, it would be necessary to estimate the rate, and you could not make it an accurate sum.

6844. Or you could take the valuation of the previous year?—Yes.

6845. If the system were to be gone into, what do you say as to the proposed allowances in Mr Cross's Bill?—So far as my experience goes they would be far too little.

6846. Are you talking from experience there?—No, I am talking theoretically—I admit that.

6847. You are assuming that the proposed allowance is meant to cover not merely trouble, but loss or unlets?—Yes.

6848. If it was merely to cover trouble, and if an arrangement was made whereby landlords should not in the end be liable either for losses or for empties, the allowance might be fair enough?—Yes. But there are two considerations there. In the first place, when you are collecting—take the small lets—your army of middlemen is an army based on a collection all on one day, for you cannot spread the collection over the whole week. You must collect on the Monday or on the Saturday, as the case may be, and therefore you must have a sufficient staff to do the whole collection in one day and you must pay these men their wages. Then, in the second place, there is the loss to the landlord, suppose he pays the rates and they are not paid to him. The landlord is in a different position from the factor, as the factor suffers no loss, but gets his commission if they are paid; and if they are not paid, he does not get his commission, but he does not lose anything. On the other hand, the landlord suffers the whole loss.

6849. Quite; and therefore, in taking the evidence of factors who are not landlords, we must keep in view that their interests are not necessarily the same as those of the landlords?—That is so.

6850. Do you agree with ex-Treasurer Brown that if any such proposal is to be passed it should be universal and not optional?—Yes; I have the same feeling of objection to permissive legislation; but at the same time I am not quite sure I agree exactly with what ex-Treasurer Brown said, in this sense that I think the rule should be made definite; I can conceive the legislature saying that it will be definite as regards one place, and it will be left alone as regards another place, but that once for all; I object to a place having permissive powers to adopt it as they choose. It is not a law which they should be free to adopt or not as they choose. Of course, I am aware, as a lawyer, that many bills have been passed on the permissive system, but it is objectionable in a measure of this kind.

6851. Did you indicate that you would not object to the £5 limit being raised to £6, 10s.?—That is my view; because I think the £6, 10s. limit would take in the whole of those citizens who require and use short lets as a matter of ordinary everyday business.

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6852. You were not talking merely about owners paying rates there?—No; I am speaking of the two things conjoined, the shorter lets and the compounding of the rates.

6853. At the present moment houses let at £5 are practically all short lets?—I think so.

6854. Between £5 and £6, 10s. you have a small number of yearly lets?—Yes, not very many.

6855. And an Act making the limit £7 or £6, 10s. would not involve the drawbacks that you have referred to?—I think not.

6856. Beyond that you think it would?—Yes.

6857. Do you agree with ex-Treasurer Brown as to the necessity for cheaper and speedier remedies against undesirable tenants at the instance of the landlord?—Yes.

6858. There are great difficulties there. The principle may be right enough, but can you say how the matter is to be remedied?—I have never considered that. I have had cases where a man was in for a very short time, and where there were great difficulties in getting him out of the house; and, of course, you not only lose your month's rent, but you might lose another fortnight's rent before you got him out.

6859. There are humanitarian elements in these cases, I suppose, that make it very difficult to lay down a hard and fast line?—Yes. And any landlord will find it a right thing to be reasonable in cases where reasonableness is required.

6860. You have a point in regard to the question of the value of houses for investment purposes. Have you the opinion that if short lets were substituted for yearly lets the houses so affected would not be so valuable in the market?—Yes, I have a very strong opinion to that effect. The fact is, that in Edinburgh the number of small houses has been steadily decreasing; probably that is due to the standard of comfort of the people rising. There is no doubt that that works largely in favour of it; but, on the other hand, if a man desires to do some of the work that the Corporation is doing in the way of building small houses for small tenants, he is discouraged whenever you put any restrictions upon his letting or any trouble or expense. Bankers and ordinary lenders have an aversion to lending on such property; and men who are building for investment naturally try to get a loan if possible, because thereby they make more money from what is left. I think the tendency of increasing the limit for short lets up to £10 would have a very serious effect on the building market.

6861. But making the limit £6, 10s.?—I don't think it would affect it.

6862. There is another point; you think that the Bill, if passed, would be an obstacle to the extension of burghs?—Yes; I think it would be unfortunate if Edinburgh and Leith were different. The line passes through working class property at Easter Road, and it would be rather objectionable to a large number of the people there if there was one law on one side of the line and another law on the other side. At present there are serious difficulties in regard to education, for instance, and this question between Edinburgh and Leith would, I think, accentuate the troubles that we at present have.

6863. Your view is that if it is proved to us that there are places which want this change, and where it is desirable they should have it, then these places should be defined in the Act?—Yes.

6864. Leaving the rest of the country outside?—Yes; either that or have a local Act of their own.

6865. (*Mr Binnie.*) I would like you to explain what you mean by saying that the provision of small houses is steadily falling off. Does it mean that the house itself is smaller, or simply that the houses let at a small rent are being reduced in number?—It means that in Edinburgh we have been clearing out large slum areas, and no houses have been put up in substitution of these. The Corporation have cleared out large areas of small houses, and have built slightly larger ones. The railways have done the same thing, viz., cleared out areas, and if they have put up houses they have put up slightly larger ones. I think that that alone, with the rise in the standard of the comfort of the people, has led to the single room house largely disappearing from the valuation roll.

6866. As a fact, are there fewer one-room houses in Edinburgh than there were formerly?—I think there are, but I do not have the return on that point. I can get it.

6867. I want you to make clear what you mean by saying that the supply of small houses is less than it formerly was?—There is a return showing the number of occupied and unoccupied houses which gives that. In 1906–1907 the occupied houses under £5 rent numbered 3217. You may take it that these are all one-room houses. If you go back to 1887, you will find that the number was 6687 or more than double.

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6868. I am perfectly at one with you that the number of small rented houses is diminishing in all large centres, but you say "small houses," and that is a different thing?—I take a small rented house as being synonymous with a small house, a one-room house. I am assuming—and I think in practice it is true—that a house under £5 is also at the same time a small house.

6869. And £6, 10s.?—When you come to £6, 10s. in Leith, then you can get a house there for that sum with two rooms.

6870. Are there not many one-room houses up to £7, 10s.?—I never heard of a one-room house at £7. That is a matter I do not have any knowledge of. There may be some one-room houses at that rent.

6871. I just wanted to know what you meant by small houses?—There may be a one-room house, with a bed closet, at £7. What I mean by a one-room house is a house with a single room and nothing else.

6872. You say that the tenants are strongly opposed to a change. During the course of this inquiry we have had a great many witnesses, but we have not had one tenant brought forward who was opposed to a change?—That may be so. The explanation is clear enough. There is a feeling that this Bill is being promoted by representatives of the working classes, and there is a reluctance on the part of tenants to dissociate themselves from their leaders even although they may have their own feelings on the subject.

6873. In regard to the frequent collection of rents, you differentiated between the gas rates and the other rates. You said that the man going round reading the meter had something to do with making it easy to collect. Is the man that goes round and reads the meter not in exactly the same position as the man that goes round for the lands valuation office to ask what the rent is. He returns to the office, and then in the office they work up his results?—Yes; the man is in the same position as the other man from the lands valuation office, except that he goes round oftener—three times a year.

6874. And why should the man from the lands valuation office not go round three times a year? What greater difficulty would there be for the one than for the other?—You would require more men.

6875. But you said it could not be done?—If I said that, then I spoke too freely.

6876. It could be done?—Yes; but it would cost more in the way of more men and greater expense.

6877. But it could be done as easily as the gas?—Not quite.

6878. Why?—I make no point of that. It might be done as easily.

6879. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Assuming that this Bill is become an Act of Parliament, would you, as a councillor, have any criticism to offer on this clause under which the Sheriff is to pass the resolution by which a burgh adopts the Act? Do you think the Sheriff should have a discretion, after hearing parties, to refuse to adopt? As the clause stands, he is bound to adopt, and therefore it is a dead letter?—I have great faith in the Sheriff's judgment in matters about which there is dispute; and not only would I like to see him have the power to apply his own judgment, but I should like to see some power to reverse the judgment if it was found that the adoption of the Act was a failure. The Bill says nothing about doing away with the Act, if you once adopt it.

6880. In view of what ex-Treasurer Brown told us as to the tactics of agitators upon any question, assuming the majority of the town council thought they were impelled to pass a resolution adopting this Act in any one burgh, the Sheriff should have a right to say whether or not this is reasonable and not to merely administer the Act by formally signing?—That would give some security that the question was dealt with judicially instead of being under pressure on the part of some electors.

6881. Have you any views on the question of hypothec?—It would have to extend to the rates as well as to the rent.

6882. Do you find hypothec any good in small houses?—It is not any good in small houses under £6, 10s. When you come above £6, 10s. it is of use.

6883. You make a point that in the absence of hypothec the tenant in arrear would be at the mercy of an ordinary creditor. Would you be in favour of a change in the law under which, say furniture and tools and clothing, up to perhaps £5, should be exempt from distraint at the instance of any creditor?—I don't object to that. I think every man is entitled to a living, and I think it is to the interest of the community that the man should have the means of making his living.

6884. Assuming arrangements were made otherwise to recoup the landlord for loss sustained through empties or through irrecoverables, you indicated to the Chairman that the allowances here attached to Mr Cross's Bill might be unreasonable. He proposes to give 2½ per cent. on rents between £10 and £20?—If you think what that means in actual pounds, shillings, and pence, you could hardly say that it was reasonable. Take a £7 rent; the rates would be about 12s. 6½d. in Edinburgh, and 5 per cent. is a very small sum.

6885. To cover what?—The cost of collection.

6886. And if you go above £10, and get 2½ per cent.?—It would be still less. My point is that a percentage is not a fair guide to a reasonable minded man for his cost of collection, because the cost of collection of £10 might be the same as the cost of collection of 10d., and therefore a percentage that would be fair for £10 would be very unfair for 10d.

6887. Take the ordinary practice of charging commission for rents. Assuming he is insured against loss through irrecoverables, do you even in that case think 2½ per cent. is an adequate commission to him for collecting the rates?—I think it is too little.

6888. I see most of your houses are under £20; all but six, I think?—Yes.

6889. Are they largely occupied by the working class?—All, you might say. By the working class I don't necessarily mean labouring men, but men whose income is under a certain amount. I think the working class, if you are dealing with them in a lump, must be held to include women and others employed whose income is under a certain amount. It is a far better criterion than simply saying that a man is an artisan.

6890. When do your tenants pay their rents?—Half yearly. I found them object to pay their rents quarterly over and over again. In Dalry Road I tried to make an arrangement with a number of tenants to pay their rents quarterly, thinking that I would have a better hold on them and get the money readier, and have less loss, but they appealed to me to get their rents made half-yearly. I attribute that to the fact largely that they are stores people, but I have nothing to do with that.

6891. Assume Mr Cross's Bill becomes law, if they pay their rents half yearly, they would not become tenants for any shorter period than six months?—That is so; but, of course, any lawyer will get round Mr Cross's Bill if he wants to.

6892. But it would substitute for a twelve months' let a six mouths' let?—Yes.

6893. A great deal of your criticism dealing with short lets and inferior tenements refers more to houses at present let by the month or by the week?—Yes.

6894. Assuming that the good class of tenants—say £15 as an average—take their houses not yearly as at present, but half-yearly, do you think that would increase the frequency of removals?—I think it would tend that way, but it might not have a very great effect. I got the number of removals in Edinburgh as a matter of curiosity, and I have found that the ordinary number has been roughly 10,000 a year for the last ten years. The curious thing is that it has not increased; while the number of unoccupied houses has gone up nearly four times, the removals for the past ten years have remained practically stationary at about 10,000 a year.

6895. Taking these tenants who have been growing up with you, do you think, if the missive they had signed to begin with was a six monthly one and not a yearly one, they would have been tempted to shift?—It would not matter.

6896. (*Chairman.*) There is a point in your precognition where you say that in regard to compounding for rates there is no provision for rents of £4 and under?—In the Bill it starts with £4.

6897. What do you suggest would be fair in regard to rents under £4?

6898. (*Mr Esslemont.*) They don't impose any in Edinburgh?—We don't impose; but the point is, I think, that the compounding would require to apply to all rates. If it is to apply at all it would require to apply to the burgh assessments and the water rates and the poor rates. Now, with the burgh rates, we don't impose under £5, but with the poor rates they impose upon all rentals. Of course, the collection of it is a different thing. The water rate is the same. So I think under £4 you would require to make an allowance, but I don't see that it should not be the same as anything up to £7.

6899. (*Chairman.*) If there is to be a compounding, you don't approve of a selection of certain rates, as in Mr Cross's Bill. If there is to be compounding it should include all rates?—My view is that the Bill was drafted from a knowledge of Glasgow.

6900. But in the Bill the only rates to be compounded are the burgh rates?—At present we pay the burgh rates one month, the poor rates another month, and the water rates another month. There are different periods for them. It would be very awkward if some things were to be paid in slump, and other things were to be compounded. At least, that is my impression.

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6901. Is there any allowance for collecting the water rates?—No.

6902. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Do you employ factors?—Yes, to some extent under my own supervision.

6903. What commission do you allow them?—It varies from 2½ per cent. up to 10 per cent.

6904. In the case of 2½ per cent., what class of property does it cover?—Above £20—first-class property.

6905. And in the case of 10 per cent.?—That is under £7.

6906. Weekly tenants?—Yes; I never pay 10 per cent. where the rents are above £7.

6907. The lowest commission you pay is 2½ per cent.?—Yes.

6908. What is it graded up to?—10 per cent.

6909. You go up to 10 per cent.?—Yes.

6910. Assuming that the hypothec were to cover both rate and rent, would not the same rate of commission be sufficient?—Yes, if you are only dealing with the question of collection pure and simple.

6911. But you consider more than the question of collection when you fix the commission that you pay to your factor?—I don't know what the factor would charge, but I would endeavour to make the best bargain possible, and I would be surprised if he charged me any more for the collection of the rate than of the rent if he got a fair amount of property to factor.

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6912. He has no responsibility for any kind of loss?—No.

6913. Not even to the extent of losing a percentage of his commission?—No; he only gets commission on the rent he collects.

6914. But suppose you have two factors dealing with the same class of property, and the one brings you in 100 per cent. and the other brings you in 80 per cent., would you treat these men both in the same way?—You mean 80 per cent. of gross rental?

6915. Yes?—In point of fact, they are treated in the same way. The only remedy is that if the one man makes a good job of it and the other man makes a bad job, you will consider whether you should not employ the good man altogether. I am not aware of any difference in commission.

6916. You are not aware of any difference being made?—No. You would require to get that from the factors themselves. I am only speaking of my own properties, where I look after the management myself, seeing to repairs and so on, so it is not quite a fair criterion.

Mr William Stevenson.

Mr William Stevenson, called and examined.

Mr William Stevenson.

6917. (*Chairman.*) You live at Burntisland, and till about seven years ago you were a house-factor in Leith?—Yes.

6918. You collected rents and managed property both in Edinburgh and Leith?—Yes.

6919. How long were you a house-factor?—18 years.

6920. During the same period did you own property in Edinburgh and Leith?—Yes, and before that. I have a little interest in Leith still.

6921. Were your tenants mostly or nearly all of the working class?—Yes.

6922. And the greatest proportion of rents ranged from £10 to £15?—Yes.

6923. You had a fair proportion of weekly tenants?—Yes.

6924. And you had yearly tenants also who generally paid quarterly?—Yes, as far as I could arrange with them.

6925. The others paying half-yearly?—Yes.

6926. I suppose I may take it that, as in other parts, there are no cases of working men tenants who pay yearly. You never heard of such a case?—No, it is quarterly or half-yearly.

6927. Half-yearly is the longest time?—Yes.

6928. I understand that you have given careful consideration to the questions that we are dealing with here?—Yes, I have considered them for a long time.

6929. Do you agree with the opinion that we have generally heard expressed that so far as regards the missive question, namely, the long period between the taking of a house and the entry, an alteration should be made in the way of shortening the period?—Yes.

6930. You would require to alter the date of warning away to start with. What time do you think would be reasonable to fix?—At present it is before the 4th April for warning away.

6931. But what would you say was a reasonable time?—For yearly lets?

6932. Yes?—It depends a good deal on the class of property.

6933. But if it is to be fixed by statute, it would need to be fixed for one day. At present it is 4th April. Would you propose to alter that and make it later?—I think it would be an advantage if it was a little later.

6934. It has been suggested that if it was twenty-one days before 28th May, that would give sufficient time?—Yes, I think it would.

6935. Before the warning away day, how many days would you need to elapse?—That is rather a difficult question. The better-class tenants like to have their houses taken much earlier than that.

6936. But I am taking houses under £20, how many days would be sufficient?—From 15th March to twenty-one days before 28th May (see Question 6934) would give a very good time. That is giving about six weeks.

6937. You would require as long as that? At the present moment it is the 15th March, and it is suggested that that is too early, and it might be made later. How much later do you think would be reasonable?—If it is a case of yearly lets, then I think they require all that time to make the necessary inquiries as to the tenants they are letting their houses to.

6938. So you do not propose any alteration there?—No.

6939. You think the present system is right?—Yes. The Edinburgh people are going back to the 2nd February.

6940. And you don't approve of it?—It is a long time between 2nd February and 28th May.

6941. Do you think that the Edinburgh system of 15th March should be made compulsory?—Yes; but how could you do that?

6942. By statute?—How would you do with the unlet houses before that time?

6943. I want to know your view; if you have no view then say so, and we will pass to something else?—I cannot say that I am satisfied in my own mind.

6944. What is your view about the proposal to have short lets, under Mr Cross's Bill?—I am of opinion it would be an advantage to both parties.

6945. Both to the landlord and to the tenant?—Yes.

6946. You have seen what Mr Cross proposes, that the term of the let should be the same as the period of payment?—Yes.

6947. So, if the payment was half-yearly, the let would be half-yearly?—Yes.

6948. If the payment was quarterly, the let would be quarterly; and monthly, monthly?—Yes.

6949. Have you found a considerable number of yearly tenants to whom it would have been an advantage to be able to move within the year?—I have no opportunities of finding out, unless the case came up between terms, as the factor does not get any information from the tenant, as a rule.

6950. What do you do when a case comes up between the terms?—If they had a reasonable excuse then I tried to relet the house for them.

6951. Did you usually succeed in re-letting?—Yes, I think so. There was a small commission to pay.

6952. Except in so far as there was that small commission to pay, was there any hardship on the tenant so removing?—I don't know that there would be.

6953. Then where was the grievance? You told us that you approved of a change in the present system, and you said it would be in the interest of the tenant?—Yes.

6954. Where is his interest, if when he wants to remove he can get the house taken off his hands, and he only requires to pay a small commission?—He could leave the house at the quarter without asking permission at all.

6955. And without having to pay this commission?—Yes.

6956. That would be the difference?—Yes.

6957. What commission did you charge him?—It was usually half the commission for collecting the same rent.

6958. Take a £7 house, for instance, how much would it be?—Perhaps 3s. to 3s. 6d.

[*Note.*—This would be the charge if the house was to be let for a whole year. If the house was to be relet for only half a year the charge would be only half this sum.]

6959. If yearly lets were to be abolished, and there was to be nothing longer than half a year, do you think that would be any advantage to the landlord?—He would be able to get quit of an undesirable tenant much more easily than now. He would not be bound to allow him to remain a whole year in the property.

6960. Any other advantage?—I do not think so.

6961. Do you think it would be an advantage if there were more removal terms than one? At the present time there is just one removal term?—Yes.

6962. Does that produce any drawback to the tenants?—There is the hurry-scurry through all the removals being

on the 28th May. Some have got removed before that; but on that day there is a great crowd wanting to move, and every one wants conveyances, and they have therefore to pay higher for them,

6963. Would the effect of Mr Cross's Bill be to produce more removal terms than at present—if you had half-yearly lets and no yearly lets—how would that affect the removal term?—There would be fewer removing at each term.

6964. And you think there would be more removal terms?—I don't think, on the average, there would be more during the year than there are at present.

6965. But they would be more spread over the year?—Yes.

6966. If half-yearly lets were substituted for yearly lets, do you think that would do anything more than make two terms in the year instead of one?—That is not a point that I have considered, to give two terms in the year.

6967. Do you think the desirable thing would be to have the removals spread over the whole year?—Quarterly.

6968. Four times a year?—Yes.

6969. Suppose that the result was that the landlords were forced to collect the rates,—what do you say to that? Do you think that would be a right thing or a wrong thing?—I hold the opinion that it would be an advantage for the landlord to collect the rates; it would save trouble, expense, and labour.

6970. Would it be an advantage to the landlords, or to the tenants, or to whom would it be an advantage?—It would be an advantage to all parties, I think.

6971. How would it be an advantage to the landlords to collect the rates?—It would save labour and expense.

6972. Who to?—To the landlord or factor.

6973. It would be more labour on the factor?—Very little.

[*Note.*—Tenants are called to pay property tax by the Inland Revenue and deduct same from rent. It saved me much trouble and labour to collect the notices from the tenants and pay the whole rates in one sum myself. And it saved expense to the tenant going to pay to the collector. Sheets are now sent by Inland Revenue to factors to fill in names of those they wish to pay for.]

6974. It would be an advantage to the factor, because he would be paid for his extra labour?—He is paid at the present time, and he would be paid for the extra collection.

6975. So it is a clear advantage to him?—Yes.

6976. How would it be an advantage to the landlord if he had to pay his factor for the extra labour?—He pays him for what he collects at present.

6977. For the rent?—Yes, and the taxes.

6978. In what cases in Leith does the landlord collect the occupier's rates?—He collects all the weekly tenants' rates. He collects the water rate under £10, he collects the stair gas, and he collects his own rates from the tenant.

6979. Did you ever find any friction or trouble resulting because the landlord was collecting the tenant's rates?—No.

6980. It is said that friction would result. Now, you have never found that?—No. There was great friction in collecting small sums for the stair gas when it was first made compulsory.

6981. What caused that friction?—Running about and collecting small sums of a few shillings and a few pence.

6982. Would there not be the same difficulty with the other rates?—These rates I added to the rent where I could, and I got them collected with the rent, and the friction ceased. It would be the same with the other rates.

6983. You did not show on the receipt how much was stair gas and how much was rent?—No; the rent asked included stair gas and water rate for yearly houses, and it included all taxes for weekly houses.

6984. It is suggested by some people that if the landlords collected the rates then the receipts should show separately how much was rate and how much was rent?—That could very easily be done.

6985. Would it not cause some friction, as you found with the stair gas, when it was separately?—My idea is to show it in one sum yearly.

6986. In one slump sum?—Yes; and that would allow the tenant to see the amount of tax that was on his house.

6987. At the end of the year?—Yes.

6988. But not periodically?—No; or after the tax was paid.

6989. And you don't see why, if the system is carried on with the water rate for instance, it should not be with the other rates too?—The landlord has to pay a certain amount of water rate, and the occupier has to pay a certain amount of water rate. I never could see any reason why it should be separated, because the tenant pays the whole thing in the end.

6990. Would you limit the operation of the Bill to dwelling-houses merely, or do you think business premises should be included?—I think it should be extended to everything, except land and houses connected with land for market gardens.

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6991. Do you think the result of short lets would be to raise the rent?—No, I don't think that would be the result. Houses are a marketable article, subject to the law of supply and demand, and I don't see why the rents should be raised.

6992. If you had short lets, would that not involve more repairs as compared with long lets?—I don't think so.

6993. You don't think there would be in the end more frequent removals?—I don't think there would be. There might be a little more frequent removals to begin with the first year or two, but they would settle down.

6994. The best class of tenants don't want to remove if they can help it, and the landlord does not want to get rid of a good tenant?—That is so. Every landlord wants to get a good tenant.

6995. And to keep him?—Yes; and not to put him away if he is willing to stay.

6996. You said you did not think it would lead in the end to more frequent removals. Do you find in the present system that there is a kind of house-hunting fever every year?—Every year, when missives are sent out to be signed, there is a regular fever.

6997. I suppose the sending of the missives puts it into their heads?—Yes.

6998. Do you think, if the English system were adopted, they would just remain on, and think nothing about it?—I don't know about the English system; but I think that if they simply took a house for a quarter, and it was continued from quarter to quarter by tacit relocation, they would never think of moving except for some particular reason.

6999. What have you to say with regard to the percentage in the Bill?—I am not quite sure whether that allowance is to be given to the landlord or the factor.

7000. Suppose it is meant to cover the cost of collection and the loss, irrecoverables and unlets, what do you say to it?—If the Bill becomes universal, if it is to be the same all over, where is this percentage to come from? It just comes out of the landlord's pocket.

7001. You think there should be no allowance at all in the Bill, and the matter should just be adjusted between the landlord and tenant?—Yes.

[*Note.*—So far as water rate under £10, it has adjusted itself, and so far as I was concerned, it did adjust itself.]

7002. And it would adjust itself in the course of time?—Yes. When a landlord had a property to let, he would agree with the factor what he would let it for.

7003. He would just have to charge a rent accordingly to cover everything?—Yes. The rent charged would be what it would bring in the market.

7004. Is it your view that any statutory enactment should be one all over the country, and not one confined to dwelling-houses or to burghs?—That is my view.

7005. You are against having different methods in different parts of the country?—Yes.

7006. You think that would introduce great confusion?—I think it would. Take between Edinburgh and Leith, for example, and between Glasgow and some of the neighbouring burghs, and between Ayr and the neighbouring burgh of Prestwick. You will allow me to say that I make a suggestion to the effect that permission should be given in the Bill to give a lease of not less than two years.

7007. In the case of property at any rent?—Yes, I think that would overcome any difficulty that might arise as to people who wished to have business premises, or a tenant of a house that wished to have it for a longer term.

7008. But not under two years?—No. If a new property is ready to let at Martinmas, perhaps a year and a half might be taken.

7009. (*Mr Howden.*) Did you ever, in the exercise of your factor's duties, use the right of hypothec?—Very seldom.

7010. Why was that?—It is a very dangerous weapon for the landlord to take into his hands.

7011. Why is that?—I do not know that there is much made of it. I do not think it pays anybody but the lawyers.

7012. Take a house rented at about £15; what would you say was the average value of the furniture in it?—I could scarcely say. You will find them having furniture of all values. If it is a shady tenant, then the value won't be very much; if it is a good tenant, the value may be twice or three times the rent.

7013. Assuming the tenant was six months behind with his rent, and you had to sell off his goods, how much would you have to sell before you could recoup yourself for the outlay?—Up to the half year's rent and the expense.

7014. How would you arrive at the value of the goods prior to the sale?—The auctioneer stops when he finds the amount covers what is wanted.

7015. You never get the value of the goods at an auction sale?—Not very well.

7016. Suppose you wanted about £4 of rent, how much goods—I mean the value to the tenant—would you have to sell before you got that?—Till it amounted to £4, and the expenses in addition.

7017. But what amount of goods—I mean the value to the tenant?—That is a difficult question, and I do not know if anyone could answer it.

7018. Could you not put an approximation on it?—I doubt it.

7019. Would it be fair to say that you never get more than one-third of the value?—I do not think you will get more, because there is seldom anyone at these sales but brokers.

7020. If you wanted £4, you would have to sell about £12 worth of goods, plus the expense of the sale?—Yes, if there was that in the house.

[*Note to Mr Howden's questions.*—I was very cautious in sequestrating a tenant's effects for rent, as the practice was dangerous and might lead to a law case, and the profit thus not worth the risk. I preferred to serve a small debt summons and work out the collection of the debt in this way. I do not remember following up a tenant and selling his effects for unpaid rent.]

7021. (*Mr Cox.*) You have a good many houses on yearly lets just now?—I am out of business now.

7022. But when you were in business, you had a good many let by the year?—Yes, all but a few weekly houses that we had.

7023. You would have been willing to let them for shorter periods?—If the other factors in the town had so arranged I would have been willing to go into that.

7024. You would not have been afraid of deterioration if you let your houses on quarterly or monthly tenure?—No; but I did not let them monthly. I let them weekly or quarterly, unless I had monthly tenants coming in with a property that I had got.

7025. If you have a tenant on yearly tenure who has been in the habit of keeping his place in good order, his nature would not change if he got a monthly let?—That is so.

7026. We have been told that houses on monthly lets were generally very inferior and dilapidated and not kept so well?—You must understand this, that at present the houses that are let on weekly or monthly tenancies are the oldest of the property in the place. There is no new property being built for that purpose, and the houses let on weekly or monthly tenancies are bigger houses that have been divided up, and they are in localities that have come down in popularity.

7027. If the landlord were paying the rates, you do not think he should get any commission for his trouble?—Of course, I do not quite understand whether you mean both the landlord and the factor. Do you put them together?

7028. Yes?—The factor is being paid at present for the collecting of what he does collect.

7029. As regards the landlord, suppose there was a loss on the collection of the rates—if he only collected 90 per cent. then he would make a loss of 10 per cent.?—There is that in the weekly houses at present, but I have never heard it being taken notice of in any way.

7030. You would be quite willing to bear that loss?—Yes.

7031. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Is it your view that these proposals would not raise the rents?—I do not think they would. I have said already that houses are a marketable article, and they are therefore subject to supply and demand. If there is a better demand, then the rents will rise a little; but you have the speculative builder coming in and rushing up property in six or twelve months, and that keeps the marketable value very fluctuating.

7032. If the landlord had to pay the whole rates, and did not recover more than 10 per cent., there would be less return from the property?—I do not think that would ever take place.

7033. Even take it that he lost 10 per cent.?—I do not think he could lose that.

7034. Might he not lose 10 per cent.?—No, I do not think so. I do not see how he could lose 5 per cent.

7035. To the extent of 5 per cent. there would be less return on the property?—Yes, but it would be the same all over the town.

7036. On all proprietors?—Yes.

7037. If the property was partially empty, and the landlords paid the rates for the whole of it, there would be less return from the property?—That is a more difficult question. The question of unlet property is a very wide one.

[*Note.*—Houses suitable to the locality, moderately rented, and kept in decent habitable condition, always let well and are very seldom unlet.]

7038. But assume the landlord is being assessed on property partially empty during the year, and that he paid these rates, then there would be a less return on the property?—Yes, but why is the property empty?

7039. If the factor was to collect the rates and the rents, he would be entitled to more commission?—He would be entitled to commission on what he collected.

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7040. He would get extra commission on the collection of the rates; he would have to collect a larger sum from the tenants to recoup the proprietor for what the proprietor had paid in the way of rates?—The rents would be fixed before, and the unlet houses would be a loss to the proprietor alone.

7041. But there would be a bigger collection if the factor had to collect both the rent and the rate?—Not for that year.

7042. But for every year?—I do not see why the houses should be empty.

7043. I am not talking of empty property. In addition to losses from empty houses, if the factor had to collect a sum sufficient to meet the present rent and to recoup the landlord for the present rates, he would get a bigger sum on his collections, which would include both rates and rents?—No, the commission would be the same.

7044. There would be a bigger sum on which to estimate the commission?—If the factor collected the extra rate, then he would get a bigger commission. I quite see what you are at now.

7045. In the end every burden upon the property ultimately comes out of the pocket of the tenant?—There is no doubt about that.

7046. And yet, after all that loss of burdens on the property that I have given you, you still think that rents would not rise?—If it was made the law that the landlord was to pay the taxes from Whitsunday onwards, then he would require to put on an addition to the rent.

7047. The rent would rise?—Yes, certainly; but it would be simply paying for what the tenant went and paid himself. He would now pay it in small sums through the year to the factor.

7048. And in addition to the loss through empties and the extra cost of collecting, and in addition to the exemption on the ground of poverty?—Possibly; but there is another thing which we forget, namely, that the tenants have to go just now and pay the rates at the collector's office at a cost which does not come in.

7049. Namely, the car fare?—Yes.

7050. That does not touch the point. Is it your view that, while the landlord would require to pay extra commission to his factor, he would require to pay extra rates for empty property and he would require to pay the rates of those at present exempt on the ground of poverty, still the rents would not rise?—The rents would not rise from what they are now. It all comes out of the pocket of the tenant.

7051. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Take a house at £10 and the occupier's rates at 2s. in the £, that would be £1 per annum that the tenant would have to pay. The factor at present collects the £10. You propose he should now collect the £11?—Yes.

7052. The factor gets 5 per cent. commission on his collections, that would be 11s. that he gets in the case of collecting £11?—Yes.

7053. But the owner of the property would have to pay the whole £1 to the municipal authorities, and he would only get 19s. from the factor?—Yes.

7054. That would not be fair?—There would have to be a trifle put on to meet that, and that would save the tenant's expense in going and paying his rates.

7055. Do you not think it would be quite fair, as the owner only gets 19s. in the £1 on the amount of occupiers' rate which is assessed, he should only pay the 19s.?—Quite so; if he is only to pay 19s., they would have to assess for an extra 1s. all over the town.

7056. No; because there is a considerable shrinkage in the collection of the rates, and according to your *précis* a great deal of that would be saved by more frequent collection of the rates?—Is it your meaning that this is to go into the pocket of the factor or to go to the landlord?

7057. The landlord pays it to the factor for services rendered, and the municipality would pay it to the owner for services rendered in the same way, because he took the trouble to collect the rates along with his rent at a cost of 5 per cent. One other question about the shrinkage and loss in the collection of rates: if the rates were added to the rent, and collected at frequent intervals by the factor or the owner, I suppose you agree it would be easier for the smaller class of tenants to pay their rates?—There is no doubt about it.

[*Note.*—I recommend that all property come under the Bill. If the Bill is to be restricted to £20, then there is reason that these landlords should have some relief because of their additional liability.]

7058. You do not assume that there would be any greater shrinkage in the payment of rates than there would be in the payment of rents?—No.

7059. Where he failed to collect the rate, he would fail to collect the rent?—Exactly.

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7060. So if this system were established, it could not very materially affect the return from the property?—I do not think it could. I think the landlord would get the same average return, taking one year with another.

7061. Or, at all events, the additional loss that he must sustain would be very small?—Very small indeed.

7062. (*Mr Binnie.*) You said you thought the best way would be for the landlord not to get any allowance from the rates, but that he should add it to the rent and collect it just as rent?—Yes.

7063. There is always some loss of rent?—I think there is always some little loss of rent.

7064. And there would be the same proportionate loss of taxes?—Yes.

7065. In order to keep up the annual return to the landlord at the old amount, he would require to get from the tenants who do pay up the taxes what he did not recover from the tenants who do not pay?—That is so.

7066. So that your proposal amounts to this, that the man's neighbours in a particular property would just require to make up the taxes of their neighbour who did not pay?—That is the case at present.

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7067. And it would continue to be the case?—Yes.

7068. And to a greater extent, if there are more taxes,—if the taxes are increased, the increase of burden laid on the paying tenants would be greater?—There is no doubt about that.

7069. Whereas, if the town were to give an allowance to cover the loss to the landlord, it would not be the poor neighbours who would require to bear the loss, but it would be the ratepayers at large, including those able to bear such a burden?—That is true; but does not that apply in the other way?

7070. In what way?—That the good payers of rents and taxes have to make up for the bad payers?

7071. Certainly; but in the one case it falls on the whole community at large, including those best able to bear the burden, and in your way it would just fall on the poor neighbours of the person who failed to pay?—I do not think so.

Mr C. E. Price.

Mr Charles E. Price, called and examined.

Mr C. E. Price.

7072. (*Chairman.*) You are Member of Parliament for the Central Division of Edinburgh?—Yes.

7073. When did you go into Parliament?—In February of last year.

7074. At the last election?—Yes.

7075. Was the question that we are now considering brought before you at all in your candidature in Edinburgh?—Yes, I was frequently heckled about it.

7076. At meetings?—Yes.

7077. What was the question, as you understood it, that was brought under your notice?—The reduction of the present term. Whether it was to be weekly or monthly was not entered into. It was an alteration in the missive system,—that was the broad term used.

7078. We have heard the missive system defined in two ways; we have heard it defined merely as a proposal to reduce the period between the time of taking a house and the time of entering, and we have also heard it defined as a proposal to substitute short lets for the present yearly tenure. In which way did you understand it?—In the latter sense.

7079. You know, as regards the first sense, there apparently is a very strong feeling, pretty universally expressed, that the present system of taking houses in February, which are not to be entered into until 28th May, is a grievance?—Yes.

7080. Did you understand that there was also a grievance in the shape of the yearly tenure for working men's houses?—Yes; before I had any thought of entering into Parliament this question came before me as an employer of labour, and it was from that point of view, rather than through any pressure being brought to bear on me at election time, that I thought I could give evidence. Very frequently workmen who may desire to change their employment feel a restriction in making a change, because they are tied to a house for such a long period.

7081. How long back are you speaking in the way of experience?—Eighteen years.

7082. Have you been in Edinburgh all that time?—Yes.

7083. What class of working men did you find that difficulty to arise with? Was it the respectable class, or the shifting and improvident class?—The respectable class. Often a man desiring to make a change from Glasgow to Edinburgh would be unknown in Edinburgh, and the factor would not let him a house unless he got a cautioner for a year. The result was that he often asked his employer to help him. Now, where a large number of workmen are employed it meant a considerable liability if the employer undertook it for every case,—he could not undertake it for one without laying himself open to give it to others; he could not make any preference.

7084. Have you found that such workmen were not able to get houses that they desired, except on a yearly tenure?—That is so.

7085. What is your practice?—We never entered into such an obligation.

7086. If you did it for one you would have to do it for the others?—Yes.

7087. How many employees were you concerned with?—When I myself retired we had some 900 or 1000. I retired from the business in November 1901.

7088. Of these 900, how many were heads of families?—That is a thing I could not tell.

7089. Have you a knowledge of the English system?—I knew it thirty years ago.

7090. And you knew that the two systems were different?—Yes; that in a place like Birmingham the workmen's houses generally were of a much better class than they are here. The reason was, of course, that they were brick houses and much cheaper. It was a very great convenience to the workmen being compelled to pay either weekly or monthly. Then I knew Liverpool very well. It is a very great convenience there to collect the rents either weekly or monthly. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that, in addition to the objection from the employer's point of view, it was also a great restriction on a workman. He often could not take employment in a given district because he was bound to the house in the district in which he then was living. That is to say, he had not freedom to enter into a vacancy that might arise, because of the obligations in the district in which he was then working.

7091. How did you know that?—By applications that we received from men. A man would frequently say that he would be willing to make a change for the same wage, because it might be a better class of work; but he did not make the change, because if he did so, he would have to take lodgings, and also pay his rent in another town. He therefore had not the freedom to make the change which he would otherwise have done if this long term system had not been in existence.

7092. That is a question of the long term of tenure, and not a question of payment of rents. You said it was a great convenience in England, the paying of the rent weekly or monthly. That is not the question so much as that the man is bound in Scotland to remain on?—It is a great convenience to workmen to pay only a small amount at a time. I was going to refer to that in another aspect of the question. My point was that this obligation that he had entered into with his landlord destroyed the freedom, which I think he should have had, to make any change he desired.

7093. On the other hand, have you not found, as is alleged by some people, that, while that is so, working men value the security of tenure that the yearly let gives them?—I don't think that that enters into the question. If the tenant is a good tenant, he knows perfectly well that he will never be disturbed; if he is a bad tenant, he must just run the risk of being a bad tenant. I think a man would prefer the freedom to be able to leave his house at any time he desired than to be under this heavy obligation. Then, as to making application to the employers to become cautioners,—where the employers make it a rule not to become cautioners, as was the practice in our firm, the men would frequently ask a foreman to become cautioner. As every one knows, workmen are exceedingly anxious to help each other, and they sometimes became cautioners. Two foremen of public works in Edinburgh pressed me very strongly on this point, hoping that I would bring it forward, that they were frequently asked to become cautioners for men entering their departments. One of these foremen had paid £7, 10s. of an obligation he had entered into.

7094. That all flows from yearly tenancies, and is not involved in the short lets?—That is so. There is another aspect I should like to bring out, and that is the very serious disturbance to business for a month, practically, before the term. I know that our travellers used to complain that business was exceedingly quiet for a month before the term, because men were saving up for their rents. The result is, that in large cities, such as Glasgow and Dundee, and in the industrial parts of our city of Edinburgh, there is a great feeling of depression in business, and it is a serious matter to many shopkeepers. If an alteration were made in the system, they would be greatly relieved; they could work with much greater regularity,

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and you would not have this long period of depression that you have at the present time.

7095. If an alteration were made, would you expect the result to be that men would remove throughout the year instead of practically at one term?—Yes.

7096. The work would be distributed in that way over the year, removal, and preparation for finishing houses, and so on?—That is not the point I had in my mind. It was rather the disturbance to the shopkeeper as regards what he has to sell. As I have had very long experience of business in that connection, I may say that it is a most important thing to shopkeepers in industrial districts that for a month practically before the term the working people are saving up, naturally, for their rents, with the result that many of them are living on practically the bare necessities of life until their rent is paid.

7097. I do not quite understand that. We have not heard much complaint about the payment of rents being too infrequent. The payment of rent, even with yearly tenancies, is monthly or quarterly, and in some cases half-yearly, and there does not seem to be much complaint that the factors won't take the payment of rent more often. The complaint rather is that they are bound hard-and-fast to too long a period?—I am speaking of the complaints made through travellers, complaints from shopkeepers as to quietness of their trade, and how it is that this quietness of trade is brought about. I therefore think it would give steadier employment to workmen, because in many cases during that month some firms relieve themselves, as far as possible, from excess of people in their employment.

7098. Have you ever considered this question, that it seems to be agreed that if short lets are enacted, compounding of rates will also necessarily follow?—Yes. Of course, that is a subject on which I have not the experience that many other witnesses will have. If I may be allowed to say so, that is a question about which you will get better evidence from others than from me.

7099. We know that in Glasgow, at ward meetings as well as at parliamentary meetings, this question was continually being brought up, and has been for a series of years. We are told that in Edinburgh it has not been brought up at any ward meetings. If that is so, have you any explanation to offer?—I think that it has been a more pressing question in Glasgow than in Edinburgh, for the simple reason that Glasgow is a more industrial city than Edinburgh, but it is a pressing question in the industrial parts of Edinburgh.

7100. Is your own constituency industrial?—Partly.

7100*a*. Have you any manufactures in the central divisions?—Yes; there are printing works, breweries, and a brass foundry.

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7101. Is there any other aspect of the question that you would like to speak to?—These are the main points that I wanted to bring out. The only thing I would like to emphasise is this, I made up my mind to agitate for this long before I went into Parliament, because I felt, from personal experience, that it was a very great grievance to working men.

7102. You have no opinion as to whether, if there is to be a measure, it should be optional?—You mean for each town?

7103. Yes, leaving each town council to settle for itself. You have not considered that specially?—No; but, personally, I think it would be better to make it a general law, if possible. It seems to me that this question is so very general that one cannot see the objection to making the Bill applicable to the whole country.

7104. (*Mr Howden.*) Have you ever heard of the grievance in England as regards short lets, namely, that the tenants have a very insecure tenure?—No.

7105. It has been suggested to us that while the tenant might have the right to shift, if his rent was monthly, at a month's notice, a good tenant who pays his rent and does not destroy his property should be given security of tenure?—That is to say, the tenant himself should have that security.

7106. Yes, that the landlord should not have the power to turn him out at a month's notice?—If you are to give the right to the tenant to claim it, then the landlord might say that he wanted equal privileges.

7107. Assume that the tenant pays his rent, and does not destroy the property, or annoy the neighbours—he is presumably a good tenant—it may work out that for a political reason, or some grievance which is not a substantial grievance, the factor might turn that man out. Do you not think that that man should have security of tenure?—I understand your point. I scarcely like to give to one side a privilege that I am not prepared to give to another.

7108. Take the case of miners that was brought to our notice in Glasgow. Many of these men live in houses belonging to their employers, and they hold their houses practically according to the term of their employment. In the case of an industrial dispute, the owners put these men on to the roadside. Would you favour a Bill or some legislation that would prevent their having that right?—At the time of dispute, such as that, certainly.

M. J. F. Wallace.

Mr J. F. Wallace, called and examined.

Mr J. F. Wallace.

7109. (*Chairman.*) You are the Secretary of the Falkirk and District Landlords Association?—Yes.

7110. You yourself are a heritable proprietor in Falkirk?—Yes.

7111. You have held your post of Secretary for eleven years?—Yes.

7112. You are authorised to express the views of that Association here?—Yes.

7113. Your Association was instituted in 1896, and it is representative of all classes of proprietors in Falkirk?—Yes.

7114. What are the industries in Falkirk?—Principally iron foundries.

7115. What is your experience as to the demand (if any) in Falkirk for short lets?—I have not been asked for a shorter let than one year during my experience.

7116. What kind of property do you have yourself? Is it working class property?—Yes; houses let at £14 or £15.

7117. What is the minimum rental?—About £9.

7118. And what does it go up to?—£14, 10s.

7119. Do you factor your own property?—Yes.

7120. What are your tenures?—One year all through.

7121. Have you any except yearly tenants?—No; I have not been asked for anything else than yearly lets.

7122. In Falkirk, what do the rents of those who have short lets go up to?—We have a few monthly lets, but very few.

7123. About what rent will they go up to?—I don't think they will go beyond £8.

7124. Have you had any cases where people have come to you and said that they would take your house if you would give it to them on a monthly let?—Not one.

7125. Have you known of any such cases?—I know that there are monthly lets, but there are not many in the town.

7126. But these are for the small lets, you see?—I don't know of any cases.

7127. Do you think, if there had been a large demand for the better class of working men's houses at short lets, you would have had such requests made to you?—Yes.

7128. Is it not the fact that there are cases where a man wants to change his employment in the middle of a term?—Yes.

7129. Does he not find it very inconvenient to be tied for months to a house which he cannot get rid of?—In general his employment is not far off. The foundries are mostly within the burgh.

7130. And is there steady employment in these foundries?—Yes.

7131. The men in Falkirk are not of a specially shifting class?—No, I don't find that.

7132. In these foundries is it steady work as compared with ship-building, where there may be a contract to build a man-of-war employing for a comparatively short time a great army of men. You have nothing of that kind?—No, it is pretty steady work.

7133. Suppose a man does need to change his employment, is it not very inconvenient in his case that he is tied, and has to pay possibly for two houses?—I don't know of such cases.

7134. I suppose you have had applications for sublets?—Yes; I have had two cases, one between May and November, and one since November, where I was asked to relieve a party of his house, because of his work being shifted to another town.

7135. What did you do?—I relieved him at once.

7136. Have you any number of unlet houses in Falkirk?—A good many, principally on the outskirts of the burgh.

7137. But there is no unusual number. It is just the ordinary number?—There are perhaps more than usual in the meantime; dulness of trade accounts for that.

7138. Do you think, if there was a big demand for short lets by the better class of working men, the market would have supplied it?—Yes, I think so, if there was a demand.

7139. But you have not known of it?—No.

7140. Suppose a man gets relieved of his house, what do you charge?—In our Association we have an agreement that in the case of houses from £9 to £15 we relieve the tenant on payment of 10s. of an indemnity fee.

7141. That is to say, if a sublet is got? It is not total

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relief of responsibility?—It is total relief on payment of rent and taxes.

7142. You hold him liable for the rent, and you charge him 9s. or 10s. besides?—We take the house off his hand.

7143. The rent being paid up to date?—Yes.

7144. Take the case of a man that has a £15 house, and his entry is 28th May; in the middle of June he comes to you and wants relief. Do you relieve him on a payment of 9s.?—10s.

7145. Although you have no sublet in prospect?—Yes. I had one case last June.

7146. Is that rule a written rule?—Yes, by resolution.

7147. Will you send us a copy of it?—Yes.

7148. Have you a form of missive that you enter into?—Yes.

7149. Will you send us a copy of that also?—Yes, with pleasure.

7150. So far as there is a demand for short lets, do you think that demand is supplied already?—Yes, I think so. I have heard no grievance.

7151. Whatever may be the case in Glasgow, you are now speaking for the wants of Falkirk?—Yes.

7152. Have you known any agitation as regards this question at any of the ward meetings in Falkirk?—No, not at the ward meetings. We had a deputation from the Trades Council asking us to alter the date of letting; to put it further back.

7153. When was that?—About three years ago.

7154. Was anything said in addition about short lets?—No.

7155. It was the missive question?—Yes.

7156. What did you do?—We were quite agreeable on condition that the warning away day was also changed. That would have to be done first, as it is fixed by law.

7157. You wished it removed from 4th April till when?—There was no date mentioned at that time, but I think 4th May would do.

7158. And what about the date of letting?—4th April.

7159. Giving a month?—Yes.

7160. In addition to what you said about there being no demand for the short lets, do you think that if short lets involved the landlord collecting all the rates, it would be a good thing or a bad thing?—I do not think it would be very suitable.

7161. Why not?—It imposes a duty upon him and also a responsibility which he wants to keep clear of.

7162. You have never found any landlords who desired to be rate collectors more than they could help?—No.

7163. Nor factors either?—No.

7164. Even although the factors would, of course, be paid for their trouble?—Of course.

7165. But they don't like it?—They don't want it.

7166. If it is necessary to have more frequent collection of rates, how do you think it should be done?—By the municipality.

7167. Collecting more frequently?—Yes.

7168. Do you think that the present system of yearly lets is to some extent connected with the present system of yearly collection of the rates?—Yes, I think so.

7169. If there was more frequent collection of rates, you think it would lead, without any more legislation, to quarterly lets being more common?—Yes, it would lead that way.

7170. Has the Town Council of Falkirk taken any action in this matter?—Not that I know of.

7171. Suppose there was to be compounding, you have seen the rates proposed in the schedule to Mr Cross's Bill. What do you say about these on behalf of your Association?—We think them quite inadequate.

7172. Do you think if burghs are themselves not able to collect their rates, the landlords will be able to do so?—No.

7173. Do you think that they would incur more loss?—They are bound to have more loss, because the municipalities have summary powers which the landlords have not. The landlord would have to cite and sue separately.

7174. In any case, if the landlords were made to collect the rates, they would require to obtain powers against tenants that corporations at present have?—Yes.

7175. And they would require a sufficient allowance to cover the loss?—Yes, and to cover the responsibility.

7176. You are clear that these rates would not fairly do so?—That is so.

7177. In Falkirk do you relieve the poor tenants?—Yes.

7178. Has that system been fairly carried out so far as you have heard?—Yes.

7179. It is not abused?—Not that I am aware of.

7180. Is it your view that in any case that should be continued?—It would be a hardship to deprive them of it. It is only needy tenants who get it, and it would be a hardship to them to lose it.

7181. It would be an objection to any scheme which necessarily involved the stopping of that system?—Yes' certainly it would.

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7182. We have been told that the present system of ejecting bad tenants is not satisfactory,—that it is too slow and too dear?—Yes, both.

7183. Have you any experience about that in Falkirk?—I have not had much experience of it, but I have heard a good deal about it.

7184. Is it the Burgh Court or the Sheriff Court that is applied to in Falkirk?—The Sheriff Court, I think.

7185. Are the members of your Association unanimous in the view that it would be a useful change if the warning-away day were changed to 4th May, and the letting to 4th April?—Yes; they are unanimous in that, and the tenants are clamouring for it.

7186. But it would require to be done universally in order to be fair?—Yes.

7187. Otherwise, some persons might not be loyal to the arrangement, and would have an unfair advantage?—Yes.

7188. What is the view of your Association in reference to the proposal that the change should be optional, thus involving different systems in different parts of the country?—We think that that would lead to confusion. Such was the case some years ago, when it was the 15th in the county and the 28th in the burgh, and that was found to be very confusing.

7189. You found that by experience?—Yes.

7190. You have noticed, of course, that the proposal under Section 10 is that the Town Council should be the authority to adopt the Act and not the people?—Yes.

7191. What do you say to that?—If it is to be permissive it ought to be permissive in the broad sense, perhaps a two-thirds vote of the people calling on the Town Council to adopt the Act, otherwise we must call it an authorities' Act.

7192. Do you agree that if there is to be liberty to adopt it, there should also be a provision that if it is found not to work successfully it ought to be gone back on?—Yes.

7193. It is proposed to limit it to burghs, so that houses immediately outside burghs would be exempt?—Yes, and that would be very confusing in some cases where houses just over the line were to let and others were not to let.

7194. The title of your Association is the Falkirk and District Landlords Association. What is included in the "district,"—are there any other communities?—I do not think we go beyond the burgh. The burgh has been extended since our Association was formed, and before its extension we had some members in the county.

7195. (*Mr Howden.*) Do you embrace any factors in your Association?—Not except as landlords. It is a landlords' association.

7196. Does the practice of your Association in connection with sublets differ materially from the practice of others who are not in your Association?—I do not know their practice generally, but I know that some of them do the same as we do.

7197. That is to say, they let them off when they want away?—I do not know how they do.

7198. You are simply stating what you do in your own case?—I am speaking for my Association.

7199. Are there many landlords in the Falkirk district who factor their own property?—A good many.

7200. And they all adopt the same system as you say you adopt?—So far as I know.

7201. Do you really speak for the Association on this particular point? I ask that, because I may say it is rather unusual that you do not charge anything to a tenant except the expense of subletting his house, and you let him away. This is the first time that we have had that evidence submitted to us?—That is how we do.

7202. Is that general in Falkirk?—It is pretty general. I cannot speak for factors outside our Association. I know that some of them do follow suit, but I could not say that they all do it.

7203. (*Chairman.*) Can you tell us the proportion of property in Falkirk that is factored by your Association as compared with what is factored outside?—No.

7204. Will your Association factor one-fourth of the property?—Yes, fully.

7205. (*Mr Howden.*) Does the removal term of 28th May not cause unusual briskness?—It is a busy day, but it has always been managed.

7206. And it causes a corresponding amount of slackness immediately thereafter?—Yes.

7207. And some men are put out of work?—Yes, those removing lose their day in order to carry out the removal. That seems to be unavoidable.

7208. Unless you had some other system of letting, which would spread it over the year?—They might get a house standing waiting them, but that is not usual.

7209. If the letting season was spread over the year, it would do away with this undue briskness?—Yes.

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7210. Do you exercise your right of hypothec?—If necessary, but it is very very seldom.

7211. Can you tell about what proportion you usually realise of the actual value of the tenant's goods on a forced sale?—I would require to be a valuator to value those things, in order to answer your question. That is ordinarily the sheriff officer's work.

7212. Do you usually get anything like the value?—I do not attend the sales, and I do not know.

7213. You keep clear of the sales?—When I am not wanted there.

7214. (*Mr Binnie.*) Have a number of men been leaving Falkirk recently for England?—Yes; the Diamond Foundry removed, and took away fifty families. One of the tenants I was referring to was one of the fifty.

7215. Do you suggest any of those men are requiring to pay rent in Falkirk for the houses they have there?—I do not think so.

7216. They are all being relieved?—I am satisfied they would be all relieved before they went. I am quite clear on that.

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7217. (*Mr Dobbie.*) The limit in Mr Cross's Bill for Falkirk is £16. Do you think that is a suitable maximum, seeing that £20 is to be the limit in Glasgow and in Edinburgh?—If short lets were in demand, that would be quite a high enough sum.

7218. Is it too high?—Less would do.

7219. The test is rather this, what do you think a fair working man's rent in Falkirk will be?—£9 or £10 for a room-and-kitchen house. A house of three apartments comes up to about £14 or £15. Unless the family require more, a room-and-kitchen house is the common thing.

7220. At about £10?—Yes.

7221. When are rents payable usually in Falkirk?—Half-yearly. There are some payable quarterly by arrangement, but half-yearly is the general thing.

r J. Allison, Mr G. M. Brotherston, r J. Goalen, and Mr J. Hall.

Mr James Allison, Mr George M. Brotherston, Mr James Goalen, and Mr James Hall, called and examined.

Mr J. Allison, Mr G. M. Brotherston, Mr J. Goalen and Mr J. Hall.

7222. (*Chairman to Mr Brotherston.*) You are President of the Edinburgh and Leith House Factors Association?—Yes.

7223. (*To Mr Allison.*) You are the Honorary Secretary of the Association?—Yes.

7224. (*To Mr Goalen.*) You are a member of the Association?—Yes.

7225. And Mr James Hall was a former President, and is now a member of the Association?—Yes.

7226. (*To Mr Brotherston.*) How many members do you have in this Association?—We have now fifty-five members.

7227. Your Association embraces all the principal house factors in Edinburgh, Leith, and Portobello?—Yes.

7228. And one in Musselburgh?—Yes.

7229. It was instituted for the ordinary purposes of such an Association?—Yes.

7230. It began with fifteen members, and it has grown in the way you have mentioned?—Yes.

7231. Did you, in February 1894, consider Mr Cross's Bill of that year?—Yes, we considered it. That was the first time it was mentioned in our minutes.

7232. And you agreed unanimously to petition against the Bill on the ground that there was no public necessity or desire for it, and that it was contrary to the interests of property owners?—Yes.

7233. Have you continued since to maintain the same attitude?—Yes.

7234. And have you seen any reason to alter the opinions you then formed?—No.

7235. In regard to the first question of whether there is a demand for it, the Town Council in Edinburgh has not petitioned in favour of the Bill?—It never has petitioned to my knowledge.

7236. What about the Town Council of Leith; have they taken any action in the matter?—I could not say.

7237. (*Mr Goalen.*) They have appointed two of their number to come and give evidence, Bailie MacNab and Bailie Stewart.

7238. (*To Mr Brotherston.*) Has the matter been agitated at ward meetings in the way we have heard it has been done in Glasgow?—I have never heard of it any more than one question being asked, and it was asked in a very intermittent way.

7239. If there was a large public demand, you would have expected symptoms of it that you have not seen?—Yes.

7240. In regard to the first question, viz., the letting day, we have been told that that was up before your Association, and you came to a resolution on it?—Yes.

7241. When was that?—It was in 1894.

7242. At whose instance was that matter brought up?—I think at that time there was some public talk, but I do not recollect about it. Mr Allison brought up a motion on the question.

7243. And the result was to alter the letting day from Candlemas to 15th March?—Yes.

7244. That was agreed to unanimously?—Yes.

7245. Until recently it has been found to work well?—Yes. We advertised in the *Scotsman* eight or nine times, twice a week, asking private owners, lawyers, and accountants interested in property, to join with us in adopting this date, and it was pretty generally adopted.

7246. And you asked the Town Council to recommend 15th March as the letting day?—Yes, and they did so.

7247. Was that the Town Council of Edinburgh only?—Yes, we did not go to Leith.

7248. Once that was done, did you find any other agitation, or did things just take their ordinary course?—There was no agitation to our knowledge.

7249. Was there an agitation for short lets at all?—I do not think so; there was none to my knowledge.

7250. Did you find, as a result of the change, that there was less trouble in letting, that tenants re-took their houses readily and did not hold back?—Yes. The difficulty with the old letting date was that people said, "You want us to 'bind ourselves five months before we want our house. 'What is the hurry?" And we had to go to the tenants again and again. We had only about a week of a busy period at first, and then it dragged on until about 4th April again.

7251. Recently there has been some going back on that resolution of yours?—Yes. One large owner would not adopt this date at all, and he hurt the others in his district who were sticking loyally to 15th March. Several lawyer firms also stuck to 15th March.

7252. What has been the result?—The Association have recommended to the members no action, but I think the date will go back to the old date.

7253. Viz., Candlemas?—Yes.

7254. Do you see any objection to making a later date statutory?—Not at all; I think it would be much better.

7255. It has been suggested that the first thing to do is to alter the warning-away date?—Yes.

7256. At present it is 4th April, fifty-three days before 28th May. How far forward would you put it?—To 28th April.

7257. How long would you require before that?—The first week in April.

7258. So as to give something like a month between the entry and the warning away?—Yes.

7259. Take the other suggestion, that twenty-one days before 28th May should be the warning-away day, do you see any objection to that?—That might conflict with the collecting term. As it is just now, the collecting term is 15th May. Now, that brings it very close on to the collecting term.

7260. What difference would that make?—It brings the one very close on to the other, but I daresay it could be worked.

7261. Suppose it was 7th May, how long time do you think the date of entry must be before the warning away? It has been suggested that it should be ten days?—I think that is too short. You mean 7th May as the warning time?

7262. Yes. How long before that, do you think?—Three weeks, perhaps.

7263. Do you see any reason why a provision of that kind should not apply all over Scotland?—I think it would be far better to bind everybody compulsorily.

7264. That is the first point. Come now to the short lets. You object, I understand, to any change on that system?—Yes.

7265. First of all keep out of sight the rates altogether. Do you agree that the present system of having only one removal term in Scotland is unfortunate?—We have not found it so.

7266. Have you not found a good deal of over-pressure at that time, and slackness of work later on, due to there being only one term?—I cannot say that I have found it so in my experience.

7267. At all events, it would be no drawback if the practice were to have two removal terms as against one or even four removal terms?—Of course, if the letting season was changed entirely, there would be no harm.

7268. Practically, it is the case that, although there are supposed to be two terms, so far as letting is concerned, there is just one?—Yes.

7269. How does that arise in your view? Why should

that be so?—Because there is only one letting season in the year.

7270. Why should there be only one letting season in the year?—I cannot say. It is use and wont.

7271. And it has been all your time?—Yes.

7272. Have yearly lets increased, or have they remained the same in proportion to the others, just as you knew them first?—I think so. I think there are more monthly houses in Edinburgh than there used to be.

7273. Has the fact that rates are collected only once a year had something to do with the number of yearly lets?—I really could not say. It is simply the custom.

7274. (*Mr Goalen.*) I may say in support that I have a paper here, signed by the whole of the tenants in a tenement, protesting against a shorter period than a year.

7275. (*Chairman to Mr Goalen.*) We have never had anything of that kind before. You produce a paper, which is headed "Letting of Houses," and which says, "We, the 'undersigned tenants of houses at 37 Buchanan Street, 'Leith, understanding that there is a Bill before Parliament 'to alter the system of letting houses in Scotland, hereby 'declare that we are quite satisfied with the present 'arrangement of letting them by the year, and we object 'strongly against any shorter period of let." There then follow fifteen names, with the rents opposite each, varying from £8, 15s. to £9, 10s. When was this signed?—Just this last week.

7276. Are these all the tenants of the houses at 37 Buchanan Street?—One of them was from home, and we could not get him.

7277. Why were they asked at this particular place, 37 Buchanan Street?—We just fixed on one place where the houses would be under £10 of rent. I have no doubt, if I had gone to a number of others, I would have got the same.

7278. (*Chairman to Mr Allison.*) You also produce a similar document?—Yes. "Edinburgh, 5th January, 1907. 'With reference to your inquiry as to how we would like 'in future to rent our houses, we much prefer that it 'should be done yearly, and payable either quarterly or 'half-yearly as arranged. We certainly would not wish to 'change to weekly, monthly, or quarterly periods." There then follow twelve signatures of tenants, all being either at 7 or 17 Rossie Place. Then there is this, "Only one 'dissentient in both stairs. All seen who were at home. 'Others at work when call made."

7279. What was the total number of tenants?—Fourteen in each tenement, that is twenty-eight altogether.

7280. And there are twelve signatures here?—Yes.

7281. There was one dissentient. That made fifteen whose views were not ascertained?—They were not in at the time.

7282. (*To Mr Goalen.*) Was there any particular reason in connection with that stair which would make the views of those tenants different from the views of other men in a similar position?—None whatsoever. They are a very respectable class of working people.

7283. What are they working at generally?—Different things. They are engineers and porters and so on.

7284. They are working at employments that are pretty steady?—Yes.

7285. (*To Mr Allison.*) What do you say to the same question?—They are workmen of all kinds, working at foundries, in shops, and so on.

7286. Any of them working about the docks in Leith?—No.

7287. Where is Rossie Place?—At Abbeyhill Railway Station.

7288. (*To Mr Goalen.*) And where is Buchanan Street, Leith?—Just at Pilrig.

7289. A bit off Leith Walk?—Yes. I have half a dozen in that street, and I know they would have signed the same.

7290. (*Mr Brotherston.*) Mr Hall is going to put in a similar document.

7291. (*Chairman to Mr Brotherston.*) Do you find that there are some working men who attach importance to the security of tenure?—Yes, I have been told such a thing from time to time.

7292. Do you find any other ground for their preferring a long tenure?—As I have said in my *précis*, the tenant takes an interest in his house. In many cases they recognise the fact that at a small rent the proprietor cannot do all the cleaning that is necessary. They ask if you will help them, and you do so, and in some cases you give them paper or paint. Now if the houses were let half-yearly or quarterly we would not do that—we could not—and we would say, "Do the repairs yourself." We give the help on the assumption that the people are to stay on for a year or two.

7293. They would be afraid if the tenancy was to be converted into a short let they would not get that help?—We would not do it.

7294. Is there also the feeling in addition that there is a social difference between a yearly tenant and a short let tenant?—That is my feeling. The weekly tenants are as a rule confined to one property, and the yearly or half-yearly are confined to another.

7295. Are they not mixed up?—No, not as a rule. There may be some cases where they are, but in 95 per cent. of cases they are confined to one property.

7296. You find they are either of the one class or of the other?—Yes, and if we let in tenants on these short lets they don't conduct themselves as the others do at all.

7297. Have you had English people coming to Leith and getting employment there?—Yes. I have had them occasionally coming to Edinburgh.

7298. Have you had them applying to get houses on a similar term to what they have in England?—They have asked us to do it, and in some cases what we do is this, we tell them that our usual terms are to find a cautioner or security, and we ask them if they can pay a quarter's rent or something like that.

7299. Suppose an Englishman came and wanted a house on quarterly tenure, what would you do?—I am afraid that if it was the usual rule that we let the house by the year we could not give it to them.

7300. So I suppose it is the case that if people wanted yearly houses at a shorter let they would not get them?—Not as a rule. They might get them in a year such as this, when there is such an immense number of empty houses.

7301. To what extent is the system of cautioners observed in your experience with yearly lets?—It is very generally observed for new tenants, but not for older tenants.

7302. Is not that an unfortunate incident of the yearly system, that cautioners should be needed?—Of course it is a legal obligation on the factor as well.

7303. It may be quite a proper thing, but is it not a drawback to yearly lets that that should be necessary?—It might have to apply the same way in a quarterly or half-yearly let.

7304. Have you found that strangers coming to Edinburgh or Leith have been put to practical difficulty by that?—In some cases they have, but, as I have said, it can be met by their giving their rent forehand. We give them that alternative.

7305. In your yearly lets, what are the usual periods of payment?—Quarterly and half-yearly.

7306. Would you say that there was a majority for any one system?—I would say that the majority would pay half-yearly.

7307. And the rest quarterly or monthly?—Yes.

7308. What proportion of the balance would be quarterly, and what proportion would be monthly?—I have a table of my own here which shows that. I have charge of 1349 houses and business premises, with a total rental of £11,690. The one-apartment houses are let at rents up to £6; the two-apartment houses from £6 to £11; the three-apartment houses from £11 to £16; and the four-apartment houses from £18 to £27. 1106 are let by the year, the rent being payable half-yearly, quarterly, or monthly; 27 are let by the month; and 216 are let by the week.

7309. You don't give the proportion of half-yearly and quarterly and monthly?—About one-sixth of our houses are let by the month and weekly.

7310. Owing to the large number of empty houses in Edinburgh this year, more monthly lets have been entered?—Yes.

7311. What does that point to? Does not that rather suggest that tenants, owing to the landlords not being in a favourable position, can get monthly lets if they want to?—That is so.

7312. That rather seems to suggest that there is a demand for monthly lets, which, when landlords are in a prosperous condition, owing to their houses being let, cannot be got?—A tenant is like everyone else who makes a bargain; he tries to make as good terms as he can. If he can get from you a house on monthly let, that is to say, that he can clear out at the end of the month and give you no notice, then he will take that house a great deal quicker than he will take a house for a year and give you a cautioner.

7313. So if he could get it, he would prefer to get his house by the month?—Yes, but we would not be able to give it to him.

7314. Why would he prefer it? Would it be because he could move more easily?—He can go when he chooses. If we give him a house for a year, and he has a cautioner, then we have some means of pressing him, and some means of recovering the money, while in other cases we have very little.

7315. Are there not many contingencies when it is desirable that he should be able to leave at short notice?—The matter can be arranged. I know that several times we have had tenants coming and saying that their wife has died, and so on. We consider every case on its own merits,

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and we say, "If you pay up to the time you move, then we will let you away."

7316. If there are a great many houses unlet, as at present, it may not be possible?—No.

7317. You have no general rule, such as they have in Falkirk, that, so far as the houses are factored by the landlords themselves, they quit the man of all his responsibility on payment of 10s.?—No.

7318. Did you ever hear of that before?—No.

7319. (*Mr Cox.*) Is it a generous arrangement?—I think so.

(*Mr Goalen.*) In my agency there were 30 houses given up out of 1309, the rental not being above £15, and I relet the whole of them.

7320. (*Chairman to Mr Goalen.*) When was that?—This last year. Of course some of them don't want to go away immediately; they come and say, "We have not got a house in the other town yet." We ask them when they think they will go out, and then they fix the date, and I do my best to let the house.

7321. (*Mr Howden.*) Assume you did not let the house, what would you do then?—I could not help myself.

7322. (*Charman.*) If they were responsible, you would hold them responsible for the rent?—Yes, I could not help myself.

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) The sublets, in my experience, are about 2 per cent. per annum.

7323. (*Chairman to Mr Brotherstone.*) Is that over a series of years?—Yes.

7324. And your view as to these is that while there are some individual cases which may involve some hardship, they are not numerous enough to warrant upsetting the present system of house letting?—That is so.

7325. Is it your view that, if there were shorter lets, the rents would remain the same?—No, they would have to be raised to cover the loss—there would be empty houses, and loss from non-payment of rents as well.

7326. That is apart altogether from the question of rates. Suppose there was no liability for rates put on the landlords at all, do you still think that the rents would require to be raised?—Yes.

7327. Would that be because you would require more repairs?—Yes, and losses as well. Just now you have them on a yearly let and you have more security.

7328. Through your cautioner?—The tenant is fixed for a year and your rents are secure, whereas, if you have half-yearly or quarterly or monthly lets, you do not have the same; we have more loss.

7329. From the point of view of the tenant—although that is not your direct concern—do you think he would be exposed to the landlord, having once got him, raising his rent on him, thinking he would just have to stay?—Yes.

7330. (*Chairman to Mr Hall.*) Have you had a statement made by any of your tenants?—No, but I spoke to a number of tenants. They refused to sign any statement, because they thought they might be pulled up by some of those Trades Unions. Every one I spoke to assured me that they did not desire monthly rents, because the majority of them were in the Co-operative Stores; they got their dividends half-yearly, and they preferred to pay their rents quarterly or half-yearly. They did not desire monthly rents.

7331. What rents were these?—The rents of the tenants I spoke to were £8.

7332. But they belong to the respectable class of decent working men with pretty fixed employment?—Yes, tenants that I have had in the same houses for years.

7333. Engaged at what kind of work?—Some of them are in Miller & Richard's place, the type-founders; some of them are plumbers, and others are masons.

7334. Where do they live?—In Forbes Street and Beaumont Place, down at the end of East Crosscauseway, near the Pleasance.

7335. (*To Mr Brotherstone.*) Do you think that if short lets were introduced, there would require to be some better power given to the landlord to eject unsatisfactory tenants than he has at present?—Yes.

7336. Do you complain both of the slowness and of the cost of ejections?—That is one point that none of Mr Cross's Bills has ever given effect to. No attention has been given to this circumlocutory process of getting rid of a bad tenant.

7337. You could not take away all power of discretion from the judge to consider particular cases; you could not enact a single rule that in every case the person should be put out?—No, I think there should be some discretion still left.

7338. So you would always be exposed to appear before a soft-hearted man who would be apt to abuse his discretion?—The sheriffs as a rule carry out the Act. The magistrates are rather of a sentimental nature.

(*Mr Allison.*) It is more the expense that we are against.

7339. (*Chairman to Mr Allison.*) That is where ejection is actually required?—Yes.

7340. But in the great majority of cases you don't require actual ejection?

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) There are many of the cases that have been through the mill so often that they know the law as well as you, and they sit to the very last minute. I have been told of one case where the tenant said, "I was always accustomed to get a summons when I was put out of my house."

7341. (*Chairman to Mr Brotherstone.*) Have you an instance of the cost in one case?—Yes, I have the account, and I will put it in.

7342. That is a case where a tenant was seven weeks in arrear, and the outlay was 10s. 10d.?—Yes. I hand a copy of the account.

7343. What was the rent?—£4 per annum, I think. It was a small single room.

7344. Now, in regard to the rating, does your Association object to being made rate collectors beyond what they are at present?—Yes.

7345. Why?—We think that it is not part of our duty.

7346. Suppose you got such an allowance as would cover the cost of collection, the loss, and the unlets, you would still object?—Yes. A great number of people object to pay rates and they pay rents. We have quite enough to bear collecting rents, and we don't want any more odium.

7347. If you are to collect the rates, you don't think that any loss should fall upon the landlord or the factor?—That is so.

7348. In your view, looking to the allowances that are proposed to be made, would it necessarily result in a loss?—Yes. What Mr Cross proposes in his Bill is quite inadequate.

7349. If these rates are substantially below the actual loss at present incurred by the Corporation in collecting their rates, do you think you would be able to do it at less loss, or greater loss?—I think if it was allowed to be collected with the rent, it would not be so very much. It is proposed in the Bill that the different sums should be detailed. My Association is strongly against that, because immediately you ask a tenant to pay certain items, then there is friction. The tenant would pay the rent, and would say, "I will pay the rates afterwards," and the sum would be so small that there would be continual friction. The simpler you make it the better.

7350. If it was collected by the landlord in one sum without detail, and at frequent intervals, you do not think there would be the same difficulty?—I don't think there would be.

7351. There is no doubt there would be less loss if you had monthly collections than the Corporation suffer at present with one annual collection?—I think so, but my feeling is to keep the rates out altogether.

7352. If more frequent collecting is desirable, you think that should be done by the authorities themselves?—Yes, I think so.

7353. (*Chairman to Mr Allison.*) We know that your experience is a large one. You have been forty-five years in business as a house agent and factor, and you have had experience of small rented properties, as well as higher rented properties, half of your property being houses under £20, and the other half being over that amount?—Yes.

7354. Are your houses of that kind almost wholly let on yearly tenure?—Yes.

7355. And the lets are payable either quarterly or half-yearly?—Yes.

7356. Do you concur with the views that Mr Brotherstone has expressed on behalf of your Association?—Yes.

7357. Have you any view on the question of the application of English experience to Scotland?—I think that each country has adopted the system most suited to its wants voluntarily, and there should be no statutory change of that. Each country adopts what it finds beneficial, and to show that, the experience of the whole of the Association throughout Edinburgh is that there are only 2 per cent. of sublets required. That shows that it is not an urgent matter in Edinburgh.

7358. If it becomes an urgent matter, then voluntary arrangements will be made according to the law of supply and demand to meet it?—Yes. The two classes are entirely different. We have good tenants; they take their houses by the year; the others are a thriftless lot, quarterly and monthly. The good tenants would never take a house beside these others. They are in different classes. The weekly and monthly houses are at present of the character of slum houses. The other houses, the yearly lets, are inhabited by working men: decent working men, who don't desire any change.

7359. You think that, so far as there is a class who do desire short lets, these are sufficiently met by the existing short lets?—I think so. There are a great number of

houses of that nature at present to let, either weekly or monthly.

7360. Mr Murray indicated that he would not object if the £5 limit up to which the occupiers pay no rates were extended to £6, 10s., and if there were no yearly lets up to £6, 10s. What do you say to that?—I don't think that would be a drawback, because the majority of lets, monthly and weekly, are under £6, 10s.

7361. You have a valuable piece of statistics where you say that the extra cost of collection by weekly payments may be taken at 5 per cent., and the extra cost of repairs by more frequent removals, vacancies, etc., at 16 per cent., which must be all paid for by the tenants. Of course, if short lets for the better class of houses did not produce more frequent removals, then there would be no increase in that way; there would be no increase in the way of cost of repair?—If the quarterly lets had the same effect as the yearly tenure, there would be none, but our experience of the quarterly and monthly lets is that there is a continual shifting.

7362. I quite see that, but is that not subject to this, that you have had no experience of quarterly or monthly lets in the higher class of houses and with the better class of tenants?—Yes, that may be so.

7363. What do you think would be the effect on the owning and lending market if yearly lets were abolished?—I think, and I am told by two or three of my proprietors, that if this Act comes into operation, they will at once sell out of their property, because they won't have their property occupied by the class who are known to be weekly or monthly tenants at present in Edinburgh.

7364. Is that not a fallacy? Is that not because they think that short lets are necessarily associated with improvident tenants? If short lets are introduced for the best class of tenants, then that objection would disappear?—We are afraid it would bring the higher class down to the lower. If you let one of these weekly or monthly tenants into a yearly tenement, you at once bring down the character of the place.

7365. Would the same thing apply to investors?—I think so. I don't think they would invest in property if this came about.

7366. You all agree with the views of Mr Brotherstone about the alteration of the term of entry and the warning away?—Yes.

7367. The members of your Association are unanimous on that?—Yes.

7368. It has not been from any disloyalty on the part of your members that this trouble has arisen?—No, it is entirely on the part of persons outside.

7369. You produce an extract from a Memorial to the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Edinburgh, 1895, which resulted in the recommendation being made that was asked for?—Yes. (*Hands in.*)

7370. You adhere to the facts as there stated as correct?—Yes. I would also wish to say that the working men in Edinburgh (to show their desire for security of tenure) have an Association which has built a large number of houses, and these houses are bought by the members of the Association. There are sixteen different investment societies in Edinburgh for the purpose of working men purchasing their houses, showing infallibly that they desire even a greater security of tenure than yearly lets.

7371. You also produce an extract from the report of your Association submitted at your annual meeting on 14th January 1896, in which you congratulate the members for the loyal way in which they have acted in favour of the change, and adding that it had been an undoubted success?—Yes. (*Hands in*). With reference to the property under the charge of the Association, I see that in 1896 there were 35 members in the Association, with a rental of £250,000, representing 1800 proprietors and 12,000 tenants. I should think that that has increased by one half more up to this date.

7372. (*Chairman to Mr Hall.*) You have been in business for thirty-five years?—Yes, I have been at West Nicolson Street for thirty-five years.

7373. Are the properties that you manage all in Edinburgh?—Yes, they are all in Edinburgh and Leith.

7374. We have heard from you and the other gentlemen about the views of tenants. How do you account for the fact that the Trades Unions all seem to be going in for short lets?—I can quite see the force of it in a business town such as Glasgow or Dundee, where they may have to remove from one side of the town to another for their work, but in a place like Edinburgh, where people remain in an employment for years, they generally look out at the ordinary letting time for a house near their work, and it is not desirable for them to leave their house until they are leaving their work, because it is not easy to get into employment in a place like Edinburgh. It is different altogether from Glasgow or Dundee.

7375. Do you find that, in addition to the use made of Co-operative Stores dividends for the payment of rents, the good class of working men also use the Savings Bank for the same purpose?—Yes.

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7376. Both for rents and rates?—Yes.

7377. Of course the improvident working man must often be in very great difficulty as regards the payment of his rates, if he has laid nothing by to meet it?—There are a great number of tenants in Edinburgh who, through illness in the family, or through idleness or other causes, are not able to pay their rents when they come due. Their tenure is secure, and I generally advance for the working class some £300 or £400 myself to the proprietors, and then I take payment of the rents as the tenants can give it to me. If it was not for that, then of course they would require to leave, but having the security of the year, I give it before the next rent is due.

7378. Does the existence of hypothec make it easier to do that?—Yes. With lets of £10 and under we pay the water rates. When we take action against a tenant, we take action for the amount against him, including rent and water.

7379. You have a right to do that?—Yes, if we had the same right with the other rates, then that would do away with our objections to a certain extent.

7380. I supposed if you continued to have the right of hypothec for lets, and if the legislature laid on you the duty of collecting rates, it would also be reasonable that you should have the right of hypothec for the rates also?—Yes, the same as for the water rates.

7381. Do you think it would be a benefit to tenants—at least to many of them—if the rate were collected, not in one sum, but in several sums?—I would distinctly say that if you collect it four times a year, then you give the proprietor and factors an opportunity of collecting it along with the quarter's rent.

7382. And it would be more easily done?—Yes, for the smaller class of tenants.

7383. Particularly those who are neither interested in Co-operative Institutions nor in Savings Bank?—That is so.

7384. You say in your *précis* that the average yearly removals from 4000 houses managed by you of £20 and under, 33 per cent. being £10 and under, is 12 per cent.?—Yes.

7385. Is that a high proportion?—No. It is less than it is from the other properties in the town.

7386. From those let monthly or weekly you find it necessary to eject 10 per cent.?—Yes. I distinguish between the weekly and monthly and the ordinary tenants.

7387. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Hall.*) What was the reason for approaching the Town Council in 1895 with the view of getting this change approved of?—It was because of a desire on the part of the tenants principally, as it was too early, 1st February or middle of January, for taking on their houses for the year.

7388. I suppose that would be because the smaller class of tenants were more changeable in their habits?—It was a mutual arrangement in this way, that we found it a benefit with the smaller class of tenants, because we found by the middle of March, whether it was necessary that they should take their houses on for the next year, in fact, should be allowed to remain on or not. When the February rent came due it clashed with the ordinary letting, and we put it back so as to have an opportunity of collecting the rents at the Candlemas term, and they would be in a position to know whether they were to remain on or not.

7389. I see in this memorial to the Lord Provost, you state that with the tenants of the smaller class the inconvenience is greater, having to fix so long in advance, their circumstances being so changeable?—At that time we had very few weekly and monthly houses in Edinburgh. The lets were generally yearly lets.

7390. Is it not quite a good argument to say that while sixteen months is too long for the smaller tenants, it is no remedy to shorten it to twelve or thirteen months—the same changeable habits may be a good reason for tenants wanting shorter lets?—Yes.

7391. Will you tell me this—at present in houses rented yearly, and with the rent payable half-yearly, you collect your rents on 15th May and 11th November?—Yes.

7392. Assume that these terms are abolished, and that lets are to take place throughout the year, how would you as a practical man propose that the payment of rents should be fixed?—I would say 15th August, 15th November, 15th February, and 15th May.

7393. That is assuming quarterly lets?—Yes, or quarterly payments.

7394. What is your reason for suggesting that?—Because in Mr Cross's Bill it says that if houses are let quarterly, monthly, or otherwise, the period of payment constitutes the let. It stands to reason that with a factor with 2000 or 3000 houses, it is impossible to go and demand the

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rent on the day the man is leaving the property. It would never do to allow those people to keep the rent in their possession until they were removing at 12 o'clock on that day. As Mr Cross's Bill stands, it means that the rent is due the moment the tenant is leaving the house, either that or paid in advance. You can take a quarter's rent in advance, but if you don't, then it is due the moment the tenant leaves the property, according to this Bill.

7395. That would make it impossible for you to make use of your hypothec?—Yes.

7396. So, assuming there were to be changes made in regard to the terms of payments, and in the way of abolishing the annual let, provision would require to be made for a date of payment sufficient to keep the landlord's right of hypothec available?—Yes, I agree with that; I would say the 15th—that would give them thirteen days.

7397. Apart from the question of hypothec, would it be practical for the house factors to collect the rents at the moment the tenure ceased?—It would be impossible to do that.

7398. With regard to the allowances suggested in the Bill, have you applied your mind to the question of what the allowance might be, assuming that the present law in regard to exemption still applies?—I think you should give power to the parties to deduct from their rates to be paid a sum equal to what you lose on the rent. That is to say, if you let a house just now one month at a Whitsunday term, it is entered for a year. If you have it standing empty for five months, then, instead of paying twelve months' taxes to the authority, you ought to get an abatement of five months.

7399. Does it come to this, that you would suggest, in the event of compounding, a sum sufficient to cover the collection and the risk of non-recovery from tenants, and you should get a refund in the event of any property standing empty for any part of the year?—Yes, over and above.

7400. You should get commission fixed for the collection and the risk of non-recovery, and then get a refund of the actual amount which is applicable to any period of non-occupancy?—Yes, that is my view on the matter.

7401. I would like to know if you can suggest any change on the present law of ejection. We have been told by most witnesses that if this change in the law is to be made, it must be accompanied by a more drastic method of ejection. What improvement would you suggest in regard to that?—The proprietor issues a notice giving the tenant notice that he is to leave on a certain day, generally one-third of the period of the let. If the sheriff gave forty-eight hours' notice instead of a week, I think that in many cases would certainly do away with a certain amount of grievance at the present moment, because forty-eight hours is ample to bring the tenant before the sheriff. The ejections are always tried at a certain period of the Court day. After the case is before the sheriff, he ought to give them a certain time to remove out of the house, forty-eight hours if the case is very bad, but if it is an exceptional case, then he should give them a little longer. Every case, however, should be taken on its own merits.

7402. What Court do you go to as a rule?—The Sheriff Court is the principal Court, for the simple reason that the magistrates' officers don't pursue the ejections further than a certain state—they don't go all the way with them.

7403. When the Sheriff Court is in vacation, what do you do?—We do nothing.

7404. With a series of short lets that grievance would be aggravated?—Yes.

7405. Could you not suggest some means of remedying the objection to the Burgh Court so as to make it a more available Court for ejection?—If you give power to the magistrates sitting to clear them out the same as the sheriff does, that might do away with a certain amount of it.

7406. What do you do in connection with the water rates just now? You have heard our Chairman ask with regard to the policy of separating the rate from the rent. Is that done at present?—No, we let a house at £10 or £8, as the case may be, and the water rate is included in that rent. If we have to raise an action against a tenant, we raise an action for £5 or £4, as the case may be. The assessor takes off so much, 4s. for £8, or 5s. for £10, and the tenants are only taxed on the rent less that amount. When we raise an action, we take no notice of the water rate, because it is included in the amount we fix with the tenant to pay.

7407. It is merely a condition of the let?—Yes.

7408. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Allison.*) You raise a very interesting point in the last paragraph of your statement, indicating a desire to have the stamp duty on missives reduced?—Yes, that has been a thorn for the last twenty years, both with the house factors in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, and so much has it become so in Glasgow, that I understand almost all the smaller class of houses are let on the old Scotch arles system. Two clerks go to the houses with their factors' rent book, and they mark down on it "flitting" or "removing," and pass a halfpenny or a penny. You can understand how great difficulties might arise with a transaction of that kind. Under the present system, all houses let under £10 are on a penny stamp; above that you have the *ad valorem* stamp, which comes up very high. I believe it was instituted chiefly for the system of leases, say a lease of from three to five years, but when you come to yearly lets, as we do almost invariably in Edinburgh, you have to put this *ad valorem* stamp on. For an £11 house the stamp is 1s. 6d., and we have the greatest difficulty in recovering it from the tenants. I would suggest that there should be a uniform stamp of 6d. on agreements up to £100, and if that were done, the revenue would benefit, and in Glasgow that verbal system would be departed from.

7409. We are dealing here only with the smaller class of dwelling house. The stamp for a £15 house is 1s. 6d., and for a £20 house it is 2s.?—Yes.

7410. The rents are paid half-yearly?—Yes.

7411. Under Mr Cross's Bill it is proposed that those houses would be let for the six months—that is a let of £10 for the six months?—Yes.

7412. The stamp upon that would be 1d.?—It is a question for consideration whether it would be liable to the twelve months' rent, or the six months' rent.

7413. It would be a six months' let of £10 under Mr Cross's Bill?—But the question would be whether it was liable to a stamp at £20 or £10, because £20 is the annual let, and the stamp duty is exigible on the annual rent.

7414. No, it is exigible on periods of not exceeding one year. What I am coming to is this: you have discovered an unseen virtue in Mr Cross's Bill. You have a stamp duty of just 2d. on a £20 house, which is not even the 6d. which you desire. On half-yearly lets 1d. would cover all those up to £20?—Yes, if that was held to be right. But the question is whether it would not be held to be a yearly rent of £20 instead of £10.

7415. I think you mentioned that people would not retain their houses if the tenure was changed to short lets. Would that apply to any extent if the tenure was changed merely from twelve-monthly to six-monthly? Was your objection not more to the inferior class of property, slum property? I think it is quite an open and fair criticism that if the practice was universal the six-monthly let would not demoralise the whole community, as you are inclined to indicate it would, comparing the present social condition of the occupants of monthly houses at present. The one can hardly apply to the other?—The factor would have to go to the tenant every half year to ascertain whether he was going to remove or remain. I find it quite enough to have to go to him once a year, instead of twice, or three times, or four times a year.

7416. But that would not demoralise the whole class of tenants under £20?—Not to such an extent as the weekly or monthly would.

7417. Have you any views in reference to contracting out. Mr Cross's Bill, as you see, would be operative only in so far as the landlord and tenant did not make a special contract. Would you have the same objection to the Bill if it passed as it stood?—I would have no objection if there was contracting out, but it would lead to friction. You could not get working men to understand it—half of them would be under the Bill, and the others would not be under it, and they would say that you took advantage of them. You are better to have some easily understood, uniform rule, because tenants come and sign things without thinking very much about it. You may read it to them, but they forget all about it. It would be very much better if you had some absolute uniform rule.

7418. Assuming that there is to be a change in the law, and you are to have more frequent short lets, what, in your view, would be the reasonable time for warning out—I mean the number of days—assuming there were to be lets monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly?—I would not remove the present one-third of the time.

7419. In each case?—Yes, I think it is an admirable system, and the less you alter the recognised custom the better. You would give eleven days in the case of a month, three or four days in the case of a week, and two months in the case of a half-yearly let.

7420. That is longer than it is at present?—It is forty days at present.

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) Perhaps a month would be enough.

(*Mr Hall.*) And the warning away on 28th April.

7421. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Goalen.*) Can you tell me whether there is much moving between Edinburgh and Leith?—I am not aware of there being much. I have a number of houses on the boundary, and the tenants find it very suitable, whether their work is in Edinburgh or Leith. There is a great demand for houses near Pilrig.

7422. Assume this Bill is to pass with the local option

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clause in it, do you think that the option should be exercised by Edinburgh, leaving Leith to follow its own course, or should an attempt be made to ensure that both of these cities would either adopt the Act or leave it alone?—Both must adopt it, or leave it alone.

7423. Supposing Glasgow and the west of Glasgow insist on some such Bill as this, and the Committee or Parliament thinks that the east of Scotland have shown no desire for it, would you, gentlemen, be of the same view as at present, that if there is to be a Bill for Glasgow, it must apply to Edinburgh? If Parliament thinks proper to take the view that there is to be a Bill to remedy a grievance which exists in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, do your objections to permissive legislation go so far as to make you agree that in that event the Bill should apply to Edinburgh?

(*Mr Allison.*) I don't think it would affect us in any way if the removal days were kept the same.

7424. (*Mr Dobbie.*) But they would be abolished.

(*Mr Allison.*) 28th May and November.

7425. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I follow that, but my first query was rather whether you would then take up the position that it should not apply to Edinburgh.

(*Mr Allison.*) Certainly.

(*Mr Goalen.*) I think so. We are dead against it coming to Edinburgh.

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) I am afraid if Glasgow got it, Edinburgh would have to follow suit.

7426. (*Mr Dobbie.*) There is a provision in the Bill making it optional. You have all agreed that you object to any permissive legislation, and I am wanting you to reconsider that, to consider whether you really adhere to it or not. Would you prefer the Bill with the clause or without the clause?

(*Mr Allison.*) I think we would prefer excluding Edinburgh.

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) It is a matter for some consideration.

7427. (*Mr Dobbie.*) The evidence in Glasgow was almost wholly one-sided, and as between no Bill and a Bill with an option is what I think the Committee should have your opinions upon.

(*Mr Brotherstone.*) I think I would take the premissive clause, because there are so many yearly tenants here. Their employment is fixed, and they do not shift about as in Glasgow and in Dundee.

7428. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Brotherstone.*) In your *précis* you say that if the houses presently let yearly were let half-yearly, quarterly, or monthly, and the rates included in the rent, the rents would if possible require to be raised to cover the outlay for rates and the loss caused by empty houses. How would there be more empty houses?—The tenants would be able to shift much easier, and you would have a house standing a month, or perhaps two or three months, empty between the lets.

7429. There would be the same number of occupied houses, for the same number of tenants have to get houses. But if a tenant can shift at the end of a quarter he must go to another house?—Yes, but perhaps he won't come to my house.

7430. But we are not talking of you?—I am simply judging by my experience of the monthly houses. We have often months when a house stands empty. In weekly houses we have perhaps four different tenants in each year and weeks between each let.

7431. Your idea is this, at present yearly tenants all make up their minds to remove on a certain day, and therefore you don't have spaces between the incoming of one tenant and the outgoing of the other tenant?—That is so. You have more continuity of let, and your houses are more regularly let.

7432. I think you say there are only 2 per cent. of removals between the terms just now?—Yes, sublets.

7433. And you bring that forward as a proof that there is no demand for this Bill?—But it is a different thing when it is permissive. You cannot remove just now, but afterwards you are to be able to remove at any time by giving a month's notice.

7434. I thought you brought that forward as showing that there was no demand for this Bill?—We can only judge by the sublets that we have that there is no demand.

7435. I don't understand your position. You show us that there are very few removals, and you argue that there is no demand for the Bill in consequence of that. Then you say that the effect would be a very great increase in the cost of repairs, and empty houses, and different things, and rents would require to go up?—If a tenant can remove he will remove.

7436. Do you think that tenants are at all likely to remove for the love of it?—I don't say that, but I think there will be far more removals.

(*Mr Allison.*) I think Mr Brotherstone referred in the one case to the yearly tenure and in the other case to the monthly and weekly tenure. In the case of the monthly and weekly tenants there were vacancies between the respective lets, while with the yearly tenure there were only two changes during the year.

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7437. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Allison.*) You tell us that you think that the increased cost of repairs would be 16 per cent.?—Yes, that is so.

7438. How do you arrive at that?—If there are frequent removals, then there are more repairs necessary. There is broken glass, keys go amissing, plaster is broken; and, judging from my experience of yearly lets, with a very small experience of monthly lets, I consider it would take 16 per cent. additional to keep the property in proper order. When tenants come to me I am quite prepared to let them a £5 house on a yearly tenure. But if they want it monthly the rent is £6, and I consider I am only giving the landlord an equivalent for the two classes of tenants.

7439. What is your annual percentage of repairs on yearly lets?—I could not tell you. That would be misleading.

7440. What is your annual percentage of repairs on monthly lets?—I have not got that.

7441. So this 16 per cent. that you have fixed on proceeds on no facts?—It is my experience in general, passing my accounts through my books.

7442. But your experience must be founded on facts, and you tell us you cannot give us what the facts are?—I don't have them in detail. Perhaps Mr Goalen can give that.

(*Mr Goalen.*) In a tenement where the houses are let weekly, the rent for the last half year that I should have received was £128, 6s. 6d.

7443. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Goalen.*) But we are talking of repairs?—I am going into that. Out of that I collected only £112, 4s. 5d., being a loss of £16. That is the reason why we say that houses let at short periods won't be so remunerative as those let yearly. For that period the half-year's rates were £15 and the repairs £18.

7444. Was that an ordinary fair half year?—Yes, with weekly tenants.

7445. Was it you who told us that the monthly and weekly lets were usually in old properties?—They are made old by the tenants.

7446. Are they not old to begin with?—This one is only between thirty and forty years old, but it was letting the houses weekly that brought down the standard.

7447. Your evidence, we may take it, proceeds on the assumption that the simple fact of letting houses monthly to tenants who are now yearly tenants reduces them to the same character as those who are monthly tenants now?—There is a strong tendency to do so.

(*Mr Allison.*) There would be a tendency to do so.

7448. (*Mr Howden to Mr Brotherstone.*) What rents do working men usually pay in Edinburgh?—That is a wide question. A man earning 25s. a week will pay up to about £10 perhaps for a room and kitchen.

7449. The artisan class will surely live in better houses?—It is rather a difficult question to answer. Perhaps from £10 to £15 for a three-roomed house if he has a family. In some cases they pay £13, and in other cases they pay £14.

7450. For a three-roomed house?—Yes.

7451. You have none as high as £20?—Yes, but that is the better class of working men, perhaps men who are foremen.

7452. I think you told us that you would not do repairs for monthly tenants?—I don't say that, but I say that if a tenant is coming to you and taking a yearly house, you treat him in a much better fashion. You listen to what he says and you are inclined to give in, and to do something, or to furnish him with material.

7453. If the tenant had been the same length of time in the house, and was a monthly tenant, you would do the same?—That is doubtful. We would require to see how it worked for a year or two.

7454. What do you charge for subletting?—From 2s. 6d. to 5s., and in some cases we don't get anything.

7455. Do you not have a percentage that you put on the rental, the same as they do in Glasgow?—No. In some cases we let the tenant off if he pays his proportion of the rates and rent. If it is a property that we can let readily, then we quit them.

7456. But you hold them responsible unless you get a sublet?—It is a question of circumstances. In a year like this we might be harder, but in ordinary times I think we will quit them on payment of a small fee, if we can let the house again. We quit them on paying the rent, and their proportion of rates to date and a small fee.

7457. You don't charge them for the time that they will not occupy the house?—No, not in an ordinary letting season.

7458. What do you mean by an ordinary letting season?—Such as we had two years ago, when we had not so

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many empty houses. If we can let the houses readily, then we will do so.

7459. As a matter of fact, when you cannot let the house readily you hold the tenant to his agreement?—We would do so when business is dull, as it is this year.

7460. You told us these were only 2 per cent.?—Yes, sublets.

7461. You did not give us the figures?—I said about twenty-six per annum.

7462. (*Mr Howden to Mr Goalen.*) You have given your figures, making about 3 per cent.?—Yes.

7463. There were thirty-nine tenants, and they had some just cause in your opinion to remove?—They got the missive back at once, and were relieved from any further responsibility for the year.

7464. But they had a just cause to remove?—If they wished to remove, I would let the house for them.

7465. You asked no questions?—I would not ask them why they were removing.

7466. (*To Mr Allison.*) Of what service is the hypothec to you in the case of small houses?—It has an influence in this way, that if people know that their effects can be taken away they will make an effort to pay. As an actual mode of recovery it is very ineffectual, but it is of great use in this way, that they know that we possess the power.

7467. On larger rented houses it will work differently; it is of some use to you then?—Yes.

7468. Can you tell us the approximate amount that you would draw from a sale such as that?—It is impossible to say. The officer who goes has experience in valuing furniture sold at the Cross, but I try to get friends to give what it would fetch at the Cross. I don't think I have had to carry out one sale each year during all my experience of house agency. The officer's expenses come to about £1, and then the sale brings about one-third of the value of the furniture. I endeavour to get some of the friends to come forward.

7469. You don't carry it out to its full extent?—As a matter of fact I don't. I have only carried out about one sale in each year.

7470. When you have had occasion to carry it out, you have found the effect to be that you have only got one-third of the value?—Yes, I admit that.

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Mr Frederick Hamilton and Mr Robert Allan, called and examined.

Mr F. Hamilton and Mr R. Allan.

7471. (*Chairman to Mr Hamilton.*) You are Secretary of the Edinburgh and District United Trades and Labour Council?—Yes.

7472. (*To Mr Allan.*) You are a representative of the same Council?—Quite so.

7473. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) When did this Council come into existence first?—About thirty-three years ago.

7474. And at present it is composed of 115 Delegates from 53 Trades Unions or Branches, and it represents a membership of nearly 9000 members in the City of Edinburgh and District?—Yes.

7475. What does "District" mean?—There is no definite line to it, but we have included in the membership of the Council the Broxburn shale miners and the carpet weavers of Lasswade, any Union within a radius of that description.

7476. That is quite accurately called a district. You represent workers of all different trades?—Every sort of worker, skilled and unskilled.

7477. To what extent do you suppose you include all the workers; what proportion are outside, will it be half?—No, I don't think it, nor a third of the general body of workers in the trades represented on the Council.

7478. In the same district, I mean?—There are many workers who have no Trade Union connected with their employment at all.

7479. But take the trades that have Trades Unions connected with them?—We represent fully more than one half.

7480. And I suppose the views of their members on a question of this kind won't differ from the views of the men within that district?—No, there is no reason why they should; they enjoy the same conditions of life.

7481. I suppose you have men who are weekly tenants, monthly tenants, and yearly tenants?—Yes.

7482. What will the rent run from, among your members? What will be the lowest, do you suppose, that any of your members pay?—The lowest practically for an ordinary labourer is the habitable house, perhaps £3 or £6.

7483. Running up to what?—£20 or over. There are very few instances over £20.

7484. Do you agree that for an ordinary working man's house, apart from the foreman, £20 is a fair limit?—I think it will embrace practically the whole.

7485. Now, in regard to what is called the missive question, apart from short lets, you know, the length of time between taking the house and entering it: what is the view of your Council on that?—We consider that the time we are asked is a long time prior to the actual term. We are afraid that it is rather too long, especially bearing in mind the precarious tenure of our employment. We are never sure for a week or fortnight how long the work we are engaged in will continue.

7486. You consider the time is too long. Well, now, suppose that is put right by the legislature, would that remove your whole grievance in this house-letting question?—In what respect?

7487. If adequately shortened, would that remove your grievance or not?—That is only a grievance applicable to houses let by the year. There is a still further grievance, that we object to being compelled to take a house for a whole year.

7488. That is to say, you have the further grievance of the long lets?—Yes.

7489. Have these questions been considered by the Council as a whole?—During the whole period that I have been on the Council, it has been a sort of a hardy annual. It usually came up in Council business in the shape of remits from Glasgow, Aberdeen, or Dundee Trades Councils. Any business of that kind is usually sent in a circular letter, and if any particular Trades Council takes up a question the others follow suit, and consider it. The result is that at certain periods of the year the question has always been before the Council.

7490. And in the conclusions you have come to, have you been unanimous, or has there been difference of opinion?—I have not heard a difference of opinion raised to the position laid down in the evidence lodged.

7491. What number of persons do you ever get at a Council meeting?—Our Council consists of about 115 members or so, and our average attendance within the last year was somewhere about 60.

7492. Have you petitioned any bodies in favour of shorter lets?—The Council have, but it was previous to the time I became Secretary. I have only been Secretary for one year.

7493. What body did they petition?—They have sent letters to the Government in connection with the matter. I am not sure about the Town Council, but I think they have communicated with the Town Council. They have always recognised that the Town Council had no real power in the matter of solving the difficulty.

7494. When we talk of short lets, what is the period your Council point to as desirable?—We consider that a month is quite long enough. Of course, while we say a month, we don't intend to give up our house every month, any more than giving it up every year. I may have a house for twenty years, but we consider it would meet the conditions of life and employment if the lets were monthly.

7495 And of course, if you don't get a month, anything else within the year would be to the good?—We will take what we can get, but we ask what we consider is necessary.

7496. Your opinion is that, out of 75,000 habitable houses in Edinburgh or so, nearly 50,000 are under £20 rent, and therefore that number will be affected by any alteration in the law of house letting?—Yes, that is the estimate we have arrived at by information we have supplied in Dr Littlejohn's report. We have not access to the Assessor's books, and had to take it second-hand from Dr Littlejohn's report.

7497. Of course a certain number of these, viz., the cheapest houses of all, are already on short let, so that it will be the difference between the 50,000 and the number already on short lets which would be affected by the Bill?—Yes.

7498. It has been said that while it is quite proper to have a certain number of short lets, there is already a sufficient number of these to satisfy all reasonable demands. What do you say to that?—A sufficient number of short lets to satisfy the demand of those who want short lets?

7499. Yes, that is said against you?—It is not correct. We know from our discussions in the Council with various Unions that we have not heard an objection to the shorter let. They have been unanimous in the opinion that they would have taken work elsewhere, but for the fact that they were bound to keep on the houses for a whole year.

7500. Of course these are men who are in a better class of houses, and therefore not of the improvident order?—Men who are thrown out of work through no fault of their own, through want of employment, dull trade, or periodic depression which takes place during each year. These all tend to throw men out of work, and very often they have an opportunity of taking a job in the country for three or six

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months, as the case may be. I can give you an illustration in my own case. In the country, the wages are usually smaller than in the city. Three years ago I was offered work in Kirkcaldy. The wages in Edinburgh are 32s.

7501. What is your business?—I am a compositor.

7502. (*To Mr Allan.*) What are you?—The same.

(*Mr Hamilton.*) The wages in Edinburgh are 32s., and in the country districts, or outside of Edinburgh, they are always less. In Kirkcaldy at that time they were 27s. I was sent over there from our Society to fill a job, and I found when I reached there that I had to take board and lodging for 12s. a week; another shilling was laid out in a variety of ways. It cost me 13s. to keep me there a week, so that I had only 13s. or 14s. to send home to keep my family and pay rent and taxes.

7503. What was your rent here?—£14.

7504. (*To Mr Allan.*) What is your rent here?—£10.

(*Mr Hamilton.*) I found it was impossible to continue in the job, and to carry on the house here, as I was bound to keep the house for a whole year, and after four weeks' trial I had to give it up, although I was to have got work in Kirkcaldy for six months, or perhaps longer. From my point of view, we may say that not only are the workmen injured, but the employers in these smaller districts, when anything abnormal happens in the way of work.

7505. In that case you never had occasion to go near the factor at all?—To go near my factor in Edinburgh with regard to giving up the house?

7506. Yes?—No, we knew there was no use going.

7507. You see it is said that the factors are able to give evidence on the whole question of removal. Now is it the case, as you have illustrated by your own, that there are a good many cases where the factors never hear of the thing because the man does not go near him?—No, he knows from past experience that the factor won't protect him. If he does, you have to pay a penalty for breaking the contract with him, and in addition to that guarantee him a suitable tenant.

7508. Now, do you think there is a considerable number of cases in that way that the factors never hear of, cases which involve hardship and a grievance?—Yes, there are ten to one.

7509. So that we cannot merely take the statistics of actual sublets, for instance, as showing the extent of the grievance?—No, these are only the parties who find themselves so hard pressed with their affairs that they are obliged to plead with the factors or else who are ignorant of the law.

7510. If it be the fact that what we call the improvident are generally housed in the cheaper class of houses already on short lets, of course the grievance is not in their case, but in the case of the better class working men who are in the yearly houses?—The grievance also would apply to what you might term the improvident—that is to say, those who are not earning very high wages, forcing them to live in a house with a small rent. Drunkenness, what you refer to as improvidence, is more common among people who live in the cheaper houses, but we also find that the wages they receive are more in accordance with the rent they pay.

7511. But those who are in cheaper houses are already, are they not, in houses that are on the short let?—Some of them only. There are houses from this point upwards that are yearly lets, and there are many of what you might term the improvident who live in £6, £7, £8, £9, and even £10 houses.

7512. If there were feeling of grievance, and no real feeling of demand for a change, I suppose you would not expect on the part of the better class of working men that they would be very much concerned merely for the improvident and shifting class. It is the feeling of grievance on their own part?—They do find it a grievance on their own part, but, even if it were not, if the man who is improvident found that it interfered with his moving about and obtaining employment, or following his employment, the Trade Union element would certainly support his case also.

7513. Do you think there is a real grievance on the part of the better class?—All sections of the workers; and by the working classes, which of course is an indefinite phrase, I mean the men who live upon weekly wages.

7514. Does the extent of a grievance to a certain extent depend on whether the nature of the employment is shifting or not?—Well, in an average of cases I am not sure; but the joiners, masons, etc., have certain times when they are bound to be thrown out of employment, and if they possibly can get work elsewhere they do get it, and there is always a certainty that in some trade or another there is a depression takes place that is unusual, and cannot be foreseen, and of necessity they are forced, when they cannot get work in the city, to try elsewhere.

7515. But your trade, I suppose, as compared with some others, is a steady and non-shifting employment?—No, we have our periods of depression also.

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7516. Take it apart from the periods of depression, your business is of a steady nature as compared with the ship-building, for instance, and trades of that kind?—Yes.

7517. So that you would expect, I suppose, that there might be other trades that would feel the grievance even more than yours?—A great deal more.

7518. I quite understand that in cases of depression it will affect any trade?—Any trade.

7519. And even occur periodically?—Yes. It is almost certain at a given time of the year that depression will take place, but in the printing trade at the present time, as far as the compositors are concerned, it is to-day in a very depressed condition. We paid out-of-work money last week to 105 members of the Union who were eligible. There is a large number not eligible, and, in addition to that, a number outside of the Union whom we have no knowledge of. I reckon at the present time that there are fully 300 compositors who are unemployed in Edinburgh. They may have their names down in a workshop as being employed there, but there is no work for them.

7520. Do men in your trade, when they shift, do so generally for a permanent shift, or might they go for temporary work elsewhere?—The majority of cases when they do leave the city they leave it altogether, but in many many instances they take work for three, four, or six months. Perhaps a job may last a year outside.

7521. What kind of place would they go to, Glasgow?—Well, Glasgow: they will go to Broxburn or Tranent, or some of the towns in Fife, such as Kirkcaldy or Dunfermline.

7522. As compositors?—Yes.

7523. Do they go to England at all?—Yes, but when they do go there they have got a long preparation.

7524. And that is a permanent job?—Yes, it is not forced upon them all at once.

7525. They know what is coming?—Yes.

7526. Suppose that a man in Edinburgh gets a job in a different part of the town, he does not want to move his house then?—It is sometimes for his benefit if he could shift it.

7527. But are not the facilities for travelling such that he would rather remain and travel?—Not if his work is likely to continue for a good length of time. He may have been for four or five years in some employment, and have to leave it, and the next job he gets may be in some other part of the city, and he is bound down to keep the house.

7528. Suppose a man was working in R. & R. Clark's, and got employment at Nelson's, what would he do then?—If his house was suitable for Clark's, he would of necessity have to carry his dinner or pay for car fares.

7529. What would the car fare be from Canonmills to St Leonards?—2d. each way,—about 1s. 10d. a week.

(*Mr Allan.*) We are certain it would be profitable for a man to shift his house, for after all, in addition to the car fares, it is more expensive for a man to carry his dinner.

7530. (*Chairman to Mr Allan.*) Why?—If he were at home his wife would make the dinner for the family much cheaper than she can make it for the man to carry, and even if he gets dinner at a restaurant it is much dearer, so that, even all round in a city like Edinburgh, and the case you cite is common enough, it would be very profitable to shift your house rather than pay your extra car fare and dine out, or carry your meals, which after all is unsatisfactory.

7531. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) Are these about the extreme distances between any printing works in Edinburgh?—Edinburgh and Leith are so closely connected that it is quite common for a man to reside in Edinburgh and get work in Leith.

(*Mr Allan.*) And the city extends further the other way, west to east.

7532. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) Have you known cases of men being offered better employment elsewhere in the country or town who have had to refuse employment?—We can only speak of our own particular trade in that respect, but there are a variety of instances where men have refused work simply because it was too far from where they were staying.

7533. And in cases employers on their side might suffer from not being able to get the men they wanted?—They certainly do.

(*Mr Allan.*) Hardly in the city of Edinburgh, but in the towns near Edinburgh it has repeatedly been the case that they could not get the men to come to the smaller towns, and were forced to pay overtime, which involves greater work and outlay of money.

7534. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) You have spoken of the drawbacks: are there any counter-balancing advantages, especially in the way of the man being secured for a whole year?—He is not secured, any more than he would be if it

were a month. He may take a house for a year, but it does not follow that the landlord turns him out at the end of the year. If he is a suitable tenant he may be there for twenty years, and even if the letting term was a month or three months, if he is a suitable tenant it does not follow that he is going to shift for three months. As long as he is a suitable tenant he may be there for years.

7535. He has sufficient security, in short, without that?—In his own good character and ability to pay his way.

7536. (*To Mr Allan.*) It is suggested that he has an advantage, let us say in the case of a strike, that he cannot be put out, and has a house over his head whatever happens. What do you say to that argument?—If his quarterly let is not paid, of course he cannot be put out, so I do not see where the security comes in.

7537. But I suppose you take the view that other working men take, that, so far as working men are living in their employer's house, the employer ought not to be able during a dispute to put them out?—No, provided of course the rent is paid. Of course there are cases where the employer has power to turn him out. They are practically living in the employer's house, as it were, in the mining districts.

(*Mr Hamilton.*) But it does not apply to Edinburgh.

7538. (*Chairman to Mr Hamilton.*) Are there any cases in Edinburgh?—None within the city of Edinburgh that I am aware of.

7539. Of any trade?—Of any trade, unless of course it be gate-keepers and others.

7540. You say something here, on page 3, about the system of yearly lets, resulting in removals being timed for one day of the year, being objected to because, first, of the necessity of having to vacate a house by 12 o'clock in the day, and only being able to obtain entry to the new house at the same hour costs much anxiety, inconvenience, and expense. You mean you would like to see more than one removal term spread over the year?—Yes, so that we might not be so much pressed for time. There is a great deal of competition on the removal day—28th May—in order to obtain the means of removal. I have known, in my own case again, that I have had a lorry ordered for 11 o'clock forenoon, and we had to vacate the house by 12. We had the lorry ordered for 11 o'clock, in order to have everything out of the house ready for the new tenant coming in. We put the furniture on the street—that is the usual custom—and owing to the pressure of work, and number of engagements the contractor had taken on, and some of them taking longer than he expected, it was 4 o'clock in the afternoon before he turned up. That occurred when I went into my present house three years ago. My furniture was lying in the street. Fortunately, it was a dry day; if it had been a wet day there would have been serious damage.

7541. That was not due to the man's own fault, but to over-pressure?—To unforeseen circumstances in connection with the removals, and, in addition to that, the scarcity of the vehicles used in removals was such that it was exceedingly difficult to get a man to engage who had no other engagements on that particular day. They were all required at the same time.

7542. In addition to that inconvenience, does it increase the expense of removal?—Undoubtedly.

7543. Why should that be?—You will get a lorry for about 1s. 6d. or so at an ordinary time, and the same class of vehicle on term day will cost you about 3s. an hour. It is an increase of 100 per cent.

7544. Suppose you are removing in Edinburgh from one part of the town to another. Roughly speaking, what would the removal cost you?—Taking into account not only the cost of the vehicle but the men and other matters, it would cost me from 12s. to 15s.

7545. The other point is the question of the rates. What is the view of working men and of your Council in particular in reference to the proposal that the landlords should collect the occupier's rates?—There are a variety of ideas in connection with it. We believe, for instance, that there are many people who escape payment of rates by removing prior to the time the rates are due, and others who obtain relief from the rates on the score that they are unable to pay the rates owing to the large sum demanded of them. We believe if those people were called upon at various periods of the year to pay a proportion of the rates, on the whole a larger total sum of rates would be paid by the same individuals, and also by the general body, to the local authority. For instance, if a man is in a £12 house, and the rates run perhaps from £1, 1s. or so, if that is spread over four periods, or even over twelve, it is much easier for him to pay the small sum than the large sum. Of course, if he were very steady—the majority of them are—but if he looks forward he can easily put by a sum every week. But they are not all built that way, and the result is that, even with the most careful, it is always a burden to look forward to keeping that sum intact and ready for the annual disbursement of it.

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7546. So you think a larger amount would be got if the collection was at frequent periods?—Yes, even in the case of those who get relief owing to poverty, and that a large proportion of what they get relieved of would be paid, because in the winter time, when they plead poverty, or immediately after it, they are less able to pay the rates than at other periods of the year, and if it were taken in proportion, as they paid rent during the year, they would at any rate get that proportion during the time they paid the rent, and at other periods when trade was dull, when they usually do pay rent at the present time, they might get an abatement. But on the whole I consider the total sum contributed to the local authority would be much larger.

7547. If a system of frequent collections were made, would it matter to the working man if the collection was by the rating authority direct or by the landlords?—I do not see that it matters much to them. Personally, I have no objection. It does not matter who draws the taxes, as long as I have to pay them.

7548. And as long as they are collected at convenient intervals?—Undoubtedly.

7549. Suppose the system of collection by the authorities were found impracticable at frequent intervals, would it induce, do you think, any friction between the landlords and the tenants if the landlords were to collect the rates?—If the local authority found it impracticable?

7550. Yes, if it were found impracticable for the local authority to collect frequently, and the system of the landlords collecting were resorted to, would that induce friction?—I think through time it would come to be recognised as part of the rent of the house. If the landlord had to make a demand for rent, say monthly or quarterly, and stipulated that a certain proportion of rates was due by you, you would always look forward to say 5s. of rate and 25s. of rent, or whatever it is, as 30s. to pay as rent. It would come to be looked upon in that light.

7551. It is suggested that if the landlords collected, the tenants ought to know what rates they are paying, and there should be a separation in that respect. Do you approve of that?—Yes, it is necessary not only for that, but to induce the tenants to take an interest in public affairs. If they had no knowledge of what it had cost them for the administration of public affairs, they might be inclined to be rather lax in their attitude towards public questions and go in for heavy expenditure if they were not aware of how much it cost them.

7552. Some of the factors, while quite admitting that, say that it would introduce a practical difficulty. They could get in a slump sum, as rent, the total money well enough; if it were divided up, some of the tenants would object to the landlord collecting rates, which he has nothing to do with. Do you think that would only be at first, before the system settled down?—I don't think there would be any such objection at all, if it were recognised as being the law, and the landlord's right and duty. The people would fall in with it.

7553. You know that in England there is no separation, where the system is said to work well. It is all charged as rent, and you never know what you are doing?—Yes, that is what I am saying would be the difficulty of the alteration. It would gradually come to be recognised as rent, but by giving separate receipts the tenant would always be aware of what is rent and what is taxes.

7554. You think for the reasons that you have alleged that would be desirable?—Yes.

7555. Is it your view that the present system of relief on the ground of poverty should be continued and works well?—Yes, I think it ought. I think any one who is unable to pay ought to have an opportunity of not paying, if they can prove that they are not able to pay.

7556. Subject to what you have said, that you think the frequent collection would enable people to pay who now get off?—It would gradually reduce their number at the period of the year when they have anything to pay.

(*Mr Allan.*) There is no question in our minds about the ability to pay rates at shorter intervals. In Edinburgh it has always been felt as a very great grievance among the working classes that all your rates and taxes come in at the worst time of the year. In putting forward candidates for Parish Council and Town Council, they have always advocated as part of their programme that the two authorities should combine for collecting purposes, and they could easily institute a system of taking the rates before in instalments.

7557. The two instalments being the part of the Parish Council?—Yes, they could combine to collect the rates, and they could easily, it was put forward, have a system of coupons introduced, so that they could pay up rates quarterly, and the tenant could get a receipt.

The rates and taxes just come in in November and

December, to be paid in January, which is the worst period of the year for employment and everything else, because the working class expenses are very heavy. We are quite convinced that if it is spread over a year by a system of monthly or quarterly lets, the rating authorities will undoubtedly get more in the shape of rates than they do just now, because the poorer class find it very difficult to save. The smaller wage, the more easy the payment should be made.

7558. (*Chairman to Mr Allan.*) Is it your view that, if it is found to be practicable, it would be better that the rating authority should make frequent collections, say quarterly, direct, rather than go in for compounding with the landlords?—No, I would not say that; I would rather pay my rates along with my rent, as proposed in the Bill; but, failing that, the payment by instalments on the part of the rating authorities would still be a good thing.

7559. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) If a system of short lets and the compounding of rates has been proved successful in England, and the difficulties which it is alleged will arise in Scotland if these things are enacted have not been found there: suppose that is so, do you see any risk in the conditions of Scotland to apprehend a different result in Scotland?—No, I consider the conditions of life are similar amongst those of my own trade or any other; joiners, masons, or any other trade that I know anything about. The conditions of life in England are much the same as they are in Scotland.

7560. If that is so, and it has come about in England without a statute, why should we need a statute in Scotland?—Because it has not come about without one.

7561. But does not that rather point to there being something different in the conditions of life here that has prevented the same system operating in the two countries?—No, it was originally due perhaps to the existence of some statute that has ceased to exist. I don't know. It is not that the conditions of life are different.

7562. We have been hearing to-day much about the question of cautioners' lines in yearly lets. Of course, if you had yearly lets abolished, that difficulty would disappear?—I consider it would disappear, because the landlord at the present time has his right of hypothec for the recovery of arrears of rent. In Edinburgh, he insists in addition upon having the additional security in the shape of a guarantee by another individual that he will pay or see paid the whole year's rent, and they have often been known—as a rule, in fact, they refuse the money in advance, and insist upon a cautioner's line.

7563. Is that found to be a practical grievance in certain cases?—It is a great grievance, and a very important one.

7564. In what class of cases? Would these be strangers coming from other towns?—Not only strangers, but any ordinary artisan who has any respect for himself does not care about asking his friends to go security for him if he has the money himself.

7565. And his friends are put in an awkward position, not liking to refuse?—In addition to that, if he comes down they come along with him.

7566. The working man does not like to ask it, of course?—No, it goes against the grain somewhat. There are those who will ask more than they will get, but on the average I think they object to getting obligements from their fellow citizens, when they can meet their obligations themselves.

7567. You say that the abolition of the yearly let would cure that. You notice that, under Mr Cross's Bill, you may still have half-yearly lets, because there are payments half-yearly. Do you think the cautioner's line would not be asked in the case of half-yearly lets?—No, I did not say it is the exact reason for the introduction, but the cautioner's line is introduced, in my opinion, because, while you may be quite able to pay the first quarter, if your house rent is payable quarterly, in advance, all is right, but that is no guarantee that you will be able to pay the second, third, and fourth quarters. In order to safeguard himself, in addition to his right of hypothec, this system of cautioner's line has been introduced by the landlord. I can easily understand if the term of let coincides with the payment of the rent that there would be no necessity for the cautioner. The landlord would simply demand the money in advance. He would take what he refuses now, and that would result in the abolition of the system of caution.

7568. Apparently this grievance of the system of cautioners is more in Edinburgh than in Glasgow. We heard very little about it at Glasgow?—I know of strangers coming from England and other parts of Scotland who have always been shocked.

(*Mr Allan.*) I understand, in speaking with people coming from different parts of Scotland, that the system more obtains in Edinburgh than in any other part of Scotland, especially Glasgow. In Glasgow it is quite common to accept a receipt for your last rent as caution, but here the factors insist most strongly on a cautioner. I know of people who have come to town and have simply been bluntly refused, even though they pleaded that they had no friends, and it is quite the custom of factors to demand the cautioner for one year. They demand it every year. I believe that is one of the best things in the Bill, because it would abolish this cautioner's line, which is a vexation.

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7569. (*Chairman to Mr Allan.*) I know it has been a grievance for long in Edinburgh.—For instance, when you put in your caution they consider it on their part a right and proper thing to go themselves, or send to the cautioner and size up the man's furniture to see if he has enough in his house, and if they think his furniture would not cover it, they won't accept him as cautioner. You see, the working classes keenly resent that, and in a score of different ways the cautioner system is bad.

7570. So that would be a direct benefit which would result from such a measure?—Yes.

7571. And an important one?—Yes.

7572. Do you agree, gentlemen, in what we have heard a great deal of evidence about, its being desirable to get rid of the extreme pressure of work in the building trades usually experienced near the May term?

(*Mr Allan.*) Yes, we would rather see it spread over a year.

7572*a*. That does not affect your own business, but it is the experience you have?

(*Mr Hamilton.*) The joiners had a strike in Edinburgh on account of this extraordinary state of affairs. They wished to have their agreement entered upon about this period of the year, when work was brisk, and the employers had not them at their mercy. The employers knew this difficulty, and knew that the workers had the best part of the making of the bargain, and resented the agreement being made about the term time. The result was a strike. Unfortunately the men did not win, but that strike was a direct outcome of the system of yearly lets, and trying to get houses ready for the May term.

7573. (*Chairman to Mr Hamilton.*) The only other point is, Mr Hamilton, what do your Council think about the proposal in the Bill to make the adoption of the proposed Act optional?—We think it would be a benefit to Edinburgh if it were optional if Edinburgh adopted it, but there are a variety of reasons why we think it should be compulsory all over. The instance I gave you in regard to Kirkcaldy shows that. We might give up our house here, but not be able to get a house in the place we go to, and, in addition to that, the compulsory aspect of it is this, that in Edinburgh at any rate—this is rather a one-sided view of the case I am going to state—most of the people who have the arriving at decisions in regard to whether these laws shall be adopted or not, that is the members of the Town Council themselves, are property owners and many of them house factors, and if they are opposed to this Bill, and it is optional, it will need a lot of pressure on the part of the citizens to make the Town Council of Edinburgh adopt a Bill which they would find against their own interests.

7574. If Leith, for instance, adopted it, and Edinburgh did not, that would be rather an awkward state of matters?—You could not remove to Leith. If there is an urgent demand for it on the part of the working classes, why was there not more heard of it at Town Council election times at the ward meetings?—It is always heard.

7575. We were told by Town Councillors that it was not brought up to them. Have you had any experience of that?—Yes, I was a candidate at the last November election.

7576. Where for?—Canongate Ward.

7577. Have you heard it brought forward?—At every meeting held by me in a hall, this question of the missive and letting system was bronght forward.

7578. In the short let side of it as well as the other?—The whole question in regard to missives and short lets in view of this Bill.

7579. Was it brought forward by working men?—By members of the Trades Council who happened to be residing in the ward. It was raised at all the hall meetings. I heard a statement made with regard to Mr Brown, but the ward he was engaged in was a ward of a different character, where the same grievance does not exist to the same extent.

7580. What do you say to this question? Assume that there is a grievance both in Glasgow and Edinburgh, would you agree that it would be more likely to be felt in Glasgow than in Edinburgh?—Well, from what I know of Glasgow and Edinburgh, I consider that amongst the working classes it wonld be more felt in Glasgow.

(*Mr Allan.*) On the other hand, the community of Glasgow being so largely industrial, it might be more voiced there, though it remained here the same among the working classes, the population not being so large relatively among the working classes, and the control of the city being so largely in the hands of the professional and shop-keeping classes.

7581. (*Mr Howden to Mr Hamilton.*) Has your Council ever used any coercion on members of Trades Union to prevent them doing anything in the way of petitioning against this Bill?—No, there is no system of coercion I know that we could use.

7582. The reason I ask is that one member in the House Factors' Association came here to-day, and said he was unable to obtain signatures because they were afraid of the Trades Unions?—We have never heard a single objection, either public or private, from members of the working class, Trade Unionists or otherwise, against this proposal.

7583. I suppose you could easily get up signatures yourselves, if you cared, for the abolition of this?—You can get up signatures for anything.

7584. What percentage of skilled artisans are out of employment in Edinburgh?—I could not tell you the percentage, but I know, with regard to my own trade, I was speaking to the keeper of our call-house, who said that last week we paid out-of-work money to 105 men. That out-of-work money is only payable for six weeks out of every thirteen. After having drawn the six weeks they may be out of work, but we have no record of any money being disbursed, they not being entitled to it, and he stated the number who actually drew last week at 105. There were as many more who were idle, Trade Unionists who were not entitled to draw. In addition there are a large number outside of the Trades Unions also idle, and I may safely say that, with regard to my own trade, there are fully 300 unemployed at the present time.

7585. These figures Mr Brown gave us about the great number of unemployed in the city could not have been correct, when he said there was slightly over a thousand men unemployed at the present time. My point is this, that a considerable section of skilled artisans are out of a job at the present time?—A considerable section, and if you are taking the Distress Committee record, the ordinary artisan does not sign the Distress Committee's record at all.

(*Mr Allan.*) The Distress Committee's record cannot be taken as a record at all of the unemployed in the city, because there is no inducement for the unemployed to sign there. All hope entertained by the unemployed has faded away there. It is only people who are claiming relief who go there. It is absolutely preposterous to take that as a record of the unemployed in the city of Edinburgh.

7586. (*Mr Howden to Mr Hamilton.*) What attitude does your Council adopt towards hypothec?—We are in favour of its abolition. We see no reason why the landlord should have a prior right over other people to take possession of your furniture. We think he ought to be on exactly the same footing, because there is a great deal of ignorance amongst the working classes as to the method that has to be adopted and put into operation with regard to this hypothec. Practically what I can understand all over the town, once the landlord finds the rent is in arrears the tenant has it in his mind that all the landlord has to do is simply to serve him with a summons or warrant notice that he is going to poind on a certain day. The tenant stands by and lets it be done. We consider if it were abolished in so far as dwelling houses are concerned, the landlord would be compelled to summon the tenant to the Court, and the sheriff or the magistrate, as the case may be, would hear the whole circumstances. I do not know if that is the actual state of the law at present or not, but that is the general impression among the workers. It is necessary to have him put on the same footing as an ordinary individual to whom money was due. He would have to summons, and in all likelihood the circumstances in which he is placed would be placed before the sheriff or magistrate, and he would get either time to pay or an agreement to pay up arrears by instalments. At present he allows himself to be made a victim of the house factor, because of his ignorance on this house matter.

7587. Can you tell us how much they realise for these forced sales of furniture. Anything like the value of the furniture?—I don't know; I have not had any experience. I know that in many cases they refrain from poinding because there is not furniture of sufficient value to make up the rent.

7588. It has been suggested to this Committee that there should be an Act on the lines of the Homestead Act in America, which would make the tenants' goods exempt from poinding by any creditor up to a certain specified sum.

7589. Do you agree with that?—Undoubtedly.

7590. (*To Mr Allan.*) Do you, Mr Allan?—Yes.

7591. Can you suggest any sum?—I should fancy about £15 or so.

7592. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) And you, Mr Hamilton?—I have no thought of it.

7593. It has been suggested to us that while tenants should have the right to leave their houses on a month's notice as long as he pays their rent, and does not disturb the neighbourhood or damage the property, he should have a security of tenure with the right of leaving at a month's notice if he cared?—He has that.

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7594. That he should have the right. Do you understand this claim for security of tenure; so long as he pays rent, and does not destroy the property, it does not give the landlord the right to turn him out?—I don't understand the point. If you mean that some outside influence was brought to bear on the landlord, such as a strike, political prejudice, or anything of that kind, and not to have the right to eject the tenant so long as he fulfils the other requirements. These extraneous questions ought not to be allowed to make an excuse for depriving him of his house.

7595. You think there would be nothing unreasonable in a proposal like that?—No, no more than dismissing from his employment because of something of the same kind.

7596. (*Mr Cox to Mr Hamilton.*) I would like your opinion on this point. Landlords say to us—there are two sides to every question—"We have spent our money in 'building houses, and we should not be compelled to let 'them in a way which is distinctly to our disadvantage. 'If we are to be compelled to let these houses on very 'short lets they will deteriorate very rapidly, and our 'property will be spoiled." I wish you to tell the Court what you think about that?—I don't think the fact that a man pays his rent by the month, by the quarter, or even by the week, is an inducement to destroy the property.

7597. They know, however, and they say that the object of the Bill is to let the tenants change more frequently, and that the result of that would be damage to the property?—I see no necessity for them changing any more frequently than they do, with the exception of change of employment necessitating change of residence.

7598. Do you think this change in the law would not lead to more frequent changes?—It would lead to more frequent changes for the benefit of the tenant, but which he is unable to take advantage of at the present time, but not to such an extent as would seriously damage the property. If you had a house by the month or the quarter it would be folly if you were going to leave every three months.

7599. The changes were stated to us to be 2 to 3 per cent. just now?—Of the total number of tenants?

7600. Yes, yearly or half-yearly tenants?—Well, many of those who do change within a year or a half year would undoubtedly change at the quarter, but that would not damage property that I am aware of. We have the interests of the tenant to consider as well as the interests of the landlord, and it is on the score of the interests of the tenant that we are advising this change, not altogether in the interests of the landlord.

7601. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In regard to fixity of tenure, the difficulty of course is no doubt apparent to you. If the fixity of tenure requires some machinery for dealing with rent, have you the view that the rent once fixed for a dwelling house should be the same sum in perpetuity?—That is a big question; I don't think it comes under it. I think we ought to have a fixity of rent; that the rent ought to remain the same. On the other hand, we meet with the difficulty that if that is so, the landlords would of necessity be forced to reduce rents in localities where they find for some reason or other there is no demand for the houses. That is the result of the operation of the law of supply and demand, so that I hardly think it is capable of being put into operation on one side without any regard to the other side. You cannot compel the tenant to stay in a certain district and pay what is recognised as a fair rent. If the landlord finds there is difficulty in letting his houses, he is thereby induced to let them for less rent. The idea is whether there should be a court to fix a sum beyond which the rent should not go.

7602. Mr Smillie was suggesting this, very truly I think, that it involved the institution of a Land Court to fix rents?—But that is fixing the maximum. I understand exactly the point, and I agree that when the law of supply and demand operates to such an extent where there is a great demand for houses in a given district, with a limited supply of them, the house agent and proprietor take advantage of that demand to increase the rent.

7603. You wish fixity of tenure, with a tribunal to whom you could go and say, "I want my rent re-arranged"?—Yes.

7604. Short of that, I suppose that if the suggestion of another witness was given effect to, that the present yearly lets might continue, but that the tenants might have the option to leave on say a month's notice or quarterly or six-monthly, in fact that there might be a compromise between the present system and this suggested fixity of tenure, giving the tenants the option of giving a month's notice to leave at any time during the year?—Yes, that is what we want; it would not be a yearly let.

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7605. It would as against the landlord?—In so far as the tenant was concerned, he would demand leave to occupy for a year; but in so far as the tenant's obligation to the landlord was concerned, it would be granting the demand of the tenant to be able to leave at a month's notice to suit his convenience.

7606. That was the evident suggestion of a well-known authority for the Police Government, Provost Keith of Hamilton. Another point, are there any improvements effected in burghal subjects by a tenant. I suppose in no cases in Edinburgh?—Yes, but they are more of an ornamental character than a vegetable garden.

7607. Are there cases of tenants who have spent money in the improvement of their houses having got notice to quit?—I have heard repeatedly instances given of where working men had so improved the inside appearance of their houses that it presented a better appearance. They had perhaps improved the appearance of the entrance door and painted the walls and carried out various improvements here and there, decorating it up and making it a grander-looking house compared with the other houses, and in this case the landlord has actually demanded a higher rent on the score that the house was more valuable.

7608. From the successor of this tenant who did the work?—Yes, but instances of that kind are not very common.

7609. To go back to hypothec for a moment. English practice, we are told, is that there must be effects left to the value of £5, and that wearing apparel and tools cannot be attached. I suppose, assuming we don't get the ideal reform you indicate, that the putting of the law of hypothec upon the same footing as the English law in regard to these matters, namely, that the tools and clothing are exempted from attachment, and that there must be at least £5 of furniture left, would be in your view a step in the right direction?—If they give us up to £5 of furniture, I think it is a fair proposal, and I agree with it. I see no reason why they should have the right to seize clothing and tools.

7610. We have been told repeatedly that hypothec is of no practical value to landlords, but that it is to protect the tenant's effects from attachment by ordinary creditors, and that it exists in the interests of the tenants?—So far as I understand, it cannot prevent ordinary creditors from taking advantage of the possessions of the tenants, unless there is also an order made for arrears of rent on behalf of the landlord himself.

7611. The law is shortly this, that if an ordinary creditor, say a grocer or butcher, having decree against the debtor, attaches the furniture of this debtor, although he only gets a few shillings, he thereby becomes liable, according to one view of the law, for the whole of the rent of the current year, at all events that is acted upon, and creditors are debarred from attaching the furniture, and give the debtor time during the expiry of six months to quit or pay the rent, and the future rent again comes under protection against new action on the part of any other creditor. Do you think there is anything substantial, that it is in the interests of the tenant?—No, I cannot see what benefit the tenant gets from it at all.

7612. You would rather have it that he should be sold up, subject to your view in favour of a limit, sold up equally by the landlord or by the ordinary creditor?—They ought to place both on the same footing, because if the ordinary creditor is unable to seize the furniture for a debt, the only other course is to take the possession of his wages, which is sometimes a far more serious thing than seizing the furniture.

7613. Above 20s.?—Yes.

7614. Your view and the view of the Council is that this proposed measure should apply all over Scotland and country districts as well as burghs?—Not to country districts where agricultural pursuits are carried on. I can easily see it would not work very well in connection with the dwelling houses where an agricultural servant was employed, or where you had a garden ground which had to be prepared and sowed at a specific period of the year.

7615. Exempt gardens, would you limit the Bill to what is called populous places?—It might apply all over.

(*Mr Allan.*) Our view of the matter was that it should apply all over, and in particular that it should not be optional.

7616. (*To Mr Allan.*) If it was not applied all over, you would have on the fringe of each town a great part of a country parish with tenement property next to the town property, and you would have the same condition of things as you were speaking of?—Just the same difficulty would crop up in leaving one place for another if the thing was optional.

7617. (*To Mr Hamilton.*) From your knowledge of your members and of the working class in Edinburgh, do you think houses of £20 may be fairly described as smaller dwellings occupied by the working classes?—Yes, I think in the vast majority. There are very very few exceptions to the rule that all the houses under £20 are working class dwellings. When I say working class dwellings, I mean houses of those who receive weekly incomes as contrasted with monthly or quarterly salaries.

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7618. We were told to-day that there are 28,000 houses in Edinburgh with rents between £10 and £20. If these houses were excluded from the benefit of any new Act, would that, in your view, be unsatisfactory?—It would be an unnecessary Act.

7619. Unless it applied above £10?—Yes, because at the present time there are many many houses—in fact all the houses that are let for less periods than a year are the houses under £10. I do not say they are all let for periods less than a year under £10, but under £10, at the present time, you can have them for less than yearly lets, but you would be excluding the vast majority of the working classes from the benefits of the Bill by limiting it to £10.

7620. With reference to what you told the Chairman in regard to the distinguishing of rates and rents, one practical difficulty indicated by the factors was this, that in making a let at the beginning of the year, it is impossible to know precisely what the amount of rates for the current year is to be, because usually they are not fixed until September or October. One remedy suggested is that the rates of the previous year might be taken?—That would have to be done, otherwise the Town Council in fixing their assessments could fix them at a different period of the year.

7621. But wouldn't it be material whether the payment made by the tenant was referable to the current year or the previous year?—No, it is only a question of a few coppers or a few shillings at the most, and any surplus could be refunded.

7622. The factors told us it would practically be impossible to collect two sums monthly, that what would happen, as you indicate, is that there would be one payment got from the tenant every month, and every quarter, and that it would be hopeless to distinguish how much of that was rate and how much rent. Would it meet your objection if annually every voter or occupier in a burgh received a statement from the Corporation of the current amount of each assessment levied by the Corporation—that is, if he paid a slump sum for rent and rates, but annually got a statement from the Treasurer of the town showing what, for that year, the respective rates per £ came to?—You are taking it for granted that he has occupied the same house for the whole year.

7623. I am taking it for granted that his name is on the Assessment Roll as occupier. It is made up once a year.—I consider that if a receipt for the proportion of the taxes is given along with the receipt for rent that he pays, those could be used as guarantees that he has paid taxes for a particular period.

7624. The factors say they cannot do that?—I see no difficulty.

7625. Taking the case of the water rate at present paid they say that they get a fixed sum monthly or quarterly, and if that sum may be £6, say about 6s. is water rate and £5, 14s. rent. They simply get £6 spread over twelve monthly payments, and they say that they could not distinguish how much precisely in each 10s. there was of rate and rent. At least they never do, and the difficulty would be aggravated. Would it not be the duty of every man to know? Would it not meet your difficulty if by some means each occupier had it brought home to him what the annual assessment came to, leaving him to make one payment of rents and rates to his landlord?

(*Mr Allan.*) That, to me, would be quite satisfactory. The tenant would receive from the Treasurer of the town a receipt for the monies paid by his landlord during the year, which would be to him a receipt of the sum.

(*Mr Hamilton.*) If he had already paid his proportion.

7626. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Hamilton.*) As I take it, your one object is that there must be in some way brought home to the ratepayers what the expenses are for the government of the burgh. So long as he knows what the rates are, you will leave it to the others to determine how that is to be collected along with the rent?—Yes, it is necessary that should be done for the benefit of the general public.

7627. (*Mr Binnie.*) The house factors have told us that they are very much afraid that if the practice of letting monthly became common, the character of their properties would be deteriorated. Now, I suppose it is a fact that many of the monthly tenants in Edinburgh are very undesirable?—Very undesirable, many of them.

7628. That is all that I say, many of them are undesirable?—Not because they pay the rent by the month.

7629. I am not saying that at all, but the undesirable tenants gravitate into becoming monthly tenants as a rule?—Yes, they cannot afford to save up the money to pay by the quarter.

7630. What I think was present to the minds of the factors was this, that they would not be able to exclude by

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careful watching these undesirable tenants from getting in among the better class of tenants who at present are safe because they pay their rents quarterly or half-yearly. Do you think there is any fear of that? It is a tenant's question as well as a factor's question.—I don't think there is any fear of it, for the reason that, though you pay your rent quarterly or half-yearly, if your character is not good—you may be improvident and still pay it half-yearly—if the factor is aware that you are drunken or rowdy, even though you pay quarterly or half-yearly, he refuses to let you continue the house, and the same could prevail if you had a house by the month.

7631. But the factor cannot spend the same amount of time in inquiry about a tenant who is only taking the house for a month as he would if the tenant were taking it for a year, and evidently some of them are afraid that in that way undesirable tenants would get in among the desirable tenants and disturb them and spoil his property. Do you think there is any fear of that?—It is possible, but I don't think there is much probability of it.

7632. Then you said you thought a desirable thing would be to fix rents?—The maximum.

7633. That they should not go up beyond a certain rent?—No.

7634. Of course landlords only put up houses when they believe that the return from them would give them a certain interest on the amount they have cost?—No, they only put up a rent when they think they can get it.

7635. I mean they only erect houses when they believe that the rents will yield them a certain return on the money they cost?—Yes, undoubtedly.

7636. And if they found that in any way the return being got from property was less than a fair return, they would cease building and then there would be a scarcity of houses?—Yes.

7637. And there is no saying what might happen?—Yes.

7638. Landlords' taxes are always going up, you know that?—The landlords'?

7639. Landlords' taxes?—I am not aware of that. I know the tenants' go up in much the same proportion.

7640. In the same proportion, that is what I mean. Then the cost of repairs is constantly going up?—Yes, some of them.

7641. And then the requirements of the sanitary authorities are increasing?—Yes.

7642. So that there is an increased outlay on the property that grows year by year?—Yes.

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7643. Do you not think that a landlord is entitled to some consideration with this additional outlay put upon him?—Yes, if he can, but he gets up the rent whether that outlay comes or not It is not this outlay, this expense of the property, that induces him or enables him to get a higher rent for it; it is obtained regardless of these considerations.

7644. It is the increased demand?—Yes.

7645. And the increased demand always comes when building has been slack for some time and the population is growing?—If there was not a very great surplus prior to that.

7646. Yes, and that would be aggravated if landlords were afraid to build, because, by any law, they were prevented from raising their rents when they had a chance, don't you think?—Oh no, that would not prevent them so long as they could get a reasonable profit on the building. They have been building in Edinburgh, with no possibility of getting their houses let.

7647. I know that, but do you think any man would begin to erect a house if he did not expect to let it?—He expects the increase.

7648. He expects it to let?—Yes.

7649. He does not put it up for it to stand empty?—No, not for the benefit of the public.

7650. Well, do you not just think that would stop building if they found infrequency of lets?—No, I don't think so. The only question is, we are preventing him from taking undue advantage of the interests of the public. From his point of view as a commercial man he may be entitled to get as much as he possibly can, but there is the interest of those who have to make use of the house to be considered, and it is from their standpoint that I say we ought to fix a limit beyond which you are not to be allowed to raise a rent.

7651. Whatever the increase of taxes should be, or the increase of repairs or sanitary requirements?—That would all be taken into account in calculating the rent. If the annual expenditure and taxes amounted to a total sum, the Court might simply point out that there would be a certain rate of profit on that.

(*Chairman to Mr Binnie.*) It has been assumed all along that if you have fixity of tenure you must have a Land Court.

Mr W. Queen.

Mr William Queen, called and examined.

Mr W. Queen.

7652. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the Council of the Leith United Trades and Labour Council?—Yes.

7653. What is your relation to the Council that we have just had before us, the Edinburgh and District United Trades and Labour Council, are they not separate?—Quite separate; we were formed slightly over two years ago, in September 1904.

7654. Do you just include Leith itself?—Leith alone.

7655. What is your total membership?—About 2700.

7656. Have you representatives of all the different trades, some on monthly tenures, some on yearly tenures?—We have.

7657. Living in houses from the very small rent up to what?—Up to perhaps £15 or £20.

7658. You have heard, generally speaking, the evidence given by Mr Hamilton and Mr Allan?—Yes.

7659. Do you concur in the views they have expressed?—Mostly so.

7660. Does anything occur to you at the moment that you would like to express?—No, I don't think there is.

7661. Do you concur with them in thinking that the mere shortening of the period between the taking of the house and entering it would not remove the most substantial grievance that exists?—That is the signing of the missives. I think that along with that a shorter period of let is required.

7662. I understand that if you take working men who have already got short lets they have no grievance at all, have they, except in there being only one removal term, and everybody having to remove at once. That is the only grievance they have?—Quite.

7663. It is the people that are in the yearly lets that have the grievance?—Quite so.

7664. And it divides into two heads, the long time before entry and the length of tenure once they are in?—That is so.

7665. Have you found any difference of opinion among your 2700 members on this matter, or do they all hold with you?—Well, of course we don't come into touch with the 2700 members. Our council is composed of delegates sent from different Trades Union Associations, but from various discussions which have taken place at our Trades Council meetings from time to time, I feel that the opinion is quite unanimous.

7666. Your delegates have never reported any difference of opinion?—Not a single difference.

7667. Do you think, as far as Leith is concerned, you fairly represent on this matter all the working men of Leith, whether they belong to your Council or not?—Well, I believe we do.

7668. Then, in regard to the system of rates, do you agree in the view that it would be easier in a great many cases to pay the rate if it were collected more than once a year?—I think it would.

7669. And there is, in point of fact, just now a hardship under the present system, especially when you consider that the collection takes place at the worst time of the year?—That is so. People have to pay the whole rates at once.

7670. Is it your view that, if your 2700 members were polled, and they were asked their individual opinions, that practically the whole of them would go in for shorter lets?—I am of that opinion.

7671. Is it the general belief that shorter lets would not raise the rents?—I have never heard that opinion expressed.

7672. I suppose that might make a difference in the view that would be taken?—If that bogle was dangled it might possibly.

7673. You are prepared to take the risk of that?—I think so. As far as payment of the rates is concerned, have your people any opinion as to paying frequently to the Rating Authority, and frequently through the landlord, as to which they would prefer?—I am not aware that there is any pronounced opinion expressed regarding that and the point as to who the rates are to be paid to.

7674. But it is frequent payments that are wanted Quite.

7675. Do you think there is anything in the idea that payments to the landlord would introduce a great element of friction between the landlords and the factors and the tenants?—I think not.

7676. What is your own business?—I am Secretary of the Carters' Union.

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7677. And what is Mr Petrie, who was to have come here?—He is a ship-yard worker.

7678. You have all the other trades as well?—Yes.

7679. Have you yourself had occasion to observe the effect of the one removal term on the business of builders and others of that kind?—Yes.

7680. The high pressure at the time and the depression at the other?—That is so.

7681. Have any of your members, in your knowledge, had to refuse better jobs in other parts of the country owing to the fact of their being tied to a house in Leith?—I cannot say that I can recollect any specific instance, but there are many cases, if one had time to think them over.

7682. On the other hand, do you agree with Mr Hamilton and Mr Allan that while there are these drawbacks, there are no counter-balancing advantages in the present system?—I don't think so.

7683. None to you?—None, unless to the landlord.

7684. I see you say here that your Trades Council and the Leith Town Council and Mr Munro-Ferguson, M.P., are all in favour of an alteration on the lines you have just indicated. How have the Leith Town Council shown that?—By a motion passed at the Town Council meeting. I have the Town Council Minute here.

7685. Just read it, please?—It is rather long.

7686. Read the import of it?—It is dated July 3rd, 1906.

7687. Take the bit that sums it up. Do they refer to Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, it is the Bill particularly.

7688. What do they say about that Bill?—The Committee resolved not to appoint representatives to attend the Deputation to wait on the Secretary of Scotland, but passed a Resolution in favour of the principle of the Bill, with amendments to the following effect: first, so as to embrace poor and school rates in the same manner as the burgh rates under Section 9 of the Bill; second, giving power to the Council to grant relief from assessment in cases of poverty, as at present; and, third, a cheaper method of eviction of the tenants. The Committee instructed a copy to be sent to Mr Munro-Ferguson. This is a letter also from the Town Clerk on the same matter.

7689. To your Council?—Yes. This is a letter in which the Town Clerk says, writing to Mr Petrie for the Leith United Trades Council: "In reply I have to inform you that the Town Council did support the Bill."

7690. I suppose you base your statement about Mr Munro-Ferguson's position from the fact that he backed the Bill?—Quite so.

7691. And you have heard from himself that he supported the Bill. Of course that is the Bill in general, apart from details?—Yes.

7692. I notice one new matter in this. You say, among the disadvantages of the present system, that it is prolific cause of farmed-out house and the attendant evils resulting therefrom. What exactly are farmed-out houses in your Leith sense?—Well, a man for instance who may be the owner of say a dozen houses gives them over to another one for the matter of a year or two, or ten years, at so much per cent., and the man who gets the house is the house farmer. He in turn exacts in every instance an exorbitant rent from the poor tenants to whom he rents the houses.

7693. These are very small rents?—Yes.

7694. For a very short tenure?—The rents are not small that the tenants have to pay.

7695. But how would the shortening of the tenure affect these farmed-out houses?—For this reason: there is a real desire on the part of many working people to be able to secure a house by the month or the week. They are compelled to go into these slum districts where farmed-out houses exist, because they can get weekly houses there, and these same people, if they were able to get a house in a better locality, would not require to go to farmed-out houses. Many of them pay 6s. a week in rent for a single house, and they would get a house in a respectable neighbourhood in Leith, for say £15 or £16, with two rooms and a kitchen, for the same rent as they pay to the house farmer.

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7696. But why don't these people take the yearly houses?—Because they are not able to pay. They have not the money to commence with. Two obstacles may be in their way. In the first place, they are unable to get a cautioner, and not having forehanded rent they have to go under and pay at the mercy of these house farmers.

7697. But wouldn't you expect that if there are short lets for a good class of houses, there will be forehanded rent asked?—Yes, for short lets, but he may be able to give a week in advance, although not able to give a quarter's.

7698. You also say that among the disadvantages of the present system are the perpetuation of old slums and the creation of new slums. Is that for the same reason?—Yes. There is one property in Leith where the yearly rent paid by the house farmer is £190, and he draws £550, 4s. 6d.

7699. (*Mr Dobbie.*) That is a good return; does he let it furnished?—I suppose they may get an orange box or something of that kind.

7700. But he claims that they are furnished?—Most likely.

7701. On the same point, in regard to farmed-out houses, that is another disadvantage under which even monthly tenants at present labour, that they cannot get an adequate selection of houses when they do want to leave their present monthly houses?—Quite.

7702. Do you think the custom of paying in advance, say a month's rent, which we are told would become habitual, assuming short lets, would be a serious grievance against the working class?—Well, I think not. There is the possibility that in the course of time that even might be dispensed with. People would get the houses without any forehanded rent.

7703. That is an indication from all the factors of what will happen if this Bill becomes law. They will insist on rent being paid in advance?—I cannot say for that. Of course they will have to decide their own future line of action in that respect.

7704. Even if they did that, and the let was for a month, do you think the great majority of the working people would have no difficulty in finding a month's rent in advance?—I think not.

7705. In regard to Edinburgh and Leith, can you tell us whether workmen in these two centres pass from one to the other, either for work or sleeping?—Of course I could not give you anything like even an approximate estimate, but I should fancy there are a good number passing between the two towns.

7706. If the Bill passed, and Edinburgh adopted it and Leith did not, there would be a practical hardship on the class who had to come and go between the two centres?—That is so. It would be a second "Pilrig Muddle," I should fancy.

7707. Your idea is that the Act should not be optional?—That is my idea.

7708. And should extend to the whole of Scotland?—Quite; well, the industrial parts particularly. I do not think it would be quite necessary in the rural parts of Scotland.

7709. To all populous places?—Yes.

7710. (*Mr Howden.*) If there was a feeling among your members against this alteration, it would have got free expression against the attitude your Council take?—Oh, perfectly so.

7711. If there had been any desire in that line?—Quite.

7712. You heard my question to Mr Hamilton and Mr Allan as to hypothec?—Yes, my reply is the very same.

Mr T. Wilson.

Mr Thomas Wilson, called and examined.

Mr T. Wilson

7713. (*Chairman.*) You are an Inspector of the Edinburgh Labour Exchange under the Edinburgh Distress Committee?—Yes.

7714. And you were at one time Secretary of the Edinburgh United Trades Council?—For five years.

7715. What is the Distress Committee?—The local authority brought it into existence under the Working Men's Employment Act of 1905.

7716. Who constitute the Committee?—There are in Edinburgh sixteen members of the Town Council, one from each ward; twelve members from the Parish Council, appointed by the Council out of their own number, and seven co-opted members who are added, the stipulation being that these members be individuals having some knowledge of distress and relief of distress.

7717. Who is the Chairman?—The Lord Provost.

7718. How long have you been an Inspector?—Since the Exchange came into existence a year ago.

7719. What was your business originally?—Baker.

7720. Have you had occasion to consider the question which is before us now?—Yes, I have given it a good deal of consideration for years. It was prior to my being Secretary of the Trades Council, but I was Convener of a special Committee of that Council some nine years ago, that took this matter in hand. There was a remit to this Committee, to which I was convener, and with the view of getting at the opinion of people outside we convened a Conference of Representatives, I think, of all the working class organisations in Edinburgh and Leith. They would cover all the Trades Unions, the Independent Labour Party, the Co-operative Societies were also invited to send delegates. The bulk of them, I think, did send

delegates, and there was unanimity on two points: first, that the time between the taking and the entry of a house was too long; second, that the yearly let of itself was a hardship. With the view of strengthening our position a public meeting was convened in Edinburgh, and another in Leith. The public meeting in Edinburgh was held in the Oddfellows Hall, which is, I think, seated for something like 700. It was well filled; at least between 500 to 600 persons would be there. The resolutions submitted were in favour of the two points I have mentioned, and at it, and also at the Leith meeting, there was unanimity.

7721. Is it the fact that in your view the establishment of public works in the outskirts has aggravated the hardship?—Most decidedly.

7722. Also the growth of the city has done the same?—Yes.

7723. Do you think work is as certain and as permanent as it used to be?—It is most decidedly not so.

7724. That also would aggravate the hardship?—Yes.

7725. You have heard it suggested that while in Glasgow there may be real difficulties, these don't exist in Edinburgh. What do you say to that?—I find the difficulties do exist in Edinburgh.

7726. Perhaps not to the same extent, but still to a very substantial extent?—Comparatively, if you take the industrial section of Edinburgh, the hardship is as great as it is in Glasgow.

7727. But then the industrial section is not so large?—No.

7728. During what period is it specially that the hardship acts. Is it when trade is brisk or when it is depressed?—Particularly when trade is depressed.

7729. When people have a real necessity apart from mere caprice or whim to remove?—Yes.

7730. Do you find a better class of working men really do remove unless for good causes?—No.

7731. Of course it is not a pleasant thing to remove, and not a cheap thing?—No.

7732. So that if you find a decent working man removing it is for a good cause?—Yes.

7733. There are the improvident class removing for other causes that are not often the best?—Yes, but these are exceptional.

7734. Then is it in the interest of the good class of working men that you think this measure, or something like it, should be passed?—It would only be the better class, the more provident of the working classes, those that are in yearly let houses at the present time, that would be affected by it.

7735. Substantially?—Yes.

7736. As against a yearly let, we have heard of half-yearly, quarterly, and monthly. What do you say should be the ordinary limit for a working man's tenure?—My opinion is that a month is quite long enough. That is in the same way as a weekly servant is engaged. I was engaged for years as a weekly servant at my trade as a baker. I went to a man, but although I was engaged for and by the week, I had no idea of leaving it at the end of any particular week. I was in some situations for four or five years, but when either the employer or myself thought it well that we should part company, a week's notice was what was required on either side. I think a month's notice in the same way between factor and tenant is all that could reasonably be expected.

7737. You would not anticipate that there would be any very large number of additional removals. The extra removals would be due to such causes as you mentioned?—I don't think the number would be increased at all; they would be spread over.

7738. (*Mr Howden.*) You spoke about a Conference being held at which you were unanimous on two points?—Yes.

7739. Did the report of that Conference get into the press?—Yes, there were reports in the press at the time. I think the Edinburgh papers gave the meeting something like three-quarters of a column.

7740. That also applied to the Oddfellows Hall, did it?—Oh, I beg your pardon; I thought it was the Oddfellows Hall Meeting you referred to. The Conference was private; there was a report supplied which appeared in the press.

7741. But the Oddfellows Hall Meeting was a meeting duly reported in the press?—Yes.

7742. So that the men who have not been paying particular attention to the affairs of Edinburgh don't know that there was such a meeting held?—No, the resolutions were forwarded to the Town Council and the local members of Parliament.

7743. A system has been suggested to us that tenants should have security of tenure, with the liberty of leaving, provided that they pay their rent and don't disturb the neighbours or destroy the property?—My opinion is that such security of tenure is practically guaranteed, although I was once in the unfortunate position of being evicted at the end of a year out of my house because I refused to sign a petition. The landlord was a grocer and wanted a licence, and I objected to being coerced into signing the petition. Otherwise I don't think I had any reason for complaint. That was an exceptional circumstance.

7744. You think you had no right to be put out on that occasion?—I felt very ill about it. I think I had a grievance.

7745. You heard my question to Mr Hamilton and Mr Allan in connection with hypothec?—I quite agree with their answers.

7746. Have you any experience of this law of hypothec?—Personally I have had no experience, but certain instances have come to my knowledge, and I am inclined to think that after all it is an Act that bears very heavily upon the tenant without being of very much actual service to the landlord.

7747. Do you believe in the exemption of the tenant's goods up to a certain amount?—Certainly so.

7748. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I suppose you would protect the goods against both the trade creditors and the landlord?—All creditors in the same way as wages are protected at the present time up to a pound a week.

7749. Akin to the American Homestead Act?—Yes.

7750. Have you ever heard of tenants removing with a view of avoiding payment of yearly rates?—Well, I have heard of such cases, but none of them have come personally under my notice.

7751. Your view is that tenants would find it much more convenient to pay the whole of their rates by periodic instalments?—Decidedly so; they have a distinct hardship at the present time in meeting them all at the worst season of the year.

[Adjourned.]

EIGHTH DAY.

MONDAY, 14TH JANUARY 1907.

At the Town Hall, Dundee.

Present:

LORD GUTHRIE, *Chairman.*

MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR EDWARD COX.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.
MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr G. A. Johnston and Mr J. Robertson. 14 Jan. 1907.

Mr G. A. JOHNSTON and Mr JOHN ROBERTSON, called and examined.

7752. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) You are one of the Town Councillors of Dundee?—Yes.

7753. What is your business?—I am a grocer in Dundee.

7754. How long have you been in the Town Council?—A year past November.

7755. (*To Mr Robertson.*) You are a Justice of the Peace, a Town Councillor, and an ex-Magistrate of the City of Dundee?—Yes.

7756. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Have you adopted the General Police Acts in Dundee, or have you any local Acts of your own?—We have local Acts, but I am not very certain about them.

7757. The Town Clerk will be able to tell us their terms?—Yes.

7758. Has the question that this Commission is dealing with been before your Town Council?—Yes, it has been before the Town Council back and forward.

7759. Do you know if it was before the Council before you entered it?—Not very much. The only way it was before the Town Council before was in regard to the period of letting houses. That was some seven or eight years ago.

7760. You mean what is called the missive question?—Yes, the time for putting out these missives.

7761. The long interval between the time of taking and the time of entry?—Yes. In 1899 the Town Council, in conjunction with the house factors and proprietors, tried to arrange to put back the letting time, making the time for getting the missives 15th March instead of February, but that fell through.

7762. So far as you know, that was the first time the question had been raised?—Yes, I think so, in the Town Council.

7763. As to the present attitude of the Town Council, may we take it that the report of the discussion contained in the *Dundee Advertiser* on 11th January correctly represents what took place?—Yes, not fully, but it is fairly correct.

7764. It is correct so far as it goes?—Yes.

7765. What is the practice at present in Dundee as regards the period of taking of a house in comparison with the actual term of entry?—The position just now is that the missives are sent out to the sitting tenants in the beginning of February, and they are returnable within a week.

7766. Suppose a tenant does not return his missive within a week, what is understood?—It is understood that they are not going to take their house, but we generally make inquiry, at least that is my practice, and if they wish a week longer to make up their mind or anything like that, then it is allowed.

7767. We may take it that by the middle of February the matter is settled one way or another?—Yes, unless there is any particular reason for waiting for the tenant's decision.

7768. Are you yourself a house proprietor?—Yes.

7769. What number of tenants do you have?—About fifty.

7770. What class of property are they in?—Just what you would call a good working man's house.

7771. Ranging from what minimum to what maximum of rent?—From £9, 10s. to £10, 10s. for a two-room house, and from £12 to £15, 10s. for a three-room house.

7772. How often in the year do you collect your rents?—Quarterly. I may say that that is the exception in Dundee.

7773. Does that apply to all your houses?—Yes, I have quarterly collection of rents.

7774. You say it is the exception; what is the rule?—Six-monthly.

7775. Down to what rent does the six-monthly arrangement prevail?—I do not know; perhaps as low as £8, but I am not certain.

7776. Under that there is more frequent collection?—I would fancy so, although I have no personal experience.

7777. (*Mr Cox.*) Where do you have property?—Strathmartin Road, at the north end, and then at Park Avenue, at the east end.

7778. Is your property all new?—Yes, it has been put up within the last five or six years. The tenants belong to the artisan class,—they are average working people.

7779. (*Chairman.*) You mean the artisan as distinguished from the mere unskilled labourer?—I mean the mason, joiner, or moulder, or some such workman.

7780. The greatest industry in Dundee is the jute business?—Yes.

7781. What comes next?—I could not say.

7782. Shipbuilding?—Shipbuilding and engineering, I should say.

7783. And then there is a great variety of occupations, such as the marmalade works?—Yes, and confections.

7784. Could you say which of these would probably involve the most shifting population? Would it be the shipbuilding, perhaps?—I do not know.

7785. We have been told that in Glasgow the shipbuilding industry involves a greater amount of shifting than many other occupations?—I daresay that that may be so, because it fluctuates considerably.

7786. You referred to what took place in 1899 when the house proprietors and factors approached the Corporation. So far as you know, was the feeling universal among the house factors and proprietors that there might profitably be a change made?—Yes, practically. I think it would be pretty universal, with perhaps some exceptions, and I suppose that was the reason why the arrangement fell through.

7787. It would just be because that they felt that unless the thing was done by all there would be unfairness?—Yes, simply because there was no Act to make it compulsory.

7788. What did the Council do?—I am not sure, but they at any rate united with the house factors.

7789. They agreed in the view that was put forward?—Yes. I produce a hand-bill which is headed, "Change of letting day." (*Hands in.*) That Bill runs as follows:—"In terms of the unanimous recommendation by the 'Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council, and the resolution 'of the Dundee Landlords and Factors Association, this 'letting day for houses, shops and premises is now changed 'from 2nd February to 15th March. Tenants are requested 'in their own interest to assist in the general adoption and 'carrying out of this desirable arrangement. Missives 'will be delivered on the 8th, and must be returned not 'later than the 15th March."

7790. That Bill is not dated. May we take it as 1899?—Yes.

7791. Why was it that that fell through?—I expect a number of the sitting tenants were anxious to take their houses even before that date. Then there were some of the proprietors that did not fall in with the arrangement,

and they let their houses when they had the opportunity. If that date were made compulsory, it would be satisfactory to both parties.

7792. Was that recommendation given effect to for a time?—For one year only, and then they went back to the old arrangement.

7793. What is the reason of the objection to the present system? What is it founded on?—Simply taking their houses so long before the term begins.

7794. And I suppose in the period between, a man may want to change?—Yes.

7795. Do you see any advantage in the present system being kept up?—No.

7796. Neither in the interest of the landlord nor in the interest of the tenant?—No. It is practically agreed by the proprietors that 15th March would be suitable.

7797. So long as it was universal?—Yes.

7798. Suppose that were agreed to, what effect in your view would that have in removing the alleged grievance against the present system? Would that be enough, or would it require to be supplemented by something more?—No, I consider that is the principal grievance that we have in Dundee, namely, having to take houses so early.

7799. In addition, it is said that although that would be a step in the right direction, the long lets would still remain for a year, and that, particularly in the cheaper class of workmen's houses, which are occupied perhaps by the most shifting portion of the population, there is a grievance in a man being tied to a house for twelve months?—Yes. In my resolution I suggested to the Town Council that for rents of £7 and under the maximum period should be a let of three months. That is to meet the difficulty of the shifting portion of the population. I consider that above that the let should be a yearly let with quarterly payment of rents. I fixed on the £7 limit from figures that I got from our City Treasurer, and I concluded that that covered the people that were shifting most often. From the figures I got from the Treasurer I found that, roughly, the rental in Dundee represented by rents under £5 was £30,000, and the rental of houses between £5 and £7 came out at £62,000, making £92,000 in all.

7800. Out of what total?—I do not have the whole rental, but I have the rental up to £15, and it is £236,000. I find that the total rental in Dundee is £ .

7801. You took £92,000 up to £7 as fairly representing the most shifting part of the population?—Yes.

7802. I notice from the report in the newspaper that what you propose is this: that for houses not exceeding £7 of rental, the period of let do not exceed three months: that the present system of rating houses under £5, whereby the landlord pays the rates with a 20 per cent. reduction, should be extended to include houses of £7 and under; that the date for the return of missives be fixed at 15th March, and the present system be condemned, and in the case of yearly periods of let for houses over £7, quarterly payments would be in the interest, both of tenant and proprietor. In the latter sentence, you are distinguishing quarterly payment from quarterly let?—Yes, it is yearly lets with quarterly payments.

7803. Then, along with that proposal as regards the £7 houses, making the let not exceed three months, you couple the proprietor as being responsible for the tenants' rates up to that rental, with an abatement of 20 per cent. off the rates?—Yes.

7804. At the present time, what is the proprietor responsible for?—Up to, but not including, £5.

7805. And you propose to extend that to £7?—Yes, inclusive.

7806. Why do you take an abatement of 20 per cent. off the rates?—Just now it is 20 per cent. for the smaller sum, and I consider that the responsibility or the chance of not getting the rate is as great up to £7 as it is up to £5, and then, further, as far as I can make out by calculation, under £7 rental the Corporation lose pretty nearly 25 per cent. through irrecoverable rates and so on. So, supposing he gets 20 per cent. to cover that, the town is benefiting not only by what they are gaining extra, but there is a saving in collectors' wages and salaries.

7807. Do you factor your own properties?—Yes, practically. I have sub-collectors to collect the rents.

7808. Would the 20 per cent. allowance that you proposed cover the cost of collection in the first place, loss through non-payment in the second place, and empties, partial or total, in the third place?—It would cover the first two, viz. cost of collection and loss.

7809. And what about the third, empty houses?—I do not know that it would cover that. I am not very sure on that point.

7810. We have had two proposals put before us, one being that the allowance should cover all three, and another being that the allowance should cover the cost of collection, leaving the landlord to arrange with the town, in the event of losses and empties, to get a corresponding reduction. Now which system do you think would be the best?—I think it ought to cover the first two, at any rate.

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7811. But not the third?—No. In the proposed Dundee Provisional Order they are taking powers to assess all proprietors even on empty houses, so they would have to pay the rates in any case.

7812. Is that a Provisional Order that you are now promoting?—Yes, it is now before Parliament, and it is proposed there that empty houses shall be rated for police rates. The reason I suggest the 20 per cent. as being necessary is that it is as much in the interest of the tenant, because there are a lot of people who are allowed exemption on the ground of poverty. Now, unless you make a pretty generous allowance to house proprietors to meet this, they will press tenants for recovery, and the tenants will be more harshly dealt with than they are at present. It will press very hardly indeed on some of the poorer classes.

7813. At present, is there a court in Dundee which deals with applications for relief on the ground of poverty?—There is no court; it is simply submitted to a Committee of the Town Council, I think.

7814. And is that regularly done once a year?—Yes. A schedule is given out for people to fill up in making an application. They fill this schedule up and send it in, giving all the details and particulars, their circumstances, and why they are asking for this relief, and then the applications are considered.

7815. We would like to know the extent to which remission is granted. The Town Clerk will be able to give that?—The Treasurer will give that.

7816. Perhaps the Treasurer will give us, first, the total amount of rate: then, in the second place, how much is actually collected and what is lost; and, in the third place, he might distinguish between loss proper and remissions on the ground of poverty. He will be able to give that?—Yes.

7817. Do you not propose that that system of relief being granted by the rating authority to the poor tenant should continue?—Of course if it is put into the hands of the proprietor, then they would have to deal with the proprietor.

7818. The other proposal is that the tenant should still be entitled to come forward, and then, having got a certificate from the rating authority, he should be entitled to get a refund from the proprietor of rates that he may have antecedently paid?—I see.

(*Mr Robertson.*) It would be almost impossible to give effect to that.

7819. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) I know there is a practical difficulty, but, in one form or another, do you think that the practice of recognising the poverty of the tenant should be continued?—Certainly, and that is why I suggest that a reasonable allowance should be made.

7820. It would put it entirely into the hands of the proprietor, and it would depend on whether he was a reasonable or philanthropic person, or whether he was not?—Undoubtedly.

7821. Trustees might not be entitled to do that kind of thing, you see, in accordance with the terms of their trust?—Quite so.

(*Mr Robertson.*) I don't think it would be wise to leave it in the proprietor's hands at all.

7822. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Then how would it work out?—I would make the landlord responsible.

7823. Would that come to this, that the poor tenant who is now relieved would not be relieved?—I don't think the landlord would make any deduction. You see, they have to make that application yearly. Now, the same tenant might not be in the house next year. It would be a complicated matter, and the landlord would just have to take the risk.

7824. Take the simple case of a tenant being in the house all the year; he comes forward in January, let us say, and shows poverty. Would it not be possible that in that case the rating authority should refund to the tenant what the tenant had paid to the landlord, and then the rating authority would get it back from the landlord?—I am afraid the rating authority would not readily give it back, and it would be a constant re-fixing of the rent.

7825. You think the practical difficulties are too great?—Yes.

7826. (*To Mr Johnston.*) You have instanced 20 per cent., because that was the allowance given just now for rents under £5. Would there not be less loss the higher you went up?—Yes, after you pass a certain minimum, but not until you pass £7. I think the risk is equally great up to that.

7827. Is it your view that if the landlord, as it were, collected the rate at frequent intervals, more rates would be got in the result than is got now, when there is only one application for a big sum once a year?—I don't think there would be very much more collected on that score.

7828. It has been said to us by many witnesses that

rates are often lost, because it is one thing for a man to pay a small sum monthly, and it is another thing when he has to pay a big sum all at once, once a year, and especially at the worst season of the year, namely, in winter. Is there anything in that?—There might be a little, but I don't think it would amount to much.

7829. (*Mr Cox.*) What do the rates come to on a £7 house in Dundee?—17s. 6d. for the tenant.

(*Mr Robertson.*) There is much more loss under the £5 to the landlord than there is above it. I hold property both under and above, and I lose a great deal more under £5 in the shape of irrecoverable rents.

7830. (*Chairman to Mr Robertson.*) Do you agree with Mr Johnston that while that is true, there is pretty much the same loss up to £7 as there is at and under £5?—No, I think the loss is greater below the £5.

7831. Appreciably greater?—Yes. I lose very little above £5, but I find there is very great difficulty in collecting the rents under £5.

7832. The higher you go above £5 the less you lose?—Yes.

7833. What class of house property do you have?—The class you are dealing with here; I have houses under £5 and up to £20.

7834. Where you collect the rates along with your rents, which do you lose?—With irrecoverable rents I lose both the rate and the rent.

7835. When you lose the one you lose the other?—Yes. Indeed you have to fix the rent on the footing that you will lose a certain amount. I have twenty tenants below £5, and there is not a single one but what is in arrears; irrecoverable arrears.

7836. I suppose that depends on the state of trade?—Yes, a good deal.

7837. How are things in Dundee just now?—The manufacturing trade is fairly well just now, but in holiday times you never get anything in the way of rent.

7838. (*To Mr Johnston.*) You know that in Mr Cross's Bill it is proposed to go up to £16 in Dundee. Why is it that you draw the line at £7?—In regard to the short periods of letting?

7839. Yes?—Simply because I don't think it is demanded at all in Dundee in the class of house over £7, and I have given evidence to prove that more frequent changes are really not wished.

7840. And not being wished by the higher rented people, do you think they attach value to the security of the long let?—Yes, certainly.

7841. What makes you think that?—I think it because of conversation that I have had with people who are not my own tenants. I have been asking whether they preferred a shorter period of let without security, or the present system with the security, and in every case I was told that they preferred the present system.

7842. If a landlord has a good tenant, has not the tenant ample security even if his tenure is only for a quarter or even a month?—No, I don't think he has sufficient.

7843. If you yourself have a good tenant you just keep him on, whether he has a yearly let or a quarterly let?—There may be cases where perhaps someone else is anxious for the house, and it is always in the option of the proprietor on giving a short notice to put the tenant out. Now, if you make the periods of letting shorter, as suggested in the Bill, the proprietor has no interest—or rather he has less interest—in keeping his property in good repair and keeping things nice, and the same thing applies to the tenant.

7844. The first view is that they would lose the security of the tenure. Do you think it also weighs with them that the landlord would not have the same inducement to do work for the house?—Yes, it encourages more frequent changes, and the property gets deteriorated more quickly. On the other hand, the tenant will say, "I am not going to 'do this little thing I was thinking of, because I have no 'security." They tell me distinctly that they prefer the present system. Of course I am referring to the more respectable working people.

7845. Skilled people rather than unskilled people?—Yes.

7846. What have you yourself found in regard to the number of removals in connection with your houses?—I think I have mentioned that in my evidence.

7847. You state that during the past years there has been an average of six removals per annum in your property, all at the term of Whitsunday, and that the average sublets between the terms are two out of your fifty separate dwellings?—Yes.

7848. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Do you have any statistics on that point?—No, but from general knowledge of the community I should say that the Dundee population are not so shifting as they are in Glasgow. I have lived in Glasgow, and I know from experience that they are not so shifting here. Many people here occupy the houses where their fathers were before them.

7849. You are talking of ordinary working men?—Yes. They continue to work longer in one district with one firm and in one place.

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7850. (*To Mr Johnston.*) We have heard it said, just as you have told us, that the people with the somewhat higher rents don't want a change, but prefer the present system. On the other hand, the direct evidence that we have had from the class occupying these houses is substantially all the other way. Representatives of the Trades Unions, for instance—who of course embrace men in such cases—have all told us that the desire is for greater freedom, so as to make it possible to change from one town to another, and from one part of a town to another. How do you account for that?—I think it is reasonably accounted for in this way, that there is a certain class who are always desiring changes. I don't require to define that class. Then beyond that there are a great number of men, especially those of a socialistic tendency, who want to be relieved of all responsibility. If they get rid of that responsibility and get greater freedom, surely they cannot expect to retain all the rights of citizenship. I hold that if you wish the rights and privileges of a citizen you must at the same time have some responsibility.

7851. How would the responsibility be lessened by a man who is at present on a yearly tenure getting three months' tenure, for instance?—Because he has the idea that he can shift about at any time, and then there is the difficulty of collecting the poor rates.

7852. I know, but stick to the view of the man. He remains a citizen of the Crown, why should he not have the right to shift about at any time if his employment makes it desirable?—If he does that often just now, then, according to the present law, he will lose his right to vote. It comes in as a practical difficulty there.

7853. Suppose he is willing to take any risk of that?—That is his outlook, but I don't think it is in the interests of the general community—it is not as regards the conditions of Dundee. My idea is that there are a number of them want to get a greater amount of freedom and to get rid of responsibility, and yet they wish to retain all these rights and privileges.

7854. A man generally knows his own interests fairly well. He sometimes wants to enforce them at the expense of other people's interests, but he knows his own interests fairly well. If these people value the security so much, why is it that their representatives should come forward and say that they, as against that, think that they have plenty of security already, and that they want the freedom?—I do not think that that class is in the majority in Dundee; it is in the very small minority.

7855. The class who really need it are the men occupying the cheaper houses, but perhaps naturally enough the men who are occupying the better houses, even though they do not need it, champion the case of the men in the cheaper houses?—I believe that is the case.

7856. But you think that the substantial case would be met by extending the limit?—Yes, and that is why I suggested the £7.

7857. Of course the mere amount would be a matter of opinion. Other people might think that it should be £8?—Yes.

7858. Mr Henry put very strongly before us the view that in Glasgow it should be £10. I suppose a Glasgow house of £10 would be represented by a Dundee house of perhaps what?—£7 or £8.

7859. So Mr Henry's view and your view would be substantially the same?—Yes, practically the same.

(*Mr Robertson.*) The cases of Glasgow and Dundee stand very much separately. In the case of Glasgow they have all round about the town where they may go for employment, while in the case of Dundee a man must make a long shift if he is changing his employment.

7860. (*To Mr Robertson.*) What places are there round about Dundee that you could compare with the places round about Glasgow?—There are absolutely none.

7861. Newport is residential?—Yes. Tayport has a small factory, but it is abundantly supplied by the residents.

7862. Is there any coming and going between Dundee and Perth?—No.

(*Mr Johnston.*) With the facilities given by the tram-cars now, there is no necessity for frequent changing of houses.

7863. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Are there cases of workmen travelling by the tram-cars here?—Yes, there are workmen's cars every morning.

7864. Where from?—From the outskirts on all the different routes.

7865. How far may a man have to travel from his house to his work in Dundee?—From Lochee to the centre of the city will be about a couple of miles. There is a special fare—a penny return for workmen. They come in with the car in the morning and go back at night.

7866. There are no workmen travelling by trains as there are in Glasgow?—No.

(*Mr Robertson.*) They run special cars in the morning to suit the workmen. We have Broughty Ferry and Monifieth workmen travelling a good deal between these places. For the most part it is Dundee tradesmen employed at shops that are travelling. There are a considerable amount of shop assistants and such like that live in Broughty Ferry and Monifieth and travel regularly to Dundee.

(*Mr Johnston.*) That is going beyond the burgh boundary.

7867. (*To Mr Johnston.*) You suggest that under £7 the period of let should not exceed three months. What do you say to one month?—That does not shut out the possibility of one month.

7868. You would not limit it to one month?—No, I would leave it in their option to make arrangements mutually.

7869. Are there half-yearly payments in Dundee in the case of houses let under £16?—Yes. The general system is half-yearly for a yearly let.

7870. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Do you agree in that, that the general system is half-yearly payments?—Yes.

7871. Rather than quarterly, as Mr Johnston himself adopts?—My experience is that the half-yearly payments are better made than the quarterly payments. The people make their arrangements to suit, and I think the present system works very well in Dundee.

7872. We have been told that the Co-operative Society dividends in other places, being paid half-yearly, conduces to make it easy?—Yes, and then we have yearly societies that break up every year. They lend money for six months.

7873. Is the Savings Bank also employed for the same purpose?—Yes.

(*Mr Johnston.*) It is exceptional to have it quarterly, but there are one or two that do it besides me.

7874. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Under Mr Cross's Bill, the period of let is to be the same as the period of payment, so that under his Bill yearly tenancies in Dundee would be just converted into half-yearly tenancies, the payments being usually half-yearly?—Yes.

7875. Would that be any great drawback?—Yes, I do not think that would be desirable at all. There are plenty of houses let on lease, perhaps three years or five years.

7876. But not under £16?—I think there may be, but I am not sure.

7877. (*To Mr Robertson.*) What do you say to that?—I have no knowledge of any houses under that being let on a lease. There are some proposals for a payment of rent in advance. That would be a good thing from the landlord's point of view, but I am afraid the tenants would not care for it.

7878. Are there in Dundee, to your knowledge, many cases of forehand payment of rent?—No. The landlord's hypothec keeps them right in that.

7879. Are there cases where cautioners are demanded?—No. In the case of weekly rents they pay a fortnightly deposit.

7880. But in the case of monthly lets or quarterly lets, the landlord trusts to the hypothec?—Yes. I think the destruction of the landlord's hypothec would be a serious matter for the tenant.

7881. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Do you think that payment four times a year instead of twice a year, in short, do you think that your own system is a better one for the tenant?—Yes, because they are mostly working people with weekly wages or monthly wages, and it is much easier for them to save up a quarter's rent, and there is less risk.

7882. Does it not go further and point to monthly payments being still easier?—Yes, but if you adopt monthly payments you increase the cost of management so much that you must increase the rent. I hold that three months is the minimum that could be done without increasing the rent. Then there is the payment of the rates being yearly. I have been asked by people sometimes to divide up the payment of the police rates into twice a year. If you adopt quarterly lets in Dundee, you get rid of that difficulty. They cannot collect the rates twice without increasing the cost.

7883. Who have made that request to you?—It has been advocated at election meetings.

7884. The request would come from tenants?—Yes. It is a hardship having to pay the police rate in one sum once a year; it is not very easy for them to pay it all at once. Now, if you adopt quarterly payments, that would do away with the difficulty.

7885. (*Mr Esslemont.*) How would it increase the cost of collection of rates if payment was taken in two instalments?—The Treasurer will be able to tell you about that.

(*Mr Robertson.*) They would have to issue two sets of papers in the year.

7886. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Robertson.*) No, you would not require to do that. Suppose the rate is £1, and the tenant tenders 10s., that can be discharged on the demand note?—They do that if desired. The tenants want the payment to be made every six months, and to have a separate notice. We already accept part payments if the tenant wishes to pay that way.

7887. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) You referred to questions being asked at Town Council elections. At the last election was the house-letting matter brought up at your meetings?—Not to my knowledge.

(*Mr Robertson.*) I had no experience of that. I was a candidate at the last election, and the question was never raised at any of my meetings.

7888. (*Chairman.*) In the case of both you gentlemen, were your elections contested?

(*Mr Johnston.*) Mine was uncontested, but I had meetings.

(*Mr Robertson.*) My election was contested.

(*Mr Johnston.*) Last November, I had a meeting of my constituents, but there was no mention made of the matter.

7889. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) Was the question brought up at any other meetings to your knowledge?—Not to my knowledge.

7890. How many Councillors are there in Dundee?—Twenty-seven

(*Mr Robertson.*) I have no doubt in my own mind that, as a whole, the tenants would prefer the collection of the rates twice a year.

7891. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) Before we come to the rates, we will take the question of hypothec. What is your view, Mr Johnston, on the question of hypothec, the retention of it, or the restriction of it, or the abolition of it?—I have not given the matter any consideration.

7892. Have you had occasion to enforce your right?—No, not so far as my experience goes.

7893. Have you had experience of giving time to tenants, for instance, because you knew that the hypothec that you had made it safe?—Yes, I have had that only in two cases in all my six years' experience.

7894. It is said that the hypothec is not merely in the interests of the landlord, but it is a benefit to the tenant in cases where, but for the landlord's security, he would be turned out?—No doubt that is perfectly true, and there have been some cases of that in my own experience.

(*Mr Robertson.*) I concur in that. It is a great help to the tenants, and it prevents the necessity, in the first place, for the tenant having to find security for the rent; in the second place, it is a protection to the tenants in many instances, where, through sickness or otherwise, they may not be able to meet their grocer's bill or tailor's bill. These parties would pounce on them and put them out of the house, but the hypothec is a protection to them and enables them to tide over their difficulty.

7895. (*To Mr Robertson.*) We are told that the benefit of it is not in cases where the landlord has to enforce it, but it lies in this, that the knowledge that he has the power is a very useful one?—Yes.

7896. I suppose it is the case that a sale under a warrant does not yield anything like the real value of the furniture?—That is so. It is very seldom resorted to.

7897. Have you often had occasion to enforce it?—No, I have never had occasion to do so.

7898. It is a rare thing in Dundee?—Yes.

7899. (*To Mr Johnston.*) That leaves us with the question of rating. What is your view about the burgh rates being paid through the proprietor up to £16 for Dundee?—I object very strongly to that on principle. I have the greatest objection to it.

7900. Do you go the whole hog, or is it between £7 and £16 that you object to that?—The reason why I would allow it to be extended to £7 is simply this, that these are the tenants who remove often; but where they don't remove so frequently I don't think there is any necessity for putting it on the proprietor at all. As has been already pointed out, I object to taking this responsibility from the tenants, and thereby taking from them or tending to lessen the interest that they feel in the economical management of their affairs by the public boards. That has been proved in England, and it has been condemned by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation.

7901. I suppose the principle as a principle has gone, because it is already done under £5, and you are willing to extend it to £7. You think, however, there is no occasion to go further than £7?—I don't think there is any occasion at all for going beyond it. We find that if they are not making payment of their rates they cannot possibly have the same interest in looking after the conduct of their representatives on the public boards.

7902. In the case of the people paying rents up to £7—it is a big thing amounting to £92,000—should they not know what they are about? At the present moment, under £5 there is no separation between rates and rent?—No.

7903. In your view, even in the case of those paying

under £5 just now, or up to £7, should they not know what the rate is?—Certainly, and I suggest that it should be stated separately.

7904. On what?—It should be stated separately from the rent.

7905. On the receipt?—Yes.

7906. Do you see any reason why that should not be done all round down to the lowest rent?—I have not considered that. I have no personal knowledge of the lowest rent.

7907. You don't think it would be impracticable from the point of labour in making the separation?—Not at £5, but it might be under £5.

7908. There is a suggestion that the rating authorities should continue to send out notices to the tenants, although the landlord was made responsible. Would you see any reason why that should not be done? In that case the landlord would not need to separate?—I see. You would send the notice to the tenant and make the proprietor responsible for the payment?

7909. Yes. We were told by a factor in Glasgow that there were certain cases where, by voluntary arrangement with the rating authority, he paid direct; his practice was to go round the tenants and collect their rates, and then he paid in one slump sum. Would that not be the simplest way?—I don't know. I fancy that the best way would be to assess the proprietor direct, and then the proprietor to separate the amounts.

7910. In one way or another, your view is that the tenant's position as a ratepayer and the extent of the rate should be brought home to him?—Yes.

(*Mr Robertson.*) I would point out that there may be three or four tenants in one year in one house, and there is a difficulty in serving the notices.

7911. (*To Mr Robertson.*) That exists now?—Yes.

7912. And it would be aggravated a bit?—A large proportion of the houses at these rentals are occupied by widows and single women who interest themselves very little in municipal affairs. Then the thriftless class also occupy these houses, and they take very little interest in these matters.

7913. Suppose that short lets were inaugurated even up to £7 or £16, do you anticipate it would produce a larger number of removals in the course of the year?—I don't think it would.

7914. Once they settle down?—That is so. I know in Dundee, at all events in the cheaper class of properties, the houses are not always provided with grates, for instance, and many other things that are convenient in a house. There would be constant reconstruction of the property, and it would not be a good thing.

7915. I don't know that we are quite at one. I wanted your opinion on this: do you think, if short lets were made statutory, there would be in the end more removals than there are at present?—There might be a few, but not sufficient to justify a change.

(*Mr Johnston.*) I am inclined to think it would encourage more frequent removals.

7916. (*To Mr Johnston.*) On the other hand, this has been put to us, that, with the present system of one removal term, there is a kind of house-hunting fever that attacks the population, especially the ladies, and that would not exist if removals were going on all over the year. Is there any such house-hunting fever in Dundee to your knowledge?—I suppose there is, to a certain extent.

7917. Is it not unfortunate to have all the removals at one time of the year, instead of having them spread over the year?—I don't know that it is.

7918. Do you not find practical inconvenience from the difficulty in getting a hire, for instance, at a moderate rate, when everybody wants horses or men on the same day?—They are not wanted on the same day. In Dundee there are a great number of empty houses, and there are people removing a month before the term.

7919. Do you not find that there is a great over-pressure in the building trade at that particular time, with a resultant want of work later in the year?—Of course it may have some effect in that direction. There is greater pressure in the springtime, but I don't think it should be so very much; if houses are to be ready for Whitsunday, they should begin the previous year.

7920. We have been told that these matters were brought forward in Glasgow at ward meetings and otherwise. If they have not been brought forward here, do you think that that points to a difference of opinion as between Glasgow and Dundee?—Yes.

7921. What have you to say about the poor and school rates?—According to Mr Cross's Bill, it is provided that that be exempted, the poor rate.

7922. It only applies to the burgh rates?—Yes. If the removals are more frequent, they will have some difficulty in finding the tenant who is to be assessed for the rate for the year. The poor rate is assessed yearly.

7923. So is the burgh rate?—Yes, and they will have the same difficulty—that is what I say. That is the reason I object to the shorter lets.

7924. Suppose shorter lets with compounding were enacted, should it be confined to burgh rates, or would it be desirable to have one system for all rates? Would you contemplate that the landlord should pay the whole rates in the case of houses let under £7?—Including the poor rates?

7925. Yes?—Yes, I think so, if it were adopted, but I do not advocate adopting it. If it were adopted, then we must collect these rates quarterly to be able to get at the tenants.

7926. If shorter lets were enacted, limited to three months for houses up to £7, you do not think that between £5 and £7 the landlord should pay the rates?—I do not gather that.

7927. Under £5 he pays the rates now, and you contemplate that up to £7 he should pay the rates?—Yes, if stated separately.

7928. But then if, on the other hand, Parliament thought that the limit should not be £7, but should be £16, you would still apply the same principle that the landlord in that case should pay the rates also. If Parliament thought that the limit for the short lets should be £16 instead of £7, would it not follow that the rates would be paid also?—I would not say that the landlord should pay the rates in that case. I would say that the Treasurer's department of the Town Council would have to arrange to take their rates more frequently.

7929. Do you see any practical difficulty, or would you rather leave that to the Treasurer as to why the rates should not be collected more frequently?—I would rather leave it to the Treasurer. I am told it would increase the cost.

7930. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Have you anything to add to what has been said by yourself and by Mr Johnston?—No, I concur in his evidence.

7931. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Johnston.*) You say that, in the main, houses are let yearly, and the rents are collected half-yearly?—Yes.

7932. Were you the first to start the system of yearly lets and quarterly collections?—There was one man before me. It was my opinion all along that that was the proper way, and I made inquiry to see if there was anyone else who did it, and I found that there was one.

7933. How did your tenants view it? Did they express any dislike to it?—No, practically as a whole they appreciate the change. Some of them mentioned the change, but they had really no argument against it.

7934. Was it a change so far as you were concerned?—In one of my properties it was. In the first property that I built I collected the rents half-yearly for the first year or eighteen months. I then built another property, and I began with the quarterly collection right away, and I altered the collection in the other property. Almost unanimously my tenants say that it is much preferable.

7935. You suggest that £7 should be fixed as the limit for shorter lets?—Yes.

7936. And that the percentage that is allowed for the collection of burgh rates under £5 should be extended to £7?—Yes.

7937. You thought that was necessary because from time to time the landlord would require to give relief to a poor tenant?—Yes.

7938. Do you not think that if the discretion were placed in the proprietor it would practically come to this, that no relief would be given?—No, because I think they would recognise the necessity for it; it would be impossible for them to collect the rates in cases of poverty.

7939. It would be only in cases where it was impossible to get it?—That is the only way you can do, unless you assess them directly.

7940. Would not this be the result, that wherever the proprietor could collect the rent he would collect the rates, and he would only grant relief in cases where he found it impossible even to collect rent?—Perhaps the factors will be able to give evidence on that point. I have no knowledge of that class of tenant. What I understand from them is that they do not wish this duty at all at any price; they would rather not have it even at 20 per cent. deduction.

7941. You said you had been in conversation with a good many tenants in regard to this proposal for shorter lets, and you found that there was a disinclination for a change?—Yes, without exception.

7942. Could we not have evidence direct from any of these? Would any of them come here?—I do not know if they would be prepared to come, but I can ask.

7943. Why could they not come?—They may be at their work, and then some of them do not want to have the publicity; but there are four men that I have spoken to within the last week, average working men.

7944. What I feel is this, and I believe it is shared by

the other members of the Commission—that it is for us to judge what weight we should place on an expression of opinion of that kind which is given to us by interested parties, proprietors and factors?—I have done the best I can by giving my own experience. There are only one or two sublets on an average out of fifty tenants, and I think that is pretty good evidence that the change is not necessary. In these cases I had no difficulty in subletting, and the people were not losers in any way.

7945. (*Mr Cox to Mr Robertson.*) Will you answer the question that Mr Esselmont put to Mr Johnston about the relieving of ratepayers? I suppose there is a considerable number of ratepayers getting relief from payment of rates at the present time?—Yes.

7946. If the collection of the rates is put on the landlord, he will see that he gets payment of them?—I have no doubt about that.

7947. It is only in the case where he fails to get the rents that he will not take payment of the rates?—Yes, he won't give any abatement if he can possibly help it.

7948. So there will be every endeavour to collect the rates from those poor people who at the present time get relief?—Yes.

7949. Have you thought at all whether any scheme would be possible for still allowing these poor people to get relief?—I do not think it would be possible. I think the landlord would just have to take his chance.

7950. So the poorest class of people would be worse off under the new arrangement?—Yes, it is quite natural that the landlord should collect as much as he can. You cannot blame him though he did his utmost to collect if he was to be held responsible. I do not think it is a possible or a practical thing for a landlord to come to the Commission and say, "This tenant was too poor and he cannot pay it." He would be a buffer between the Commission and the tenant.

(*Mr Johnston.*) The tenants under this arrangement would have a greater difficulty in getting relief than they have at present.

7951. (*Mr Cox to Mr Johnston.*) And no practical scheme can be devised for still giving them the relief that they get just now?—I do not think so.

7952. (*To Mr Robertson.*) You spoke about their dividends from Co-operative Societies. Are those dividends substantial in amount?—About 15 per cent.

7953. What do you think a working family might draw half-yearly from that? Would it be a substantial amount?—If their groceries and other purchases were to amount to £1 a week, then it would be 3s. a week. That would be about the minimum if there is any family at all.

7954. That comes to £7 in the year?—Yes.

7955. So it would pay half the rent?—Yes.

7956. Is it used for that purpose to any extent?—Yes, to a very large extent.

7957. Are these dividends paid half-yearly?—I am not sure about that.

(*Mr Johnston.*) I think they are paid quarterly, but I am not sure.

(*Mr Robertson.*) We have a good many Friendly Societies, where they pay in so much a week, say 1s. or 1s. 2d. That 2d. goes as a contribution to a sick fund and a funeral fund, from which they may draw if necessary, but the main sum lies and is drawn to meet the rent.

7958. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Robertson.*) On rents under £5 are the poor rates charged to the landlord as well as the burgh rates?—No, there are no burgh rates charged to the landlord; they are always paid by the tenant.

7959. But the municipal rates are charged to the landlord on £5 and under?—I do not know that the sum is limited; it is on weekly lets—I think that is the principle on which they are charged. It may be a larger sum than £5. It may be £6 or £7, but if the rent is paid weekly, the landlord is held responsible.

7960. (*Chairman.*) It is under three months, whatever the rent may be?—Yes. That is because of the difficulty of locating the tenant who ought to pay the rent. Great difficulty is experienced when there is a removal between terms.

7961. (*Mr Binnie.*) Putting it generally, the landlord pays the tenant's rates in the case of the smaller rents?—Yes, or he pays the rates on the shorter lets.

7962. And these are generally, I suppose, the smaller rents?—Yes.

7963. And the result is that the very poor in Dundee have to pay burgh rates, whereas a very large number of those in the class above them get relief?—Yes.

7964. Are there in Dundee, as I know there are in some other places, a good many applications to town councillors for lines of relief?—Yes.

7965. Particularly about election times?—Yes. Up till recently they brought their notices, which were signed on the back, probably by their grocer. We were flooded with these. They have now adopted a different system, whereby the parties making application for relief get a schedule in which they state all the particulars, their income, and the number of people living in their house, and that comes before a committee.

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7966. Do they not get certificates from anyone at all now?—They sometimes come to councillors to get these schedules signed.

7967. Have you had the experience in Dundee that they have had in other places, viz. of a lady driving up to the collector's office in a cab, and going in with a certificate from a councillor that she was unable to pay her rates?—I do not know, but we believe that a great many people have been relieved who should not have been relieved, and a number who have not been relieved should have been relieved.

7968. So the very poor are made to pay, and a great many who should get relief do not get it under the present system?—That is so. It used to be the system with us, that if a councillor's name went in along with the schedule the application was invariably granted without much investigation, but now the matter is different. There is an investigation, and all the particulars are got, and in many cases they are relieved to the extent of one half, or they are relieved in instalments.

7969. (*Mr Howden to Mr Johnston.*) I think you told us that the tenants under £7 necessarily removed oftener?—Yes.

7970. Why do they remove oftener under £7? Is it because of insecurity of work?—I suppose it is simply on account of their work being more of a shifting nature. The poorer class of people change oftener.

(*Mr Robertson.*) Not infrequently they remove to evade payment of arrears. Many of them shift about from place to place to evade payment of rent.

7971. (*Mr Howden to Mr Johnston.*) It would be a hardship on these people to revert to a system where they could not leave on reasonable notice; it would be a hardship to go back to a yearly let?—Yes, I would not propose that for a small rent.

7972. What about joiners, masons, moulders, turners, or blacksmiths—are they not paid weekly wages and liable to be shifted on a week's notice?—Yes.

7973. And have they not frequently to shift from Dundee?—I have given my own experience, and that is that they do not shift frequently. There are only six on an average in three years out of fifty—that is the three years' average.

7974. (*Chairman.*) Is that six a year?—Yes.

7975. (*Mr Binnie.*) You said two before?—No, that was the sublets between the terms.

7976. (*Mr Howden.*) What do you charge in the case of subletting?—For what? Rent?

7977. Either rent or expenses in subletting the house?—Nothing. They pay for advertising the house, and they are charged the rental according to the time they are in it.

7978. In the event of a tenant coming to you and saying that they want to give up their house, what would you do?—Simply ask them to advertise the house, and I would try to get a sub-tenant.

7979. And if you did not get one?—I have never had that experience; I have always managed to get the house let.

7980. What would be the usual practice in Dundee in a case such as that?—I would expect that if a sub-tenant was not found, they would be held responsible for the rent.

7981. Would that not have a deterring effect on people applying to you to remove between terms, even although they needed to remove?—No, if they found it necessary or advisable to get their houses sublet, they would be at me at once.

7982. Do you not think it would be a deterrent if they had to pay the rent of the house?—No, that does not prevent their trying it.

7983. What principle do you adopt in fixing rents?—How do you mean?

7984. You told us that a system of shorter lets would raise the rents?—Yes.

7985. You have no doubt in your mind in connection with that?—No doubt at all.

7986. What method do you adopt in fixing rents?—A proprietor will naturally look for an ordinary return on the money invested, and then there is the expense involved,—if you have a monthly period for letting you increase the cost to a very great extent. You have twelve lettings in a year instead of one, and naturally the cost of men's time and other things must be increased to a very great extent. That must fall on the tenant through time, because the cost of administration must always be considered if a man considers what sort of return he is to get.

7987. Did you ever try to raise rents under your present system?—No, but I have reduced some of my rents.

7988. You have been a proprietor for only six years?—Yes.

7989. Has it come to your knowledge that rents have been raised even when the conditions remained the same as regards letting?—No, I have no knowledge of that.

7990. You have never heard of rents being raised?—Yes, but that was because of additions in the way of water closets and other things that they did not use to have.

7991. But where the property remained the same, you have never heard of any cases of the rents being raised?—not for a long time, because there are too many empty houses.

7992. It will be because you cannot extract more rent from your tenants that you allow your rents to remain as they are?—No, I do not admit that.

7993. If there is a demand for a certain class of house, a landlord or a factor usually tries to get as much rent as possible?—I do not know; I could not say. That has not been the line on which I have worked.

7994. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Johnston.*) Do you let your own houses by the year?—Yes.

7995. And you merely collect the rents quarterly?—Yes.

7996. You have not thought of experimenting with quarterly lets?—No.

7997. Nor half-yearly lets?—No.

7998. What is the feeling of the Town Council on this question? The Chairman has given us an excerpt from the report of the meeting?—The Town Council passed its resolution that I moved by a very small majority certainly, but I do not know that they have any particular feeling.

7999. What was the majority?—Thirteen to twelve. I would like to say that, as regards the town councillors' point of view, they expect to get more rates in if the rates are collected through the landlord, and at the same time to be relieved of the responsibility and work of collecting these rates. Now I hold that it is the Corporation's duty to collect them.

8000. Is it customary to have missives in Dundee?—Yes, in regard to yearly lets, so far as my knowledge goes.

8001. And to have a cautioner?—Not as a rule. I have never had one.

8002. If shorter lets come into vogue, would that mean in your view that a cautioner or pre-payment might be demanded?—Quite naturally it would.

(*Mr Robertson.*) That is done at present. A deposit is demanded.

8003. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Pre-paid rents might take the place of missives, assuming shorter lets became more frequent?—I am not sure of that. I am afraid that a mere pre-payment of a month's rent would not be enough.

8004. The landlord would insist on the tenant making payment, as opposed to the present system of giving credit?—Yes.

8005. What do you do in Dundee, in reference to ejections? What Court do you go to?—The Burgh Court. That has begun quite recently.

8006. Do the magistrates sit there?—Yes.

8007. Is there any grievance on the part of proprietors with reference to dilatoriness or expense in connection with ejections?—Yes, I think so. In the case of undesirable tenants, or tenants that won't pay, I think the process of ejection is too expensive. It costs about 10s., and it takes about a fortnight to do it.

8008. Assuming this Bill is necessary, that may infer shorter lets and more frequent removals, and the suggestion has been made that if there is to be that change made in the law, there should be a corresponding change made with a view of giving more immediate remedy in the case of failure to pay rent. Can you suggest any improvement on the present system for evicting tenants?—No. I should be loth to put the tenant entirely at the mercy of the landlord in the way of selling his furniture, and so on.

8009. Do you go to the Sheriff Court at all for ejection warrants?—Not in the case of weekly lets.

8010. Can you tell us whether it takes an equally long time? Can the tenant get any more delay in the Burgh Court than in the Sheriff Court?—We have a very sympathetic sheriff, who is sometimes not very easily dealt with. The Burgh Court would not have been resorted to if the proprietors had thought they were getting the justice they were entitled to.

8011. It has been suggested that, with the view of giving more facilities, Burgh Courts should have more powers where they have not power to give warrants?—I think the Burgh Court an improvement. I think that, in the first place, because of the congestion of the business in the Sheriff Court, and, in the second place, because the Burgh Court gives greater facilities.

8012. There would be necessary delays?—Yes. As soon as a tenant comes to know that he is to be shifted, then there is no more rent paid, and the property is destroyed. I have known of water closets being completely destroyed by tenants who knew that they were to be ejected, and who therefore wanted to take revenge on the landlord.

8013. Is there any practice in Dundee of collecting gas or water rates direct from the landlord?—I am not aware of it.

8014. I mean stair gas?—Yes.

8015. Can you tell me what allowance is made to the landlord for the trouble in collecting the stair gas?—There is no allowance.

(*Mr Johnston.*) There is no allowance at all.

8016. (*To Mr Robertson.*) Is it the case in Dundee that owners of property under £5 pay both the tenants' and the landlords' burgh rates?—Yes.

8017. It is not merely a case of no burgh rate being charged?—No.

8018. We were told that in Edinburgh the proprietors did not pay any more burgh rates on houses under £5,—the Corporation simply did not charge any occupier's rate at all. In Dundee, however, they charge the proprietor twice?—Yes.

(*Mr Johnston.*) Yes, they charge both the tenant's rate and the proprietor's rate under £5.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) That is different from Edinburgh.

(*Mr Robertson.*) They are not so generous with us here.

8019. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Robertson.*) Do you know if there are many subjects let as a house and shop in Dundee under £7?—Yes, widows and single women who live in the back and make a living by having their little shop in the front.

8020. Can you give us any figures showing what the number of these premises might be, say up to £7, and also up to £16?—I could not give it, but perhaps the Treasurer could. I anticipate that it will be somewhat difficult, because in one case it will be returned as a shop, and in another case it will be returned as a dwelling house.

8021. But there will be a considerable number?—Yes.

8022. Even under £7?—Yes.

8023. With reference to the proposal that the proprietor should pay the rates, assume that that is to be enacted, what do you think would be a reasonable allowance, say in respect of houses up to £7?—I think 20 per cent., in view of the amount that the landlord loses,—I think that that would be as little as would be reasonable.

8024. We have been told that the Corporation lose 25 per cent. between £5 and £7?—Yes, but I believe the landlord would be probably more successful in collecting in the case of these houses than the Corporation would be.

8025. Why do you think that?—He is in closer contact with them, and he is more frequently visiting them.

8026. You know that the Corporation can arrest wages?—I don't know that they can do so here. I have never known of its being done here. Our Corporation deal very generously with people in that way. In my experience they very seldom put their powers in operation. I have known them to wait for years.

8027. Assuming that 20 per cent. was sufficient, would that be to cover the chances of not getting the rate, would it cover the risk of loss?—I don't know that it would.

8028. But in your view would you think that that allowance ought to be given, the landlord taking the risk of recovering?—Yes.

8029. And also to cover the cost of collection?—Yes.

8030. And the risk of empty property between terms?—Yes.

8031. And also to take the place of the exemptions at present given on the ground of poverty?—Yes.

8032. You cannot tell us what is the total amount of taxes in respect of which exemptions are given?—About £4000, I should think.

8033. Do you think 20 per cent. ought to be sufficient to cover all these things?—Yes.

8034. Although in respect of irrecoverables alone the Corporation lose 25 per cent.?—Yes.

8035. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) How late do you propose that missives should be returned instead of the middle of February?—15th March.

8036. What was the difference on that question between the two sides in the Town Council?—It was proposed in the minute I objected to that the date be 4th April.

8037. That was one difference. Was there the other difference that it was proposed to take a £10 limit instead of a £7 limit?—Yes.

8038. And in addition, instead of a three-monthly let, a monthly let?—Yes.

8039. So there are three differences?—Yes.

8040. First, 4th April instead of 15th March; second, £10 instead of £7; thirdly, a monthly let under £10 instead of three months under £7?—Yes. Houses of £7 and under to be let for any period not exceeding three months.

8041. Lastly, was there a difference as regards the other view proposed, that proprietors should pay rates on all subjects under £10, the abatement given being not 20 per

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cent., as you propose, under £7, but 10 per cent. on houses of £5 and under, and 5 per cent. on houses between £5 and £10?—Yes.

8042. And the result was, as you have told us, that thirteen voted in favour of your view, and twelve in favour of the other view?—Yes. The objection, I think, to the small abatement is that the chances are that the proprietor won't recover the rates—10 per cent. won't cover the loss, and the consequence is that the rents will be advanced and greater pressure will be brought to bear on the tenants.

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Mr Edwin Scrymgeour.

Mr Edwin Scrymgeour, called and examined.

Mr Edwin Scrymgeour.

8043. (*Chairman.*) You are one of the Councillors of the City of Dundee?—Yes.

8044. How long have you been in the Council?—This is my second year.

8045. What is your view in regard to the missive question and the date on which the missives might be returned in place of the present system?—I think that the beginning of April would be satisfactory.

8046. You think that the beginning of April would give ample time?—Yes.

8047. Do you concur in the limit of £7 that Mr Johnston and Mr Robertson have spoken to, or would you raise it a bit?—I thought that about £7, 10s. was a fair sum to cover the cases about which there was some difficulty.

8048. Suppose it was £7, 10s., you would say that the rates, whatever the limit was, should be paid by the proprietor?—Yes, up to that sum.

8049. Does that mean that you don't propose that there should be up to that limit no rate except an owner's rate? There should be two rates, an owner's rate and an occupier's rate, for both of which the owner is responsible?—Yes.

8050. Do you concur in the view that, there being an occupier's rate paid in that way by the owner, the occupier should know what the rate is that is being paid for him through the landlord?—Yes.

8051. On the grounds that we heard Mr Johnston and Mr Robertson advocate?—Yes. The tenant ought to know the rate and the rent exactly.

8052. What is your view about the continuance of the present system of relief on the ground of poverty?—I appreciate the system of relief that is at present adopted by the Corporation in the cases of people unable to meet the rates. There are a considerable number of such people in the city.

8053. Do you think that the system is abused, or is not abused?—I think that probably there will be cases that have not been quite satisfactory, but, on the whole, I think that the system is one which deals reasonably with the applications.

8054. Of course we know that there are no soft-hearted judges, but there are said to be soft-hearted councillors and magistrates. What is your experience in regard to people being got round in undeserving cases?—I have heard of such cases in connection with the Parish Council, of which I was a member for a terms of years, but my own experience has been that thoroughly good cases make application and get relief.

8055. Are there any cases when, at the time the application is made, the sum claimed being a lump sum and a large sum, the person is unable to pay it, but if the sums had been collected monthly or quarterly by the landlord, the person might have been quite able to pay?—Yes.

8056. There are such cases?—Yes, but at the same time I know that in such instances payment has been accepted from time to time to make it up.

8057. Is that the practice?—I don't know if it is the regular practice, but I know that it has been done.

8058. It has been pointed out by Mr Binnie that at present this relief is not given to the really poorest class, because under £5 the landlord pays the whole, and there is no relief given. What do you say to that?—I believe that that is a disadvantage to some people, but it is also to be recognised that there are many who, through their own negligence, fail to pay their rates, and it is necessary in some way to deal with such cases.

8059. In point of fact, the people paying the lowest rents are paying the highest rents proportionately?—Yes, that is my view.

8060. On the other hand, the landlord runs great risk in these cases, and he must make the better class pay for those who don't pay?—I think that on the whole he comes out fairly well.

8061. Do you think that in the end the landlord comes out better, looking to all the contingencies, in the less rented houses than in the higher rented houses?—Yes, I think he makes a great effort.

8062. And he succeeds if the factoring is sharp and prompt?—Yes.

8063. Was your election contested?—Yes.

8064. Do you know of any public demand for the adoption of monthly lets?—I never heard of anything of the kind.

8065. Do you think that monthly lets up to, say, £16 would have the effect of increasing the rents?—I have the view that if there is a system of that kind adopted it will be liable to incur extra expenditure for which the landlord will naturally expect to be recouped, and it will fall on the tenant in the end.

8066. If there is a feeling in favour of these monthly lets on the part of people who think that the rents would not be increased, do you think they are going on a false basis?—I have never heard any testimony in regard to it, beyond having the knowledge that there are some people who would like to have a shorter period, perhaps a half-yearly system, as is done in connection with the payment of insurance policies.

8067. Do you think that half-yearly payments would meet any demand that there is?—Yes, for the larger rents.

8068. Mr Cross does not exclude half-yearly lets, because he says where you pay half-yearly, then the let is to be half-yearly?—Yes.

8069. You think even in cases where there may be such a demand, it will be substantially met by Mr Cross's proposal?—Yes, I think so.

8070. Do you concur in thinking that it would be easier for the poorer class of tenants to pay their rates at periodic intervals rather than in one lump sum?—Yes.

8071. If the rating authority, for instance, could collect four times a year, if that were practicable, it would be in itself a better system?—Yes, it would be better for the individual tenants as a rule. I recognise the disadvantages from the Corporation's point of view.

8072. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I suppose there are a good number of empty houses in Dundee just now?—Yes.

8073. I think you said that any change in the direction of short lets would result in additional expense being put on the landlord?—Yes, I believe it would increase the rent.

8074. He would have more outlay?—Yes, to some extent.

8075. How do you think he will succeed in getting more rent?—They will make an alteration in their rental owing to the increased expense of management.

8076. But if there are so many empty houses at present, will the mere fact of the landlord being put to additional expense persuade the tenant to give him a higher rent?—The fact of empty houses does not altogether bring about the effect that the rent will be kept at a given sum, because there is a preference for certain localities, and people may wish to go to a certain house in a certain district, and so the landlord is able to sustain the same rental, although there may be a number of empty houses.

8077. Will he succeed in getting sufficient extra rental to recoup him for the losses you have indicated?—I am not in a position to be able to make up the appreciable cost, because I am not acquainted with the internal arrangements of a factor's office, but I think the tendency would be towards an increase.

8078. (*Mr Howden.*) What effect has the present system of yearly lets on the building trades? Does it cause periodic rushes, and then a depression in the building trade after the term?—There is a desire, in Dundee at any rate, to go after new buildings.

8079. What I want to get at is the effect on the building trade, not the effect on the tenant. Does it cause a rush in the building trade before the term, and a depression after the term?—I could not speak on that point.

8080. You have told us that there is no demand for shorter lets, so far as you know, in Dundee?—Not for the monthly system that was advocated in the Council, and especially not for monthly lets with the proviso that the rent be paid in advance. That was the further proviso, and I think it was an objectionable feature.

8081. That weighed with them in deciding that they would not have monthly lets?—Yes.

8082. Has the Trades Council taken any action in connection with this matter?—No, not so far as my knowledge goes.

8083. They have not petitioned in favour of Mr Cross's Bill?—They may have done that at an earlier stage, but I am not aware of its being done.

8084. In your precognition you talk about the necessity of indirect rating on tenants occupying the lower rented houses as due to social conditions?—The disadvantages under which these poor people live, surrounded for one thing by very severe temptations, by public houses which

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extract from these workers a very large proportion of their comparatively meagre wages, very largely tend to explain why they are not so well placed for meeting their obligations.

8085. You refer to the comparatively meagre wages. Are the wages in Dundee not up to the standard of other cities?—I think that we are not in so good a position as regards many of our women workers as they are in other parts of the country.

8086. It is to that class that you refer in your precognition?—I refer to the general body of the workers, but in regard to the special point of the wages I allude to the mill and factory workers.

8087. (*Mr Binnie.*) Have you had any experience in the management of property?—No.

8088. So any expression of opinion that you have given us regarding the profit from owning small houses and large houses is just the opinion of an outsider?—As I have indicated, I have no personal knowledge of the management of property.

8089. You proposed that the lets should be from 4th April?—Yes.

8090. Did you also take into consideration the necessity for altering the time for warning away?—I think that includes a sufficient time for any such notice.

8091. But at present you require to warn away on 4th April, and if you did not allow the letting to commence till 4th April, how would you do, when would you let?—The question at present is that of committing a tenant to the occupancy of premises for a year, involving about sixteen months.

8092. You propose to alter the term when houses are to be let to the 4th April?—Yes.

8093. How could a landlord warn away a tenant if he was not at liberty to commence letting till 4th April?—I think you have about six weeks.

8094. No. The law at present is that you must warn away a tenant on 4th April, and you are proposing to make that the time for beginning to let?—Yes.

8095. If a landlord did not come to terms with a tenant when he went to let him his house on 4th April, how could he warn away that tenant?—An intimation of retiral could be made; that is quite a different thing from asking a man to be committed for sixteen months.

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8096. Surely you don't see the difficulty at all. You propose that the landlord should not be at liberty to let his house till 4th April?—Yes.

8097. Very well; he goes to a tenant on 4th April, and says, "Will you take the house for next year," and if the tenant and he did not agree as to the terms on which the tenant is to sit, how can the landlord warn him away?—If a tenant is objectionable on any score at all, I should suppose it is quite reasonable for the landlord to give intimation that he will require to go before 4th April.

8098. But if they don't agree as to the terms of the let, what is the landlord to do?—If he is to be ordering a man from the tenancy, there is no question of agreement any further.

8099. No, if he has made up his mind that the tenant is an objectionable tenant, and is to be cleared out, but the tenant and he may quarrel as to the terms of the let for the next year?—Quite so.

8100. Then how is the landlord to get quit of that tenant?—It is time when he has to order him to move, and he is then in a position to fix up another tenant.

8101. (*Chairman.*) You would just make the date of warning later; if you are to alter the date for returning the missive, you would also alter the warning date and make it later?—Yes, there is no difficulty in that respect.

8102. Both would require to be altered?—Yes, but I don't see any difficulty even as it stands.

8103. (*Mr Binnie.*) Then when would you make the warning-away day?—A landlord is entitled to give an intimation at any time he chooses, if the tenant is an unsatisfactory one. I know, as a matter of fact, that where there is an objectionable tenant, there has been a desire to give an intimation long before the time.

Mr A. W. Stiven.

Mr Alexander W. Stiven, C.A., called and examined.

Mr A. W. Stiven.

8104. (*Chairman.*) Are you the Police Treasurer of Dundee?—Yes.

8105. How long have you been Treasurer?—About three years.

8106. Can you tell me whether the town of Dundee has got Local Acts?—Yes. The Principal Act is the Act of 1882, and then there are something like six or eight subsequent Acts.

8107. Are you under the General Police Act of 1892?—No.

8108. As to the statistics, we want a note of the total assessment to begin with; then we want to know how much of that is for houses under £16 (*i.e.*, the limit in Mr Cross's Bill), under £10 (*i.e.*, the one proposed in the Town Council), under £7 (that is the other proposal), and then under the existing system under £5. Then we next want to know the effect of the suggested changes in two particulars. You see we want to know how much of the rates are paid out of the total that you would give us; then we want to know how much of the non-payment results from failure to pay when demanded, and how much results from exemptions. Under the second head you might distinguish if you can between people who are exempted as paupers and people who get exemption on special grounds shown?—I am afraid we could not distinguish that. Perhaps if I confine that to police rates it would suit this Commission?

8109. Yes. It has a bearing on the franchise question, in the first place; if the landlord is to pay all the rates, then the rates will be paid and people who are now disfranchised because they are returned as not having paid their rates will then claim a vote. We want to see how many that would be. The other object is to ascertain what amount of rates would be got by the rating authorities through the landlord which at present are not got, and of course on the assumption that there is to be no relief of poor tenants that might be a considerable sum. We want, in short, to ascertain what the Corporation would gain on the footing that the present relief still continues, and also on the footing that it is brought to an end. You would be able out of these figures to give us the material?—You mean the present relief in respect of under £5?

8110. No, in respect of rents up to £16 if it can be done?—Yes.

8111. So we can see what would be the result to the Corporation if these reliefs came to an end. In addition, can you give us any information as to the number of houses on what are called long lets, viz., yearly lets, and the number of short lets? I am of course limiting myself to houses under £16. Is there any material for that?—I am afraid not.

8112. Either in your position or that of any other official?—Of course we have it if we were to analyse the whole roll, but that would be a very serious undertaking.

8113. It has been done for us in some other places?—We do it in periods of five years.

8114. It may be quite rough. We would like to know, roughly, the proportion of houses under £16 which are on long lets, and the proportion of short lets?—I will try and put a figure on it.

8115. In Glasgow, we were told that, suppose the limit were £10 instead of £20, as Mr Cross proposes, it would practically affect 50 per cent. of the whole householders of the town. It appeared in Edinburgh that the proportion would be quite different. Now we want to know what it would be in Dundee?—I will try and give the information.

8116. Then could you give us the number of empty houses in Dundee?—I think some of the house factors are prepared to give evidence on that subject.

8117. But could you not give us the total?—I think I could give a figure for that too. I will endeavour to do so. (See Appendix.)

8118. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Could you tell us just now what the owner's rates are?—The owner's rate just now, as regards police and other rates, is one-half only of what we call the minor rates, consisting of the rate for lunacy purposes, registration of births, registration of voters, and such small things as these. In other words, the owner just now does not pay any proportion of the police rates proper.

8119. They are all levied against the occupier?—Yes.

8120. So what the owner does pay now is the tenant's rate on property under £5?—Yes.

8121. That is practically everything?—Yes, that is so.

8122. With reference to property above £5 which is let on short lets, does the owner pay the police rates?—They are paid by the owner in place of by the tenant in the case of short lets up to three months.

8123. That is by your private Act?—Yes.

8124. How do you get the material for assessing the owners in these cases?—They are returned to us by the assessor as short lets.

8125. Will the proprietors in these cases return to the assessor these subjects as let for the short period?—Yes.

8126. I do not think we have had that method explained to us before. The difficulty we had in Glasgow was that the assessor only got a note of the tenant and had no information as to the duration of the occupation?—I think the proprietors do make a return, showing which of the lets are short lets.

8127. Under three months?—Yes.

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8128. If that were extended to six months or nine months, the same information being given, then you as treasurer would be able to collect the rates from the proprietors just as you do now, in cases of under three months?—That is so. Perhaps I ought to have said that the proportion of rates presently payable by landlords is $1\frac{5}{16}$d. per £.

8129. That is the ones you have detailed?—Yes, one half of the small rates.

8130. Can you tell us as to what poor and school rates are payable in Dundee?—Taking it upon the gross rental, it works out about 1s. 1d. and 1s. $1\frac{3}{4}$d.

8131. That is on owner and tenant respectively?—Yes.

8132. Is there any limit of £4 or £5?—No.

8133. There is no exemption, so far as you know, in respect of short lets?—No.

8134. That is evidently a provision of your own private Act?—Yes, as regards police rates.

8135. You heard one of the witnesses deal with the proposal in view of charging the landlord with the rates, that the tenant might be told how much of the monthly or quarterly payment was rent and how much was rate. Do you think that is practicable in view of the usual date of letting property? Could a factor fix with a tenant how much the tenant was to pay monthly for rent and rates, say in May?—You would require to approximate in respect of the first quarter and perhaps the second quarter, because our rate is not fixed till September.

8136. Would that be obviated by going back a year and taking the previous year's assessments?—Or by going back a half year and being always half a year behind.

8137. After the first half year it would right itself?—Yes.

8138. We have been told that, assuming the proprietor was obliged to pay these rates, he would simply collect a slump sum either monthly or quarterly, as is the practice in England. Assuming you had the right to collect from the landlord, would there be any difficulty in giving the tenant as usual a notice showing what the rates came to while you collected from the proprietor?—I think the preferable way would be for the landlord to note on his receipt the amounts represented by the rate and the rent.

8139. In England it is one sum that is collected, and we have been told elsewhere that it would be practically impossible to collect two sums from, say, a monthly tenant?—There would be no difficulty in putting on the notice and receipt as well the rate per £ represented by the rates.

8140. Thus bringing it to the tenant's notice?—Yes, every time he pays his rent.

8141. Is there under your private Act a right to exempt on the ground of poverty?—Yes, that is a provision under a local Act. It is copied as a matter of fact from the general Police Act.

8142. In some private Acts burghs do not have the power to exempt from police rates, but you have the power?—Yes.

8143. At present you assess only the tenant who is returned as tenant at the making up of the annual roll?—We go further than that; we get a supplementary roll from the assessor in the early spring, which contains subjects that have come into occupancy during the year.

8144. Assuming that a tenant is returned when the roll is made up and leaves between terms, he is still liable for the whole year's rates?—No, our Act provides for remission being made in the case of premises being unoccupied for a period of three months.

8145. Remission in favour of the man returned in the roll?—Yes. If a house is occupied only for six months, then we only get the six months' rates.

8146. Do you have any claim on the successor?—Yes, we have a section which enables us to demand it at any time.

8147. And it gives you the whole power of recovery against the new tenant?—Yes, we have that power.

8148. So, even assuming under any legislation short lets became more prevalent, the powers you have would enable you to get the proper proportion from both the man whose name is on your roll and from his successor?—No, because it is impossible to recover towards the end of the year. If the time be too short, then we would lose the rates. That brings up the question of the collection of rates being more frequent than once a year. It would result in a large loss.

8149. (*Chairman.*) Will you kindly explain that?—In the first place, we cannot begin to collect any of our rates until December. If we are to make any interval at all between the first collection and the second collection, it brings us on very close to the end of our year before the second portion is payable. There is such a short period that it would be impossible to collect them.

8150. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Would there not be time after that to take payment in four instalments or so?—There would not be time to take payment in one instalment. We would lose thousands of pounds.

8151. In regard to the present system of exemption, the burgh of Paisley suggested that a clause might be put into any Bill, in terms of which the tenant would be entitled to appeal against rates on the ground of poverty, and in the event of his appeal being sustained, he would get a certificate from the burgh, and the landlord on receipt of this would be bound to credit the tenant with the amount of the rate and then get this as a refund from the Corporation. What do you think of that?—I am afraid that that would be impracticable. Our collection would never be final.

8152. But at present you have a great number of exemptions?—Yes, but they are dealt with then, and we have never handled the money.

8153. It is merely a case of one year righting itself with the next?—I am afraid it would be endless; it would never work.

8154. If you put the burden of the rates upon the landlord, then the tenants have no opportunity of continuing the present claim for exemption,—they cannot get exemption if they are not assessed?—That applies at present to rents under £5.

8155. Assume it is up to £7 or £16, that would aggravate the injustice which at present exists?—It really comes to be a question in many cases of their saving up a sufficient sum of money to pay a large sum. I have no doubt whatsoever that a large proportion of the occupiers who presently get relief could pay if it were taken in small sums.

8156. I will assume that poverty will always be with us. If there is to be a class of ratepayers too poor to pay rates, the question is whether that is to be borne by the landlords as a class or by the whole community. At present it is borne by the community. Is it not possible to devise some means by which, even with direct collection of rates, it will be possible for the tenant to get exemption on the ground of poverty and to get credit from his landlord in respect of the rate included in his rent? This is the Paisley proposal, that he should get a certificate and forthwith get credit, and then the landlord should get a refund from the Corporation?—It would not work.

8157. It must involve a much larger payment to proprietors than would be the case if tenants continued to get exemption?—Yes, it would be a larger payment.

8158. Would not the allowance require to be sufficient to cover the amount of the exemptions as well as the amount of the irrecoverables?—Something less than that would do, because they would make a better recovery than we would.

8159. And also the expense of collecting?—Yes.

8160. And also some allowance possibly in respect of more frequent entries?—Yes, that would all require to be taken into account.

8161. (*Mr Howden.*) Can you tell us whether the wording of the Act which allows them to grant exemption is "inability to pay" or "on the ground of poverty"? You see there is a distinct difference?—It is "on the ground of poverty."

8162. (*Mr Binnie.*) You said that you could not collect the rates quarterly?—It would be quite impossible.

8163. You suggested a little ago that a landlord should for the first six months of the year collect the rates at the rate at which they had been imposed the previous year?—Yes.

8164. If he could do that, why could not the town collect the rates at the same rate as the previous year for the first six months and then increase or diminish the rate for the next six months?—Perhaps I ought to state my views in full?

8165. Certainly.—The ideal way of paying the rates is that the rates ought to be paid within the year of assessment. Now that is quite impossible if you make the rate payable in more than one sum.

8166. But why is it necessary that the rates should be paid in the year of assessment? What is the peculiar merit of that?—All the disbursements are made in the year of assessment, and the revenue ought to come in to meet that.

8167. I know, and under the suggestion I have made to you, you would get a year's assessment within the year?—Does your suggestion involve that we would always be half a year behind in our collection?

8168. No, it does not. The first half year, that is up to the time that you have fixed on the assessments, usually somewhere about the half year, you should levy the rates at the same amount as was imposed the previous year?—I question whether that is practicable.

8169. In what way?—It means a radical alteration of the whole assessing system.

8170. We are asked to consider very considerable alterations?—We do not get our assessment roll finished until the middle of September, and it is upon that roll that we must assess.

8171. You could not know earlier even who the tenants were?—No, we do not get the roll till September.

8172. Could you not even get the names of the tenants?

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—That would mean double work; it would mean our doing the same work as the assessor is doing. It would mean doing it twice a year instead of once a year.

8173. (*Mr Cox.*) Mr Dobbie went pretty fully into the question of relief while the landlord paid the rates. It would be very satisfactory if you would set your mind to work to see whether any scheme is advisable for giving relief in really necessitous cases under the condition of the landlord paying the rates. Of course I do not want an answer just now, but that is one of the difficulties of this question that we are inquiring into, and if you could help us towards a solution, it would be very satisfactory?—Does the question of abatement not help to solve the matter, if the landlord gets sufficient abatement to cover his loss?

8174. But he will press the poor tenant as far as he can?—The abatement falls on the whole ratepayers as a body.

8175. He will take as big an abatement as you will allow him, and he will also press the tenant to the very utmost to get the rates out of him. You will consider that?—Yes.

8176. (*Mr Esslemont.*) You have seen Mr Cross's latest Bill?—Yes.

8177. Have you considered the schedule attached to it?—Yes.

8178. What do you think of the rates of abatement there?—I think they are too small for us.

8179. The suggestion for Dundee is 7½ per cent. up to £7 of rental, 5 per cent. up to £10, and 2½ per cent. for £10 and not exceeding £16?—Yes. My own personal opinion is—I have no authority from the Town Council to give it—that in this matter we should not be niggardly in our abatements to the landlord. We ought to give a full abatement rather than a narrow one, and on the whole I think we ought to continue the 20 per cent. up to the present limit, and we ought to give a 10 per cent. abatement from £5 to £10.

8180. You say 10 per cent. between £5 and £10?—Yes, both inclusive.

8181. And between £10 and £16?—He would not require more than 5 per cent. in that case.

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8182. That means that you suggest double the percentages suggested by Mr Cross?—Yes, something like that. 20 per cent. is our present rate up to £5.

8183. (*Chairman.*) Will you be good enough to hand in a note of the dates and sections *re* rating of Acts of Parliament referring to Dundee?—Yes. (*See Appendix.*)

8184. You referred to the short lets under three months. Can you tell me up to what rent any of these short lets go?—I do not know that many of them will exceed £10.

8185. They go as high as that?—Some of them reach £10.

8186. Under £5, do I understand that it is not the case of the annual rates being owner's rates, but that they are substantially occupier's rates paid by the landlord?—They are occupier's rates with the exception of about 1¼d.

8187. Is there not a similar rule as in other places in regard to the water rate?—Yes, 20 per cent. up to £5.

8188. Is there any similar rule about the stair gas?—No, there is no abatement there.

8189. How often is it collected?—Four times a year.

8190. Why, if you can do that four times a year, could you not collect the other rates more frequently than once a year?—We have a compulsitor with the gas that we do not have with the police rates. We can cut off the gas, a thing that we cannot do with the police rates.

8191. But still you have the work to do four times instead of once?—It is not a very large matter.

8192. The quarterly collection would merely involve increased expense to the town, or in your view is it really impracticable?—It is impracticable.

8193. You said you took five months before you could begin?—Seven months.

8194. Could that not be reduced by putting on a bigger staff to do the work?—Not appreciably.

8195. Why not?—It is the middle of September before the roll is available. It might be made a month earlier with some effort, but it could not be appreciably earlier.

8196. It would involve an alteration in the valuation statutes to make that roll earlier?—Yes.

Mr J. M. Barlas.

Mr James Miller Barlas, called and examined.

Mr J. M. Barlas.

8197. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the Town Council of Perth?—Yes.

8198. And you hold the office of Lord Dean of Guild?—Yes.

8199. And you, yourself, are a house agent in Perth?—Yes.

8200. What are your main industries?—The dyeing industry and flax-spinning and railway works.

8201. In Perth, what is the practice as to the time for sending out missives?—It is only within recent years that the missive system has been introduced in Perth. Most of the proprietors send them out about the beginning of February.

8202. And ask them to be returned when?—From a week to ten days thereafter.

8203. Your lets are mostly yearly and half-yearly?—All yearly. The lets are all yearly, and the payments are half-yearly.

8204. Take the smallest class of houses and the lowest rents, what is the practice with them?—The practice there, too, is simply the yearly let.

8205. Suppose you have a house of £4, what is it?—Some prefer monthly payments, but a yearly let.

8206. Substantially you have no monthly or weekly lets?—That is so.

8207. In Perth, has the desirability of reducing the time between the taking of the house and the entering of it been agitated at all?—It has never been spoken of at all by the public, so far as I know.

8208. Apart from that, has the proposal to institute short lets instead of long been agitated at all?—No, never mentioned.

8209. When you say never mentioned, do you include municipal election meetings?—I do.

8210. And correspondence in the papers and so on?—Yes; it has never been raised, for instance, in the Trades Council itself.

8211. In your view, is there any substantial grievance either in the one matter or the other?—The only thing, I think, is that possibly the missives are issued too early.

8212. How much later, do you think, consistent with the reasonable accommodation of landlord and tenant, should they be issued?—I should say, possibly about the beginning of March, and returned about the 10th.

8213. Do you see any objection to the proposal that we have heard to-day from Dundee to make it even later and take it in April?—It would be rather late, I am afraid. You would have to give legal notice after that.

8214. Suppose, instead of the warning-away day being 4th April it were taken on to the end of April, in that case could not you have the missives sent out in the beginning of April?—It might do, but it is too short between the time of sending out the missives and the flitting term.

8215. If a system did in a place like Glasgow, would not it be still easier to work it in Perth?—I should think so.

8216. You see, factors in Glasgow have told us they require so much time, having enormous businesses; apparently, if it would do there, it ought to do in Perth?—I should think so.

8217. In Perth have you much of a shifting population as there is in Glasgow?—Not going out of Perth. There may be a little shifting in the city, but there is little from Perth to other cities.

8218. Can you give us any illustration, from your own experience, of the number of removals that you have?—I do not think I have had above half-a-dozen leaving the city who were tenants of my own.

8219. Where were they going to?—Well, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

8220. Was that from dull trade, or just from getting better situations?—Just getting better situations.

8221. How many houses do you factor yourself?—Over 600, I think.

8222. The rents will vary from what?—From about 30s. up to £38.

8223. Thirty shillings a what?—A year.

8224. You have experience of all classes?—Yes.

8225. Have you any information as to the number of houses in Perth under a £10 rental?—Not further than from the census return of 1901.

8226. Just give us now what your information is?—Of course, the rentals I give are only approximately average rentals,—one-roomed houses, 491, rented from £1, 10s. to £4; two-roomed houses, 2510, rented from £6 to £9, 10s.; three-roomed houses, 1727, rented from £11 to £13; four-roomed houses, 833, rented at from £14 to £16, 10s.

8227. Have you a statement of the total number, including all rents?—I have not.

8228. Could you conveniently get it?—I could get it.

8229. You might say what the total number of houses is, and you might send a note of that to Mr Gillon, and we will fill it up afterwards?—Yes.

8230. The Corporation of Perth have houses of their own?—Yes.

8231. Has that been through improvement schemes?—Yes; partly through opening up of new streets, and to provide houses before the streets were formed.

8232. Have they kept or disposed of them?—We have them still.

8233. 101 altogether?—Yes.

8234. Are there any of these new houses, or all old?—All new.

8235. In that case are the 101 houses with rents varying from £4, 10s. for one-roomed houses up to £12, 10s. for three-roomed houses. How often are the rents collected?—Every week.

8236. By the Social Union?—Yes.

8237. Is that found satisfactory?—Very; there are no arrears.

8238. Are the tenants selected?—Yes.

8239. Is there a caretaker?—Yes, in each block.

8240. Are the rates collected with the rents?—Yes.

8241. There is no loss either on rent or rates?—Except from empty houses.

8242. Are they fairly well filled?—They have been fairly well filled up to last year.

8243. Have you not got what number of empty houses there is in Perth at present?—No.

8244. You could get it?—Yes.

8245. Is the state of trade just now in Perth normal?—Yes.

8246. Have Perth Co-operative Society 170 tenants?—Yes. The rentals varying from 5 guineas up to 19 guineas for two-roomed houses.

8247. Is it the custom in Perth to have bathrooms in the better-class houses of working men?—They are in several of the working-class houses.

8248. How many of your 602 are new houses?—I should say possibly 200 of them.

8249. The Perth Co-operative houses are yearly lets, with half-yearly payments?—Yes.

8250. Have you not found a desire among tenants, apart from the length of let, to have more frequent payments than half-yearly?—Yes; they prefer more frequent payments, some of them, but they desire at the same time security of tenure.

8251. When you say more frequent payments, what do you mean, quarterly or monthly, or what?—Monthly, and quarterly in some cases.

8252. Why don't they get it if they want it?—We generally let them have it if they wish it.

8253. Out of your 602, are there any quarterly payments at all?—Very few; not more than 30.

8254. But if a man wants to pay quarterly, you allow him?—Yes.

8255. And if he wants to pay monthly, what do you do?—I will take it monthly if he wishes it.

8256. Although it would cost you more labour?—Yes, more trouble.

8257. Do you send round, or does he come to you often?—I send for it.

8258. Always?—Yes.

8259. You heard what we asked from Mr Steven, the Treasurer of Dundee. Do you think, if you got a copy of his evidence, it would be possible for you afterwards to make up a corresponding note for Perth?—Yes, I should think so.

8260. We will arrange that, if you would kindly do your best?—I will do so.

8261. As to the question of rates being collected along with the rents by the landlord and paid over, how do your people view that. Has it been discussed at all in the Council?—No.

8262. Do you know the general view of it. Yes.

8263. What is it?—The feeling is that we should not collect the rates under £10.

8264. At present is Perth under the general Police Act, or is it under a local Act?—It is under the general Police Act.

8265. Of 1892?—Yes.

8266. Under £4, you do collect the rates just now?—Yes; that is to say, the burgh rates.

8267. And the landlord pays them over?—Yes.

8268. Does he get any allowance?—No.

8269. Is there any complaint against that system?—No, not so far as I know.

8270. Would there be any objections to taking the limit a bit up, as was proposed by Mr Johnston to-day, to £7: he suggested that instead of £5, as it is in Dundee?—If there were no extra risk.

8271. To whom?—If it were a monthly let, of course, and we had to bear the risk of collecting the rates, and paying the rates for the whole year, we should require a bigger percentage.

8272. By "we" you mean the landlords?—Yes.

8273. That would be a question of getting a proper allowance?—That is so.

8274. Suppose that were done, what about empty houses?—We would suggest that we should be rated only for the time that the house was occupied.

8275. So that the allowance you would get would be for the cost of collection and the losses?—That is so.

8276. In your view, suppose the burgh rates were collected by the proprietor, should the other rates also be collected?—I think so, if there is to be any alteration at all; all the local rates ought to be collected by the proprietor.

8277. Why?—I think, if otherwise, it would lead to confusion.

8278. Have you any opinion on this? Suppose that short lets were brought in instead of long lets, do you think it would lead to a greater number of removals in the year, or merely spread them over a year?—It might at the beginning, until they get accustomed to the system; but when it was in operation I do not know that it would increase the number of removals.

8279. We have been told in other places that having only the same removal term in the year produces great inconvenience, overpressure, higher rates for hiring vehicles and horses and men. Do you find any complaint of that at Perth?—Yes, that is the case. There is overpressure at the flitting time in May.

8280. Do you think, if it could be done at more frequent removal terms, as in England, it would be better than one removal at Whitsunday?—I should think so.

8281. Substantially do people in Perth remove at any other time?—No; Whitsunday is the flitting term. There are very few removals at any other time.

8282. Have you any idea why that should be, as contrasted with England?—I have no idea.

8283. The Martinmas term is not a removal term practically?—It is in the country, but not in the burghs.

8284. In your view, at far as Perth is concerned, to take forward the time for making the contract about the house would cure any grievance that exists?—I think so. It would go a long way to remove it.

8285. In your view, if a Bill was passed into an Act, should it include the optional clause, leaving it to different places to take their own way according to their own interests?—No; I think if a Bill was to become an Act, it should be made imperative on all burghs.

8286. How would it affect you in Perth? Suppose in Glasgow they have real occasion for it, because the conditions are different, and suppose in Perth you have no occasion for it, would you not desire to be in a position to say that Perth should not be subject to it?—It might lead to confusion, with different practices in different burghs.

8287. You think the advantage of having one system would outweigh the hardship that localities might be under which did not want it?—I do.

8288. You attach such importance to having one uniform system?—Yes.

8289. (*Mr Esslemont.*) About the Corporation houses, I forget how many you said?—101.

8290. You said they were all new?—Yes.

8291. And weekly lets?—Yes.

8292. And until this year did you say, or last year, they had been well let?—Yes. Well let.

8293. What is the reason for their not being well let this year or last year?—Last year there was a considerable amount of dull trade in one way and another in the building trade, etc.

8294. I though you said the condition of trade was normal?—At present it is.

8295. But the houses have not filled up?—No.

8296. Is that due in any respect, do you think, to unpopularity on account of the weekly lets?—No, I would not say that.

8297. The tenants seem to like the short lets?—Yes. That is the experience of the Union, at any rate.

8298. I don't think you mentioned what the rents of these houses were?

8299. (*Chairman.*) Varying from £4, 10s. to £12, 10s., the higher rent being three-apartment houses?—Yes.

8300. (*Mr Howden.*) What do the factors charge in Perth for a sublet. How do they do in the case of tenants wanting to remove between terms?—The practice is that, if there is an intimation given that a sitting tenant is to remove, we ask them to bring the incoming tenant along with them. That is my own practice; and if we can arrange the matter agreebably, he just goes into the house.

8301. That means that the tenant has got to find a sub-tenant?—Of course, I make an effort to find a sub-tenant, but the burden of responsibility lies on the sitting tenant.

8302. You leave him responsible in the event of not getting a sub-tenant?—Yes.

8303. Do you charge anything for that or for putting out a board "To sublet"?—Nothing.

8304. You just charge him for the sublet?—That is all.

8305. (*Mr Dobbie.*) What would you call a typical rent for a working man's house in Perth?—From £10 to £12.

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8306. The Bill proposed by Mr Cross states the Perth limit at £16. Would that cover every working-class house?—I should think it would.

8307. Do you think it would be any hardship if the limit was kept to £16 as against £8 or £9?—I should make the limit £12 for the burgh.

8308. I see the Perth Co-operative Society have built houses of four rooms at £13 rent: to whom do they let these?—Just workmen, generally.

8309. They will perhaps be less frequent rents; cases of working men with large families, perhaps?—Yes.

8310. We may take it that the normal rent of a working man's house is about £10?—Yes.

8311. In the Bill proposed by Mr Cross, dealing with Perth, he proposes to allow the proprietor an abatement of 7½ per cent. for rents under £10?—Yes.

8312. Five per cent. under £10, and 2½ per cent. under £16?—Yes.

8313. Under the Bill it is proposed to allow these sums to cover the loss through failure to get the money from the tenant, the loss from partial empties, and the loss through the present exemption on the ground of poverty being done away with. Have you any view as to whether or not these rates would be sufficient to cover the burden put upon the proprietor if he had to pay the rates?—In my view the percentage allowed is too small if you have to take all the risks.

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8314. Assuming that the arrangement come to was that there was to be an allowance for the trouble of collecting, and possibly the risk of partial empties, and that otherwise the burgh should make good the amount lost through the exemption on the ground of poverty, do you think, in that view, 7½ per cent. might be sufficient?—Yes.

8315. Coming back to the landlord. What was your loss through exemptions or irrecoverables?

8316. (*Chairman.*) How long have you been in business as a house-factor?—For four years.

8317. In that time can you tell how much, in your knowledge, has been lost to tenants removing by having to continue to pay your rent and also to pay the rent of the house they went to. Have you had any case of that kind?—None whatever.

8318. In every case where a sublet was wanted it has been got, has it, without double rent being paid?—That is so.

8319. So far as you know, has your experience been singular, or may it be taken that you are representing the ordinary experience?—I think it is fairly representative.

Mr J. Mann, Mr J. Greig, and Mr Reid.

Mr James Mann, Mr James Greig, and Mr Reid, called and examined.

Mr J. Mann, Mr J. Greig, and Mr Reid.

8320. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) What is your occupation?—A blacksmith.

8321. (*To Mr Reid.*) What is your occupation?—insurance agent.

8322. (*To Mr Greig.*) What is your occupation?—Shop assistant.

8323. (*To Mr Mann.*) Are you and Mr Reid commissioned by the Dundee United Trades and Labour Council to express the views of your Council on the questions before us?—Yes.

8324. (*To Mr Greig.*) How do you stand?—I am authorised by the Representation Committee, composed of the principal Trades Unions in Dundee.

8325. To state their views?—Yes.

8326. (*To Mr Mann.*) How old is the Dundee and District Trades United Trades and Labour Council?—It has been in existence since 1884.

8327. Is it representative of all the different trades, skilled and unskilled?—Almost all trades; but there are thirty-eight Trades Unions represented—most of the skilled trades. The unskilled are not very largely organised. The mills and factories are organised. There are two bodies represented.

8328. Are the mills and factories represented on the Council?—Yes.

8329. How many men do you represent, if you take the total workmen?—About 13,500.

8330. All in Dundee, or some of them outside?—All in Dundee.

8331. What is the district?—The only body outside of Dundee will be the bleachers. They are practically located in the rural districts.

8332. Has this matter been considered by your Council or only by Committees?—Lately it has only been considered by Committees; but at different periods, when the Bill was before the House, previously it was discussed in the Council.

8333. How long ago?—About three years ago.

8334. (*To Mr Greig.*) How old is the Labour Representation Committee?—I think it will be four or five years since it was formed.

8335. Does the work representation apply to Parliamentary and Municipal Representation, or only to Parliament?—It applies to the running of local M.P.'s as well.

8336. Both municipal and parliamentary?—Yes.

8337. Has this matter been discussed in your Committee?—The question has been brought up and discussed at various times.

8338. How many does your Committee consist of?—There are, I think, at the present time, between twenty and thirty delegates.

8339. From the different Trades Unions?—Yes.

8340. We have been told that in Dundee, gentlemen, this matter has not been brought up before the municipal meetings. Do you agree with that?

(*Mr Reid.*) It is quite true, but it has never been made an issue at the present time. If it had been made an issue, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying, so far as the wage earners are concerned, about 100 per cent. would have been in favour of this measure; because in my occupation as an insurance agent, I move about among all classes of people, every hour of the day, and I have been particularly sounding all classes of people upon this Bill of Mr Cross's. I have yet to meet the man who is against it.

8341. Are you including both the early missive question and the question of short lets?—Yes.

8341*a*. The inference rather is suggested that if it has been brought up prominently at ward meetings, etc., in Glasgow and not in Dundee, it is a more pressing question in Glasgow than in Dundee?—I think it affects wage earners all over the country, no matter where they live.

8342. We were told in Edinburgh, by the working men, that, while they press for it there, they admitted it was more urgent in Glasgow, because there was a more shifting population. I suppose that is true about Dundee?—There is a fair percentage of the people in Dundee, for example, those who work in the boat yards, and who are engaged in the building trade, who are compelled to move. A man may be a joiner employed in a boat yard for three months; the ship is finished, and he is left idle for five or six months, and compelled to go to Newcastle or some other ship-building centre.

8343. There will be a fair percentage in Dundee, but the percentage will be larger in Glasgow?—Yes; it is a larger city.

8344. (*To Mr Mann.*) Taking the question of the shortening of the period between the time when you take your house and the time when you enter. Everybody is agreed, you see, that a change is desirable there. How far would you go? When would you make the latest time of taking a house down to, before the 28th of May?—For a yearly tenancy, I should say a month, at any rate, before the removal term would be sufficient. That would be about the end of April; 28th April would be early enough for the missive to be returned.

8345. It has been said in Glasgow that instead of the warning-away day being 4th April it might be twenty-one days before the 28th of May, that would be 7th May, and that they would require a fortnight or three weeks before that for looking about both for tenants and landlords. That would take you, let us say, a month to beginning of April. What do you say to that?—That would give you nearly what I was saying: mine was seven days more. That is for the missive to be returned and for the new house taken. The inquiry would not begin until that time, so that would be four weeks for the inquiries and taking the new house. The old tenants would have settled by that time.

8346. Suppose that alteration were made, do you think that would satisfy the whole grievance, or do you think the separate question of yearly let remains?—It would satisfy so far as the missive is concerned, but not so far as the whole yearly tenancy is concerned.

8346*a*. It is admitted that there are cases when men have to leave between terms. There is no doubt about that. It is said that there are so few that practically the matter is met by sublets. Have you any experience in regard to that?—It is difficult to get many cases, of course. I have one specific case that I was connected with.

8347. Give it as an illustration?—It is a matter in connection with what Mr Reid said. It was in the case of a young joiner working in a ship-building yard, who lost his employment through the job being finished. He was idle for a good many months, and eventually got a situation out of town, and his removal to the other town happened to be in the first six months of the year. In order to get his goods removed, two parties came to his assistance, he being short of money, and paid the first six months' rent

for him, and found a sublet; but until the proprietor had security, these two became security for the second six months' rent, before he would accept a sub-tenant, which they considered to be a hardship. If a yearly tenancy is continued, there is a great demand for a break at any rate at the six months.

8348. That was a case where there was anxiety connected with it, but there was no actual loss?—No.

8349. Can you say, from experience, that you have known of cases where a man has had to pay, as it were, two rents—the rent of the house he went to, and the rent of the one he left?—No; I could not give you an instance of that.

8350. (*To Mr Reid.*) Have you?—Yes, many. For example, here is one. A friend of my own, some years ago, took a house at Forest Park, rented at £14. After two months his wife took ill, and the doctor advised him to remove to the outskirts of the city. He took a house at Invergowrie, after being three months in Forest Road He advertised the house, and spent £1, 2s. in advertising, and endeavoured in many ways to get the house sublet, but failed. The total loss was the rent for nine months, £10, 10s.; taxes, £1, 14s.; advertising, £1, 2s.; total, £13, 6s.

8351. Had he gone to the factor, and tried to get the factor to sublet?—Yes; but he thought that the factor being financially interested did not worry over the matter. There was another case up my own stair—244 Clepington Road. I have been there for five years, and during that time there have been three cases where people were compelled to leave that part of the town and sublet their houses. In one case out of the three there was a loss of three months' rent and six months' taxes.

8352. How did the loss arise?—Through failing to get some one to take the house.

8353. Had every proper effort been made?—Yes.

8354. Were there at the time many empty houses in the town, making it more difficult to get a sublet?—The number was not unusually large. There was just the usual number; but it happened, of course, between the terms, and the only chance of getting a tenant was either in the case of a stranger coming to the city, or of some young married couple looking for a house. Eventually, it was a young married couple that did take the house. I have come across a large number of cases, having exceptional opportunities in that way.

8355. You see, we have great difficulty, Mr Reid, in getting at facts there; because we have factors who come and consult their books and tell us exactly how much in such cases has been lost in every case. They say they never knew of anything being lost. I quite understand that there will be exceptional cases, but you think they are really numerous?—It may be my exceptional opportunities. If I was living in an entry all my days, and not having an opportunity of moving about the city, I would not find out these cases. I know of a very large number.

8356. May I take it also that there will be cases of people who would desire to remove, and for very good reasons, and who don't do it just because they are afraid they might be burdened with a double rent?—Yes; well, do you mean people refusing good situations, cases where people had the offer of better situations and refused them?

8357. Or because they were afraid that they would not get the house taken off their hands?—I have never heard of a case of that kind, because, as a rule, if a man gets the offer of a better situation, he is prepared to make a sacrifice in order to secure it.

8358. Either by going into lodgings or travelling?—Yes. With reference to the sub-letting of houses, the most serious case I have come across, perhaps, in regard to the early missive, happened three years ago. A family came from Montrose. They were farming people, and left their family behind, taking a house in Arbroath Road, just large enough to suit themselves. After about four or five months' time they thought they would like the rest of the family here, so that they brought them to Dundee, and took a larger house to accommodate them all, and sublet the house they had previously taken. The May term came round, and the people to whom they had sublet the house had an engagement in the middle of the night, and found it necessary to leave quietly, and take their furniture with them. This farmer and his wife and family were left to pay the rent of both houses.

8359. What rent was that house?—£10 was the rent of the first house and about £13 was the rent of the second.

8360. Both within the limits of this proposed Bill?—Yes. The result was they found themselves unable to meet their liabilities, and were compelled to leave the city, also during the night-time. As a result, the father and mother became law-breakers, I suppose, and they had to go back to the country without leaving any address, and they left a young family behind, deprived of the benefits of home influences. It was due entirely to the early missive.

8361. (*To Mr Greig.*) What do you say on that question: Have you had any experience?—In regard to the danger of being left with a house on a party's hands? I have a case of that next door to me.

8362. What rent?—£14.

8363. What is your own rent?—£9, 10s. This party has shifted his situation from the very west end of the town to the extreme east of the town, and being a baker he has to go out very early in the morning, and he would very much like to remove, in order to be nearer his work, but is rather afraid of the risk. His house stood untenanted 18 months previous to his occupancy.

8364. Do you think there are other cases?—I have no doubt there are other cases similar, to which I am not aware.

8365. (*To Mr Mann.*) What do you gentlemen say. Suppose there is to be a limitation to a shorter let, what should it be? Mr Cross, you see, proposes to make it depend on the period of payment. If the payment is half-yearly, the let would be half-yearly; if monthly, it would be monthly?—A quarterly let, I believe, would be the right thing for a good working-man's house, or even monthly.

8366. Would you take his principle of making it depend on the period of payment, or would you prevent a let under a certain rent for more than a certain period. Which way would you do it?—I should have a fixed period.

8367. And what do you say a fixed period should be?—Monthly

8368. Under £16 in Dundee?—No matter what the rental was, as far as the working men's houses are concerned, fix the period at the same rate, I would say. It would affect them in this way: When younger they would require a small house, but as the family grew they would go to a larger house; and under the same conditions, of course, as the family spread again, they would go back to the smaller house. That would be always keeping them under the same law.

8369. But isn't £16 a fair enough limit for Dundee?—Yes.

8370. It covers the ordinary working man's house?—Yes.

8371. (*To Mr Reid.*) Do you agree with that?—I am quite agreeable to that too.

8372. You next come to the question of rates, and in the note I have you point out that, according to the City Treasurer, the rates paid in full would mean an increase of about £3000 to the city. I suppose you would agree that, whatever the allowance is to be to the landlord, he ought to get a fair allowance to prevent this new system involving him in loss. As a general principle you agree to that?—I had an interview with Mr Steven on that point, because we were not quite sure how it would affect the landlords. Mr Steven assured us the amount allowed to the landlords was far too little, and we bowed to his superior knowledge on the matter. He is impartial.

8373. On the other point, Mr Reid, what do you say to the convenience or non-convenience of the present system of giving relief on the ground of poverty?—People being exempted?

8374. Yes?—Those who are exempted are quite unable to pay.

8375. A lump sum as at present?—Yes.

8376. But wouldn't they be able to pay if it was monthly?—A large percentage would be able to pay their rates if allowed to pay them monthly.

8377. (*To Mr Mann.*) Do you agree in that?—To a certain extent only. I would like to be sure that the percentage comes off the general community, and not the individual. I think it would be better, so as to keep the tenant in touch with his rates as well as his rent, that a separate receipt should be given for the rates along with the rent.

8378. You attach importance to that view?—Yes.

It has been enunciated in England, apparently.

(*Mr Reid.*) Two separate receipts.

8379. (*Chairman to Mr Reid.*) Or one receipt, mentioning the amount?—Yes.

8380. (*To Mr Mann.*) What do you say to the question of poor relief. Do you agree with Mr Reid?—Yes; but when necessary, if they are unable to pay the poor rates, they ought to be relieved from them.

(*Mr Greig.*) I am agreed on that point, too.

8381. You agree also that the more frequent payment of rates would make it possible to pay them in some cases where now it is not?—It would make it much easier.

(*Mr Reid.*) For example, we have at this time of the year our police rates, poor rates, water rates, gas, and, as you know, there is a custom of feeding and drinking a great deal at this time. There is extra clothing, extra coal, and at this time of the year, why, the average housekeeper is very much worried: you have all these extra expenses coming at this time, and in addition to your taxes.

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8382. Do you approve of Mr Cross's section limiting to burgh rates, or do you think the rates to be paid to the landlord should include all rates, Parish Council as well?—There is no reason why it should not. We have not discussed that.

8382*a*. (*Mr Mann.*) Personally, I think that would be easily enough done. I have had experience of weekly tenancy matters for six years, so that a short tenancy does not mean flitting often, and the rates are all collected on that.

8383. That was under a certain figure?—Yes.

8384. What is your rate now?—£9.

8385. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Mann.*) With reference to the present exemptions, is your view that, as far as there are *bona fide* reasons on the ground of poverty, such ratepayers should be exempted under any new scheme?—Yes, under any new scheme if they were *bona fide*, unable to pay, and could show reasons why, it would be better to let them have that privilege still.

8386. Your comment is, that paying by instalments or spreading over twelve months might enable some to pay who cannot pay at present?—Yes, I believe it would; because they would know exactly then how their expenditure was going over the income more than they do in the meantime, and possibly by wanting some other little comforts. If they had not to pay the rates always at unless at a certain period, they could do it easier under that system than they do at present.

8387. But so far as there is an honest case of poverty the present exemption should continue?—Yes.

8388. Of course, in the cases where there is exemption at present you would not want the landlord to lose for the benefit of the Corporation. Would you agree with Mr Reid in this, that the landlord should get an adequate allowance to make up to him for any loss sustained from this change in the law?—If he had not collected, of course, from the party who was exempted, I do not see how he should get the cost of collection.

8389. If, through removals in the middle of the year, he found that he could not collect, do you think that element should be taken into account in giving a more ample allowance to the landlord?—If he was collecting his rates monthly, or whatever period he was collecting his rents, he would only collect a portion of the rates. If his house was empty during the rest of the year, he would not collect any rates under the present law; at least, under the law of rating, he would not be asked to pay, seeing they are not asked to pay anything for an empty house.

8390. If he was assessed at the beginning of the year, and through the change in the law the house was empty part of the year, you quite approve of the landlord getting an allowance in respect of the partially empty?—Yes, until the whole system of house rating was tackled, independent of the house letting system; and then, of course, I think unlet property should pay more taxes than at the present time.

8391. In the case of the ship joiner you mentioned, was his house let yearly?—Yearly; taken at the February period as in vogue just now.

8392. You think that if a change was made from yearly to half-yearly lets that might be quite satisfactory?—It would remove the grievance to a certain extent, allowing a break every six months. Or he would not have to pay the last half year if he could not find a tenant.

8393. (*Mr Howden to Mr Mann.*) How does the removal term affect the building terms in Dundee?—As far as the cost of work is concerned, it makes, to a certain extent, a seasonal trade. Immediately before the May term there is a great rush for building, more especially affecting joiners and plasterers, and often the tenants get into the houses before they are half finished, and then there is a rush and the houses are not properly finished.

8394. (*To Mr Reid.*) Is that your opinion?—Yes.

8395. (*To Mr Greig.*) Is that your opinion?—Yes.

8396. (*To Mr Mann.*) Have you any reason to believe the views given by you to-day are held by a considerable section of the community in Dundee?—Yes, that is the general view of our body when the matter was discussed.

8397. If there had been any other view it would have been easily voiced?—Practically, we have been uniform; the feeling was so strong on this matter.

8398. On the question of yearly lets?—Yes.

(*Mr Reid*) The matter was before the Trades Council, and the Council remitted it to the Executive, with full powers to support this Bill.

8399. (*Mr Howden to Mr Reid.*) Unanimously?—Yes.

8400. (*Mr Cox to Mr Mann.*) It has been to me in this way that while there is a distinct grievance in Glasgow, Glasgow being a very large place, and distances between the east and west end being so great, the grievance is probably not so acute in Dundee, where the distances are not so great. I understood from what I have gathered from some respresentative working men that possibly a six months' tenure would be looked upon as meeting the case. What do you think about that?—Well, it might meet the case as far as pretty highly paid artisans were concerned, but others in the labouring class it would not meet so well. They are a fluctuating class to a certain extent; men who work out of doors, possibly leaving one place and going to another when their job is finished, after lasting only a few months. It would not meet their case, because they have not the means of being able to stay for a period until the sixteen month's tenure would be up.

8401. Are the workmen's cars, morning and evening, much used?—Yes, a good deal.

8402. How many cars are there that run, and what are the points they run from?—They run from every quarter of the town. I think they run workmen's cars on every route generally in the morning.

8403. About half past five or when?—Half past five and about ten minutes to six, I think, in some places.

8404. Are they pretty well filled?—Generally all those that I have seen are filled.

8405. Showing that some people do live pretty far away from their work?—Yes.

8406. You told us about the Co-operative Society; what kind of a dividend might a working man get from a Co-operative Society that he deals with?—For his provisions?

8407. Yes; are they paid half-yearly?—Yes.

8408. Will they get provisions, clothes, boots, everything from the Co-operative Store?—Yes, everything.

8409. What would the amount of an ordinary working man's dividend come to in the course of a half-year?—In one Co-operative Store the dividend generally runs from 3s. to 3s. 1d. or 3s. 2d.; and in the other one, the City Co-operative, it is 2s. 8d. or 2s. 6d. per £1.

8410. Say 3s., what amount does he spend per week?—The average amount of his purchases, I think, runs from about 9s. to 12s.

8411. So that he might have about 1s. 6d. a week. That would be £4 or £5, and you are paid half-yearly. That would come in very conveniently for the half year's rent, and is used just now for that?—It is generally considered so. It has been put to Co-operators pretty strongly that the saving of this money for the rent is the reason why they are Co-operators.

8412. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Did you say you were a weekly tenant?—I was, in England.

8413. Not in Dundee?—Never in Scotland.

8414. Since you came to Scotland you have been in a yearly house?—Yes; before I went and after I came back.

8415. (*Chairman to Mr Mann.*) What would you say to the limit in the proposed Bill being £10 instead of £16? Wouldn't that meet the case of the people who most generally require to move?—I don't think so; because if you take the ship-building trades they are pretty highly paid, and some of them live in very respectable houses. It would affect them to some extent up to the limit of £16.

8416. (*To Mr Reid.*) What do you say to that?—I mentioned before that I had been five years in my present house, and there have been three sublets in our entry. The lowest rent is £10, 10s.

8417. (*Mr Binnie.*) And the highest?—£11.

8418. (*Chairman to Mr Greig.*) What do you think of that, to limit it to £10?—I think the higher amount would be more satisfactory. There was a case in the property I am in just now of a £14 house. The gentleman got a situation in the country. He came from the country and went back to the country.

8419. What was he?—He was driving a horse. I think he was in the coal business, but did not stay long. He lost his situation. I suppose he had not been up to the job he had got, and could not get another, and had to go back to the country.

8420. What was his rent?—£14.

(*Mr Reid.*) There is one important point. Working men are becoming more desirous of having larger houses and better accommodation for their families. The working man of thirty years ago was content with conditions that the working men of to-day would not be content with. The worker is anxious to provide proper housing accommodation, and he would struggle to pay £13 or £14 of rent.

8421. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Mann.*) Can you tell me whether a £7, 10s. house in Dundee corresponds to a £7, 10s. house in Glasgow?—Something like that. They say Dundee rents are getting nearer the Glasgow rents than they used to be. The newer houses, with a little more accommodation and two rooms, are £10, 10s., or £11, more like what the Glasgow rent is. £7, 10s. would not in any way meet the requirements of the community here.

8422. Did you hear the evidence of some witnesses in the forenoon?

(*Mr Reid.*) We heard Mr Johnston, the landlord.

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8423. You don't think any Bill limited to £7, 10s. would deal adequately with the problem.

(*Mr Reid.*) Absolutely no use at all.

(*Mr Mann.*) No use at all.

8424. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Mann.*) Could you tell me the size of any working men's tenements. We wish to compare the rent of different places and the size of the tenements,—the feet of length and the feet of width of a tenement?—I don't understand the question.

8425. The frontage and the depth of the tenements?—They vary in two-roomed houses, possibly from 6 feet one way to 12 feet the other.

8426. It is the tenement, that is the way by which we can compare rents in one place with another?—That will depend on the size of the room, and how many might be in a row.

8427. But you can tell us the size of a tenement. If not, don't trouble?—We might get it.

(*Mr Binnie.*) We will get it from some other body.

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Mr William Patrick and Mr Alexander Forsyth, called and examined.

Mr W. Patrick and Mr A. Forsyth.

8428. (*Chairman to Mr Patrick.*) What do you do?—I am a warehouseman.

8429. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) What do you do?—I am a cloth-measurer.

8430. (*To Mr Patrick.*) Where do you reside?—6 Kinnaird Street.

8431. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) Where do you reside?—23 Stirling Street.

8432. (*To Mr Patrick.*) What is your rent?—£11, 10s.

8433. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) What is your rent?—£8.

8434. (*To Mr Patrick.*) What accommodation have you?—Three rooms.

8435. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) What accommodation have you?—Two rooms.

8436. (*To Mr Patrick.*) You know that we are here inquiring about a proposal among other things to have short lets, quarterly or monthly instead of yearly lets?—Yes, I understand that.

8437. Are you a yearly tenant?—Yes.

8438. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) Are you the same?—Yes.

8439. (*To Mr Patrick.*) Suppose you got your choice, and were offered either a yearly tenancy, as you are now, or a monthly tenancy, or a quarterly tenancy, which would you rather have?—I would prefer a yearly tenancy, for the simple reason that if you had a monthly or a quarterly, if you wanted to make any improvements on your house to suit yourself, immediately you had done that possibly you would get notice to remove. Then anything you had spent on your house would be thrown away. That would be my reason for having a yearly let.

8440. Have you had any experience yourself of any tenancy except a yearly?—Never.

8441. Is there any other reason that would make you prefer a yearly tenancy. Suppose you had illness in your family, for instance, would you prefer to be in a house that you could not be turned out of on short notice?—That is a different thing. I would prefer a yearly tenancy whatever the circumstances. I would not prefer a monthly tenancy, so that I could be turned out of my house in that time.

8442. And if you had not a yearly tenancy you would prefer half-yearly, for instance, to monthly?—Surely.

8443. And quarterly to monthly?—Surely.

8444. You are a warehouseman, did you say?—Yes.

8445. That is not a very shifting occupation—not like ship-building?—I have been almost twenty-one years in my present situation.

8446. And how long in 6 Kinnaird Street?—Thirteen years in the same house, and twenty-four years in the same proprietor's property.

8447. Has your rent been raised in that time?—Not since I went to this house.

8448. For how long?—Nearly thirteen years.

8449. Have you a family?—Yes.

8450. And are they working for themselves, any of them?—Yes, they are all working for themselves.

8451. How far do you go to your work?—About three-quarters of a mile.

8452. And how far do any of your children go?—One of them three-quarters of a mile, another half a mile, and another sometimes four miles to his work.

8453. What is he?—A joiner. He is sometimes working at one place and sometimes at another.

8454. And he takes a tram?—Sometimes, and sometimes rail, when he goes as far as Monifieth.

8455. But your house is a good central house for all your family.

8456. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) What did you say you were?—A cloth measurer.

8457. How far do you go to your work?—About 500 yards.

8458. Have you any children working?—No.

8459. Have you children?—One.

8460. What do you think about these short lets? Suppose you got your choice? You are a yearly tenant just now?—Yes.

8461. Suppose you got your choice to become a short let tenant?—I would prefer the yearly tenancy; and if it was to be altered, I would rather have it six months than the month.

8462. Why do you prefer a yearly?—They cannot shift you out when it suits themselves, if you do anything to the property. I have been fourteen years in my house.

8463. Have you been in the same work all the time?—Yes; sixteen years.

8464. But suppose you had behaved yourself well, as no doubt you do, would the landlord ever think of shifting you?—We don't know. I do not know the landlord's mind and he doesn't know mine.

8465. A man generally follows his own interest. When he gets a good tenant does he ever think of turning him out when he gets the rent paid regularly, and the family are all respectable?—I am never hard up.

8466. Would you be secure enough?—No; I could not do anything to suit myself for comfort. I might have to remove in any month; where is all my money gone in that case?

8467. What kind of things does a tenant do. Do you mean papering and painting?—Yes.

8468. Anything more?—You might put up something for your own convenience.

8469. Take your case, Mr Forsyth. You have been in your house fourteen years?—Yes.

8470. Has the landlord during that time done anything to your house in the way of improvement?—No.

8471. Has he ever papered or painted the house?—I have got paper from him.

8472. How often?—Twice.

8473. No painting?—Once; but I had to do the papering and painting myself. I got the materials.

8474. It has been suggested that the landlords would not be inclined to do so much for the house if the let were short, but your landlord doesn't seem to have done much for you?—It has never been required, for we are very careful with it, and don't destroy the property.

8475. (*To Mr Patrick.*) Has your landlord done anything for your house?—I have got paper from him to put it on myself, but as regards painting I have done a good deal of that to the house myself.

8476. What do you say about the other point, shortening the time between the taking of the house and the entering it. We are told that everybody thinks it is too long to be compelled to make up your mind so early in the year as February; that it would be time enough in April?—Yes; I think it ought to go back to the old time. When I took the house first—thirty-three or thirty-four years ago—six weeks and one day before the time was the regular time to take or give up your house.

8477. That was quite satisfactory, was it?—I think so.

8478. What has made the change?—The factors being anxious to get their houses let.

8479. And sometimes the tenants themselves?—Sometimes; but I think factors are a good deal to blame for it, more than the tenants.

8480. You, Mr Patrick, have been telling us your views. What do you think are the views of other working men on this matter?—I think the generality of them would appreciate what I have said.

8481. But take the ship-builders who are more fluctuating than warehousemen or cloth-measurers. You have no association with them, I suppose?—No.

8482 Do you belong to any Trades Union yourself?—No.

8483. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) Or you?—No.

8484. (*Mr Howden to Mr Forsyth.*) I think you told us the factor did improvements for you when you were on a yearly tenancy which he probably would not do for you were you on a monthly tenancy?—I have not said so.

8485. It was probably the other way. That you did the improvements yourself?—Yes.

8486. What interest would the landlord have in turning out a tenant who was improving his property?—I do not see that he would have any, if the tenant was paying his rent.

8487. That would apply equally to a monthly tenant as well as a yearly, wouldn't it?—Yes. The tenant on the

other hand would always have the fear of being turned out at the end of the month.

8488. But you told us there would be no interest on the landlord's part to have you turned out?—I never said so.

8489. Well, I fail to understand you, I am sorry. Did you not say to us the landlord could not have an interest in turning out the tenant if he paid the rent and improved his property?—Neither he would.

8490. Decidedly not? That would apply equally to monthly tenancy, or as to a yearly tenancy?—I daresay it would; but at the same time the tenant would not have the same interest in doing anything to his house, if he had always the fear that at the end of the month he might be turned out.

8491. You have told us this fear is largely imaginary?—Possibly it is imaginary, but still if it is there.

8492. (*To Mr Patrick.*) Have you any experience of men having to shift to suit their job?—I have not had to do it myself, and I cannot say much for any other body.

8493. You could only speak for yourself?—Surely; as far as that goes.

8494. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) Is that your opinion, too, that you can only speak for yourself in this matter?—I have never had to remove for work. It is a very rare occurrence.

8495. But when a man had to do that, he had to pay the landlord to get away, if it happened to be between terms, and don't you think it was a hardship on that man having to pay more than one rent, because that is what it amounts to?—No.

8496. You don't think so?—No; he was not paying two rents if he got another tenant to take his place. This party I speak of got his house sublet by consent of the factor, and he was nothing out of pocket.

8497. If he did not get that sublet?—That is that "if" that won't do.

8498. He would either have had to pay the rent or sit still?—Most decidedly.

8499. And the factor could have put him to considerable inconvenience, if he had not got that sublet?—I have walked a long distance, but never thought of removing. I was quite content with my house.

8500. Probably you were?—You see, I am only speaking for myself.

8501. You admit there could be a possible grievance here any way?—Not a grievance to warrant monthly lets.

8502. Is it the monthly rent you object to, or the monthly tenure?—I stand by the yearly taking of a house.

8503. Is it the payment of the rent by the month or the taking of the house by the month that you object to?—I object to them both.

8504. Do you pay quarterly meantime?—No, half-yearly.

8505. Do you prefer that system?—Yes.

8506. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Patrick.*) Do you think that it would be convenient to working men generally, to wage earners throughout Scotland, to pay their rents more frequently than once every half year?—Yes, I would certainly say that; even quarterly. I have always paid my rent half-yearly, but I believe to a great many working men it would be a benefit to have to pay it once a quarter. It would be easily gathered together.

8507. Take the case of working men earning anything from 20s. to 25s. a week, don't you think it would be a convenience if they had to pay rent as frequently as possible, say even monthly?—It would be a convenience. For my own part, I would say that I would as readily pay my rent quarterly as half-yearly, which has always been the case in Scotland.

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8508. You said if you were in a monthly house you would always have the dread that you would be turned out?—Yes.

8509. You have had a long experience of your present property, twenty-one years, and the landlord never put you out at the end of any one year?—No, or I would not have been there.

8510. Why should he put you out at the end of any one month?—I don't say he would do it, but he could do it.

8511. And you have just a sentimental objection to that?—Surely.

8512. You prefer to have the sense of security that you can remain there for twelve months?—Yes.

8513. Do you think that is a feeling very largely shared?—By the average working man, I think it is. I don't think the average working man would prefer a monthly tenancy to a yearly. At the same time, I believe that to pay your rent even monthly, but have your yearly tenancy, would be a benefit. I would say quarterly instead of six monthly rents.

8514. It has been represented to us, you know, that the working classes have a far greater dread of having to pay two rents in the case of having to shift for employment. Also of the rent day at 15th May and 11th November than they have of the monthly tenancy which you feel. They would rather take it with all these risks than suffer the present inconvenience of paying rent twice a year and rates once a year?—I do not follow you exactly.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) It does not matter; you have already expressed your opinion.

8515. (*Chairman to Mr Patrick.*) Are you a member of a Co-operative Society?—No.

8516. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) Are you?—No.

8517. How do you work it. You have got to be keeping the money for a half-yearly rent. Do you put it into a Savings Bank, or keep it in the house, or what. People have told us that they did it by means of the Co-operative dividend. What do you do?—I put my money in a Savings Bank.

8518. Is that a common system?—I suppose with a great many working men it is, and the statement that was published in the press here one day last week showed that the Dundee Savings Bank seems to have been freely patronised during the last year.

8519. And there is a big withdrawal at the time of the rent paying?—Yes, there is always that.

8520. Is there the same for the rates?—Well, I don't suppose there is for the rates so much, because you know the working man's rates are not so very much. Of course, the police money is high; too high, I think.

8521. The Treasurer will take a note of that?—At the same time we have just got to grin and bear it.

Mr Alexander Tasker, called and examined.

Mr A. Tasker.

8522. (*Chairman.*) What are you, Mr Tasker?—I have done many a thing in my lifetime, but I have done nothing for the last two or three years.

8523. What were you immediately before?—I was driving a horse.

8524. Where do you live?—34 Lawson Place.

8525. What is your rent?—The rent is £8.

8526. Have you been there for some time?—Three years.

8527. You heard part of what Mr Patrick and Mr Forsyth said, that they preferred the long let for a year rather than a shorter let. Have you a yearly let yourself?—I would not take a house for less than a year, because when I remove I clean my house and put it in order, and if I was under an obstreperous landlord, he could throw me out at the end of three or six months.

8528. Have you ever had anything except a yearly let?—Never.

8529. How often do you pay your rent?—Six monthly.

8530. Have you any other reason for preferring the yearly let? Is the security that it gives you an encouragement to improve the house?—It is an encouragement to improve the house, and that is why I am inclined for the twelve months' tenure.

8531. What would you say to a six monthly tenure. Would that not be just about as good?—No; because if I put my house in proper order an obstreperous landlord may put me out at the end of six months.

8532. But if you paid your rent regularly, and kept the house in good order, as I have no doubt you do, what motive would he have?—Perhaps to oblige a friend, or to suit one of his workmen. Many a thing might cause him to put me out.

8533. What do you think other working men think about it?—As far as I am acquainted with working men—the respectable working men—they are all inclined to twelve months.

8534. Have you any acquaintance among the ship-builders?—None.

8535. The trouble is, you three gentlemen all belong to the class of working men who have not much occasion to shift. Now we are told that it is rather those engaged in other occupations, like ship-builders, that often need to shift in the middle of a term. You cannot tell us about them?—No.

8536. In your land, Mr Tasker, what are the kinds of occupations of the men there?—They are working men. Some of them drive bakers' vans, some are lorry men, and so on. Of course, the lorry men go down to the station, and the bakers' vans perhaps go to a remote part of the town.

8537. (*To Mr Forsyth.*) What class of men are there in your stair?—They are mostly all in the jute line.

8538. (*To Mr Patrick.*) What class of men are they in your stair?—One is a sailor on board of a Newcastle boat,

who has to walk from the docks once a week. Another is a mason, who works sometimes in one part, sometimes in another. He finds his place very central. Another is a mechanic, who works down in the Pleasance; he has a mile and a quarter to walk, and walks always to his meals.

8539. (*Mr Cox to Mr Tasker.*) Has the question been much spoken about in Dundee of late?—I have not much experience of what is inside, but from what I have heard and read in the papers, these monthly tenants are not much worth to any man, and if you can oblige respectable working men they should be left over. The monthly tenants and weekly tenants perhaps have a bundle of bags in the corner to sleep on, and an old soap box or that, and when the house gets dirty, he would far rather remove and try to get a cleaner one, than clean the old one.

Mr A. Tasker. 14 Jan. 1907.

Mr Robert Lickley, Mr Islay B. Murray, and Mr Edward Shepherd, called and examined.

Mr R. Lickley, Mr I. B. Murray, and Mr E. Shepherd.

8540. (*Chairman to Mr Lickley.*) You are President of the Dundee Landlords and House Factors Association?—Yes.

8541. (*To Mr Murray.*) You are Secretary of the same Association?—Yes.

8542 (*To Mr Shepherd.*) You are a house factor and property owner in Dundee, and a member of the Association?—Yes.

8543. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) You gentlemen are going to give us evidence on behalf of that Association?—Yes.

8544. How long ago is it since the Association came into existence?—Over twenty years.

(*Mr Murray.*) It was formed in 1881.

8545. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) Does the Association manage through its members about three-quarters of the property let in Dundee?—Yes.

8546. Some of these members, I suppose, are both proprietors and house factors?—That is so.

8547. Do these members manage any property outside Dundee?—Not much; they may of course individually.

8548. There is a reference in your precognition to Dundee and district. What does "district" include?—The suburbs, Broughty Ferry, Newport, Monifieth and Invergowrie.

8549. None of these are industrial, are they?—No, they are all residential.

8550. Have any of these got a working class population?—Not many. Broughty Ferry has a few working men's houses, but a very small proportion.

8551. And Newport?—A very small proportion also. Monifieth is nearly all villas.

8552. How long has your firm carried on business from first to last?—I have put down sixty years; it is certainly older than that.

8553. (*To Mr Lickley.*) How long have you had experience?—Twenty years.

8554. (*To Mr Murray.*) How long have you had experience?—Seventeen years.

8555. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) Has the Association considered the question raised by Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

8556. Also the other question of the missive system?—Yes.

8557. Take the missive system first. What is the view of your Association about the complaints against the long time between the taking of the house and entering it?—There is a complaint amongst the tenants about the early issuing of the missives.

8558. For how long has that been?—Several years, but the house factors and landlords were driven to it by the tenants making early application for houses.

8559. Take things as they are, what is the view of the Association as to any change?—That a change is desirable if it can be made binding on all concerned, but otherwise it cannot be carried out. We tried in 1899, and made a strong effort to put the letting season back, but it completely failed.

8560. Why did it fail here, if it succeeded in Edinburgh?—I don't know, but we found that the tenants would not wait. The first year we stood by, but the last a good many tenants complained that we had not houses in February when they wanted them. Next year we had to revert to the 1st of February.

8561. And although the arrangement worked that year, it has only broken down on account of some outsiders refusing to abide by it. Does that confirm your view as to the necessity for a uniform system?—Yes, outsiders here moved ahead of the Association.

8562. How long did that arrangement last?

(*Mr Murray.*) One year. We find the tenants are asking for houses now.

8563. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) How far would you go. We have heard even the 15th March or the beginning of April suggested?—Personally I would be prepared to go to the 4th of April, but the Association decided on the 15th of March.

8564. For sending out the missive?—Yes.

8565. And how long for returning them?—A week. I have had experience of forty days' notice, but there were no missives issued at all, and it worked quite well. If you wanted to give up your house you had to do it before the 4th of April.

8566. Why should not that have continued instead of worrying everybody about asking them if they are going to take their house?—It is far back, but it was possibly by putting up new houses and offering them earlier.

8567. (*To Mr Lickley.*) Do you agree with that?—Yes.

8568. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) And it became universal?—Yes. We had to do it to meet the demand.

8569. In your personal view, you would take it like the Association, that is 15th March?—Yes.

8570. How do your rents stand in Dundee generally compared with Glasgow?—We are £2 or £3 cheaper on the two-roomed houses.

8571. And on the one-roomed house?—We have very few except weekly.

8572. Are they different from Glasgow, or much the same?—I don't know the Glasgow weekly houses.

8573. Do you know, Mr Shepherd, yourself, of any demand unsatisfied for short lets in Dundee?—I never had an application for a house for less than a year from any working man.

8574. To what extent are there short lets in Dundee?—Of course Dundee is in a peculiar position. There is a very much larger proportion of the working men's houses let weekly in Dundee than in any other large city.

8575. You are speaking of tenure in payment?—They are the same thing, paid weekly and let weekly.

8576. How many are there in Dundee?

(*Mr Murray.*) There are 8000 weekly houses and about 2000 monthly houses over and above. You have 10,000 houses available for short lets.

8577. Any quarterly?

(*Mr Lickley.*) That includes quarterly.

8578. Any half-yearly lets?—Very few.

8579. Is it your view that, as far as people want short lets weekly or monthly, there are enough houses for them?—Ample.

8580. Have you ever had people coming and asking that their houses that have hitherto been yearly houses should be put on a monthly tenure?—We have had no application for monthly houses in Dundee at all.

(*Mr Murray.*) Very few monthly houses in Dundee.

8581. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) I am talking of applications for houses hitherto yearly proposed to be monthly?—I have had some wishing to pay monthly.

8582. I am talking of tenure?—No.

8583. (*To Mr Lickley.*) What do you say, Mr Lickley?—The same.

8584. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) If there were any serious demand for a change from the yearly lets to short lets, would you have expected that it would have shown itself in the way I have indicated?—Surely.

8585. By private and voluntary arrangement?—Yes.

8586. But, on the other hand, may it not be said there would be no use to ask it because it would be refused?—It would not be refused. There are so many empty houses that we would let them either in that way, either monthly or three monthly.

8587. Other factors said no, they would not let a house at a short let. You say that, looking to the number of empties that would be entertained?—For a broken period. Supposing a man wanted a let from now to May only, I would let.

8588. But supposing he came in May and said I want it monthly?—We should be very slow to do it, for this reason, that the class of people who live in these houses are very different from the class who live in yearly houses in Dundee.

8589. Suppose a man whom you knew to be thoroughly respectable said, "I am not certain about my employment 'next year; I may have to go to Belfast or to Glasgow, I 'want a house month by month," what would you do?—We would not let it to him at the letting season.

8590. (*To Mr Murray.*) Do you believe in that, Mr Murray?—Very largely.

8591. (*To Mr Lickley.*) Do you believe in that?—We would just offer him a house that we are in the habit

of letting in that way. They are generally of a lower class.

8592. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) Does it come to this, that there is scarcely freedom of contract at the present moment, because, if a man of a good class wants a short let, he really cannot get it?—That is so.

8593. But if there had been a big demand?—If there was a demand, I think there would be a supply.

8594. Why should a working man, looking to the chances of having to change his employment, not want a short let? They don't change much in Dundee.

8595. As compared with Glasgow?—In Dundee the working man is not the only support of the house. There are members of the family, who may be working in different parts of the town, residing in the same house. Dundee is not like Glasgow. The distances are very short. Men living in the outskirts can travel daily to their work.

8596. But there are trades, like the shipbuilding trade, where there will be a necessity to shift?—Those engaged in the shipbuilding trade to a great extent live in the east end of the town.

8597. You see, we were quite glad to hear these gentlemen, Mr Tasker and Mr Forsyth and Mr Patrick, but they rather represent the more permanent class who don't want to shift?—But I rather think there is a much smaller number of removals in Dundee than in Glasgow.

8598. Why?—We may be able to compare in figures.

8599. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Between terms?—No, altogether at the end of the year.

(*Mr Lickley.*) I think that class of steady occupants is greater in Dundee.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) Only about 15 per cent. of our yearly tenants move per annum. The experience of the members of our Association in reference to houses given up before the term after being re-taken, and sublets between terms, is that these do not exceed 3 per cent.

8600. The percentage of removals among the yearly tenants represented by the Association last Whitsunday was 15 per cent. Is that an average?—Yes.

8601. Your experience in reference to houses given up before the term after being re-taken, and sublet between terms, is that they don't exceed 3 per cent. Is that for a period of years or last year?—It is last year. Last year was a very good year to take in favour of those who want a short let. There have been more empty houses than for a long time.

8602. Is it your view that, whatever may be the interests of Glasgow, there is no interest in Dundee in the proposed change?—That is so.

8603. Suppose there were to be a change. It has been suggested that it might be limited not to £16, as in the Bill, but to £7 or £7, 10s., thereby covering the class which are shifting. What do you say to that?—It is very difficult to answer that question, because houses in one tenement vary from £7, 10s. to £15. If you make the one payment monthly, and the other yearly, it would be very far from desirable.

8604. We were told in Glasgow and other places that there is not much mixture?—They are a different class of people.

(*Mr Murray.*) But we have a considerable mixture of rents. We have rents in properties varying from £6 and £7 up to £15.

8605. But all yearly tenancies?—Yes.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) A respectable person who wants a good house at £6 can get it next door to people who pay £10.

8606. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) How many houses have you got?—2000 or 3000 dwelling houses.

8607. (*To Mr Murray.*) How many have you got?—About 1200.

8608. (*To Mr Lickley.*) How many have you got?—About 1500.

8609. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) Is there the social element in it?—Yes, strongly.

8610. I suppose that while at present there is, if they were all made short lets, that would disappear?—Oh, of course.

8611. Have you found that there is just one term of removal in Dundee, Whitsunday?—Yes.

8612. Is not that attended with inconvenience?—Not very much.

8613. What is the inconvenience?—The pressure on removal day. Of course there is also the difficulty of getting the houses cleaned.

(*Mr Murray.*) There is usually a month to come and go on.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) Removals begin about the beginning of May, and go on pretty generally to the 28th of May; sometimes after that.

8614. Are not the rates for removals higher than at other times, hires for instance.

(*Mr Lickley.*) They double the rates on the term day only.

8615. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) What about the building trades. Do they not put on pressure?—No. The painter is the only man to hurry up. He is the last.

8616. What is your view about the rating, and the proposal to make the landlords collect the rates?—I fail to see why the landlord should be made a tax collector.

8617. Why?—The Corporation has machinery for collecting rates that no private individual has.

8618. You think it would introduce a difficult relationship between the two?—We have very unpleasant relationships through collecting the Corporation's stair gas.

8619. Tell us about that. You do that just now three times a year?—No, we collect it once a year, but pay it four times to the Corporation.

8620. Once a year from the tenant only?—Yes, at Whitsunday. The bulk of the gas is burned in the winter quarter.

8621. Do you say expressly it is for that purpose you collect it?—Yes.

8622. Do you find great trouble in connection with it?—Yes, great trouble. One man's gas is 2s., and his neighbour's is only 1s., and the former thinks it is a grievance.

8623. Have you water rates to collect?—No.

8624. Under £5 you pay the rates?—That is included in the weekly rents.

8625. Without being shown?—Yes.

8626. Suppose it was shown separately as rate, do you think it would make some shindy?—You can hardly show it on a 2s. rent, it is so small.

8627. Suppose you pay the rates up to £16, and had to show them separately on your receipts, do you think that would make trouble?—Not where they were charged all alike. With gas they are charged according to the amount burned.

8628. You know that there is compounding in England, but without any provision for showing the rate?—That is so.

8629. Do you agree that it is desirable in the public interest that a tenant should know what rate he is paying?—Certainly. The compounding of the rates would be very much against the interests of the community.

8630. Why?—Because the expenditure would go up so fast. In some districts of London I understand the taxes are 10s. a £.

8631. But that is, isn't it, from the absence of any stipulation that the occupiers shall be informed of what rates they are paying?—It is said to be the want of interest on the part of the community, because they don't know what they are paying.

(*Mr Lickley.*) We think there would be a difficulty in showing the monthly and weekly tenants the proportion of taxes that has to be collected for that period.

8632. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) You can show the rate per £ well enough, but to bring out the particular figure applicable to the particular case you think would be difficult?—For the shorter collections.

8633. Would it involve a difficult calculation?—Not only that. There was the difficulty of showing it to the tenant.

8634. For instance, in our weekly books we show the amount due as arrears. We would need to show separate from that, according to Mr Cross's proposal, the amount due for rates.

8635. What would be the practical difficulty there.

(*Mr Lickley.*) Supposing some Saturday they paid their rent, and not the rates, and another Saturday *vice versa*, you would continually have to be putting down the arrears of rent and the arrears of rate.

8636. Suppose this system was to be entered on, you have looked at the proposed allowances, what do you say to them?—They are quite inadequate.

8637. What would you substitute?—More than double, even though you don't take in empties.

8638. Are you assuming the Bill covers empties or not?—Yes, at present we don't pay on empties in Dundee.

8639. In any case?—Only poor and school rates. No municipal rates. I think our Treasurer will be able to tell you his loss apart from rates is very much larger than any they are prepared to offer. I don't know what his loss is.

8640. If the town has a certain loss, would you expect your collection would involve as much, or more, or less?—Very likely more, plus the cost of collection.

8641. If you collect frequently as compared with one collection, would not that go to minimise the loss?—If rents were collected monthly, tenants would get into arrears, just as they do in weeklies, and it is just a question of calculation, whether he is paying the tax or the rent.

8642. You would get a larger amount of rate, whoever collected it, if it was more frequently collected?—Naturally.

8643. Do you say there ought to be more frequent collections by the rating authorities?—If they did, there would not be the same difficulty in getting the money.

8644. I do not know whether you profess to know whether that is practicable or not?—No. The same facts applying to the Treasurer would apply to the factor.

8645. Is the relief given to the poor just now well administered?—I think so.

8646. And ought it to be continued?—Yes.

8647. Do you see how it could be if the landlord paid?—No.

8648. Could it not be by the tenant coming forward and getting an abatement, getting re-payment either from the taxing authority or the landlord?—You might, but the likelihood is that once the tenant had paid the rate he would not ask the abatement.

8649. In many cases would not that be quite right? Would they not be able to pay rate well enough if collected frequently?—Some respectable poor people pinch themselves to pay when they have to do it.

8650. What is your view, Mr Lickley, as to the question of whether, suppose Mr Cross's Bill or some such proposal is become law, it should be optional? Should there be one universal system?—It would become very complicated if it were optional.

8651. If any such proposal did become law, have you something to say about the necessity for a quicker and less expensive method of removing tenants.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) Clearly. The loss of time, and the expenditure in removing a weekly tenant is a very serious matter to landlords at present. As a rule a weekly tenant is three or four weeks in arrears before we ask him to remove.

8652. That is your own fault?—Granted. Suppose we apply for a warrant, it takes ten days to get it.

8653. With or without answers?—I am assuming we have to take measures.

8654. Supposing he puts in no defences?—It takes eight days.

(*Mr Lickley.*) The summons may be served on him on a Friday, and he appears on the Tuesday, and gets three days to remove.

(*Mr Murray.*) Sometimes beyond that.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) Then, as to costs, it costs anything from 4s. 1d. to 15s. to eject a weekly tenant.

8655. That is only where actual ejection has to take place; 5s. of that is the sheriff officer's fee, isn't it?—But in the most cases a very objectionable tenant would give you as much trouble and expense as possible. It is not poor people; it is the other class.

8656. Those fellows know the law, and just walk out a few minutes before anybody appears?—We have experience of cases when they don't even walk out after somebody does appear.

8657. They have to be turned out?—Yes.

8658. They are of the class that no right-minded landlord would have there?—They are the objectionable class.

8659. You don't find it with the decent class?—I don't think any member of our Association would throw a decent tenant on the street.

8660. Suppose you get expediting and cheapening, what do you say of the right of the law of hypothec?—I think it is in the interests of both the landlord and the tenant.

8661. Is it often enforced?—Very seldom.

8662. In what class of cases is it ever enforced?—In the objectionable class.

8663. Is the game worth the candle?—That is why it is so seldom put into force.

8664. Still, you think its existence is of value?—Yes, it is of value.

8665. On both sides?—Yes, clearly.

(*Mr Murray.*) It is never enforced in regard to weeklies.

8666. (*To Mr Murray.*) Why?—It is not worth while.

8667. And not even in regard to any others?—No, it is very exceptional.

8668. (*To Mr Shepherd.*) How often had you to put it in force for short lets?—I could not answer that question.

8669. Would it be half a dozen or a score?—I would have more than that through the Court.

8670. It is hypothec I am speaking of?—None at all.

8671. With your 2000?—I did not say 2000 weekly.

8672. Take all your houses, how often have you enforced the hypothec?—I don't recollect one case during the last year.

8673. (*To Mr Murray.*) That is very interesting. Does that correspond with your experience?—Yes.

8674. (*To Mr Lickley.*) Does that correspond with your experience?—Yes.

(*Mr Shepherd.*) In the event of this proposal of Mr Cross's becoming law, it is very desirable to have a cheaper and more expeditious way of ejection. To have it even beyond a judge, because we have suffered a good deal in Dundee from the leniency of the Court.

8675. (*Chairman to Mr Shepherd.*) You mean that you should be entitled to eject them under the Bill without having to go to the Court?—Why should a landlord be bound to allow a tenant to sit in a house, two, three, or four weeks at a judge's discretion, when he is not paying rent?

8676. What would you recommend in place of the present system?—I am not prepared to say, but it would be desirable to have some more simple way of dealing, because it always means loss, and less property in the market for tenants, if there is not a sufficient return from them.

8677. Do you think if short lets were introduced it would affect the property market, either the selling market or the lending market?—I think both.

8678. To any substantial extent?—I think so. In Dundee weekly properties sell about 30 per cent less than yearly.

8679. Does that prove anything?—It proves that they are of less value.

8680. But suppose you had yearly tenancies made into monthly, they would remain the same class of tenants?—If it became general.

8681. It would right itself?—Through time. It would affect the value to begin with.

(*Mr Murray.*) The repairs would be considerably more.

8682. (*Mr Howden to Mr Shepherd.*) In regard to the law of hypothec, you told us you had very seldom to put this law into force?—Yes.

8683. In fact, we may assume that, with the lower class of property, it is hardly worth while putting it into force?—It is very seldom put into force.

8684. But when it came up to higher rents it undoubtedly became of some value to the landlord?—That is so.

8685. But we had some evidence that, in any case, whether the law of hypothec was still left in your hands or not, certain necessaries of life should be left to the tenants even in those circumstances, such as tools, wearing apparel, and bedding. Have you gentlemen any objection to such a clause as that?—No.

8686. Could you not even go further, and say that up to the extent it was essential for the comfort of the people, that they should be left with some of the furniture?—Most people that come under that category have not many comforts.

8687. But they should not be reduced altogether to starvation?—Quite so.

8688. You agree with that?—Oh, I think so.

8689. Do the other gentlemen agree?

(*Mr Murray.*) My experience as to administering the law of hypothec is that the fact of taking steps in that direction is sufficient to produce the rent, and in many cases it does not need to be put into force.

8690. But would it affect you if you went the length of Mr Shepherd?—In many cases it would not.

8691. You don't think Mr Shepherd's statement would damage your case at all?—No.

8692. Same, Mr Lickley?—I think Mr Shepherd is on the lenient side. I do not see why we should have so much consideration for these people when they have so little consideration for us.

8693. You would be more harsh?—I would be inclined to be so with that class of tenants. We never have to enforce hypothec in the case of decent tenants. It is always in the case of troublesome and objectionable tenants.

8694. It is never exercised through the fault of the principal tenant?—We never do it.

8695. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Murray.*) I think you said you had found that the threatening to use the law of hypothec generally made them pay the rent?—Yes. It had the desired effect.

8696. That showed they were able to pay the rent when they found it was urgently necessary?—Just so.

8697. In regard to those short lets, you told us that there are in Dundee 8000 weekly lets, and 2000 others that are monthly or quarterly?—Yes.

8698. What will the rents range from of the weekly tenants?—From 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per week.

8699. Does that rent include the taxes?—It includes the police and water rates.

8700. You have 2000 monthly or quarterly?—Yes.

8701. What will the rents of those houses range from?—From 20s. to 35s. per month, including police and water rates, especially in regard to monthly at any rate. There is no hard and fast line; quarterlies might be somewhat different.

8702. I would like to get the rents of all these particular classes of short lets you have in Dundee. Do you limit these to monthly?—More largely in the case of monthly, I would say.

8703. What are the rents of the quarterly lets then?—The rents might be from £2 up to £4 or thereby per quarter.

8704. Then you say some of your monthly lets are much

Mr R. Lickley, Mr I. B. Murray, and Mr E. Shepherd.
14 Jan. 1907.

dearer than the houses let quarterly. 35s. a month is £21 a year. 80s. per quarter is only £16. Have you larger houses let monthly?—I have given the lowest and highest figures.

8705. The highest in the monthly you gave me was 35s. per month, £21 a year?—No, but I said the rents were from 20s. to 35s. a month, the taxes included, and then I made another remark, specially in regard to monthly, that the taxes were included. In the case of quarterly that would not happen perhaps so often, that the taxes were included.

8706. Then this 45s. to 80s. for the quarter is for rent alone, not including taxes?—Yes, largely so.

8707. That reconciles the statement?—I might say, in a general way, that we have a very strong feeling that if the missive question was dealt with simply by itself it would largely solve the difficulty and remove all cause of complaint in Dundee.

Mr R. Lickley, Mr I. B. Murray, and Mr E. Shepherd.
14 Jan. 1907.

[ADJOURNED.]

NINTH DAY.

MONDAY, 21ST JANUARY 1907.

In the New Court, Parliament House, Edinburgh.

Present:

LORD GUTHRIE, *Chairman.*

MR COX.
MR HOWDEN.
SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL.
MR BINNIE.
MR DOBBIE.

MR STAIR AGNEW GILLON, *Secretary.*

Mr J. Allison.
21 Jan. 1907.

MR JAMES ALLISON, re-called and further examined.

Mr J. Allison.
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8708. (*Mr Dobbie.*) When last before the Committee, you referred, in answer to a question, the number of which we will get later on, to a grievance you said exists in respect of the stamp duty on missives of let?—Precisely.

8709. I think your point was that while the stamp duty on lets not exceeding £10 was 1d., the duty on lets between £10 and £15 was 1s. 6d., and on £20, 2s.?—That was so.

8710. The duty is the same, isn't it, on any house above £10, whether for one year or thirty-five years?—That is so.

8711. Then it was suggested from the Committee that, if short lets prevailed, and if a house wherever say £20 a year was let by the half year for £10, the effect might be that each let being under £10, the stamp duty would only be 1d.?—That was the inference given, but I rebutted it by saying that it would require to come under the *ad valorem* stamp duty.

8712. You have since consulted the Inland Revenue authorities, and do they take the view that *ad valorem* duty would still apply as long as the total rent for each year exceeded the £10?—That is so. They gave me a distinctive assurance to that effect, and they say it is quite clear under the statute. I have an abstract here which bears that out.

8713. So that, in that view, the grievance you speak of would be aggravated by the system of short lets?—That is so; instead of having the let yearly, you would have the let half-yearly or quarterly, and, to get within legal limits, you would require each of these agreements to be stamped with a 1s. 6d. or a 2s. stamp.

8714. Which would mean that taking even a half-yearly agreement, you would pay 1s. 6d. on a £12 house?—That is so.

8715. Which would be a tax upon the landlord of about 3d. in the £?—Yes.

8716. Then I think your suggestion was that a uniform duty of 6d. might be imposed upon all missives of between £10 and £20?—Yes, or even up to £100. It is so difficult to get working men to understand the stamp duties. We generally try to collect half of it from them, but they don't understand. About twelve years ago, I brought out a system which is carried out in England, viz. to make continuous agreements. That is, that the agreement went on for an indefinite period, unless altered by either the one or the other on the 15th of March beforehand, but they could not understand that. They thought the house was taken for a year, and when you told them after the 15th of March that it had automatically, as it were, gone on for another year, they could not see it, and I got into trouble and I had to drop it. That is an argument against trying to let a quarterly or half-yearly house continuously. It shows the necessity for having these agreements stamped every time, either quarterly or half-yearly.

8717. So that, if the term of let were shortened, say to quarterly, the effect upon proprietor and tenant would be 6d a £, that is whether it is let by the quarter or six-monthly, and if that was thirty-five years the duty would be the same, and would thus, I make it, be one-third of ¼d. per £?—That is so. The time which the stamp covers is thirty-five years, and you have the stamp the same for three months as for that.

8718. So that, in your view, the grievance would be aggravated if short lets were made more common?—In that respect.

Mr A. Cross.

MR ALEXANDER CROSS, M.P., called and examined.

Mr A. Cross.

8719. (*Chairman.*) You were returned to Parliament first in 1892?—Yes.

8720. Then in 1895, 1900, and 1906?—Yes.

8721. Which division of Glasgow have you sat for?—The Camlachie Division.

8722. Right through?—Yes.

8723. In what year did you first bring in a Bill proposing to deal with this house-letting question?—Very early after my return to Parliament.

8724. I see in 1894 a Bill to amend the law relating to the letting of tenure of small dwellings in Scotland backed by you and Sir J. Carmichael and Mr Baird and Mr M'Gilligan. Was that the first year?—I think it was.

8725. Then I have got a Bill in 1905 backed by you and Sir James Carmichael and Mr M'Gilligan; another in 1897 backed by Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Sir William Arrol, Mr John Wilson, Colonel Denny, Mr Faithful Begg, and Mr T. P. O'Connor; another in 1898 backed by the same members; and then another in 1900 backed by the same members; another in 1894 backed by you and Mr T. W. Russell and Sir John Leng; another in 1905 backed by Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell, Mr Hunter Craig, Colonel Denny, Mr T. W. Russell, and Mr John Wilson; and then the Bill of 1906. Are these the different years?—I believe so. In the years in which I did not bring forward the Bill, I was largely influenced in not doing so by the hope of an amicable settlement through Landlords Associations.

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8726. Although the first Bill you brought in was in 1894, had your attention been directed to the question before that?—Ever since I began to take an interest in public affairs. For twenty-five years the question has been a burning one, to my personal knowledge.

8727. What do you understand to be the question?—The system of letting by missives for yearly tacks.

8728. It is suggested that the true grievance is merely the length of time between the date of taking the house and the date of entry?—Persons who say that desire to evade the issue.

8729. I suppose, in your view, the grievance is aggravated by any addition to the period of a year?—To some extent, of course.

8730. As far as that goes, but you think that legislation for that alone would not remove the grievance?—Distinctly so.

8731. At the elections that you have told us about, did your election addresses deal with the question?—Yes, it was a prominent feature.

8732. And in all cases, have you dealt with what you think is the true question, viz. the large question of the yearly tack as distinguished from the subordinate question?—No public audience would permit the speaker to deal with this question under any other aspect.

8733. What about your constituency in the way of the number of working men it contains?—It consists almost entirely of working men.

8734. Of what classes?—Of all classes.

8735. Skilled and unskilled?—Skilled at high pay and mere labourers.

8736. Living in the poorest class of houses?—Some in an excellent class of houses, and some, on the other hand, in probably the worst class.

8737. And in your district you have men varying, I suppose, very much in the necessity to shift, some more and some less?—That is so.

8738. Has the feeling, in your experience, increased the desire for a change?—I think so.

8739. How have you seen that show itself?—I was for a long time almost alone in public life conducting an agitation on this subject; latterly there is no public man, whether he be a candidate for municipal or parliamentary position, who omits it from his platform, not only in Glasgow, but over the west and centre of Scotland.

8740. Take these election meetings, what do you say about them?—I say this, that when I wish to bring an audience to good temper, I incidentally introduce the question, and immediately I am on capital terms with them.

8741. Have you found at public meetings much difference of opinion on the subject?—I say with accuracy that I never met anyone in any rank of life, unless he were a factor or a landlord, who was in favour of a continuance of the present state of affairs.

8742. Of the long lease?—Of the long yearly tack.

8743. What have you found in your personal canvassing of your constituents?—Exactly what I have pleaded publicly for all these years. I spoke for every man who was my supporter, and for nearly all those who voted the other way.

8744. We have been told that there is a large section of working men who would desire the continuance of the present system, partly because it gives them the security of tenure they would not otherwise have, and also because it encourages them to improve their houses. Have you found at your public meetings and in your personal canvassing the existence of these people?—I have not.

8745. Do you know any reason why, if they exist, you should not have come across them?—I should certainly have expected so. I could imagine that under a misapprehension or a partial knowledge, certain persons might believe that short lets are a kind of badge of social inferiority, but such a state of opinion would immediately alter under a different *régime*.

8746. We have had produced to us in Dundee certain very respectable working men, who seem to belong to the more stationary employments, and they have told us that they prefer the present system of the long let. We have not, I may say, at least I think I am correct in this, seen any working men of the more shifting employment who have put forward that view. What do you say now to the view of these men, which was evidently given quite honestly and straightforwardly?—They have probably never seen any other system nor thought about it. These men will die some day, and their families will be tied, and compelled to pay a rental for a house they may not wish to occupy for periods beyond what they may find convenient or possible.

8747. Then, if it be the fact that these men associate short let with necessary insecurity of tenure, do you think that is a sound view?—My inquiries in England absolutely satisfied me that such a dread does not exist in the population of the burghs or cities there, where they live entirely under the system of short tenure, almost invariably weekly.

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8748. You think that if their opinion in favour of the present system arises from their dread of being turned out, they being quite satisfactory tenants, that is not well founded?—I think it is an entire mistake.

8749. You refer to the subject as affecting Parliament. Have the Scotch members taken any action in the matter?—A number of the Scotch members accompanied the two deputations which waited upon the Government last summer, and, shortly after, I was requested by a large number of them to convene a meeting for the purpose of further discussing the situation amongst members of Parliament. I issued a post-card, and, in response, a very large meeting assembled, and promptly appointed a Committee to draw up a memorial, resolved that this memorial should be pressed on the Government, and met again within one week to deal with the memorial which the small Committee had prepared. That memorial to the Government was printed in the public press with all the signatures to it, and it was signed by about three-fourths of the Scotch members of Parliament.

8750. What about the other members?—I made a calculation that of the remaining three-fourths, there are something like ten or eleven who are actually members of the Government and could not sign a memorial to themselves. Of those remaining, it was notorious that several who were not present at Westminster on the particular day when this course was resolved upon and adopted, would have signed the memorial had they been there.

8751. And there is a statement in the memorial addressed to the Secretary of State for Scotland, dated 5th July 1906, that it is widely representative of all parts of the country and all shades of political opinion, that is correct?—That is correct. In short, this question has nothing to do with party politics. Might I respectfully submit to this Committee that an expression of opinion has very seldom come before Parliament on any subject whatever, backed by such a unanimous support of the Parliamentary representatives of the Scotch people, or by such a strong sentiment amongst the people outside.

8752. It is a fact, is it not, that the grievance alleged to exist is more pressing in some parts of the country than others?—Yes.

8753. How do you define the distinction?—Wherever the industrial conditions of modern life have asserted themselves, the ancient conditions of tenure are unsuitable. Where there is less of the industrial elements things may remain longer in the old ways without the grievance becoming so obvious.

8754. Was it that consideration that led you to insert the optional clause?—It was that, and the advice of responsible members of Parliament.

8755. In addition to what you have told us about 1906, I think there were deputations, were there not, first, to Sir George Trevelyan, and then to Mr Graham Murray, when respectively Secretaries for Scotland?—You are correct, there were these two deputations amongst others.

8756. Have you ever contemplated the Government taking the matter up?—I have been eager that they should; being satisfied of the extreme difficulties attendant on the prosecution of such a measure by a private member, or, indeed, of any legislation by a private member.

8757. But you have not succeeded in your effort to have that done?—I have had the privilege of laying the case by special request before members of three or four Governments of recent years, or before some of them, which has led to frequent interviews and negotiations. Their difficulties at the moment, pressure of other business, and, if I may dare to add, the neglect of Scotch affairs, in my opinion, have led to the delay in dealing with it, as I have not found any one in authority willing to be otherwise than sympathetic as regards the principle I was pressing for to be dealt with by legislation.

8758. Have you always urged it as a great boon to the tenants without being any interference with the rights of the landlords?—Certainly.

8759. And also as a movement that would result in benefit to the rating authorities, and through them, of course, to the general body of ratepayers?—Yes.

8760. In addition to what you have told us about Parliament, is it the case that in municipal elections the matter has bulked?—Yes, frequently; in the west country nearly invariably.

8761. And have you noticed any such difference of opinion as is said to exist among working men in connection with municipal elections?—I will venture to say that no candidate has the remotest chance of being returned who will state on his platform that he is opposed to the principle of the Bill. I believe that at the last Parliamentary election, it turned the scale in several con-

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stituencies. It would be improper to mention names, but I am well informed when I say that it is the fact.

8762. You would introduce the word "industrial," wouldn't you?—I refer to industrial constituencies only.

8763. Take a place like Rothesay, what evidence we had here has been that the measure would not be suitable for such a place as that?—May I point out that it has happened in connection with places which have been represented here before you as opposed to the Bill that the witnesses have nearly always been house factors or house agents. Without implying improper motives I suggest, "If self the wavering balance holds, 'tis rarely right adjusted."

8764. You think a sufficient answer to any difficulty about Rothesay is that the optional clause would prevail?—The optional clause would prevail.

8765. Now, we have been told that while cases of hardship will undoubtedly occur under the present system, for instance, a man wanting to leave in the middle of his term and being unable to get a sublet, these cases are, in point of fact, not very numerous, and that it is more an apprehension than anything else that exists. What do you say from your own investigation of real personal hardship?—Probably people apply to me more readily than to other members of Parliament, but I have hundreds of cases of extreme and cruel hardship in my papers here; still I feel that this grievance is by no means confined to those persons. The dread of it is present in every man's mind; when he hears of a case, he feels that perhaps it may be his turn next, and he is in dread of the present system.

8766. Do you think there are any cases where, on account of that dread, a man may refuse an eligible place elsewhere?—I have known such cases again and again.

8767. What is your view about this? It has been suggested that a lower limit than what you fix, say a limit of £10 or £12, would include almost all these cases?—I have a strong opinion upon this point. All the advice I can get, and all the experience I have had, have driven me to the £20 limit. I began my endeavours on this question with an idea that £15 might suffice; but the reception that that proposal met with at public meetings, and the comments made upon it in the papers and by other public authorities, were such that I had to abandon it immediately. I have come to £20, and I fail to see how any limit under £20 will satisfy public demand or be productive of the results that we hope to arrive at.

8768. In regard to your first idea, I refer you to your Bill of 1894, where you had this clause, clause 4, "No 'dwelling-house of a less rental than £15 yearly rent, 'situated within a burgh, shall hereafter be let for a longer 'period than one month, unless a garden is let along with 'it, etc.; any law or custom or aggreement notwithstanding 'and the period of let of such dwelling-house shall expire 'at next 28th day of the month." That was your first idea?—Yes.

8769. You have departed from that in two particulars; you fix £20 instead of £15; and, second, you don't fix any absolute limit, but make the matter depend on the period of payment?—Yes.

8770. You told us what led you to depart from £15. What led you to depart from your first idea of taking a limit of a period? You see that was in the 1894 Bill; then in 1895 Bill, and then in 1897 Bill, and then in the 1898 Bill, you propose the tenancy to be terminable in May, August, November, and February, and so in the 1900 Bill; and then for the first time in 1904, you came to your present proposal, the term of let to be equal to the term of periodic payment. What led you to come to that conclusion on the latter matter?—I suppose it was the more extended discussion which the subject had received, the advice which I had received from people in high position as to the best means of obtaining what was desired, as well as the education which every man has to go through who desires to be of any use in framing legislation. You have to serve your apprenticeship. I approached the question from my point of view, and passed through the various stages, having considered carefully as I went on. The conclusion I have now come to is by far the most reasonable and equitable and easy means of obtaining the result desired.

8771. And it interferes to the least possible extent consistent with the achievement of the object with the freedom of contract?—Precisely; I should have said that.

8772. Then your first proposal would have prevented quarterly and half-yearly lets?—Yes.

8773. In your second proposal you would have allowed quarterly but not half-yearly lets?—Yes.

8774. But now you contemplate weekly, monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly?—I leave it perfectly free to the bargaining parties.

8775. But I suppose we may take it that you would destroy yearly lets?—That is the condition which any reform must absolutely and in the first place satisfy.

8776. And the practical result of your Bill would be to do so, because we know that in houses under £20 nobody pays once a year?—Exactly.

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8777. But you think it is fair that if people want quarterly lets or half-yearly lets, and pay at these periods, they should have them even under £20?—I think so.

8778. It has been suggested that this is a pretty large order, and that at all events, in the first instance, as Mr Henry suggested in Glasgow, you might have a limit of, say, £10, which would, as he pointed out, affect half of the householders in the town. What do you say to that experimental suggestion?—That the time is past for experiments in this matter, that the public opinion is ripe for a measure which would put it at rest, deal with it in a satisfactory way, and that, if there be any good reason for placing houses of, say, £9 or £10 under this new *regime*, there is equal reason for houses under £20.

8779. Would you say "equal"? Does not the number of cases tail off where the grievance exists the higher you go in the way of rent?—No; I think it is the other way. Under £10, since I have begun this agitation, the effect has been that nearly one-half, I believe nearly two-thirds, of all the houses are let under the weekly tenure. For this Committee to fix £10 as a limit would simply be to render their action effete and useless. We have already accomplished that change within the last fifteen or twenty years by the reasonableness of the case, which has recommended it alike to tenants and landlords; but when we get above that (since the agitation has become so great), we find the landlords banded together, insisting on missives; it is the tenants who pay the higher rentals who feel the grievance most acutely. It is upon these tenants, who are good tenants, that the landlords are most determined to fasten the grip of the missive. I despair of any redress for such tenants, except by legislative enactment.

8780. You think that if the legislature were to pass a measure altered to, say, £10 or £12, the agitation would still go on, and it would merely lead to another measure extending it?—I don't think the Government could carry a measure limiting the reform to £10. I don't think the Government could count on the support of the Scotch members for such a Bill. These members have to reckon with their constituents.

8781. May it not be said, suppose you limit it to £20, that the agitation would still go on to have it raised higher?—No; the number of houses between £20 and £30 is remarkably small. The numbers tail off over £20.

8782. For ordinary working men?—For any tenants. Although there are many working men inhabiting houses of £22, 10s. to £25, the number is small. A limit must be fixed somewhere, and I have come to the strong conviction, which is not shaken by anything I hear, but confirmed, that £20 is the lowest limit that could possibly be suggested as a settlement of this question.

8783. Have you a £20 limit in any other Act of Parliament? We know there is a £10 limit under Acts of Parliament. Does the £20 limit occur anywhere?—Well, I don't quite follow what you mean.

8784. There are £10 limits and £4 and £5 limits in many Acts of Parliament we have been hearing about. Is there any Act that selects that particular sum?—You refer to Scotch Acts?

8785. Yes?—No; but I may point out that the Acts in which £4 and £5 yearly rental are fixed are Acts which couple in the provisions enacted all houses let for periods less than a year. Government had in view to include in the enactments houses of a higher limit, provided they are let for periods less than a year.

8786. You say there is a £10 limit in the water rate. Then, as Mr Dobbie reminds me, there is £20 limit in the inhabited house duty. Under £20 you don't pay anything. I think that is a case where the limit you have taken has been selected by Parliament?—Yes.

8787. In regard to Town Councils, we have some which have taken action in this matter. What, in your experience, has induced them to do so?—Pressure of their electorates.

8788. It has been suggested that their action is not in the interest of the working classes, but simply to get more rates. What do you say to that?—They are representative men who reflect the opinion of those who elect them; and if they misrepresent that opinion, they will not be long in the position they hold.

8789. Then Trades Councils apparently take the view pretty generally?—They do universally.

8790. As far as you know, is there any reason to doubt that Trades Counils accurately reflect the opinion of working men in general?—I regard them as representatives of the opinion of the organised trades who form their members.

8791. And apparently of the more skilled people as distinguished from labourers, who we are told have a Union of their own?—More skilled people belong, in the great majority of cases, to Trades Unions.

8792. So that the best class of working men's opinions may be got at in that way?—The best class is got at most directly in that way.

8793. In your view, are you chiefly aiming at bettering that class of working men, or the improvident?—I am not here to speak for the improvident, but for the better class. The better a man is, and the more independent his spirit is, the more he resents the position in which these missives place him, and it is on behalf of the better class that I make an appeal strongly as I venture to do to-day.

8794. The improvidents are pretty well supplied with short lets?—They cannot get houses on any other terms.

8795. Tenants Associations, we know, have sprung up in different towns in Scotland. Is this really one of the main objects of their existence?—It is one of the main objects. I have the prospectuses of two coming into existence this week.

8796. What do they say?—They talk of the abolition of the missive system on the one hand and some provision with regard to painting on the other, as their main objects.

8797. It is a very misleading expression, "the missive system," which seems to be used in so many senses. You have no objection, I suppose, to a written as distinguished from a verbal bargain?—I prefer the written bargain.

8798. So that the mere existence of the missive has nothing objectionable in it?—That illustrates my objection to this whole system. The missive has ceased to mean anything except a bargain for one year, involving a tenure of at least fourteen or sixteen months in duration. That is the meaning every one has come to attach to the word "missive."

8799. In a secondary sense?—Yes. Missives hardly exist in any other sense.

8800. So far as the newspapers go, there has been correspondence we know on both sides. Have you any remark to make as to the quarter or quarters from which the correspondence, contrary to your view, generally emanates?—From the facile pens of one or two gentlemen who have been opposed to my reform. The complaints are from all and sundry, and are in all sorts of newspapers, and are continually appearing.

8801. Now, if the interest of the landlords would not be seriously affected by this proposal, why should they object to it?—I don't wish to do any injustice to any class. I would be no party to a Bill which would injure the landlord class, but I believe the present system confers upon the landlord classes undue advantages, and it is for that reason they press it.

8802. Do you think the new system would yield them in the end less rent than they are at present getting?—The economic rent which is to be obtained from investment in houses will have to be obtained under any system, or the system will cease in operation until economic circumstances prevail. I cannot, and do not wish to, interfere with free play of supply and demand, but I do say the system under which houses are let just now is such as to create an artificial market for houses. I come to that a little later on.

8803. Do you think that your proposal would result in an increase of rents to the working classes?—I am quite confident it would not.

8804. At all events, after things had adjusted themselves?—I mean, of course, after things had adjusted themselves.

8805. Now, as to public meetings, you have attended, I believe, apart from mere electoral meetings, a number in connection with this subject?—Yes.

8806. Where?—In the City Hall of Glasgow I have been at three or four very large meetings.

8807. Also at Paisley, Falkirk, Govan, etc.?—Yes.

8808. Were these open meetings?—Yes.

8809. Largely composed of the working classes?—Yes.

8810. Were they unanimous?—They passed resolutions of the strongest kind unanimously and cordially, with no amendment in any one case.

8811. You refer to the deputation to Lord Dunedin in 1904. I rather think, if I recollect rightly, Lord Dunedin seemed to think your Bill had this advantage that it would not involve interference with freedom of contract?—I did not bring my album through. I think I have his speech carefully preserved. My recollection is what you say.

8812. I suppose that would require to be taken along with what is apparently admitted that it would kill yearly lets, because nobody pays under £20 once a year?—Yes, that would be the effect on all houses under £20s.

8813. You refer also to the deputation to the present Lord Advocate on 20th May 1906. I think the Lord Advocate pointed out that there might be another side to it in the case of working men being turned out of their houses during a strike?—Yes; but he had not considered the optional clause which would prevent any Burgh containing such men from adopting the Act.

8814. What do you say on that point which has been brought before us, the present security of men in employer's houses in the event of a strike?—Such houses are never let upon the missive system.

8815. Have you any view on the larger question which, as a side issue here, has been brought before us, of what should be done by way of legislative provision in the case of a strike. It is not directly before us, but has been brought up?—No; I cannot offer the Committee any well thought-out suggestion on that point.

8816. You refer to efforts to procure reform apart from legislation. Have approaches been made to the associations of the landlords?—Repeatedly. I am not at all alone in this matter. I have had a great following. I have been induced, along with delegates who share my view, to request meetings with the Landlords' Associations in various parts of the country, notably in Glasgow, and we have met and discussed; in my opinion we did, on more than one occasion, arrive at a basis upon which an unopposed measure might have been allowed to pass. On these occasions I have not heard the least objection to £20. What was objected to was the whole thing; but having become convinced, I suppose, that some action was necessary, the points that were discussed between us, in privacy, on these occasions, were details of another kind. I have not heard even a landlord object to the limit,—they may object to the whole thing, but not to the limit.

8817. And was it the failure of these negotiations that led you to take your present action?—It was so. For some sessions I abstained from bringing in any Bill lest it should imperil a friendly and amicable arrangement.

8818. And does it appear to you that the only action that can be effectual is legislative?—I have become satisfied of that.

8819. We were told that even in regard to shortening the period between taking the house and entry an arrangement of that kind had been come to in Edinburgh, and worked well until some factors and landlords kicked over the traces and spoiled the whole thing. Do you think that is almost inevitable?—Absolutely inevitable. Besides, there are rating questions which have to be dealt with.

8820. And in your view would a Bill of any other kind, such as the alteration of the law of hypothec, for instance, or any other subsidiary measure, really deal effectually with the question?—I have been well advised in this matter, and I have given my own best consideration to it. I speak for myself and those who have backed this Bill, and for the present members who are supporting it. I am of opinion strongly that nothing short of some direct enactment of the kind I propose will meet the difficulty.

8821. And in saying that you have considered Mr Provand's Abolition Bill?—Oh yes.

8822. And also the Bill introduced in 1890, before you went into Parliament, backed by Mr Provand, Mr Baird, Mr Edward Robertson, Mr Caldwell, which ran thus: "From and after the passing of this Act, notwithstanding 'anything to the contrary in law or by custom or usage, 'no lease or agreement of letting for a yearly tenancy ter-'minating at Whitsunday or Martinmas of a dwelling-'house under a rental of £20 in any burgh of Scotland, 'shall be enforcible by law or in equity by either of the 'parties thereto if entered into at a date earlier than 52 'days before the commencement of the lease or agreement"?—We do not think anyone will introduce or back a Bill of that kind now, owing to public opinion being in advance of it.

8823. When the fact seems to be that everybody seems to be agreed that something is wanted, not optional but all over Scotland, why should not your Bill have a clause of that kind?—I am very unfond of interfering with the freedom of contract as far as it can be possibly avoided. If you get rid of the yearly tack, you will have no trouble about the dates at which arrangements are made.

8824. But take, for instance, the date of warning away. People seem to be agreed that that is too early, and ought to be made later; and if that was made later you could quite well have the date of taking a house made later, and that is a question affecting the whole of Scotland. Is there any reason why, taking your Bill as it is, there should not be a provision of that kind contained in it as well?—Well, I should be suspicious of such an enactment, as it would be difficult to limit it to the places where perhaps it might be said to be advisable.

8825. But it is said to be necessary all over?—But I am dealing with the industrial centres. If you introduce any clause complicating the issue, I should be jealous of its effects.

8826. Your Bill is a Bill for industrial centres?—Yes, chiefly.

8827. And if such a measure were thought desirable it would be a short Act for itself?—I have not thought of how it could be embodied in my Bill.

8828. Take the important section, apart from the rating section of your Bill, namely, section 4—"The term of let 'for any dwelling-house within a burgh shall be held to be

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'the term fixed for the periodic payment of the rent thereof, 'whether such term for payment be weekly, fortnightly, 'monthly, quarterly, or otherwise." There is no precedent, is there, in any other Bill for a clause of that kind?—I had none before me when I wrote that clause.

8829. Nor in any colonial Bill?—It was evolved entirely from the necessities of the position.

8830. Was your action at all influenced, and if so, to what extent by English experience?—Yes; my habit has been for twenty years to inquire into the house-letting condition of all the English cities and towns where I found myself, and I have been over a great number of them. I find the house owners and agents, on being told of the Scotch system, hold up their hands in astonishment at the impolicy, absurdity, and unfairness of it. They tell me how different the conditions are with them, how sure the tenure, how quickly and regularly rents are paid, and how the compounding system works extremely well. That is confirmed by my inquiries among persons who own the houses. In my whole experience I have not found a person objecting to the system in England, and no one except the landlord and the factor defending the system we have in Scotland.

8831. What about the landlords' practice in England? Do they long for the Scotch system?—They laugh at it. Such expressions are used as, "How do you tolerate that any longer?"

8832. You don't talk of working men?—I am talking of landlords and factors in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and other English towns of consequence, and I offered to bring to this Commission witnesses from any or all of the towns you may name. I have given the clerk the names of house agents and tenants from many towns, and he has been kind enough to summon some of them.

8833. How do you account for the difference between the two countries. There is no short-let legislation in England?—We have emerged in Scotland slowly from the more primitive conditions. The industrial system is of more recent growth than in England.

8834. Do you think the Scottish system of a continuous period for all houses with gardens should be retained?—It is what happens with agricultural land to this day, and as regards agricultural or gardening land it is quite proper, but it is absolutely unsuitable to the conditions of industrial life now.

8835. They must have had some system in England in regard to gardens attached to houses at one time?—They have it still in country places.

8836. What are the lets there?—They are upon similar conditions to those which prevail upon agricultural subjects here.

8837. Annual?—Annual or longer periods, but very often annual. Even in the matter of agricultural lands they prefer annual tenure; our farmers have found ruin by 19 years' leases. That is the history of the ruin of Midlothian and other highly cultivated Scottish counties: the tenants being involved in long tenure of agricultural lands. The farmers in England had not the same thing to face.

8838. Take the industrial centres in England as compared with such places as Glasgow. In your view are the conditions different or practically identical?—They have become identical.

8839. You do not have in Glasgow working men's houses with gardens attached?—I wish we had.

8840. Any more than in England?—I wish we had.

8841. There has been this difference suggested that in England the rents are much lower than in Scotland, the rates on the other hand being much higher. Would that difference in any way affect the principle of your Bill?—Not at all.

8842. How do wages in the two countries compare?—My inquiry has not been directed exactly to the point of wages, but I think they are smaller. My belief is that the more substantial structure, and more costly building of our Scottish buildings, have led to rather higher rentals for smaller accommodation.

8843. But you yourself do not know of any difference of conditions which would affect the question? If any information should reach you, you will be prepared to give us it?—I will try.

8844. As to the limit of £20, you told us that that was the result of long investigation and consideration. The optional clause is not a unique clause, but is to be found in such other Acts as the Burgh Police Act, the Housing of the Working Classes Act, and the Water Supply Act, and the Public Health Act?—Yes.

8845. In your view, does it necessarily follow, if there are to be short lets, that there must be compounding?—I think it is an advantage.

8846. It has been suggested that there is another way of doing it, viz. for the rating authorities to collect at more frequent intervals, say four times a year. What do you say to that?—After consideration of the question, on the advice of rate collectors in various places where I have had the privilege of consulting them, I think it is unworkable.

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8847. Theoretically it is a good enough idea?—It may be.

8848. But practically you come to the conclusion that it is not workable. Do you know of any rate in this country or any other country that is collected more than once a year?—Well, these local taxes are collected in England twice a year, but then they are collected from landlords.

8849. Well, I should have put it, do you know of any rate collected from the tenants either in this country or any other country more than once a year?—No, not to any extent.

8850. And does that seem to point to practical difficulties?—It does.

8851. Because I suppose it is admitted that people who are paid their wages at frequent intervals should pay their rates more than once a year?—It would be an enormous advantage to the payer.

8852. You have not found any difference of opinion upon that point. How it is to be done is another question?—Quite so.

8853. Take it it is to be done by compounding. Do you have a view as to any objection to collecting small amounts direct from the tenants?—I think it is not a business-like proceeding for one thing.

8854. You would propose to retain the annual collection, but make it from the landlord?—I would prefer to make it biennial from the landlord.

8855. Why?—The money need not be taken from the landlord before it is required. The money requirements of local authorities go on all the year round. Their payments would better be served by having collections twice a year.

8856. Of course, if the landlord was to pay, and only once a year, he would have the benefit of the money, wouldn't he, of a large part of the money, for the rest of the year?—He would have the interest. But the authorities would have to borrow.

8857. And pay the interest?—Yes, they would then pay interest for advances to banks, etc.

8858. That is a detail you don't pin yourself to?—Quite.

8859. Do you think the result would be from the frequency of payment to give a larger amount in the end?—I think the authorities would collect all their assessments. They would certainly collect all their assessments if levied upon the landlord. They have the means of obtaining payment from landlords without loss.

8860. Always subject to what you are going to say immediately about allowances they would have to make to the landlords?—Certainly.

8861. Apart from allowances, do you think there is a great deal of taxation at the present moment that has not found its way into the public coffers through the system of collecting once a year from the tenant which would find its way if the tenant paid frequently through the landlord?—I have no wish to add to the burden of the poorer classes; but I am perfectly satisfied that if the money was taken from them weekly, in sixpences, or small sums, the money would be paid by them without effort, and the public exchequer would be better off, and that loose money would be used for this purpose which at present goes into less worthy channels.

8862. You don't limit that to weekly?—No; I only say the more frequent the better.

8863. But in the case of your monthly and quarterly lets, the payments there of rates would be monthly and quarterly?—They would be so.

8864. And you think that in that way a great part of the arrears which are not got in at all, or are now got in with great trouble, difficulty, expense, and pressure on taxpayers, would cease to be harassing?—I think this system of collection has a more demoralising effect than almost any other circumstance. Tenants are always in arrears. I went into the books of a great many factors in Glasgow by their kindness a few years ago, and as regards rents I found arrears was the rule, not the exception. This was before so many of the smaller houses under £10 were let on weekly terms. The habit was for those persons to be hunted by collectors from one year's end to the other. They never knew what it was to be out of debt to landlords or to the public authorities, for the same prevails with regard to the rates. This remark was made to me by the city collector of Glasgow. He said: "It would be 'impossible to collect oftener than once a year, because we 'have hardly finished the hunting for one year when the 'next year is due." The population of these industrial centres are the quarry, hunted from year's end to the other, either by the rate collector or the rent collector, a system which would be stopped if we had short lets and quick payments. It is a most demoralising system in every

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sense. Mr Henry, the City Assessor, tells me there are more moonlight flittings in Glasgow to evade payment of rates than to evade payment of rents.

8865. What do you say to the present system of allowing relief on the ground of poverty to a very large number of persons. Do you think there would be the same necessity, if the payments were frequent through the landlords, to grant such relief?—There would not be the same necessity.

8866. Many people who are not able to pay one big lump sum would be quite able to pay throughout the year in driblets to the landlord?—Yes. I beg leave, however, to point out that this system is also demoralising, the people who obtain that relief are not the class who most deserve it. Those who obtain it are those persons who, with the cry of poverty in their mouths, present themselves before the magistrate and obtain relief. The people who ought to be relieved are those who suffer in silence, and don't parade their poverty, as is too often the case. I can give instances by the half-dozen of most improper relief granted. I think the system is bad.

8867. Through the soft-heartedness of the magistrate?—The consideration and kindness of the Bench, who cannot refuse a tale of suffering presented to them.

8868. Apparently the system is not very consistent, because those people paying rents under £4 get no relief, the poorest of the poor?—I was going to point out that, if poverty is to be the qualification for relief, all the men under £4 ought to be relieved at once. Persons who are getting this relief are persons paying much bigger rents, sometimes very large rents, but they go to the magistrate and make an appeal. On some stairs you will have people relieved at one door, and paying at the next, under circumstances which are precisely parallel. I say this, with all deference, I may be under a wrong impression.

8869. Allowing all that, I suppose there are a certain number of cases which are deserving of consideration?—Oh yes.

8870. We are told, for instance, of a person who may keep lodgers?—Yes.

8871. A maiden lady may really have had nobody during the year, would you propose that there should still remain a means by which such cases could be considered?—Certainly. She should make application, I suppose, as now, and if the magistrates approved, relief would pass to her through her landlord instead of direct.

8872. Do you think that would be practicable?—I don't see much difficulty.

8873. If compounding is found to work well in English burghs there again do you think any reason to doubt its working in Scotland?—My contention is that we are working it just now.

8874. In certain cases?—In every case the landlords are compounding without knowing it.

8875. We will come to that immediately. But take the English burgh. There is no difference in condition, is there, to prevent the one experience being applicable to the other?—No, I have not been able to find any.

8876. What do you say of the view of the Royal Commission, which seems to be that in theory, at all events, although they say it is practically necessary, it is an objectionable system?—I quite agree. It is desirable that every man should feel the pressure of taxes, but practically that view does not come to much.

8877. Of course, they are speaking there of a system where the taxation of the tenant is not brought home to the tenant at all. Now you propose that the tenant should know what taxation he is paying?—I do.

8878. In England he does not?—Well, I do not find that is a charge that lies. I find there is a keen interest in public affairs in England.

8879. But take the receipts?—No, the receipts bear no distinction. The rental covers everything.

8880. The tenant would have to inquire and calculate for himself, if he was to find out?—Yes; but you might on the same principle found a theory that a working man does not take interest in Imperial affairs. He is not called upon to pay Imperial taxes. He finds out how much the Government put on as tea duty and whisky duty. According to this view there should be no interest except from those who pay direct taxes.

8881. You propose a note of amounts separately due for taxes and rent should be furnished?—I think that would be desirable.

8882. We have been told there would be great practical difficulty in that. Do you suggest that it should be done weekly or monthly, or that once a quarter would be enough?—I have suggested once a month. It is not desirable to get into fractions of pence weekly.

8883. It has been suggested that it might be enough, if without stating the actual amount, the rate per £ were stated and the tenant left to calculate it for himself?—That would be an excellent suggestion. That is what we all have to do. I have to study the tax papers in the city of Glasgow myself. The working man would get it in a single line, and he would be as well informed as I am myself after laborious study.

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8884. You said a little ago that in your view, practically speaking, there is compounding already. Just explain what you mean by that?—Apart from houses under £4 or anything of that kind, my view is that, examined economically, the present system is practically a system of compounding. We have in Scotland a curious method of pretending to call certain rates "landlord's rates" and other rates "tenant's rates," but they are really all paid in the end by the man who occupies the house. I have ventured to sketch an example. If I do not detain you too much, might I put it to the Committee?

8885. Yes, to show that the tenant in the end pays the whole taxes?—If I take a house at £20 annual rental, and assume taxes on that house are £10, payable by the tenant direct to the rating authority. The landlord is content with £20, and gets it; the tenant is content to pay £30, and pays it. He pays £20 of rent and £10 of taxes. Suppose it put the other way, that the landlord pays these taxes. The result then is, that the tenant will pay £30 rent, as he is willing to do; and the landlord, having to pay the £10 taxes, still receives only £20 as before. Suppose a middle course, which happens to be the present system in Scotland, and assume the taxes collected half from landlord and half from tenant, the result is the same: then the tenant pays £25 of rent and £5 of rates, making the £30 he is content to pay; and the landlord pays £5 of rates out of his £25 rental, and so only receives the £20 net rent, which he is content to get. The tenant is willing to pay and does pay £30 for the use of the house, and the landlord gets £20 of rental. Whichever way the taxes are collected, that makes no difference, in the end the tenant pays the taxes.

8886. Suppose you had compounding, would not the tenant in addition have to pay for the landlord's cost of collection?—Of course, some person must pay the cost. I do not enter upon the question of cost there at all, but there is a certain proportion of cost which it would be proper to pay to the man who collects.

8887. Would not that be an addition to what the tenant pays now?—Yes, if the authorities made no allowance.

8888. That throws you back on the question of allowance?—Yes; my point there is that at present the landlords are paying what are called landlord's taxes. They do not pay these "landlord's" taxes; they are really only collected through them and recovered by them from the tenant. In a house of £20 in Glasgow, what are called landlord's taxes amount to 3s. in the £, or thereby. The landlord pays those. He really receives, when he makes his rental, £20 —£17 of rental and £3 for taxes outpaid. It cannot be pretended that the landlord really pays these taxes. They are only one of the items of his outlay in providing and maintaining the house, just like his costs of painting, building, and fire insurance. The rental has to cover all these costs, including the cost of the taxes upon the premises, and it is only after all these outlays are satisfied that any rent return is obtained upon the capital sum invested in the building. He has to pay this £3 before he has a free rental. He collects this £3 from his tenant; he does it without any allowance at all.

8889. Fire insurance or factorage have all to be paid in the end?—Yes.

8890. So that when you go to the root of the matter you don't think it is really introducing any new principle. You have an analogy for it in the water rate and houses under £4. That is a direct analogy, and then you have got in the matter of principle the same thing carried out?—I ventured to state that in the House of Commons, when making a speech on the Agricultural Rates Act, and I received the compliment of a note from the front bench to say that I had pointed out a most important point of principle.

8891. And so in the end you don't think the landlord, if he gets a fair allowance, would have any cause to complain?—He would be better off than he is now.

8892. He does complain that it would introduce an element of friction between him, or at all events between the factor and the tenant. It is said that in England it is right enough, because it is just a payment of rent, and they so treat it; but if you make a distinction between rate and rent, there would immediately be friction?—That would speedily pass off. If one factor did it and another did not, there would be friction, but not when it becomes the universal plan.

8893. They say there is great trouble with stair gas?—The landlords, I am prepared to say, make a good thing out of it. The assessment for a stair paid to the city by landlords is probably 15s., and landlords charge 5s. to each tenant, and collect the money. The tenants are willing to pay for the gas, but they object to the large profits the landlords put on; and may I say that, under the present

dulness which is prevailing in Glasgow, a very favourite method of attracting tenants at the present moment is to offer the prospective tenant "No charge for stair gas."

8894. It is said that if collection of rates were made so frequently as the monthly payments, for instance, that the factor's charge would be very high. They say for a yearly collection, or half-yearly collection, of rent, it should be 2½ per cent., for monthly or weekly collections it would be 5 per cent.?—That is not my opinion. I think it would be collected far more easily. Persons who differ don't study this, that to get the quarter's rent factors have probably to call often and take instalments. Weekly collections would be paid at once.

8895. Suppose rents were collected once a month, if the rates were collected at the same time, should it involve any more trouble to the factor if it is the same call?—I don't think so. I think the facilitating of the business would be preferred at the same charge by all factors. The factors who are advising me, who are very numerous, have never suggested that their rates would be raised if my Bill passed into law.

8896. And do you think that after a time the tenants would come to recognise that the rates must be paid just as rents are paid, and that the present distinction, which is undoubtedly made between rents and rates, involving moonlight flittings, would in many cases cease to be?—Yes. I aim at stopping it.

8897. It has been said that your proposal is a very serious one, because it would increase the number of voters, and some of them, perhaps, not of a very desirable class, the very poorest and most improvident. Would it increase the number?—Yes.

8898. Largely?—I think it would; yes. To some extent it would certainly increase the number of voters.

8899. Is it the case that at the present moment you have the class that would be added actually in possession of the franchise in England?—Yes.

8900. If the same class is admitted in England, do you see any reason why they should not have it in Scotland?—There do not seem to be complaints of revolutionary sentiment in that class in England. The English Burghs are conservative.

8901. Are they the class that turn out very largely to elections or not?—I think they make up the percentage who don't come out to elections.

8902. You say that if the poor rates are paid the State has no business as to who pays them?—Neither the State nor your humble servant.

8903. It has been suggested that you would have people voting who had in point of fact not paid their poor rates. Do you anticipate any large number where rates have not been got by the landlord?—Oh no; the landlord would be no more anxious to give credit for rates than for rent. He would look after his rates.

8904. It has been suggested that there might be cases of great hardship to the voter, as the landlord might not have paid the rates to the rating authority?—The law is quite clear. There have been two cases.

8905. It has been held that even though he does not——?—In the first case the Act is perfectly plain. It is found in the Franchise Act of 1884. The clause I have first marked is section 9, sub-section 6. This bears on the question of rating as well. In the 1868 Act, section 3, sub-section 3, the provision is, "That no man shall under this section be 'entitled to be registered as a voter who at any time during 'the said period of twelve calendar months shall have been 'exempted from the payment of poor rates on the ground of 'inability to pay, or who shall have failed to pay, on or 'before the 20th day of June in any year, all poor rates *that* '*have become payable by him* in respect of said dwelling-'house." The cases that happened in Scotland I have a note of: the one is Neilson (1890), 18 Rettie, p. 338; the other is Wilkie *v.* Burns, December 1903, Fraser, vol. 6, p. 223. Lord Kinnear gives the leading opinion. He holds the tenant was never rated for those rates, that the rates are not payable by him, and that the default of another, namely, the landlord, is not to be held as disqualifying the tenant from exercising the right he was entitled to otherwise.

8906. The landlords and factors have said that if any change such as you propose was to be made, it ought to be accompanied by giving the landlord cheaper and speedier methods of ejectment of defaulting tenants. What do you say to that?—Certainly, if it can be done without injustice to the tenants.

8907. The simple and drastic way of doing it, of course, is to abolish the necessity for going to the magistrate, and to put the absolute power into the hands of the landlord in every case. Do you think that would be desirable?—Forcible ejectment can only be done by a warrant of a magistrate.

8908. You don't think Parliament would entertain that?—I would certainly never propose it.

8909. Do you think it involves considerations which necessarily require the discretion of somebody?—The tenant may have a legitimate defence. He must have an opportunity of being heard. If every man is to be a law unto himself, we shall have come to an unfortunate position.

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8910. But if it is the fact that in Glasgow Burgh Court, simply by paying a 6d. you can get delay, even though you have no defence, and no reasons whatever, as compared with the other man who does not appear at all, do you think that is reasonable?—No. I have made a suggestion about that. I would limit by statute the defence permissible in actions of ejectment.

8911. You see in Glasgow we are told that if you have no defence, and if you just lodge a sixpence, you get delay. You don't defend that?—Certainly not; but I may point out that the process in England is infinitely worse, and involves a longer time and greater expense.

8912. What do you suggest should be held relevant? I have marked down that the only defences permissible in actions of ejectment should be limited to, first, whether rent has been duly paid or not; second, whether legal notice has been duly served or not; and third, whether the terms of tenure have been implemented or otherwise.

8913. You would need some kind of discretion to cover cases of serious illness?—I think that would be reasonable; but I was dealing with the legal aspect, for that is a moral consideration. I don't know. The Committee must judge if effect can be given to that.

8914. In your view, looking to the nature of the contract, it is unavoidable that some time, more or less, must elapse before judgment can be carried out?—It could not be otherwise; because, until the tenant has refused in point of fact to go, and the term of notice has really expired, no action can lie for ejectment.

8915. But those tenants, I suppose, whose practice is to take advantage of mere forms of court, in order to sit on without rent, nobody defends?—Nobody; certainly not myself.

8916. In regard to the expense, do you think it is fair to take as an example of expense a single case, or must one consider that these cases are generally half a dozen taken at once?—That is the practice.

8917. Do you think it is fair to assume that in every case the thing is carried out to the bitter end by the employment of a sheriff officer?—That is rare. There are but few cases in which an extract has to be taken where an officer is employed, and the sheriff's officers tell me that it is practically the same people who are ejected continually.

8918. In regard to the objections to the enactment of your Bill, what is your view as to the effect on the total number of removals in the year as compared with spreading them all over the year?—I don't think the number of removals will be increased; I think the contrary.

8919. Why?—Many inducements that exist now for removal will be altered. For instance, new tenants generally get newly painted and papered houses, and people change houses to get a house newly papered. I think these removals will be spread over all the year in place of being carried into a short week; and removals, always so irksome and costly, will occur only when necessary.

8920. We are told that in Scotland, owing to this one removal term, there is a considerable amount of excitement and house-hunting goes on?—It is notorious that there is always a ferment during the ten days at missive time among the industrial population.

8921. You refer to the inconvenience of the present system. Do you mean everybody removing at once; all the removals taking place at one day, the increased cost, and also hardship in the way of the difficulty of getting into houses before they are properly cleaned?—It is a common practice for incoming tenants to pay to the outgoing tenant from 10s. to £1, in order to get in a day sooner, that some little painting or so forth may be done.

8922. That all leads to expense?—Yes, to greater cost in painting and to dirty houses.

8923. I see you quote the proverb that two removals are equal to one fire?—That is so: I believe the truth of it.

8924. There are, in addition, extra expenses incidental to the present system?—No doubt it aggravates expenses very much.

8925. Is the annoyance and cost incident to every removal such as to prevent people moving, generally speaking, except for good causes?—That is my opinion.

8926. And do you think if a man finds better employment elsewhere he ought to be in a position to move at short notice, and not have to travel backwards and forwards, or take lodgings in another place?—I think so, certainly.

8927. I suppose it is the case that the increased facilities for getting about by cars have minimised the hardship in these cases?—I don't think so; not to any appreciable extent.

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8928. In Glasgow they have, haven't they?—Well, a man may live further from his work than he did. That is true; but that is all that can be said.

8929. Aren't there a great many cases where a house is more a family centre than anything else, the children working in different parts?—That has reference to a higher class of family than what we are contemplating.

8930. Where there is a wage-earning family?—I think so, or better employment.

8931. We have been told of cases where working men live in houses a good deal higher than £20, if they have wage-earning sons and daughters, but that is not the class you are chiefly providing for?—No; these men are more independent, and can make terms for themselves.

8932. It has been said that the system would involve more cost to the landlord in the way of painting, etc. What do you say to that?—I don't think the case is so plain as it is pretended.

8933. Of course, that view is on the assumption that there would be in the end more frequent removals. If that presumption is not correct, as you think it is not, it would, to a large extent, if not entirely, disappear?—It would do so; but may I point out that a removal, when a man must remove, and is determined to remove, will take place inevitably in the end; and what is wanted is to allow of removals being less irksome and costly. If a man is going to get better pay, the landlord cannot prevent him ultimately.

8934. Unless in cases where—— ?—Where he loses the chance, by being tied to his house for a year.

8935. Would the short let result in forehanded rents in your view?—It might.

8936. It does in England, doesn't it?—To some extent.

8937. There has been complaint made to us in certain cases about the cautioner system as a very hard one, especially to working people coming to town for the first time without acquaintance?—Yes.

8938. The short let would abolish that?—Yes.

8939. Have you had any experience of that in your own investigation?—Oh, yes; it is most natural and reasonable that before a landlord permits a tenant to enter his house for a long period he wishes to know a little more about him, and it often is very difficult to satisfy landlords' demands.

8940. We have been told about the Glasgow Corporation houses being forehand. Do you place any value on the experience gathered from houses of that kind, where the tenants are selected and there are caretakers and a number of other peculiarities?—All the nice new properties in the city are in that position. I have half-a-dozen in my own division in Camlachie, where new properties have been got up recently. One I heard of recently belongs to Mr Anderson, late of the Polytechnic, with forehanded rents and weekly tenancies.

8941. What kind of rentals?—Small; all about from £8 to £12.

8942. And he finds it successful?—Yes; he asks me to visit the houses, and see an entertainment he is giving to the tenants one of these evenings, and judge of his tenants.

8943. You have some interesting details as to the English system. We are going to get that from English witnesses, so I do not think we need to go into that detail?—Except that I may be permitted to lay emphasis upon the difference of the valuation roll in England and the valuation roll here, the valuation roll here being based on rental, whereas in England it is upon rateable value. Now, what constitutes rateable value it is impossible to define. It consists in the judgment of the assessor or of a bench to whom it may be appealed; but all kinds of considerations are therein taken into account, and therefore, when you have the rental set forth as rental in England, it must be always remembered that that is rateable value, and to arrive at the rental you have to add from 30 to 50 per cent.

8944. In your view would your proposal involve any alteration on the Valuation Acts?—No.

8945. Unless the method, instead of compounding, were taken of making the rating authorities collect more than once a year. That might involve changes in the way of additional surveys, I suppose?—I think the Acts presently in force provide for that.

8946. But at all events your proposal for compounding in your view does not involve any alteration?—No. I think the powers of authorities are already in existence for tenements and properties let for periods of less than one year; but I would like to say I have had the opportunity of making exhaustive inquiry into the English system. I have been permitted to attend at the Local Government Board, and had the benefit of a conference with their authorities, and everything I have learned has gone to show me the advisability of such a system as is practised in England being adopted for Scotland.

8947. Have you not found in England serious questions arising over the amount of allowance that should be given and great difficulties in adjusting that?—Not great difficulties, but I think the allowances are too liberal in England. I formed that opinion, and it is corroborated by the officials of the Local Government Board.

8948. What is the allowance?—When compounding is compulsory the discounts are taken at not exceeding 15 per cent., and they frequently come very near it, sometimes 10, and sometimes 12, and sometimes 15, but in that case the landlord pays on the whole of his property, and takes his chance of its being unlet.

8949. So that the allowance covers, first, cost of collection; second, losses of rates; third, unlets, partial or complete?—Yes. He is treated as if his property were occupied for the whole year and entirely paid.

8950. Is that 15 per cent. allowed whatever the rent is, or is it graduated as you suggest?—If compounding be determined upon by compulsion, the discount is increased to a maximum of 25 per cent. The authorities in England have the privilege of determining whether the rates shall be compounded or whether they shall be collected from the tenants. All rates are assessed upon occupiers. The compounding system is a method by which, in place of collecting in detail from tenants, the right is taken to collect from landlords. By resolution, the local authorities have power, in the case of the burghs at all events and cities, to collect from landlords, in which case they do it either voluntarily or compulsorily. If compulsorily, they are permitted to go up to 15 per cent.

8951. A graduated scale?—That is the law. It is in the hands of the local authorities; and, in the case of its being done voluntarily, the authorities are authorised to allow discount up to 25 per cent., but I am not aware that that discount has been given.

8952. Can that be done in cases of rent up to any amount?—It is done in the case of even large houses by voluntary agreement. By compulsion it is chiefly small houses.

8953. Give us an illustration. In London compulsory compounding may apply to property entered in the valuation roll at £20 and under?—Of the rateable value of the £20 a year.

8954. In Liverpool £13 a year and in Manchester £10 a year, in Birmingham £10 a year and under, and elsewhere similar?—That is not rental; that is rateable value, but beyond these figures compounding is practised by agreement in very many cases.

8955. How do you account for it, if it is the fact, as we have been told, that the rates in England are much higher than the rates in Scotland?—I don't know upon what ground you come to the conclusion that rates are higher.

8956. We have merely been told it?—My inquiries have not shown me that.

8957. Take London?—London is exceptional.

8958. How much higher are they; double?—Well, now, it is exceedingly difficult. I believe the rates in London amount to about 8s. 6d. in the £, but in Glasgow the landlord's rates are about 3s. 6d. per £, and the tenant's on houses over £10 about 5s., so I get up to 8s. 6d.

8959. Put aside London. The rates in Scotland are lower than in most places in England?—I don't think so.

8960. That is a matter we will get from English witnesses?—Undoubtedly. The rates are collected in curious ways in England. We have no parallel to the system. The spending authority is not the collecting authority in England. The one authority collects in many cases, and then hands the assessments over to other bodies altogether to be administered. It is a source of confusion. These sums I have mentioned include imperial taxes as well. I take the whole taxes when I say 8s. 6d. in the £.

8961. It has been suggested that a better system regarding the allowance would be, suppose the allowance was merely to cover the cost of collection and losses, leaving to the landlord to adjust unlets with the rating authority, so that he should not pay for the property unlet. What do you say to that proposal?—I think it most desirable. The Landlords' Associations made one of the conditions of amicable settlement, perfectly informally and privately, that it should be a condition that a property unlet should not be rated. I applied to the authorities in various places, with the result that I think that an arrangement could have been carried out.

8962. Then the allowance would merely include the cost of collection and losses?—Yes; but, of course, if the tenure were short and payments frequent, I would put loss on one side as of little account.

8963. Now, in regard to amendments on the Bill, you have three suggestions to make, first, you would propose that all houses let by lease for periods of two years and upwards be excepted from the Bill. Are there many under £20 in Scotland?—No; I put in that condition in order that freedom of contract may prevail as far as possible. I think when a man desires to enter into a probative lease

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for a lengthened period of any subjects it would be desirable, as far as possible, to allow him to do so.

8964. At whatever rent?—Yes.

8965. Secondly, you propose that the system of compounding be extended to all rates and taxes leviable upon all houses rented at £20 and under. Of course, there are no imperial taxes on £20 or under, so it would be practically burgh rates and parish council rates?—You find it impossible to distinguish, and any argument with regard to compounding one rate applies with equal force to the other. Thirdly, you propose that £20 be made the limit of the Bill in all the burghs affected by it instead of differentiated rentals adopted in the last print. The graduation was inserted at a time when you had hopes of settlement by arrangement and to facilitate the passage of the Bill amicably, but the graduated scale was just as much objected to by opponents as the £20 all round limit. Besides, a uniformity of nominal sums is desirable?—That is my opinion.

8966. Your Bill has no clause against contracting out. Do you contemplate that people should be allowed to contract out?—No.

8967. You have not provided against it?—That it was possible under my Bill has not occurred to me before.

8968. It is not your view that people should be allowed to contract out of it?—No, they should not be allowed.

8969. There is a kind of side issue introduced by the law of hypothec. Perhaps you have nothing directly to do with it, but it has been brought before us, and it has been suggested either that it should be abolished or that if retained it should be applied in this way, that in addition to clothing and tools a moderate amount of furniture, say up to £20, should be exempted. What do you say to these suggestions?—That such an exemption would, in my opinion, deprive the right of hypothec of any little value that it possesses.

8970. What do you go for, then?—I would abolish hypothec entirely.

8971. Don't you think that there are cases where it is really in the interests of the tenant, because it enables the landlord to allow him to remain under circumstances where it is very desirable that tenants should be allowed to remain?—Any such protection ought not to be claimed by the landlord. The persons who really afford it are the other creditors who are taking all the risk. I know of no reason why the landlord, any more than any other man, should receive a special preference or have his operations protected by a special law. If he likes to give credit, let him do it at his own risk.

8972. It is said that the other creditor is in a different position, because he can stop his credit at a moment's notice; whereas a landlord cannot, the tenant remaining on at all events for a period. What do you say to that?—I don't think the situations are at all parallel. The trader, should a bad debt arise, not only loses the interest on his capital, but he loses his capital itself. The landlord never risks his capital at all; he only perils the interest of his capital.

8973. He gets back his house?—Yes; he only really perils the interest on his capital for a few days necessary to obtain ejectment. I do not think it is in the public interest that a man who is not paying his rent should be allowed to remain. Traders give credit to a man who may be greatly in arrears with the landlord. The landlord, safe under hypothec, maintains the man in a false position.

8974. In your view the arguments which went to abolish agricultural hypothec fully apply to the condition of the urban hypothec?—The question was debated and considered very carefully before a Committee of the Lords and Commons about 1868 or thereby, and as a unanimous report that Committee found that the law of agricultural hypothec had worked badly. It had raised rents, prevented agricultural progress, created an injustice to many classes. It was abolished by the Conservative administration of that time. I think the same may be said of urban hypothec. It creates a false market. If hypothec be of any value, the landlord may take any sort of man as a tenant, because he will have a certain amount of furniture to keep him not far wrong. The market is raised by fictitious competition. He says he is going to be kind to this tenant, and he does it at the expense of other people, because he does not risk anything. If hypothec is worth a straw, it keeps him right; it is the poor grocer or butcher who doesn't know the real position of this tenant, and thinks him worth trusting because he is in a respectable house, who really takes the risk and helps the tenant, not the landlord, who, under hypothec, escapes disaster. It makes a mock market for houses, and is an injustice to other classes.

8975. In your view both the arguments for and against agricultural hypothec would apply equally on both sides to urban?—Yes.

8976. There was the same argument urged in favour of agricultural as in favour of urban hypothec, viz., that it was in favour of tenant?—Yes. But even among the landlords of Scotland to-day I do not know personally of any, and I meet a great many, who is of opinion that the abolition of hypothec is otherwise than an advantage to tenant, landlord, and trader alike, although they made a tremendous noise before it was passed.

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8977. In the case of an undesirable tenant who pays his rent but is an annoyance to the neighbourhood, and cannot be got out, I suppose the landlord's interest would be to have a short let?—That is the true protection of a landlord.

8978. All round?—Yes.

8979. When a sale under hypothec does take place it realises nothing like the true value of the furniture?—Nothing like it.

8980. There would be nothing left in an ordinary case?—The effect of such a sale is to deprive the poor people of the very means of finding a living, let alone paying their debts.

8981. You think if a clause limiting hypothec to £20 were inserted, it would take away any motive landlords have to maintain hypothec?—I think so. My experience is that hypothec is very rarely fallen back upon.

8982. Why do you not just go direct for lets under £20 being limited to six months; it would be the same result?—I don't think so at all.

8983. Would it not?—Oh no; I think many of those houses would be let on monthly tenure.

8984. No; but limited to not more than six months?—That would be an interference with freedom of contract—quite unnecessary.

8985. That would only be apparent, wouldn't it?—I don't like the appearance of such an enactment on the face of it.

8986. But if the result is the same, wouldn't it be a more straightforward method to say downright you shall not let a house under £20 for more than six months?—I think that would be a proposal which would be open to great misrepresentation.

8987. Which your present one is not?—I think my present Bill is at least equitable, and plainly comprehensible.

8988. Is there anything you want to say in addition?—May I draw attention to this other point. The present system places a tenant at great disadvantage. When houses are scarce, he is forced to accept at once what the landlord offers under the missive. On the other hand, when houses are plentiful, and before a tenant can take advantage of the situation, he must refuse the missive and risk being turned out. He must refuse the missive without knowing what is in the market, or whether he can find a house to serve him better, or even as well. Because it will be clear that factors themselves cannot tell tenants what houses are available until the missive days are over, and it is ascertained what tenants are flitting. I wish also to place great stress upon the public sentiment in favour of my Bill, and the unprecedented preponderance of Parliamentary support which has been received.

8989. Then, in regard to the disturbance of industrial occupation under the present system of yearly tenancy, with only one flitting time in the year?—That is an exceedingly interesting phase of this subject, and it needs a little consideration to perceive the bearings of it. But they are very extraordinary. It means, for instance, that tradesmen, such as bricklayers, painters, or plasterers, have great difficulty in obtaining permanent employment. At some times of the year you can hardly get these men at all, at other times they are only about half employed. All the building must take place perforce at certain times of the year, because all the houses must be finished in May. Plasterers get nothing to do when the building is going on, and builders have nothing to do when the plastering is going on.

8990. We have had evidence from members of the trade on that subject, and they quite correspond with the result of your investigations?—Absolutely, many tradesmen have been in the habit, of recent years, of crossing to America in order to get summer empolyment, and steamers have offered them low fares in order to facilitate that.

8991. And does the present system lead to jerry buildings, some of which are occupied before they are fit for occupation?—Within my knowledge that is true. I even suggest this reform in the interests of factors and landlords themselves.

8992. In the interests in short of the three parties requiring to be considered, landlords and factors, tenants, and public authorities?—I should be supported by nearly every factor, if it were not that some of them were apprehensive that an expression of their views would cause dissatisfaction to their principals, the landlords. Any one who knows factor's work in Glasgow in January and February, when they and their staff work till 10 o'clock at night during pressure, and the arbitrary methods they are driven to in consequence of overwork, would agree with me that

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the factors are very anxious to have some system which would alter the present plan.

8993. In your view there are three people who require to be considered, landlords and factors on the one hand, tenants and the rating authorities on the other, and you think the proposal would be to the benefit of all three?

8994. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You refer solely to occupiers in your definition clause of your Bill. You refer, I assume, to all tenants, whether they occupy directly or not?—Yes.

8995. A tenant who does not occupy would still have the same right to get his rates paid by the landlord?—Yes.

8996. Occupier would mean the person in occupation. That is the definition that is put on page 2 of the Bill. There are many cases where the tenant is not occupier?—I desire to cover all persons in occupation.

8997. You have told us that you wish now poor, school, and parish rates to be included in your clause. What allowance do you suggest might be given in respect of these rates? Your scale deals, of course, with burgh rates at present. Would you apply the same scale to the parish rates you now propose to embrace?—Probably the scale might be a little increased to meet the parish assessment. I was looking for the statutory allowance, which is provided for in the Burgh Police Scotland Act, one-tenth of the amount. I take the Act of 1892, section 344—"But the 'Commissioners shall allow to such owners a deduction from 'such assessment equal to one-tenth of the amount thereof," 10 per cent.

8998. What in your view would you fix the 10 per cent. as applicable to—all houses up to £20?—Well, no; I think it might be necessary to have a differentiation. The rates on houses from £15 to £20 are much better paid than those on houses of £10 to £15, or those below £10, and therefore some little adjustment as between these values ought to be made, but 10 per cent. is what I find is provided for in the Burgh Police Act.

8999. Would you allow for houses under £4?—10 per cent. is the allowance at present.

9000. Would you apply the 10 per cent. up to £4 and £15?—Yes; I would be disposed to something of that kind. Certainly 10 per cent. up to £10, and perhaps 7½ per cent. from that to £20. The schedule of my Bill contains scales of allowances arrived at not arbitrarily, but after inquiry. It would probably be necessary to reconsider those.

9001. You have a reference in your Bill to an application to the Sheriff to confirm the resolutions of the Local Authorities?—Yes.

9002. Is it in your mind that the Sheriff should have any discretion or merely a formality?—Formality—making public.

9003. You would not give the Sheriff the discretion to say whether or not, after hearing parties——?—No; I think the Local Authority ought to have full discretion.

9004. Dealing with the English custom, can you tell us what notice, apart from agreement, is necessary under the law of England?—I am afraid I omitted to bring through the Blue Book in which there is a report on the Committee on Local Taxation.

9005. From the Blue Book you refer to, I find in yearly lets the notice required is six months?—Yes, I believe that is correct.

9006. And in quarterly lets three months?—Yes.

9007. Is it the case that these are almost in every case made subject to agreement?—Yes, because the statute is evidently unworkable; notice is too long. In all leases I have seen the period of notice is defined on the lease. These are referring to houses of a rather better character.

9008. Apparently a house taken for three months enforces occupancy for six months?—That would be so, as you put it. It was the confusion of such things in Scotland that led to the passing of the Terms' Removal Act in Scotland, which defined those things and brought them into a reasonable form for the first time, which forms a precedent of Parliamentary interference of house letting.

9009. Taking the terms of that Act, what notice to quit do you propose to substitute for the present law?—I propose to confirm the notice and other conditions of the Terms Removal Act.

9010. Have you thought out how that lies?—One-third of the period of tenure is the provision of that Act.

9011. Take a half-yearly let. As you know, for a half-yearly let just now the period is forty days?—Yes.

9012. You would be likely, in a majority of cases above £10, to make yearly lets six-monthly lets?—No, I think monthly lets.

9013. We have been told from all places the rents of £12 are usually paid half-yearly?—No; quarterly. It varies, of course; more often quarterly than half-yearly.

9014. In the east of Scotland?—Ah! in the east, perhaps.

9015. But in cases where the rent is paid half-yearly, the effect of your Bill would be to substitute half-yearly lets for yearly lets?—On that point I will not hazard an opinion. I think it will make them mostly monthly or quarterly.

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9016. But clause 4 defines this, that if the rent is payable half-yearly, that is to be the term of let?—Clearly.

9017. So that where under existing conditions rents are paid at the two half-yearly terms, that would mean six-monthly lets. Then in your clause, adopting the Removal Terms Act under six-monthly lets, you propose that the notice should be two months?—Yes.

9018. That is sixty days against forty days under the present law?—Yes. I don't think that is unreasonable.

9019. And in the yearly, assuming such a thing is possible, it would be four months?—No, it would be forty days. The Terms Removal Act makes that clear. I would seek to interfere with the existing statutes as little as possible. If I were recasting the whole system of Scottish house tenure, what you point out should be noticed, but I don't see any necessity for disturbing existing enactments any more than is absolutely necessary.

9020. You suggest under weekly lets that the notice should be seven days?—Yes. "Notice of removal from a 'dwelling-house may hereafter be, in the case of a dwelling-'house, for a shorter period than one calendar month, 'seven days before the day upon which it is desired the 'tenure shall terminate, such notice being given in terms 'of the Removal Terms Act of 1886, so far as applicable." It would follow from that that the notice for a weekly tenancy is a week.

9021. The present law is three days?—I think that is unreasonably short.

9022. With reference to the question of exemption, which the Chairman examined you upon, do I take it that you think the present system of exemption should be abolished or merely remedied?—I think remedy would suit the cases. I believe that under the new system there would be less necessity for it than at present happens.

9023. You would merely make more stringent conditions on which relief is to be given?—No; I would hope that, under weekly or monthly payments, the payments would be so much easier that they would be made by tenants without difficulty. But in cases where poverty undoubtedly exists, you would have the Local Authority endowed with the present powers of giving exemption. I would not disturb that at all.

9024. But you increase the powers, so as to make that applicable to tenancies under as well as above £4, altering the present law on that point?—I think that would be equitable.

9025. You have not thought out as to how in practice the present method of giving exemption is to work alongside of the system under which landlords pay the rates?—I have thought it out. I think the exemption form obtained by the applicant as now, would be presented to the landlord, and would entitle the tenant to have the deduction from the rental; in turn it would entitle the landlord to exemption from assessments from the amount upon the face thereof. If the exemption were for 5s., or 7s. 6d., or 10s.—the form would be granted to the applicant of exemption from assessment to that amount which would be recovered from the landlord, and he would recover from the authority. I am assuming, in the first place, that the landlord pays the assessment. There can be no question of abatement on the landlord's claim. The authority would assess on the landlord, and collect the full sum of the rates. Then comes the applicant for relief, who appears before the bench, obtains a granting of the prayer, and an order for recovery of the 7s. 6d., or 10s., or whatever the sum may be.

9026. That order, the person who gets it presents to his landlord, obtains the deduction in such form as may be arranged between them, is passed on by the landlord to the authority to pay back to the landlord the sum which was dealt with in this exemption form?—Yes.

9027. Are you assuming that the tenants in question pay the whole of the rent?—I am assuming that it would happen at various times of the year. I am entitling the tenant to exemption from assessments for the period set forth in the form.

9028. With reference to franchise, you agree that if the tenants do pay their rates even indirectly, they should be enfranchised?—I do.

9029. Would you include in that men whose names are on the valuation roll?—They cannot be on the roll. They cannot be entered under the Act. "No man is to be 'entitled to be registered as a voter who has, during the 'period of twelve calendar months, been exempted from 'payment of poor rates on the ground of inability to pay, 'or who shall have failed to pay his poor rates."

9030. That is the general clause?—Yes.

9031. But if a pauper is an outdoor pauper paying his rents, assuming that he will be paying to his landlord rent and rate like any other tenant, is he to be precluded from exercising his citizenship while somebody paying no more

does so?—I don't know; but the analogy of the English practice is that such persons would be improperly possessed of the franchise. That wording can be made to meet the case you put, I have no doubt.

9032. Can you tell me when the voters roll is made up in Scotland, or rather tell me this, from when does the twelve months' occupacy run?—Well, the English Act provided, and I think there is nothing in Scotland to the contrary, a year previous to the 15th of July.

9033. So that, assuming there were a removal during any part of that twelve months, the tenant who had removed would lose his vote. He would not have his name on the roll?—Under the present Act these persons are disqualified, although I believe a transference from one part of the same constituency to another constitutes the same qualification as permanent residence in the one place, but if a man shifted from Edinburgh to Glasgow he would lose his vote.

9034. Would there be any risk of a man taking his house for a month in order to get on to the roll, and then pay his month's rent and give up his tenancy?—There are risks about any enactments. I don't think that is a serious risk.

9035. It would be got at, no doubt, by the clause providing for occupacy?—Obviously. The registers are not at present absolutely accurate.

9036. Then, with reference to hypothec, you are in favour of abolition of hypothec?—I would be.

9037. In the interests of the tenant?—I think of all classes. It is not in the interests of landlords that they should be encouraged to put improper tenants into their houses.

9038. That term applies to tenants who are perhaps unable to pay the rent?—Well, it takes this form, if hypothec be of any value he is excused and absolved from taking these prompt precautions which otherwise devolve upon him, and he lets a man get into a house of a higher rental than perhaps he otherwise would.

9039. In England, as you know, tools and clothing and furniture up to £5 are all exempted from distress?—Yes.

9040. Would you be in favour of a similar provision being made for Scotland?—Yes.

9041. Would you go further in the interests of the occupiers to prevent the tragedy you refer to being perpetrated not only by landlords but by ordinary creditors? Would you give the same protection against not only the landlord but against ordinary creditors?—I think I would, on the same principle as that on which we have abolished imprisonment for debt, and other penal enactments in connection with these matters that humanity has rebelled against.

9042. So you would protect the tenant's tools, clothing, and a minimum amount of furniture?—His means of living.

9043. Up to £5, say?—Yes.

9044. Against all diligence?—I would.

9045. With reference to the option given to Local Authorities, how do you propose, assuming the experiment is not satisfactory, to enable a Local Authority to revert to the present system. You are going to give the power to come under the Bill, would you assume the power to abandon it?—I am quite sure that if they once experience the benefits under my Bill they will not want to go back.

9046. But is there any objection to a resolution of the Town Council cancelling a prior resolution adopting the Bill?—If I am going for local control I must take the whole consequences of local control, and allow them to revert if they should unfortunately so desire.

9047. Do you think, perhaps, that would not be necessary?—I do not think it would, but you put it in a way that I am compelled to answer as I have done.

9048. Then with reference to the English system of compounding, I do not know if I quite understand you to say that 15 per cent. you think was the allowance given by the English burghs where compounding was compulsory?—The authorities are permitted to allow a discount not exceeding 15 per cent. In some cases they give 15 per cent.

9049. But was it your evidence that that included empties as well as others?—Yes; my evidence is to show that that is allowed the landlord when he pays on all property whether occupied or not.

9050. My impression was that 15 per cent. was exclusive of what is known as voids, and that 15 per cent. was allowed where the landlord took the risk?—All I can say is, that my notes of my investigations of the Local Government Board are as I have said.

9051. We will get it from experts, but I see we have here a statement by an English witness who gives scales showing the abatement, compounding rate of Liverpool, Birkenhead, Exeter, and York, etc., and these run 30 per cent. in every case?—Yes, an abuse has really crept in in regard to the deductions in many cases. I was told by the Local Government Board officers that they have been approached frequently in reference to an alteration in the system of discounts. He gives this schedule, and also states that under this section they may allow abatement up to 15 per cent.

9052. If the owner gives notice that he wishes to be rated, whether or not the premises are occupied, he is entitled to another abatement of other 15 per cent.?—That may be the case in some places, but it is very excessive in my opinion.

9053. Is this quotation from the Public Poor Rate Assessment Act applicable to all burghs in England?—I have only an extract from that Act.

9054. Then with reference to the practical difficulty of collecting from tenants, I gather from what you told us that you are not so very strongly, as the Bill indicated, in favour of the separation of rent and rate—in practice, I mean?—It will be a little difficult. My objection to defining in the Bill any procedure is an objection on principle. I think Acts of Parliament should be in general terms, for whenever you begin to attempt too closely to regulate details of such matters, you interfere with the functions of local authorities and perhaps defeat the purpose you have in view.

9055. I was rather referring to this,—assuming the landlord pays rent and rate, we have been told that in Scotland, as in England, what will happen will be that the tenant will be called upon periodically to pay one sum, and that is, I understand, the invariable practice in England, and that in Scotland no attempt will be made to distinguish at periodic payments how much is rent and how much is rates?—Unless a provision to the contrary is inserted. I would leave that to the discretion of each authority.

9056. Do you think the desirability of bringing before the tenant the amount of rate would be met if he once a year or once every six months got a statement simply showing what in effect the burgh rates or parish rates were?—I think oftener, perhaps, than once in six months. I have suggested quarterly. It might be monthly. I think it desirable. It would not involve any great difficulty on the landlord.

9057. You refer to the English phrase "rateable value" can you tell us whether the rent, as opposed to rateable value, includes the whole sum paid by the tenant, rent and rates, not rateable value, but the rent itself?—I scarcely follow.

9058. In Liverpool we are told the rateable value is £13, and with 30 per cent. higher the rent you get is £19, 10s. Is that £19 inclusive of rent and also the rates?—I should say so. I think it must.

9059. That is how I followed your calculation as to how the rateable value was arrived at?—In that case you have always to remember, in dealing with a house in Scotland of a certain value, you have to deduct the sum charged for rates. For instance, if you were to find that it was desirable to make £20 the limit here of rental, and if the rates are to be added by compounding to the rental, you practically would be enacting something like £15 of actual rental, as things are just now. That is a view I hope the Committee will keep carefully in view. My Bill fixes £20 of net rent as the limit.

9060. The point is that we have to make clear that the assessment roll only contains the real rent, not the total sum paid by the tenant to the landlord, and embracing both rent and rates?—The difference between the rental and rateable value is that in the latter a deduction is made for the cost of upkeep, which takes the form of deductions for repairs, I suppose for painting, and I have no doubt for rates as well.

9061. Of course, if it includes rates, assuming any change is made in our system here, and the assessment rolls contain a slump sum, being the whole that the tenant pays, we would require to have a corresponding rateable value?—You would.

9062. Perhaps we will get it from the English witnesses too? Then the case is put with great force that the Bill might be limited to £10. You told us you thought that would not meet the grievance at all?—I do not think it would at all meet the case.

9063. That witness who spoke of a £10 limit was talking largely upon the question of compounding?—Yes, he was dealing with that at the time.

9064. Assuming that compounding was applied to rents not exceeding £10, couldn't it be left to the Local Authority, just as in England, in certain cases either to collect the rates on houses above £10, as they do at present, or to make a voluntary agreement with the proprietors, if they thought proper?—Yes, that could be done.

9065. Above a minimum?—All that recommends such a provision to my mind would recommend it to the rental of £20 just as much as to the rental of £10. I think the suggestion is one of value.

9066. Do you quite appreciate this, that the grievance here is the long period of let, and that the attempt to be

made is to remedy that grievance. The question as to how the remedy will affect rating and franchise does not directly concern the people who are interesting themselves in this question. Supposing the rating authorities tell us that above £10 compounding will be most difficult to apply, that it will cover 75 per cent. of the whole of the houses in Glasgow, if you take up to £20, and that practical men suggest that the compounding should stop at £10, do you think your Bill would make it impossible for the rate collectors to proceed as at present in all houses between £10 and £20?—That is a question upon which I can only form an outside opinion. I think it would be very difficult to collect the rates from that class of houses oftener than once a year. I am afraid it would be very difficult. It may be done, however.

9067. You would not suggest doing it more than once a year?—Well, the hardship is that the tenants do not have the money at hand. Houses between £10 and £15 are 32,000 in Glasgow, houses between £15 and £20 are 19,000, so that there are 52,000 houses in the year 1905 of the class that you refer to.

9068. Your Bill does not lead to more frequent removals?—No, in my opinion it would not.

9069. Where it does lead to frequent removals it will be largely in the lower class?—Why should you confine the benefits of making frequent payments to the lower class. Men at £12 or £14 a year are just as liable to be in a difficulty to find £3 or £4 for rates in November as a man who has a house a little lower rented. I am most eager that those men should have the benefit of the collection of their burden at frequent intervals. To my mind this is the essence of the whole case. It will let a man meet his obligations honourably, and give him that feeling of independence which a man cannot feel when he shirks them, as is the fashion too often now.

9070. Not made by instalments?—I deplore that sad system. It is the worst you can invent. I am in arrears myself. I received a notice this morning that, unless I paid within a certain period, costs would be charged; whereas, if I paid it out in equal sums, it would go out without my feeling it.

9071. As you know, the rents are payable on 15th May and 11th November, and the rent removal term is 28th May?—Yes.

9072 Proprietors find the difference between the 15th and the 28th of May invaluable time for taking steps against the tenant who has not paid?—Yes.

9073. Your Bill proposes to shorten lets?—Yes.

9074. Do you propose that the day of payment of rents should be the day of removal?—I leave that to the bargaining with the landlord. If he finds it an advantage to stipulate with regard to that, let him do so.

9075. Agreements are very rare in small houses?—They will become commoner. It would be to the advantage of everybody.

9076. In the absence of an agreement, you, under the Bill, propose that the rents should be paid by twelve o'clock, and that would be the moment that the tenant vacates the house?—That is the law.

9077. If agreements become commoner, that involves a missive?—Yes.

9078. And the stamp?—Yes. I have raised this question of the stamps that Mr Allison alluded to. It is a serious grievance.

9079. Do you concur with Mr Allison?—No, I don't concur as to the tenants being unable to appreciate the real position. If tenure were weekly or monthly, things would glide along, under tacit re-location the agreement would be propelled from month to month. We have so many confused ideas upon missives in Scotland under this present system that few persons, not even legal agents, have their minds perfectly clear as to what the meaning of missive really is.

9080. Do you concur with Mr Allison to this extent, that assuming the house is taken for six months up to £6, the stamp duty should not be more than 3d. in the £?—Yes.

9081. Under £10 it is 1d.; under £12, 1s. 6d. for a year?—Up to £37, yes.

9082. Do you concur with him that the fixed rate of say 6d. is quite ample for a house up to £20?—I would go further; I would be disposed to abolish the tax altogether. It is like a tax on insurance.

9083. You might extend the limit to £20?—I would be quite willing to assist any such proposal. I have raised this question on the Budget repeatedly, and I have been encouraged by the Chancellors of the Exchequer who say, "If public opinion in Scotland is strong enough, you will 'get your way." Seeing public opinion is so strong, I am inclined to raise the question again.

9084. You confine yourself to burghs and you talk about industrial centres. We have had evidence showing that there are several places in the west, industrial centres and not burghs?—That is so.

9085. Can you tell us where the phrase, "populous places," comes from? It is a well-known legal term for industrial centres?—I had great trouble in coming to the definition of that. I forget the various considerations which weighed with me. You will find the phrase varies in some of the previous Bills. If any better clause or wording could be advised that could cover such places, I should be very glad.

9086. I am suggesting "populous places," but I cannot at the moment remember where that occurs?—I have it in one of my Bills. I will look up and let you know.

9087. You are quite anxious to apply any change not only to burghs, but to all populous centres and industrial places?—Wherever it appears to be needed.

9088. In regard to ejectments, you talk about magistrates taking the necessary time to deal with petitions for ejections. We have been told that almost, with the exception of Glasgow, the magistrates have no power to deal with that at all; that in most places the Sheriff Courts only have power?—Yes.

9089. Would you be in favour of extending to magistrates or to police judges the right to deal summarily with the applications for ejections?—I see no interference with justice which would be induced by such a step.

9090. In Glasgow they have that power?—Yes.

9091. We are told that Sheriffs take so many holidays that there is a grievance felt in places where there is no Burgh Court, and where, therefore, the proprietors must wait during the vacation until the Court resumes. To meet that difficulty you would endow the Police Court magistrates with the same power as magistrates have in Glasgow Burgh Court?—I must not be held as assenting to any proposition that any judicial functionary takes too many holidays, but if it is desirable to extend these powers to the magistrates, I don't see any objection.

9092. In view of the change in the system of letting, we have been told on all hands that something must be done to expedite the landlord's right of ejection?—The landlords keep on asking for that.

9093. Would one way of so expediting his right be to make the Burgh Court or the Police Court the Court which would grant ejections where at present only the Sheriff Court has that power?—Yes, I think it might be of value.

9094. Have you considered the large number of cases in large towns where a house is called a house and shop simply because there are a few goods in the front window?—Yes.

9095. We were told in Glasgow and elsewhere that there is quite a large number of such houses. Would you exclude that from the Bill as it stands?—Yes.

9096. Do you think that is the only case?—The person carrying on a shop is accustomed to mercantile considerations and propositions and transactions, though on a small scale, and ought to be able by agreement to make a bargain which would protect that individual's interest. That situation is quite different from the working man's, whose dwelling-house is concerned, who has no knowledge of business, and is not accustomed to making transactions or bargains at all. I look upon the workshop or the shop as being in a position clearly differentiated from the dwelling-house.

9097. Would you exclude any premises?—I propose to exclude byres, stables, workshops, and the like.

9098. With reference to the allowance to proprietors, I am not sure whether I rightly understood you to say that the more burden the landlord paid in the way of rates and up-keep would inevitably result in the rents being increased?—I think so, economically and in the end.

9099. So that if the typical landlord is right in the view he takes that there will be more frequent removals, extra cost for collection, and that he will lose largely from empties and irrecoverables, that that will result in your political economy in the rent rising?—Yes. Whatever reductions there may be in the returns from the capital invested in such a business must be made up. Capital will not go where there are not reasonable returns.

9100. Whatever he loses in one way he makes up in another?—Yes. But the number of houses remains the same under whatever tenure the houses are held. If a man leaves his house and goes to another, the number of houses and tenants remains unaffected.

9101. Dealing with the scale of allowances, does it follow from what you have said that the greater the allowance the landlord gets the less will the rent be?—No; I think he may regard the allowance as payment for services—a certain proportion of the allowance. I aim at establishing a principle under which the whole of the allowance shall be expended by the landlord in getting taxes collected. I don't intend to make the landlord better or worse by means of this allowance, but that it shall be such an allowance as shall be balanced by the expenditure he is put to in consequence of having to

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collect rates in addition to rent, rather than rent alone. Therefore, it does not affect the question you raise.

9102. It affects the question as to whether the scale you give is adequate, and whether the Bill if passed would raise rents. Assuming no allowance is given, rents will be raised?—I think certainly, but may I correct myself? There would not be so much tax required to be raised. Certain expenses are at present incurred by public authorities. These expenses will be saved and placed on the landlord. As far as the tenant is concerned, the amount is alike. I have only transferred the cost of collection from the pockets of the public collectors to the pockets of the landlords, therefore my answer at first was wrong. The amount of the tax to be raised, as far as the tenant is concerned, would remain alike.

9103. Except that the factor has more work?—No; the work is presently performed by the public collectors at a certain expense. That work would be performed by the factors' staff in the future without very much extra expense; but at all events the same work would be performed, and it will be rewarded by something like the same payment. In so far as the costs to the tenants are concerned, it would remain unchanged.

9104. So that so far as the allowance is equitable, and no more or no less than what the Corporation either expend or lose at present if expended in payment of salaries or losses through irrecoverables, the tenants would not suffer?—No; obviously the tenant is in exactly the same position. But this is a counsel of perfection. There will be a little extra discount obtained no doubt by the landlord.

9105. In the scale finally fixed upon, you are anxious that the landlords should get a sufficient allowance to cover the cost to them of collection, of any risk through irrecoverables as well as the risk of empties, unless they get a separate allowance in respect of empties?—Certainly, I am in favour of the landlords being treated with an equitable and even with a generous hand, and I am quite in favour of an enactment being provided that property unoccupied shall not be rated.

9106. (*Mr Cox.*) Do you think any progress has been made at all towards the attainment of shorter lets since this agitation began?—Very much, I think.

9107. There has been progress made, and you told us that just at the present time, within the last week or two, you had heard of some new tenements put up?—New Tenants Defence Association.

9108. About the new tenements of Mr Anderson, are these new?—Oh yes!

9109. And they are weekly terms?—Yes.

9110. Because we were told very emphatically by some house owners in Glasgow that new tenements would not on any account be let on weekly tenure?—Those who possess old tenements are no doubt saying so. There are 16,000 houses (mostly old) unoccupied at this moment. The competition is great, and persons with old tenements are feeling it keenly.

9111. So that progress, if made, is in the direction you want? But you don't think it would do to leave time to work its own cure without the interference of Parliament?—We don't live long enough; besides, there are many analogies for Parliamentary interference with house letting. The Terms Removal Act is an example, indeed, of legislative action in connection with house letting.

9112. What would be the effect on rents, on the passing of your Bill, would it lower rents?—I don't think so. If anything, no doubt the effect would be in that direction, but I don't look for any serious result.

9113. You don't think there are many cases where tenants would prefer the present state of things to remain?—I don't know of any.

9114. But we have heard, of course, in the course of this investigation of a good many men, and probably there are a large number of men who have had for years steady employment, and who have occupied their present houses for many years, who would much prefer to have the thing remaining as it is just now, rather than have it changed. Would it not be possible to put in your Bill some power that would enable tenants of that kind to have some longer tenure. For example, would you not allow a tenant who really wished to be put in the position of making an agreement with his landlord, say with a 5s. or 10s. stamp, or whatever was thought necessary, so that a man who, from prejudice or ignorance, or whatever it was, wished to have tenure of his house for a year, that he might have it?—I have no objections to a regular covenant in the form of a regular lease for a lengthened period being entered into by parties. I propose myself that all houses let for periods of two years shall be exempted. A written agreement might be considered for a period of less than two years, provided it be a written probative deed written before witnesses, so as to show that the tenant was not coerced into his action.

9115. That would be contracting out of the Bill?—No, I cannot consent to that, but it might be put as an exempting clause.

9116. But such a clause might be very useful in certain places: seaside places, for example. Take Rothesay, which was referred to, where people go down for the summer, and it is absolutely necessary that people who let their houses for summer should have security of tenure?—I do not think that is a serious objection. The contention would be that the landlord would pounce upon a house in May, and wish to let it again in October. I say he could not. The suggestion is that the tenant who presently has such a house would be evicted in May, in order that the landlord would obtain the big rents of the summer holding, then he would endeavour to let the house again in October. The house would not be let at all under those conditions.

9117. I don't quite see what you mean. If a tenant has a house on a short tenure, such as you propose, he would not be able to let that house to tenants for short periods during the summer?—Do you mean because he would be afraid of the landlord evicting him in order to get the benefit of the summer rents? The landlord, in such a case, would have the house empty in the autumn, and no person would take it on such terms. I can understand some benighted landlord so acting and taking the summer rents to himself, evicting his tenants. Then comes October. What then? No person would take the house at all in October; and when next June or May comes, the landlord who has so acted will find it impossible to get a tenant at all. But my optional clause provides for such places. If the people in such places as Rothesay consider exemption is to their advantage, they will not adopt the Bill.

9118. But that optional clause would apply equally to Glasgow?—To Glasgow also; and if the majority of persons in Glasgow desire not to have this Bill, they have an opportunity of so electing.

9119. Have you thought of a case like this—we have had it put before us by some factors or house-owners that in their tenements there are houses adjoining each other at varying rents, so that you might have two doors adjoining, one within your limit, and the other without. Thus you would have a half-yearly and weekly tenant, possibly, door to door. The landlord says that would be very objectionable. They want to get weekly tenants altogether. How would you deal with that?—I would not deal with it at all. I don't think legislation can follow all the conduct of a house-letting business. Nor do I see any objection to a weekly tenant and a half-yearly one being side by side, but I think it will very rarely occur. It is not the fashion to build houses in that way. All sorts of difficulties are being fished up from the bottom of the sea against the Bill.

9120. But it is the case that tenements are designed with small houses and large ones. You have three rooms on one side, and perhaps one in the middle?—That may happen, but I see no objection if it does happen.

9121. (*Sir John Stirling-Maxwell.*) How many private members are there from Scotland opposed to your Bill?—I can answer that question if it would not be invidious. I believe there is one.

9122. Only one, as far as you know?—Yes; but it would be improper to go any further, I am afraid, wouldn't it? I am only aware of one, and his objection is to the compounding clause as cloaking the incidence of taxes.

9123. You told us why you did not include any provision to shorten the period for warning away, but you did not tell us whether you were in favour of such a provision?—The Terms Removal Act seems to me a reasonable statute on that question. I see no reason to disturb that statute. It is, roughly speaking, one-third of the period of occupancy. The only point at which I propose to alter the provisions of that Act are in regard to weekly tenancies, and I submit to this Committee that three days is too short a time to call upon a man to find a house, and, even if the landlord has to wait a week before getting possession of his house, it is not a great hardship, and a week is as short a time as can reasonably be expected to evict a man from the house.

9124. Tell us shortly why you decided not to put in any provision dealing with facilities for ejectment under this Bill?—Because I knew no enactment I could propose.

9125. You suggested in your notes—— ?—Yes, these suggestions have been evolved in consequence of my consultation with the members of Glasgow Corporation and with the officers of the Burgh Court. A report was prepared, as you know, by the Town Clerk of Glasgow on this subject. I think that was in the days of Sir James Marwick, and I was not able to get the benefit of his advice, because of his being away from home in bad health when I was preparing my Bill. I make the suggestion now as a reasonable way of dealing with that method.

9126. Would you include them in your Bill?—I think I

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would. I should be willing to do anything and everything which would make the position of the lordlords equitable, reasonable, and secure, as far as I can.

9127. (*Mr Binnie.*) Do you regard the optional clause in your Bill as essential to it?—I think it is a wise provision.

9128. Do you consider it essential; because, if so, I will not ask you anything about cases like Rothesay?—I cannot say that I have considered it in the view of being essential. I suppose I may be permitted to quote the Lord Advocate, "It is a great improvement."

9129. Would you not introduce your Bill without that in it?—My present opinion would be to endeavour to obtain an optional clause.

9130. As you put it in that guarded way I must say something more about Rothesay. There are keen landlords there, as in other places. If a tenant holding for a quarter only were to let a house in spring, as is very commonly done for occupation during the summer months, and if a month before removal term he got notice from his landlord to remove, a month before the 28th May, he would be very awkwardly placed towards these people who had taken his house for June, July, and August?—He would be.

9131. Would it not be essential to make some provision for the security of the tenure in a place where such a thing might happen?—I would not regard it as absolutely essential; I think it would be equitable and reasonable. I don't know that I should go further than that. The cases of people who let houses under £20 for occupancy during the summer months in the month of March, which is the case you presume, are very rare. The bulk of small summer houses are taken rather nearer to the term of occupancy.

9132. But my remarks extend up to the 28th of April?—Forty days, yes. You are correct. In the quarterly tenancy they would. It would be a case of difficulty. But we must look at things in a practical aspect. An earthquake might happen and involve the half of Rothesay.

9133. If you don't see any difficulties, we need not go on?—I think an optional clause a reasonable provision; but I am not going to say that I refuse my Bill, if it were scored out.

9134. In regard to compounding, your first and most important representation is that you approve taxing at the source?—Yes.

9135. Is the landlord the source?—Yes. He is like the large railway company. You don't collect your income tax from the individual shareholders; you take it *en bloc* from the railway company.

9136. We are talking of the source?—The tea importer is the source, the man from whom *en bloc* it can be taken.

9137. But is the tenant not the source? You yourself have proved, and quite satisfactorily, that it is the tenant who pays taxation?—Yes.

9138. Then the man who pays it is the source?—Oh! no. The tea-duty is paid by the man who drinks the tea.

9139. We are not dealing with the tea-duty at all; we are dealing with the things we have before us?—If I have used the word "source," and it does not convey the proper idea, I can correct it. Collecting from the landlord is collecting where it can be done *en bloc* in a large amount, and with certainty.

9140. Most easily?—Most easily.

9141. That is it, if you had said so?—I concur in that, most easily.

9142. You said, I think, in answer to a question from the Chairman that the landlords would get the allowance on something on which they get no allowance now?—Yes.

9143. What, for instance?—The landlords pay at present what is called the landlord's share of taxation in full and without any deduction. I presume that when they come to add that to the cost of their houses they make no deduction; they simply charge the full amount. They don't make an additional charge.

9144. What would they get?—Supposing the landlord's taxes were £3 on a £20 house, he would be entitled to a percentage deduction for the £3 he at present pays in full.

9145. Is that your proposal?—Under compounding with an allowance, that would be the proposal.

9146. That he should get the deduction from his own taxes as well as those he collects from other people?—Well, I don't know how you can distinguish. You are going to collect all the taxes from the landlord.

9147. Yes, yes! but we are dealing with the question as between landlord and tenant. Do you think the Corporation of Glasgow, or any other Corporation, would make an allowance to the landlord on his own share of taxation?—They will have to do what is equitable and reasonable; and if the deduction of 5 per cent. or 7½ per cent. on the tenant's half is insufficient to remunerate the landlord for collecting the rates when it is to be upon the whole taxation, it will be ample.

9148. Then is your proposal that you should take this deduction on the whole taxation?—My deduction would be an equivalent to the entire cost of collection just now.

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9149. You have made certain allowances, named certain proposed allowances in your Bill. Do you intend that this allowance should be made on the taxes charged directly on the landlord?—Might I say that the proposals for deductions contained here are proposals which are not essential to the Bill; they are to be considered by this Committee. My suggestion is, that whatever deductions be given they shall be equivalent to the charge of collecting taxes at present, so that the landlord would be no worse placed.

9150. Have you said he would get some allowances which he does not get at present? That was your expression. I wish you to explain what allowances he would get that he does not get at present?—My view is that it is impossible to enact that part of the taxation shall be net and the rest of the taxation shall be less a given percentage. I have in my mind that the authority dealing with the taxes as a whole will assess them as a whole, make allowances to the landlord as a whole, and make such deduction to landlords as shall be equal to what tehy will save in expenses, etc., under the new system of compounding.

9151. To put it shortly, the intention is that there should be the same allowance to the landlord on the landlord's taxes as there is on the tenant's taxes?—That way of putting it renders it liable to be misunderstood.

9152. That is not liable to misunderstanding?—I perceive the point you aim at, but I don't think it can be suggested that this Committee should report in favour of a system by which part of the taxes was to be compounded with a deduction allowance and part was to be net.

9153. Then you have been inquiring very largely in regard to this matter about compounding in England. Can you tell us what are the allowances in that country?—I believe they come under the same statute as that which I have read to you, that when they are voluntary they are permissible up to 25 per cent., when compulsory they are limited to 15 per cent.

9154. As a matter of fact, what are they?—From 20 to 30 per cent. There are various authorities, and they vary in different places.

9155. We have had different accounts?—I believe you are having the Registrar of the County Council of London before you. He will no doubt give the detailed information.

9156. If he is coming, that will be all right?—I believe they all compound, except one single division of London represented by Mr Cleland.

9157. Do you consider it essential that an abatement be allowed and be fixed by the Bill, or should it not?—Upon that point I have no absolutely fixed opinion.

9158. The reason for putting the question is this: I think you said that would not allow any other person than the rating authorities to interfere in this matter?—Not the sheriffs.

9159. Now, suppose the Bill is passed, the rating authorities having the power to compel the landlord to pay the rates, would they not have it in their power just to take down the sums to the very lowest figure, 1 per cent., 2 per cent., or 3 per cent., although utterly inadequate?—Well, that is a position that ought not to arise.

9160. But we are dealing with human nature?—But the Bill does make provision for that.

9161. Let us just see where it does, please?—Perhaps you will allow me to add, Mr Binnie, that what I meant was that there should be a scale of allowances; but I should explain to the Committee that since this scale of allowances was drawn up, steps have been taken to include in the scope of the Bill the compounding of poor rates, and I admit at once that the addition of compounding in respect of poor rates involves a rather more liberal reduction to landlords than had been contemplated here. That is why my answers have been more hesitating on that point than they might have been. I was clear that there ought to be reasonable reductions in regard to police rates. I am now convinced compounding ought to apply to poor rates too. But the officials from the Parish Council were not very clear, I think.

9162. They were the very opposite?—The first that appeared was surely not so. I heard him. The police authorities gave you full information. The parochial did not. They said they were opposed to my Bill, because they wanted their rates compounded; and until I put this into the Bill, they would not give me much assistance. The schedule of allowances will require to be overhauled on that point mainly.

9163. To go back to the question, in the circumstances I have explained, do you not think it would be essential that a rate of allowances should be fixed by the Bill and not left to those whose interest it would be to reduce it to the very lowest figure?—Putting the matter as you do, I

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am inclined to think you are correct in that matter; that there must be a percentage provided by the Bill.

9164. And fixed?—It may be fixed variously for various localities.

9165. Have you seen the tables that were put in in regard to the recovery of monthly rates in Glasgow?—Yes.

9166. And during your last period, do you know how much the losses were under £10—about 26 per cent.?—I will assume that if you please.

9167. It is only fair, in connection with another answer, that you gave to say that 25·61 was the rate last year. The average for the last seven years is, as near as possible, 22 per cent.?—Yes; I take it from you.

9168. Now, it is only right that you should be reminded that that includes the sum allowed to poor occupants. They have not given us the figures to let us know how much they would deduct from the 25 per cent., but they have given us figures that it would leave at least 15 or 16 per cent. of irrecoverables from those who have been relieved from payment of rates. Now, on the same class you say you would allow on rents up to £7, but, under £10, 5 per cent. Even that allowance is not at all adequate when the loss is not less than 50 per cent.?—You have the benefit of figures, and cross-examination of officials who gave you the figures. I was obliged to take figures from a great many sources, and I had not the advantage of cross-examination. I said in my speech in the House of Commons, when I was permitted to move an amendment to the Address, about my Bill, that I thought the rates for collection would require to be increased. I think so still, but I am not possessed of detailed information which would enable me to say whether your figures and conclusions are absolutely right or wrong. I was guided by the fact that the Parliamentary powers given for compounding deduction in the Burgh Police Act of Scotland on rentals under £4 are only 10 per cent.

9169. The one justifies the other?—No; that was the data I acted upon. I have not heard serious objection. The Landlords' Association, so active in looking after their interests, have not raised the question that this is an inadequate allowance. They are exceedingly keen in scenting any grievance; and I took it that Mr M'Bain or his colleague would be down on such a grievance if it be the case that they are losing so much and only getting 10 per cent. against it.

9170. But this is a Bill which you introduced and tried to get advanced into law, and your proposal was that rents under £7 and under £10 should only have a deduction of 5 per cent.?—Probably before I proposed to deal with poor rates.

9171. But dealing with the question as it was then, the losses were 15 or 16 per cent.?—That is what you say. You would require to take the figures for Edinburgh and other places along with those, wouldn't you, Mr Binnie?

9172. Unless you have simple facts, actual facts in different parts of the country. Why not all through?—Because a Bill of this sort cannot be absolutely regarded as the last word in respect of every one of its details. The schedule is open to consideration; and I assume that if there is to be any error in calculation, or difficulty about proper allowances, the landlords will point it out in the committee stage in the House of Commons.

9173. And you are guided by one case in Glasgow; while if you had inquired, you would have found that in Liverpool, Bootle, Waterloo, Walsell, Portsmouth, Burton-on-Trent, Chester, and Barrow, which are very important centres, they give 30 per cent. on poor rates, and on the general rates they give in Liverpool 50 per cent.?—I don't hesitate to call these allowances an abuse.

9174. And then down to 20 per cent., and in some one or two cases 10 per cent. on rateable value?—Which, of course, makes a different deduction when counted on rental. This was not gone about carelessly as you would like me to admit, but with great deliberation. I was eager to put myself conscientiously safe and to consider every side.

9175. The safe side I quite admit?—I say so. I have never doubted but that the landlords, who have great influence in Parliament, who have prevented my Bill from being heard and debated for fifteen years, would be well able to bring before Parliament any reasons for larger deductions in my schedule.

9176. Therefore you did not?—Oh yes! I consulted with them. I cannot say they assented to these, but they were well aware of the provisions, and they did not make the objections you are making to the scale of deductions.

9177. You were right in saying they did not assent?—If they had been willing to consider the subject with me in earnest attempt to arrive at an equitable scale, I would have been most ready. Whatever can be shown to be reasonable allowances, 5, 10, or 15 per cent., I will be in favour of what is equitable.

9178. That is satisfactory, or even more?—Well, I don't suppose, for instance in Scotland, we charge the rates on empty houses.

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9179. Poor rates are paid?—In some localities. It is not always so; but not police rates.

9180. In regard to the difference between rent and assessed value in England, very frequently I think you find that the assessable value is about two-thirds of the rent?—Frequently, yes.

9181. Which is not, perhaps, a case exactly in point now, but it is an important thing from your point of view. Imperial taxes, income tax, and other things are assessed in Scotland, and the rent is entered in the valuation roll, less an allowance for taxes. Were you aware of that?—Is it for taxes or up-keep?

9182. Taxes?—I take it from you, sir. I cannot say that at the moment I remember, but there is a deduction. If it is for taxes, I take it from you. I had the idea that it was for up-keep, but I may be wrong.

9183. In England you say the assessed value means deduction for repairs?—No. The phrase that was used by the head official was that the valuation roll and the rateable values are absolutely confusing in England. There is no rule to be laid down. It varies with localities, and presents many anomalies.

9184. I certainly know that, and you are within the truth in stating again what you said. I know one man who is very largely assessed in England, and he put in a small sum for the cheapest house, to prevent people appealing against his assessments, and that is made the basis of Imperial taxes; while we in Scotland pay on our real rent; and I wish to commend that to the attention of some people who wish to keep us right?—Many valuation rolls are twenty years old and some are twenty-five years old.

9185. I know. In regard to ejectments, you say there should be no defence permissible except whether rent has been paid or not, and whether legal notice has been served or not. Would it not be quite reasonable to say that a tenant could not object to remove unless he consigned the rent due?—I scarcely follow the point.

9186. If a tenant is summoned to be ejected because there is a rent overdue, do you not think it would be reasonable that the rent due should be consigned in the court?—Or ejectment granted forthwith, you mean.

9187. Yes?—Cases were brought before my notice by the Burgh Court authorities, in which it was shown the landlord had departed from the original terms of his weekly let, and that the tenant, receiving consideration at one time, had presumed upon it at another; the Court thought that was a reasonable ground for granting him a little delay. That would be a case in which consignment of the rent could hardly be asked. If I had been your tenant, and you had been in the habit of giving me extension on my rent day, it is improper to evict me on some sudden occasion, unless I instantly conform to a regulation you have not been in the habit of enforcing.

9188. Would you recommend landlords never to give any consideration to the poverty of their tenants?—They will give the consideration which their own interest indicates and which their humanity will prompt. No law will make any difference in that.

9189. And you say that gives the person a right to insist on getting the same?—It does not give him a legal right, but the habit of that court has been to constitute a constructive right in that way.

9190. You say there are but few cases in which an officer has to be employed?—I believe that is correct.

9191. You inquired into that?—Yes.

9192. And what is your idea of a small number of cases?—Well, you have evidence of the Burgh Court officials and the Sheriff Court people.

9193. It amounts to 12,095 last year; is that a small number?—That is a considerable number, certainly. Surely that is not the number evicted by the Sheriff Officer?

9194. The number in which the officer had to be employed, the decree had to be employed?—Out of how many?

9195. That is not nearly the number of cases that were dealt with?—Are these Sheriff Court cases or Burgh Court cases?

9196. There were in the Burgh Court 10,970 where there were summons alone. There were 9917 where decree had been got, and then there were in the Sheriff Court 2078 where there were decrees, so that is not a small number?—My figures are quite different. They refer however, to the year ending 31st October 1902. There were supplied to the Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, and may be taken, says the Town Clerk, as an average—

Number of ejectments applied for, .	17,000
Answers lodged by tenants, . . .	6,900
Warrants for ejectment authorised, .	16,997
Warrants for ejectments extracted, .	2,251

I would say only 2200 went *a' l'outrance.*

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9197. Would you be surprised to hear that the loss to landlords in Glasgow for rent and ejectment amounted to about £10,000 a year?—With all respect I doubt if any man can possibly obtain the facts of these cases. You may assume it on a wrong basis. I doubt the amount; there are no means of ascertaining it.

9198. Of course—— ?—You get it on the basis that I heard argued here one day, that every case cost so much. But the witnesses did not explain the very important consideration that on one form of petition for ejectment there are six or eight names, and if you make the deductions necessary for that, you get a very different expense from what was put before this Commission.

9199. But, on the other hand, where the officer has to be employed, he has to be employed for each case separately?—I have here a document as an example.

9200. Is that not so?—Where an officer has to be employed, yes, in the end; but that occurs only in a very small number of cases, as I think I have made clear.

9201. Then this number of tenants does not cover the whole expense of the process, which simply means that one sum does for six tenants, but the serving of the summons on each tenant has to be paid for separately?—Yes.

9202. And so it is only a little saving on the drawing out of this paper, and putting on six names on one paper instead of six names on six different papers. That is all the saving?—The cost fluctuates according to the number of tenants on the page. If the number on the petition is six tenants, the cost is 2s. 6d. each. If the number be less it is somewhat increased. Only in the 2000 out of the 20,000 is the whole cost incurred. It is never more than 8s. or 8s. 6d. I made inquiries at twenty or thirty factors, and I am prepared to state that 8s. 6d. in every case would cover the entire expenditure, and this only on an extremely small proportion, as I have shown.

9203. The sum given where the decrees were given and extracted was 10s., that is only 1s. 6d. of difference; and before the Sheriff, 15s.; you don't speak about that?—I happened to put these figures before the Sheriff himself. He said they were erroneous, and sent me his clerk, who has offered to give evidence here.

9204. You say that is not correct?—I say so. The cost of serving a summons is 2s. 6d., but there are six names.

9205. But this was given as an average?—Mine is an average too.

9206. You say six names?—Yes; there are a great many where there are six names. House factors do their business in an economic way. Every factor has to evict a certain number, and he does it in lump when he possibly can.

9207. A factor may have only one?—He is a happy factor; that is all I have to say. It is not so bad as was represented, Mr Binnie. At the same time I would like to say that any reasonable methods by which that process could be assisted would have such support as I could give it.

9208. Would you tell me what difference it makes to a man when he loses a thousand pounds, and calls it loss of profit, and when he loses a thousand pounds and calls it capital. What difference does it make in his balance-sheet at the end of his year?—If he is a payer of income tax he discovers one difference.

9209. Would you kindly tell us what difference it makes?—If I were an accountant I would tell you he was a thousand pounds poorer in either case.

9210. I agree with you. Then you quote the Acts of the Agricultural Hypothec having been abolished. Am I not right in supposing that when that proposal came before Parliament a very strong argument in favour of it was this, that merchants supplying feeding-stuffs and manures were supplying a material which increased the value of the land, and yet the landlord having got his land increased in value by the use of those materials on the land took a preference over parties who had supplied the various materials that increased the value of his property?—Yes, that was true; but the persons who supplied those articles were not differently placed from those persons who had supplied carts and harness, boots or shoes, or any other such article.

9211. Was it at all equal in amount to the other?—It depends; implements are very costly things.

9212. And they are being got much more frequently?—Much more frequently than when you and I were younger. When a new implement comes into the market everybody must have it.

9213. Don't answer the question, if you like. The other has to supply to a larger extent?—Yes.

9214. I thought so. Then do you intend, or do you not intend, that landlords should pay rates on unlets?—I did not intend that. I was anxious, and I am still anxious, to make an arrangement by which they shall not be charged rents on unlet houses.

9215. If you re-introduce the Bill, will you make that clear?—I would be glad if it is thought desirable that it should be engrossed in the Bill. But that will affect the Schedule of allowances.

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9216. I wish your opinion?—I am not personally responsible for this Bill. It is backed by a great many members of Parliament. I act on the advice of a numerous committee in Glasgow. I give you my personal opinion, but I am only one of many. My personal opinion is in favour of not rating on empties, and I will do what I can to bring that about.

9217. Is there any reason known to you why allowances somewhat similar to those given in England, where rates are compounded, should not be allowed in Scotland? Allowances similar to those in England, in similar places like Manchester, Liverpool,—is there any reason?—Well, you said to me just now that one thing being done wrongly did not justify another being done wrongly. I would rather——

9218. You did not assent to that, I am sorry to say?—I would found on it now, if I concur in that principle. We are making a new departure in Scotland. We ought to do so equitably and reasonably on conditions really justified by the facts of the case. I was informed by various authorities in England that the allowances in England are excessive, that it has reached an abuse, and by a leading official in the Local Government Board that the scale of deductions should be amended.

9219. But in a case like this, where you are imposing on people the disagreeable duty of collecting rates, should the allowance not be a liberal one? If there is to be any mistake at all, should it not be on the side of liberality?—I should say they should be generously dealt with.

9220. Since you have said that, I need hardly ask the next question. It was this, in one place, page 8, you said, "The landlord is made, and he presently consents to be 'made, the means of collecting that part of the taxation 'which he recovers as part of his rent from the tenant 'perhaps without knowing it." When did landlords consent to that?—I have gone through this agitation for fifteen years, and I don't think I have met many, if any, landlords who appreciated the fact that they were collecting for the State. But they do it perfectly willingly, so you see that they are not aware of the burden laid on them. They don't experience it as a hardship.

9221. There is one thing. What is the meaning of no increase in cost in collecting taxes by collecting them through the landlord. What is a reasonable rate for a factor to get for factorage under £10?—I hear of charges of from 2 per cent to 3½ per cent.

9222. All under £10?—Well, I know some cases like that. In other cases they ask 4 per cent. In slum properties even perhaps 5 per cent., but not in general.

9223. If in Edinburgh we are told by a man that he paid his factor for collecting his weekly rents 10 per cent., what would you say to that?—I would say he was not managing his business very well.

9224. If it is very common to pay 5 per cent. in Glasgow, and if at present it only costs 12s. per cent. to collect municipal taxation, would not that involve a very considerable increase?—No; I think the rates would be collected by landlords and factors with hardly any appreciable increase of expense to them: one collection would serve both. Besides, a factor does much more for a landlord than merely collect the rent. Besides, I think the difficulties with arrears under the present system cause so much trouble to the factors, that they would be quite content with an easier system, which would avoid arrears, even if they had sums a little larger to collect when taxes are included in their collection.

9225. That would be another reason for dealing liberally with those?—Yes, I think so.

9226. You say the very poor should still be relieved, and you propose some plan by which the tenants should get some letter from the assessing authorities, and go to the landlord with it, and then that the landlord should specially arrange to charge a different rent, and they should go and claim the difference from the rating authorities. I think that was your proposal?—Yes, that is one way to do it.

9227. Do you think it is reasonable?—I don't think it would amount to much extra trouble.

9228. Take it for what it is worth. Is it reasonable to impose such a duty on the landlord as a part of his business?—I think it is. He must take some trouble with his tenants. It is not a great deal of trouble after all.

9229 How much difference will it make in his book-keeping?—His clerk may have to work longer on a few days in the year, but he will be saved the severe pressure he suffers from at present at the missive time. I don't attach much importance to that.

9230. (*Mr Howden.*) We have had a view put before us by various tenants of the great value of security of tenure, also the view that while the tenant would have security of tenure he would have the privilege of removing at the end of any month. What do you say to such a system as that?—That the tenant should be at liberty to break——?

9231. That he should have security of tenure. First, if

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he paid his rent; second, if he did not destroy the property; and, third, nor interfere with the liberty of the other tenants. Do you think a tenant under such circumstances should have security of tenure?—Well, I think such a tenant will enjoy security of tenure without an Act of Parliament.

9232. But there are some tenants who have come before us and complained that they don't think they will have that. We have had a plan put before us whereby security of tenure could be secured to the tenant on these three conditions?—By direct enactment? Surely such good tenants would have practically a secure tenure as long as they chose to remain under any landlords without any enactment.

9233. Yes. On condition that they pay rent, don't destroy property, and don't interfere with other tenants?—I don't think an Act of Parliament is required to secure fixity of tenure for good tenants. These are the conditions of good tenancy, and the landlord is not so forgetful of his own interests as to disturb a tenant like that.

9234. We had a modification of that view expressed by Provost Keith of Hamilton, who gave it that the landlord should only have the privilege of removing a tenant once in six months, whereas the tenant should have the privilege of moving once in the month?—With every desire to be considerate towards those whom you represent particularly, I could not think of such a proposal. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The tenant must take equitable conditions, and the landlord must have the same as the tenant.

9235. But isn't it essential that he should not be disturbed in his tenure?—Supposing such disturbance took place frequently, and for political reasons, or such-like reason, there might be a cause shown for interference, as there was in Ireland; but as I look upon the situation in this country I cannot imagine any circumstances that would justify Parliament interfering in the circumstances you have put.

9236. In the event, say, of a trade dispute?—It is a difficulty. If it were so serious or frequent, I would consider what justification the law would have for interfering.

9237. But we have had evidence that it is serious?—I have no doubt it has occurred, but not enough in my opinion to warrant an Act of Parliament. I cannot see my way to a proposition of that sort, I am afraid.

9238. To come back to your optional clause. Suppose the city of Glasgow adopted your Bill, and the burgh of Partick did not, which at present seems very likely?—No; if the Partick Town Councillors don't adopt the Bill, I think they will lose their seats.

9239. Would what I have suggested not cause a great deal of confusion?—No, I don't think so. It will make Partick a less desirable place for a workman to reside in; but if a workman gets to Partick he will vote for a representative who will support the acceptance of the provisions of my Bill, so it will come right in time.

9240. It may be essential that a man should reside in Partick?—Then he will vote for a Councillor who will support the Bill, and use his influence to obtain its acceptance in Partick.

9241. This, however, to the exclusion of other things, which may be of some importance in municipal affairs?—A man's vote is determined by a great many things. I make no doubt working men in Partick are similar to those in Glasgow. When they see the advantage of this Bill they will insist on the authorities giving them the benefit of it. I think the chances are greater of this Bill passing into law and obtaining the advantages we seek to obtain with the optional clause, than without the optional clause, because the places that don't desire it have to be taken into account as much as the places that do, and it is not desirable to thrust it on the places that don't want it.

9242. We have been told that the optional clause in the Bill is absurd?—I don't read it in that way.

9243. Both landlords and tenants are agreed on that point?—The landlords may say so, because they wish to discredit the Bill. The tenants may say so, because they are determined to have the Bill, and so they want no optional clause which may prevent it. They want it, option or no option.

9244. Then in regard to the limit of rental you propose to fix, you now say £20 all over. If this principle of shorter lets works out well with the rents under £20, is there any reason why it should not with rents over £20?—There is none. My only answer is, that tenants over £20 are more independent than those below £20, and are better able to look after their own interests; and if those below £20 obtain these benefits by legal enactment, those above £20 will be stirred up to make a determined effort to get it on their own initiative.

9245. Would you not be prepared to extend that Bill to all?—I would be delighted, if I had not to consider the opposition of the landlords. I think it would be an advantage with much higher rents.

9246. You speak of the advantage it would give to the building trade. The limitation you have placed in regard to rental is going to take away that advantage?—Every limitation placed on this Bill decreases the advantages to be obtained from it. I would be eager to plead with the Committee even to raise the rental. I have felt the effect on the compounding clause. That did not impress itself so much on my mind before. What my supporters believed when talking about £20 was the net rent presently chargeable. If compounding is to become the law, it means that that will be reducing the £20 to something like £16, which is not what I intended at all.

9247. It may be information to you, but in the Park Ward of Glasgow the Ward Committee have petitioned in favour of shorter lets, and the majority of people in that ward stay in houses over that rental?—I believe you are right. I live in that ward myself.

9248. They evidently wish shorter lets; is there any reason why they should be deprived?—If this Committee will help us the length of £20, fate and providence will look after the rest.

9249. (*Mr Dobbie.*) There is one reply you gave with reference to contracting out. In reply to Mr Cox you said you would not object to tenant and landlord making an agreement for, say, a yearly tenancy on stamped paper and before witnesses. Does that mean the whole provisions of the Bill might, by a formal contract, be departed from?—Certainly not. My reply would be this, if any man is so determined to obtain a yearly tenure, or so oblivious to the benefits of this Bill that he is willing to execute a formal deed in presence of witnesses, depriving himself of the use of it, I was willing in former Bills to exempt him from the Bill, and thought of doing so still.

9250. But in Edinburgh we have stamped missives for nearly all houses between £10 and £20?—When I say a probative lease, I don't mean a stamped missive. What I have in my mind is a legal document, drawn on formidable paper, extending for several pages, and witnessed—such a formal document as will bring to the mind of the man who is asked to sign it a feeling of responsibility. He will think.

9251. What principle are you trying to press. Take an ordinary missive, properly stamped and signed, you would say that that was not to be a binding contract?—That would be my intention.

9252. But if the stamped agreement took a more formidable shape, and extended for several sheets—with formal witnessing—then it would be binding?—Yes. I have perhaps an exceedingly erroneous vulgar view of that position, but I believe that vulgar view will be shared by a good many persons. If a landlord comes in with a legal formal document of this character to sign, the tenant reads it, and probably hesitates, and does not sign it. What happens now is, that a man commits himself, and is not aware of it until he finds it to his disadvantage. If the deed extends for several pages, it opens his eyes to the necessity of considering. But I must make very clear the principle we conceive necessary to be enacted. If there be any possibility of evasion through a written probative deed, I must make it inoperative unless for two years or longer. If you tell me that the distinction existing in my mind between a missive and a written probative deed is not one that can be maintained from a legal point of view, I must drop it.

9253. You think a period of two years may be given?—I think that may be given without fear of defeating the purpose of the Bill through the exemption.

9254. That is to say, as distinguished from clause 5 of your proposed Bill of 1898, which was repeated in 1900, and which runs:—"This Act shall not apply to any dwelling house which is let by a written lease signed both by landlord and tenant in presence of two witnesses according to the law applicable to probative deeds in Scotland." I suppose you see now that if a clause of that kind were introduced, contracting out could be done so as to defeat the Bill?—Yes; from what has passed to-day I am satisfied that is a clause that could be used to defeat the whole purpose of the Bill. May I say with regard to your proposal to make it illegal to let for longer than six months, that such might prove no remedy for the difficulty we are facing. I see it would be easy to adjust missives, make them six-monthly, and insist upon their being signed at six-monthly periods, just as now at twelve-monthly periods, and to attempt a remedy in that direction might prove no remedy at all.

Mr J. Paterson and Mr E. M. Brodie. 21 Jan. 1907.

Mr James Paterson, Greenock, and Mr E. Mortimer Brodie, Port-Glasgow, called and examined.

Mr J. Paterson and Mr E. M. Brodie. 21 Jan. 1907.

9255. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Paterson.*) What are you?—I am an Accountant and House Factor in Greenock.

9256. You are a partner of Paterson & Anderson, Accountants and House Factors, 13 Hamilton Street, Greenock?—Yes.

9257. What office do you hold?—I am Secretary of the Scottish Branch of the Society of Accountants and Auditors, incorporated in 1885, and also Secretary of the Greenock Traders' Association, Greenock and District Investment Building Society, Greenock Building Co., Ltd., Clydesdale Glass Insurance Co., Ltd. I am also a Member and ex-Chairman of the Parish Council of Greenock.

9258. I understand the house factors of Greenock have been discussing this question, and have held various meetings, and that you appear for them here to-day?—Yes.

9259. Is the evidence you have to give evidence authorised and approved of by them?—It is.

9260. We had some evidence from Greenock before in favour of some change in the law of house-letting. What is your view in regard to opinion in Greenock?—There has been no agitation on the question of shorter lets. About seven or eight years ago there was a Tenants' Defence Association, which dealt for a short time with the missive question, and endeavoured to arouse public opinion, but there was no substance in the complaints, and the Association has not been heard of since.

9261. I think one of the Town Councillors of Greenock, a Mr Bennett, gave evidence before the Commission?—He did.

9262. Is he still a Town Councillor?—Yes, he is a Magistrate.

9263. And I think he rather spoke to the view that in his ward at least there was some public feeling in favour of a change?—Bailie Bennett has been the only member of the Town Council who has tackled this question during his election campaigns. With that exception, I am not aware of any interest being taken in Greenock outside of his ward. I was present at the only meeting at which it was referred to at length, and I cannot say that the meeting, which was a very crowded one, appeared to be enthusiastic in the matter.

9264. The Bill has different rates for different towns, and the rate proposed in Glasgow is £20, and in Greenock, I think, £16. Does Greenock differ in any way from Glasgow, either in regard to necessity for any Bill or in regard to the rents?—Greenock, in my opinion, differs entirely from Glasgow in regard to this question: Out of 14,681 inhabited houses, we have not more than an average in recent years of 160 vacant houses. We are exceptional, possibly, in that respect; of these inhabited houses, approximately 4296 are let monthly.

9265. What is the population of Greenock?—It is estimated at 70,000 inhabitants at the present time.

9265*a*. Do you think there are sufficient monthly lets to satisfy the demand in Greenock just now?—Well, the experience in Greenock has been that we have been underhoused, but if a Bill of this kind had been in force it would increase the difficulty. Houses in Greenock practically represent the necessities of the inhabitants at the moment; and when any of the houses fall to be sublet—and according to our calculation not more than 1 per cent. of the houses which would be affected by this Bill would fall to be sublet in one year—there is no difficulty in getting these houses sublet at once.

9266. What is the staple industry in Greenock?—Shipbuilding and sugar-refining.

9267. Is the population shifting, as a rule. Do the people move much from the one town to the other?—Not unless there is trade disturbance, such as there was at the end of last year with the strike. As a rule, the population is fairly stationary.

9268. We have been told that the grievance which it is sought to remedy has a disadvantage of having to take a house for sixteen months. Have you, in your experience, seen many cases of tenants who required or desired to leave between terms?—We have never had more than a little over 1 per cent. in my experience of seventeen years. My present firm's experience of eleven years confirms that. We have never had more than rather over 1 per cent. of removals during the year, and we have had no difficulty whatever in getting the houses let, and we are not aware of any cases of hardship. Greenock may be exceptional; but we never have any difficulty in dealing with the tenants who wish to get away, and no difficulty has ever been raised by any landlord or factor within my personal knowledge.

9269. What do you do? Do you make a charge for subletting?—We make a charge for advertising the house; that is we merely charge the cost of advertising. In some cases it may be 6d. or 1s. for an advertisement. In many cases we don't require to do that, because the moment a tenant is known to wish to remove, there are others who may desire his house.

9270. Greenock is more favourably placed in the sense that there is no over-building?—There has been none for a good many years in Greenock.

9271. What is the present custom in regard to letting? Are yearly lets common?—Well, in lets up to £8 I think the majority of houses are let monthly: I believe in some cases quarterly.

9272. Above £8?—Mostly let yearly, and payable quarterly or half-yearly.

9273. Do you think that if by Act of Parliament short lets became imperative, that would affect the value of property as an investment?—There is always a prejudice among investors against tenements with monthly lets. It would appeal to an entirely different class of investors from our experience as at present.

9274. Is that not merely because at present only inferior tenements are let monthly to an inferior class of tenants?—That may be in some cases.

9275. If the custom of short lets was universal, would that sentiment not simply die away?—It probably would die away.

9276. Have you any evidence to give in regard to the views of the tenants themselves from their standpoint. What do you think their views are on the question?—I am not authorised to give the tenants' view, but I have been mixing with working-class people in one way or another for a good many years, and I have never heard the slightest desire for a change of this kind. In fact, our experience has been that where a new proprietor has purchased property, and endeavoured to change half-yearly lets into quarterly, the tenants objected to that as being a lowering of the status. Paying rents at more frequent intervals was considered a reflection upon their ability to pay.

9277. It may be said in the same way that that also arose from the same sentiment?—That is so.

9278. Monthly tenants at present are the poorest class of occupants. However, I suppose you would say that there would require to be an extra charge made for collecting rents for any short lets?—That is so. In Greenock we have a local Act of Parliament, and on lets up to £5 the rates are charged against the landlord. Rents from £5 to £8, if let for less than a year, are also payable by the landlord; and in those cases the landlord gets 20 per cent. of a deduction from the rates on lets from £5 to £8, and 25 per cent. on the rates up to £5.

9279. Under what Act is that?—Greenock Police Act, 1877.

9280. These are burgh rates?—Yes; ordinary police, health, and other assessments.

9281. Parish Council rates are not included there?—No.

9282. That 20 per cent. is allowed in respect of rates paid by the owners?—Yes, from £5 to £8.

9283. Then is that 20 per cent. on the tenant's share of rates, or upon the whole rates payable from the proprietor?—Upon the specific rents, not upon the whole rates or the property, but upon the specific rents from £5 to £8.

9284. The point is rather one Mr Binnie dealt with earlier. The landlord has a certain liability for rates and the tenant in most cases. My question was, does the landlord get 20 per cent. off the whole of the rates payable in respect of that property?—No; just upon the rents from £5 to £8. Supposing they were over £8 he would not get a reduction.

9285. But between £5 and £8, is it upon the tenant's taxes or upon the landlord's, or upon both?—It is upon the occupier's rates.

9286. Only?—Yes.

9287. Under that Act are there any burgh rates payable by the landlord between £5 and £8?—Yes; from £5 to £8 the landlord is assessed as owner as well.

9288. (*To Mr Brodie.*) Is this 20 per cent. allowed on purely the landlord's rates?—No; on rents of £5 and under, where the proprietor is responsible for tenant's assessments. On such tenant's assessments 25 per cent. is allowed; but on tenant's assessments where the subjects are let for a less period than a year, where the proprietor is responsible for the tenant's assessments, 20 per cent. is allowed on rents above £5 up to £8. But, of course, in addition to that they pay on the full rental as proprietor.

9289. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Brodie.*) The deduction is only on the tenant's part of the assessments?—On the tenant's assessment for which the proprietors are responsible.

9290. The landlords pay in full, without any deduction?—As owners, yes.

9291. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Paterson.*) I suppose you cannot

tell us upon what basis these abatements were fixed?—No; the Act goes back to 1877. I hand you a schedule which may clear up the matter.

9292. Can you tell us what is the factor's commission for collecting monthly lets as against, say, half-yearly ones?—Monthly rents, as a rule, are 5 per cent.

9293. And half-yearly?—For rents quarterly and half-yearly it varies from 2½ per cent. to 4 per cent.

9294. Under your Private Act, does the Corporation have the option of assessing the owner, or is it statutory that the owner is to pay between £5 and £8?—My recollection is that it is optional.

9295. On the part of the Corporation?—Yes; but, of course, they exercise the option. It is natural that they should take the easier way of collecting their rates.

9296. In spite of giving 25 per cent.?—Yes; they recognise that a considerable loss is made by the owner. It was estimated at that time that there is considerable loss on monthly houses, so they give us this deduction.

9297. Your view is that, having the option to assess the landlord and give 25 per cent., they prefer that to collecting direct?—Undoubtedly; it is much easier for them.

9298. You have been over Mr Cross's Bill?—I have.

9299. No doubt you have seen that scale which is attached to it. Have you any views on the proposals in that scale?—My view is that the scale is altogether inadequate so far as houses under £8 are concerned, or even up to £10, if the lets are made shorter than at present.

9300. Can you tell us, from your experience, whether in Greenock, you having these allowances of 20 per cent. in one case and 25 per cent. in the other, as a matter of fact, proprietors make any profit through this compounding?—I don't think they make any profit. In purchasing property for clients we always calculate the net rental. We don't take advantage of the gross amount. Further than that, the experience is that you do not always get the full amount added on to the rent.

9301. How do you do in Greenock with that arrangement? Do you get a slump fixed sum, and recover that from the tenant without distinguishing the rent?—We don't distinguish rent from the taxes. The house that was let at 11s. a month might possibly be let at 11s. 8d. to cover the whole of the rates and any risk of loss.

9302. One slump sum payable by the tenant and bargained for with him?—That is so. He does not feel that he is paying the taxes, and the result is that he ignores the question of taxation and representation altogether.

9303. Supposing in Greenock the taxes were raised 2d. in the £, when would that react on these smaller tenants so as to result in the factors raising the rents?—In point of fact, the taxes have been raised in Greenock, and no increase, in my experience, has been put upon the smaller rents. Increases have been made on rents from £9 to £10, where they have been reduced a number of years ago, owing to dull trade, but no increase corresponding to the amount of taxes has been put on the lets of smaller houses, with very few exceptions.

9304. Does that arise from the precaution taken from the start to make up an allowance in fixing this slump sum?—With small lets we cannot ask more than a single amount from that class of people.

9305. I suppose in Greenock you have less trouble in getting your rents, looking to the demand for houses, than in most other towns?—I think so. I have very few unlet houses, and therefore we can select our tenants a little better, and I think on the average we have less difficulty in getting our rents.

9306. What would you put a typical working man's rent at living in Greenock? Take a typical sum?—The great majority of tradesmen live in houses from £8 to £12. Very few ordinary working men live in houses over that.

9307. Are you inclined to believe that £16 is too high a limit to apply to Greenock?—As applied to Greenock, it would.

9308. Are rents dearer in Greenock than in Glasgow?—I think they are cheaper.

9309. What is the view of your Association and the bodies you represent upon the general principle of compounding?—We object to being made the tax collectors in the first instance. We think that the taxing authorities should collect their rates from the persons whom they assess, at their source.

9310. We have had it suggested to us that any inconvenience being caused by the rates being paid in one sum would be got over if the rating authorities collect, say, quarterly or half-yearly?—I think that would be impracticable.

9311. Another suggestion is that the present assessment arrangement might continue if payments be taken by instalments. Have you any views upon that?—I think that a reasonable proposal.

9312. Do you think that would meet any inconvenience without necessitating the making the proprietors rate collectors?—In point of fact that is carried out in Greenock to a certain extent by the assessing authorities. They don't object to take rates by instalments from poor people who are not able to pay in one sum. They allow discretion. I don't speak of poor and school rates, just burgh assessments.

9313. Have you any views on the subject as to keeping tenants in ignorance of the exact amount which they are being asked to pay for municipal government?—I think, as a matter of public policy, if a person knows exactly what he is contributing towards municipal expenditure, he is far more likely to take a direct interest in that expenditure than if he pays the same as rent including taxes, without having the matter brought specifically before him. My experience of municipal meetings is that the class whose lets are paid by the landlords are very seldom the class who attend those meetings; therefore, I think it a mistake, as a matter of public policy, that a person should not be made directly aware of the amount he contributes.

9314. You have told us you think this scale is much too inadequate. Have you any suggestion to make as to what might be an adequate allowance, assuming that compounding is enacted?—In Greenock we do not think we are getting too much a deduction in getting 20 per cent. off these rates.

9315. That is up to £8?—Yes.

9316. You would not have the sum less between £8 and £10, say?—No, because we would have the additional labour.

9317. What do you suggest as a reasonable allowance between these two sums, £8 and £16, 10 per cent.?—I would think at least 10 per cent., certainly not 7½ per cent. or 5 per cent., as stated in the Bill.

9318. Then, as you see, the Bill before us is to be optional in its application. Assuming that the Committee reported that in Glasgow, for example, there exists a strong feeling for some change in the direction of this Bill, would you favour any Bill that requires to meet the Glasgow conditions being also applied to Greenock?—My own view is, that if a Bill of this kind were passed, it should be made experimental in certain districts for a year or two. My Association objected to the optional clause of this Bill, and I am stating their views. I do think that the optional clause in the Bill will cause considerable confusion. In the industrial centres at any rate, not speaking of the country or coast districts, it should be compulsory.

9319. Your Association are at one with other factors in the country in quite recognising that the period between letting day and the warning out day might be reasonably shortened?—That in our view is the only real grievance of this matter.

9320. What would you suggest in the direction of removing that grievance?—My view is that, with the co-operations of the municipalities, an arrangement might be come to in all the towns by which the missives should not be issued before 1st March and be returnable in fourteen days.

9321. Do you think, from what you have heard and seen in Greenock, that if that reform indicated there was carried out, that would remedy any substantial grievance which exists in regard to the letting?—I think it would. The only question with us is the missive question, caused generally by the tenants themselves, desiring to take or retake their houses at an earlier date.

9322. (*To Mr Brodie.*) Do you concur generally in what Mr Paterson has told us?—Generally. I have taken a note of one or two points. Perhaps, in the first instance, I might explain that, although representing the Greenock Landlords and House Factors' Association to-day, I am also representing a good number of proprietors in Port-Glasgow, and in that way I would like to point out that we in Port-Glasgow are governed under the Burgh Police Acts. We have no Act of our own, so that the question affects us differently from Greenock.

9323. Is Port-Glasgow a police burgh?—Yes.

9324. And has no private Act?—No. At the same time we factor a lot of property in Greenock. While concurring generally with Mr Paterson, I don't agree in one or two points, not that we have any serious differences. You asked him a question about property, from the investor's point of view, where the tenants were monthly. Well, I would like to supplement what Mr Paterson said in that way. If you make monthly lets or shorter lets compulsory, there is no doubt about it that you will frighten investors to some extent, because the more frequent the removals the greater damage to the property. The repairs bill becomes a very serious matter; and no matter what class of property and the value of it may be, whether old or new, if the lets are short, that will be the result. I have no hesitation in saying that.

9325. Do you think that one result of the Bill will be to increase the number of removals?—Undoubtedly.

9326. Why?—Well, when people know they can get a thing they usually want it, and it is surprising to know in how many cases the desire for removal is a mere caprice, and there are cases where tenants spot clean houses and want to go there to save them trouble.

9327. So you would continue the present law, in order to prevent tenants who wish to remove doing so, on the view that they don't know what is good for them?—No. You will observe in my *précis* that in two directions I show how improvements in the relations between landlords and tenants can be affected.

9328. Tell me what these two are?—I admit in the first instance that the system of letting so early in the year is not beneficial to either party, and that if the first week of March were adopted, I think the grievance would be met.

9329. That is for sending out missives?—Making the letting day any day within the first week of March. The notices can be sent out perhaps a week or ten days prior to that. You doubtless are aware of the practice that is common now, instead of making every tenant sign a missive each year, you send them a notice to call and retake, or give up the house for the ensuing year, and that is done before two witnesses. It saves stamp-duty.

9330. That is arles?—Even the arles fee is not often taken. At the same time, I think tenants have an undue grievance.

9331. You shorten the forty days which are at present required for notice to be collected?—The first week of March is a satisfactory time for letting. I was keeping in view that the existing law as to the warning out of a yearly tenant might remain. Forty days is long enough, because, as a matter of fact, tenants know for a long time whether they are going to leave their houses or not.

9332. Have you any other point?—There is one thing, although Mr Paterson has not been specially charged with it. The members of the Association and Proprietors in Port-Glasgow, from whom I have distinct authority to speak before this Commission, agree with me that something might be done in the way of shorter lets up to lets of £12. I say, speaking from my own experience, that houses up to £12, if let monthly, would remove the grievance complained of. But this should not be made compulsory until the Burgh Police Acts have been amended, so that under no circumstances will proprietors be liable for tenant's assessments. I would hazard the opinion that if this question of payment of tenant's assessments was equitably settled, as I have indicated, the question of short period lets would almost settle itself. My firm has always recognised the hardship to a tenant with a yearly house who finds it necessary to leave the town before his set is exhausted, and we have rarely any difficulty in arranging to take the house off his hands. We always make it a condition, however, that his assessments are paid; as if not, the community would lose, and the proprietor might be held liable for the loss.

9333. Assuming that short lets were up to £12, you would still have the authorities collector of rates?—Yes, I am strong on that.

9334. We have been told that for certain considerations it is impossible, even with half-yearly terms?—I meet that by saying that now the principle of deduction from tenant's assessments payable by landlords is conceded. If you have to give 25 per cent.—I contradict Mr Paterson on this point. I go further than 10 per cent., speaking from actual experience. If you have to give 25 per cent. as a deduction from the tenant's taxes, what would the loss be to communities if they undertook to gather in all the monthly tenants' assessments themselves? Would they lose one-fourth?—I don't believe it.

9335. Do you suggest 25 per cent. should be allowed up to £12?—Yes.

9336. Assuming compounding?—Assuming these shorter lets for all houses up to £12 becomes compulsory.

9337. Also assuming compounding becomes compulsory. Are you against compounding?—Yes.

9338. On principle?—I think it is mixing up interests.

9339. Is it your position that while you are against compounding, if there was to be compounding with short lets, that 25 per cent. should be the allowance to the landlord?—Yes; to cover the cost of collection, loss and empties—I think these two cover the items.

9340. Under the General Burgh Police Act, where you add the rates at present on houses under £5 and also for short lets under a year, is there no allowances given?—Under the General Statute rents of £4 and rents of £4 and under, there is a deduction of 10 per cent., but in connection with that reply I would like to point out that £4 rents and under are becoming very rare nowadays, because so many old houses are being demolished.

9341. Then under the General Burgh Police Act, for short lets less than a year, what allowance is made?—None at all. There is another point. The question was asked Mr Paterson as to keeping the tenants informed as to what rates he is paying. I know the practice of my firm is this,—we have shown it to the assessor prior to making our valuation returns. We return the net rental of the property, that is to say, the rental on which a purchase price would be based. The gross rent is that net rent plus, say stair lights, or water rate, or in cases where the let is for a less period than a year, the burgh assessments; and I think it is pretty generally the fact—I certainly speak for my own firm—that we add as nearly as possible to the last ½d. the exact amount. No proprietor really wishes to make a profit in that way.

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9342. What appears on the assessment roll?—The actual rent.

9343. What do you call the actual rent?—Take a house rented at £10, and perhaps the gross rent taken from the tenant is £10, 10s. That 10s. may be to cover assessments and stair lights, but he is only assessed on the £10. So also is the proprietor.

9344. You return your valuation at £10, 10s., and explain that the 10s. is for water rate, etc.?—Whatever may be added.

9345. And you are assessed properly, of course, on the actual rent of £10?—Yes.

9346. (*Mr Cox to Mr Paterson.*) In dealing with tenants you said that you heard no expression in favour of change?—That is so.

9347. Is there any very strong desire on the part of tenants not to change?—I cannot say there is any very strong desire; I am not aware of it. I have spoken to a number of workmen with whom I have come in contact with, and they all seem, without exception, to resent the idea of being put upon a monthly basis rather than the yearly set, and they still more objected to having their taxes added to their rent when they knew the proprietor was to get a deduction of 25 per cent. for their collection. That has been the view in every instance in which I have spoken to the men.

9348. In speaking to your house factors, they may say one thing, but they come here in their multitudes and say quite the opposite, and with the exception of house owners and factors we have had nobody taking the opposite side. If there is any general desire on the part of working men not to change, why have they not come here to say so?—I presume the other side has been organised. There is an organisation.

9349. It would have been possible to organise your side too?—As a factor, managing other people's property, I think it would not be right for me to get up an agitation of that kind.

9350. If it was for the benefit of the owners that you were working?—I can see the point; but I am satisfied, personally, that a very large proportion of working men, when they realise that the taxes are to be added to the rent and that their half-yearly or quarterly payments are to be converted into monthly or weekly payments, will object very keenly.

9351. Do you think shorter lets would raise or lower rents?—My view is that it will raise rents.

9352. That is also for the benefit of the owners?—I don't think so, because the owner will have more repairs; he will have a loss. On rates he will require to pay more commission. He will have a constantly fluctuating tenancy in several of the larger towns, and every change of occupancy means an increase of the cost of management of the property and of repairs.

9353. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Paterson.*) Can you tell us whether the 20 per cent. rate on rates collected by landlords is fixed by the Greenock Act?—I think it is, but I cannot recollect the terms of the Act of Parliament itself.

9354. (*Mr Brodie.*) The deduction is statutory; so also is the rate of deduction.

9355. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Paterson.*) You have not the Act here?—No.

9356. You will let us know that exactly?—Yes; I will give you an extract from 1877 Act of Greenock. I will see that the information is conveyed.

9357. Tell me what the police rates actually have been increased by?—We have had a new rate for electricity purposes, and as far as my experience goes we have added only in a very few instances any additional rate in Greenock.

9358. How much was the actual increase of rate?—I think 4d. per £. We have had several increases.

9359. How much would the increase come to on a £7 house?—The increase of rates for the last few years in Greenock will amount to about 6d. per £, between public health and other rates.

9360. That is 3s. or 4s.?—Yes. You cannot add very conveniently in practice, it is all right in theory, an increase of 2s. or 3s. per annum

9361. At what point would it be added,—if it was 10s.?—Yes, I think it would. The more you increase the rates,

the easier it is to add something that would be an appreciable amount, but you don't like to add 2s. or 3s. in the year to a man's rating. In practice it is seldom done. You either add 5s. or nothing at all.

9362. Supposing the plan were to present to the tenant a Bill in which rent and rates were shown separately, I suppose in that case, when the rates went up, his payment would go up?—That is so, and his rates would go up. When you put them in a separate column in his pass-book you would add the aggregate amount, but then it would never be suggested that the landlord is to calculate out to all his tenants in a large factorage the distinctive amounts.

9363. I was thinking of a continuance of the present system. At present each tenant has his rate put down on his sheet. All the factor would have to do is to keep it up?—There would be no difficulty in putting these separate amounts in the pass-book.

9364. There would be no difficulty to the landlord?—Not the slightest; it would be just a matter of labour.

9365. And he would have the advantage of being able to recover any small increases which could be conveniently added?—Yes, that is so; but I am afraid a great many tenants would make objection. They would offer you the rent and refuse to pay the taxes, just as now they sometimes pay the poor rates, and refuse to pay school rates, in order to get their votes. I think the duty of recovering rates should not be put upon the landlord. If there is a balance of taxes, whatever it might be, the landlord would require to sue for it, just as if it were part of the rent, but that is a great burden to put upon the landlord. There is an odium attached to the collecting of rates by summonsing; and, another thing, the Corporation or the Parish Council can get a summary warrant, while the landlord would require to go to the Small Debt Court and get an ordinary decree. The expense would be very considerable in that case to the landlord.

9366. (*To Mr Brodie.*) You think tenants would move, if the period of let were made shorter, by caprice? Do you find that the tenants who now take their houses on the monthly system move much more than other tenants?—Yes, that is my experience.

9367. By caprice?—Yes, the desire for change.

9368. Does not the expense of moving deter them?—Monthly tenants just now of course have not much in the way of furniture, so that it is an easy matter for them to remove, and it is a well-known fact that such tenants as are monthly just now are very fond of removing. It is really no trouble to them.

9369. But isn't that due to the class they belong to? Would tenants paying larger rents, with more furniture, be equally liable to remove?—There would not be the same amount of removing, but it is a question of degree merely.

9370. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Brodie.*) You say that the 20 per cent. allowed off tenants' assessments payable to the landlords for houses let for less periods than a year is now not always sufficient to cover cost of collection and loss. You are speaking from actual experience. You have looked into the matter, and find that in some of your properties it does not do it?—I have tested it, and that has been my experience. To satisfy myself that my statement was correct, I have gone into the question more closely, and I find that only in a very few of the properties factored by us in Greenock is the deduction more than sufficient for the loss and cost of collection.

9371. And taking that all over, is it sufficient or insufficient?—It is insufficient, barely sufficient.

9372. All over?—Yes.

9373. Then that embraces this other question, what number of such houses do you factor in Greenock?—I did not prepare a note, but I could tell you in a moment.

9374. Just give us a round figure?—About twenty tenements.

9375. And this remark in regard to rates applies to these tenements taken all over?—Yes.

9376. In Port-Glasgow the landlords are responsible for the rates on all houses to £4, and for those above that which are let for less periods than a year?—Yes.

9377. They get 10 per cent. for £4 and under?—Yes, but nothing for all other cases.

9378. In compounding in Greenock, when you get off 25 per cent. and 20 per cent., do you pay on the whole rental whether it is let or not, or do you pay only on the portion that is let?—On the whole rental, whether let or not.

9379. And if there is an unlet you have to pay on that?—Yes, all the same.

9380. (*Mr Howden to Mr Brodie.*) How many short lets have you in Port-Glasgow?—I did not prepare figures, but we have quite a number. In rents under £12 limit I have admitted something might be done. We have found it necessary among the very poor to meet that in this way, because the very poor have to reside in old property, and if their houses are damp or dark, they naturally want to change out of them to houses that are somewhat better in these respects, and at about the same rents. We try to study their interests in that, and all such houses are monthly.

9381. If you do not get any commission from the authorities for the collection of rates, how do you pay yourselves at the present time?—We only in some instances just now charge the proprietor a commission, because in some cases the amount of loss to a proprietor is so serious that we take all the trouble, and that amounts to a good deal, in collecting such assessments free of charge to the proprietor.

9382. But you don't get anything from the town?—Nothing.

9383. So that, unless you are getting something extra to cover that, you are at a decided loss in the meantime?—That is so. The proprietors suffer very much, and that applies to all towns acting under a general statute.

9384. Have you done anything to get that altered?—No.

9385. Surely it is not very pressing if an intelligent body of men cannot do that?—Well, to begin with, you will find proprietors and other people who invest money are not terribly clannish. They are very apt to do things on their own account. But it is an undoubted grievance, but under a general statute, they give up in despair. They see there is no hope of its mending itself.

9386. (*To Mr Paterson.*) Have you a system of cautioners either in Greenock or Port-Glasgow?—We get cautioners occasionally. We try to get forehand rent as often as we can.

9387. But where you get forehand rent, you don't insist on the cautioner?—No, that is so. The cautioner is an exception, the forehand is the rule in most houses; but it generally drops off after the first or second quarter.

9388. I think you told us you don't charge a tenant anything for subletting except putting up the board?—Except for advertising.

9389. Or putting up a board?—As a rule that is so.

9390. Don't you do exactly as factors do in Glasgow, charge a percentage?—No.

9391. Is that only done in Glasgow?—It is not done in Greenock.

(*Mr Brodie.*) It is not done in other towns?

(*Mr Paterson.*) It is, as a rule, only the outlays in the way of advertising in the way of putting up a board that we charge.

9392. Is the rate of hypothec of much value in the lower class of property?—No, with smaller rents it is of no appreciable value.

9393. But do you consider it becomes of some value as you go higher?—Well, from £8 upwards it is of some value.

9394. If you have occasion to put it into operation, how does it work out?—I think we have only put it into operation once or twice during the eleven years. We try to avoid it. It is a thing we only do where some question of character is involved as well as loss of rent.

9395. You would not put it into operation against a decent tenant?—No, we have never done it.

9396. Only in the case of very bad tenants?—Some cases where we were specially anxious to get rid of the tenant or to get our rent paid and be done with the people.

9397. If you had a process of ejectment, that would allow you to get rid of such tenants?—The cases have only been two or three in eleven years in the experience of my present firm, so I think it is hardly worth while asking a general rule for the sake of two or three cases—putting 10,000 people under monthly lets in Greenock for the sake of two or three isolated cases.

9398. How many members have you in your Association?—All the house factors and accountants were present or represented at the meeting which we had.

9899. How many would you say?—About a dozen.

9400. (*To Mr Brodie.*) Are you in the same Association as Mr Paterson?—Yes, but in addition to the Association I have the authority of about a dozen proprietors in Port-Glasgow, one of whom owns in Port-Glasgow about £30,000 or £40,000 worth of property.

9401. (*To Mr Paterson.*) I think you stated there was no agitation in favour of the Bill, that there had been no expression of opinion in favour of shorter lets?—That is so.

9402. How do you account for the fact that on 30th May your Town Council, by fourteen votes to four, decided in favour of Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes, on the motion of Bailie Bennett. But for Bailie Bennett there would be no agitation in Greenock outside the Trades Council, of course.

9403. But Bailie Bennett was able to get fourteen gentlemen in the Town Council to vote for his resolution?—Well, I think that is easily explained. The position of Town Councils is as rating authorities. The policy has been to get as easy a method of collecting the rates as possible, and it is not so much a question of house letting that is agitating the Town Councils like Greenock, but the facility for recovering rates, and these two cases must be

kept entirely separate. I don't think they came to a finding on the merits of the question, but upon the question of collecting rates.

9404. The motion is undoubtedly that they petition in favour of Mr Cross's Bill, and the only amendment put up against that was that they should remit it to the Law and Finance Committee to report, which received four votes?—Yes.

9405. Which would show that the Greenock men, as represented in the Town Council, do want shorter lets?—With the exception of Bailie Bennett, I am not aware of any who referred to it at any election meetings.

9406. What about Bailie Lemmon?—I am not aware of his referring to it.

9407. He is Secretary of the Trades Council?—Yes.

9408. You would expect in their case that they discussed it?—I am not aware that they discussed it, but they appointed representatives to give evidence here.

9409. And they represent probably the whole of the working men?—I would not like to give any opinion on that. They represent the organised workmen, with one or two exceptions.

9410. And there is absolute freedom of speech?—I have never had the honour of being present there, and I cannot say.

9411. But surely there is freedom of opinion there as elsewhere? You may take it that that is the case?—Probably.

9412. If there had been a feeling in favour of longer lets when they proposed to give evidence, it would have found voice then naturally?—That is so.

9413. Of course, I don't know that the merits of the question were discussed. The Trades Council looked at it from one point of view; the Town Council another; and the question of missives was the question discussed by the Trades Council, and the question of the rating was what appeared to actuate the Town Council.

9414. The representatives of the Trades Council would know?—Quite.

9415. If they came here and told us they had discussed the question of shorter lets?—I presume you must take it. I have no knowledge.

9416. Was Mr Halley Stewart, your representative in the House of Commons, questioned?—I cannot say.

9417. That would necessarily come to this, that there is some agitation in Greenock in favour of shorter lets, although you don't know of it?—Well, I have never heard of any agitation. The Tenants Defence Association had an existence of a few months. They had an active campaign seven years ago for a few months, and it has never been heard of since, and any action that has been taken must have arisen through the Trades Council, or through Bailie Bennett's action at the Town Council, but I am not aware of any public agitation.

9418. What rent do you usually charge for two-room and kitchen houses, say in a decent locality? I am not referring to the lower class?—In some of the newer properties we have, the rent is £13, 8s.; in others from £13 to £15, as the ordinary run for two-room and kitchen houses.

9419. How do you say the houses up to £20 are occupied?—There are some detached cottages and small four-roomed dwelling-house tenements with rents of that kind, but not in ordinary tenement property occupied by tradesmen. We have no rents of that kind of houses occupied by the working classes. We have in new properties occupied by clerks and shopkeepers.

9420. Are they better paid than the average workman?—I don't know that they are better paid, but they have to live sometimes in a better locality.

9421. Have they security of tenure?—You refer to clerks, I think in most instances they have in a place like Greenock.

9422. (*To Mr Brodie.*) Is that your experience?—That clerks are better off? Well, that enters on a very delicate question, because, after all, it is pretty much a matter of conduct; the steady working man is as sure of his job as a clerk or shopkeeper.

9423. And there would be nothing extravagant in a working man occupying a £20 house?—No, quite right. I would rather encourage him to stay in a better house; and they could do that, too, some of them.

9424. If it is necessary for that man to have shorter tenure, with a lower rent, it would be equally necessary that he shifts into a house of a higher rental?—He would not ask for it.

9425. But assuming he did, he would be entitled to have it?—Certainly; it is a question of money, and I might point out to you that I deal with the question of rents up to £20. I saw statements which were made here to the Commission, and to say that working men stay in such houses is wrong.

9426. Do you say it is wrong?—I am speaking, of course, of Port-Glasgow and the district. In Glasgow, of course, the rents are much higher.

9427. Do you admit there would be nothing out of the way in a working man staying in such a house?—No, most commendable, and most of them could, but for drinking and horse-betting.

9428. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Paterson.*)—Mr Cross's Bill proposes that the receipts for payments furnished by owners shall separately distinguish the amounts paid for rent, and the amounts paid for rates and assessments. That means that, assuming this became law, every monthly receipt for every house let monthly, or quarterly receipt, would require to bear exactly the amount of payment applicable to rent and rate. Do you think that is practicable in business?—I don't think so; it would entail an enormous amount of labour on landlords. It is all right to have it on the annual schedule like this, but if everyone of these had to be split up into twelve different portions and marked in everybody's book, it would be really impracticable.

9429. Or fifty-two proportions for weekly?—If it were weekly it would be worse.

9430. Another difficulty would be that the rates are fixed usually about September or October, while the current year's rents and rates would be charged from the same tenant yearly in May or June?—Yes.

9431. Before the actual rate receipts are known?—The rates might be entirely changed.

9432. Then, in practice at the moment in Greenock, where you have this compounding, you don't attempt to show separately how much periodic payment is rent and how much is rate?—No.

9433. (*Mr Brodie.*) Before you close, there are two points. There is a point which has not been made clear in this evidence. I don't know whether it has been before the Commission or not, but in compelling proprietors to pay tenants' assessments there is one point being lost sight of, I think, and it is this: just now we find that poor persons who are unable to pay have the right to go to a Town Council and ask to be exempted in respect of inability to pay. If it becomes compulsory for proprietors to pay tenants' assessments, such tenants cannot possibly get the benefit of exemptions of that kind.

9434. I think we are going to try to find a way out of it. Your view is that that exemption should continue if it is possible?—That is a proper exemption for poor people, and they would lose it. Then I have mentioned here the question of the collection of rates. Why should the rates not be collected oftener than once a year? If we were left to collect the rents once a year, I wonder where proprietors would be. If collectors all over the country took a little more interest in their work, there would not be so much loss.

Mr James Brown, called and examined.

9435. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You are Chamberlain and Collector of Rates for the Burgh of Partick?—Yes.

9436. Previous to that you were Treasurer and Collector for the Burgh of Johnstone for eight and a half years?—Yes.

9437. And your experience of these two offices would extend over thirteen years?—Yes.

9438. In burghs such as Partick and Johnstone, when are the Valuation Rolls made up?—About 15th September, or earlier.

9439. That is after the Valuation Appeal Court?—Yes, after it is over. It cannot be earlier than 10th, or later than the 15th.

9440. In Partick, how many entries have you in your Valuation Roll?—For the last year it was 19,686, including owners and occupiers.

9441. When are the assessments imposed?—As soon after the Valuation Roll is received as possible; in the beginning of October.

9442. Is that the usual period in burghs?—That all depends. In Johnstone we did not receive the Valuation Roll until 5th October: of course the notices were later in going out.

9443. Is the procedure the same?—Yes, all over.

9444. The Valuation Roll is made up first, then the County Valuation Appeal Court is held, and then the assessments are fixed?—Yes, they are all alike as far as that is concerned.

9445. How long does it take you to get your assessments out after you have got the roll?—We do that as speedily as possible, and it is usually in less than three weeks. We have temporary hands brought in at the time. I usually have these men until that work is done.

9446. After the notices are out, you allow a period for appeals?—Yes.

9447. How long?—Usually about twenty-one days or so; not less than fourteen.

9448. Is the next step to have the Appeal Court?—Yes.

9449. Is it at that Court that these applications for exemption are made?—Yes.

9450. That is a magistrates' court, is it?—No, the whole Council.

9451. Do the Council consider each case on its merits?—They do.

9452. Talking generally, do you think substantially no abuse of the right of exemption is found to be given?—In very few cases. There are one or two that crop up, but very seldom.

9453. On the whole, you think this right of exemption is properly applied?—Yes.

9454. Having got the Appeal Court over and the exemptions fixed, you proceed to cover your assessments?—Yes.

9455. When are they payable?—Immediately after the Appeal Court. 26th October usually is the day.

9456. Are you busy from that date until you get your collections finished?—Yes.

9457. When do you usually get in all your rates?—At the end of December we had 72 per cent. collected.

9458. Who is assessed? Is it the tenant whose name is on the roll at the date of making up the Valuation Roll?—Yes, that is the party assessed.

9459. What is the Supplementary Roll?—That is perhaps empties that appear on the principal roll. They are taken up, and a survey made between 1st January and 1st March. The Supplementary Roll is made up principally of those empty houses on the valuation.

9460. Supposing the tenant whose name is on the roll at May, when the roll is made up, terminated his tenancy of the premises, say on 2nd August, would he still be liable for the whole year's rates?—No, provided an ingoing tenant is got.

9461. Tell me about that?—Under Section 346 of the Police Act, premises that usually let for a year are not occupied by the same tenant for the whole year from the term to Whitsunday, to the term of Whitsunday, but occupied by new occupiers. It is lawful for the Commissioners to levy on the new occupier whether his name appears on the Valuation Roll or not a proportion of that assessment for the period of his occupancy, and from the owner the proportion due by the first tenant.

9462. Assuming that you have assessed tenant No. 1, that is in possession on 15th May, and this tenant leaves on 2nd August, and the house is relet, are you then entitled to relieve No. 1 of part of his assessments and impose his assessment on No. 2?—In the first case, we have the name of the tenant who appears on the roll.

9463. As liable for the whole?—Yes, we assess him for the whole, but on delivering these notices, we find that the tenant has gone. We therefore apply to the factor or landlord, asking if this house is not relet and who is the tenant. Thereafter the landlord is charged for the proportion due by the first tenant who is gone, and we assess the second tenant for his proportion.

9464. I am not taking the case of a wayward tenant who has disappeared. Assume he has not disappeared, but taken a house in the next street; under the proposed change in the law of letting by which he leaves his house say at 2nd August, would he be liable to you for the whole year's rate if you knew where to find him?—Yes, that is to say if his first house remained empty, we could follow the first tenant.

9465. If it did not remain empty, but you knew, first of all, where the first tenant was, and, secondly, that the house was tenanted by a second man, can you elect to take either?—No, we take the landlord.

9466. In all cases?—Yes, where there has been a change.

9467. In all cases where there is a change of tenancy between 15th May and 15th May, the landlord automatically becomes liable for the rates?—For the first tenant's proportion, yes. If he lets his house again, he is liable for the first tenant's proportion. We assess the second tenant for his proportion.

9468. If you can get the first tenant, you can get him too, I suppose?—Well, they may make an arrangement between them; whoever pays, it is all one to me so long as I get the rate, but, failing the first or second tenant paying it, we have recourse against the landlord for the first tenant's proportion.

9469. For less than a year, at present what is the rule?—We charge the landlord.

9470. You don't discuss the tenant at all?—No.

9471. That is both above and under £5?—The rental does not matter, unless £4 and under.

9472. That is the landlord as a matter of course?—Yes.

9473. But up to any figure for less than a year, the landlord is liable for tenant's rates?—Yes.

9474. Is there no abatement allowed to landlords liable for tenant's rates in respect of short lets?—Nothing unless under £4.

9475. Looking to the time taken in making up your assessment roll, it is practical in your view to have that roll made up, say half-yearly?—No.

9476. You don't think that could be done?—It is September before I get it. We are so late in the year in getting the Valuation Roll, that by the time I get the notices out and the Appeal Court held and second notices issued, the second collection is on. There is no time.

9477. Would it be possible without having any second assessment roll to arrange for the assessments being paid by instalments?—The Council are entirely against that, unless in cases of poverty or illness, etc.

9478. Supposing your assessment roll was ready in October, why should you not begin and take the assessments then fixed by four quarterly instalments, and so proceed from year to year?—The first quarter is over before you get the Valuation Roll. The second quarter is due before you get the first notices out for the first quarter.

9479. Well, what is the special disadvantage of that? You have the assessment roll, and you then invite the people to pay the whole assessments. Supposing you said, "Pay one quarter just now and a quarter in three months," what is the difficulty?—Well, plenty of them would not have it in that way.

9480. But from the point of view of the rating authority? The local authority won't get the use of the money so speedily?—This is so.

9481. And under the present system of yearly lets, the removal at 28th May would aggravate the difficulty of getting your one-third and one quarter instalments?—That is so, one half of those removing would be away before you get your third quarter rates.

9481*a*. With removals spread over the year, there would be less substance in that objection?—Yes, there would be.

9482. However, in your view, you don't think it would be practicable?—No, I don't.

9483. I see you tell us what the expenses of your office are, but would it be much saving on that, supposing compounding was the practice up to £16, say?—There would be no saving so far as my office staff is concerned, because I consider I am not too highly staffed as it is. When the busy time comes on, we get temporary assistance.

9484. Mr Cross suggests to-day that the allowances to the factors would be made up to the rating authority, through the saving in the cost of direct collection?—Yes; I show that in the table on page 4.

9485. But you think there would be no gain through the expense of collection being less, if there was compounding?—I don't see that there would be much less expense.

9486. You would not have much saving of salaries or printing?—No.

9487. Come to your own burgh of Partick, what is the rate per £, there, just now?—1s. 10$\frac{8}{9}$d., and 8$\frac{8}{9}$d. on landlords.

9488. Have you applied to your own figures the discounts suggested in Mr Cross's schedule?—I have taken it only on last year's valuation.

9389. Would you put in a statement showing how you work it?—Yes, you have it there. I can send it.

9490. We will put it into the notes. What year do you take here?—1905–06.

9491. You separate the rentals here into four classes?—According to Mr Cross's Bill. Over £4 and under £7, over £7 and under £10, £10 to £16 inclusive, and from £16 to £20.

9492. The result is that you show discounts or rebates allowed to the proprietors would come to £474?—Yes.

9493. You show the amount given off in the way of relief on appeal, and in respect of paupers, is £659?—Yes.

9494. And irrecoverables, £539, 16s. 5d. Is that absolutely bad, or not, collected at a certain date?—Not collected at a certain date.

9495. How much of that might be actual loss?—About one half.

9496. We have to keep in mind that while you put in arrears, these are not irrecoverable arrears?—No, I will recover them afterwards.

9497. You show the whole deduction from the money collected?—Yes, £1199 odds.

9498. And including these items, the percentage of loss is £8, 3s.—Yes.

9499. On houses up to £20?—From £20 under.

9500. Then you tell us the number who have not paid their rents in regard to franchise. Take the three years 1903, 1904, 1905, what was the number of people disqualified from failure to pay rates?—These are the figures there for the three years.

9501. These are householders?—Yes, 1603 was the

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number disfranchised last year through non-payment of burgh rates. In 1904–05 the number was 1798, and in 1905–06, 1603.

9501*a*. So that, roughly, 1600 people failed to pay their rates prior to 16th June?—Yes.

9502. While the money may be got in to some extent, the result was that the people were disqualified?—That is so. They may have given part payments up to 20th June but not paid fully up.

9503. Assuming that there are to be short lets, do you think it is practicable to avoid compounding?—No. I don't see how it could be otherwise.

9503*a*. A suggestion has been made that, following on what we believe to be the English practice, the rents of £10 and under might be made a subject of compounding, and that between £10 and £20 it might be left to the rating authorities to collect, as at present, or to make a voluntary bargain with the landlords. Do you think the difficulty would still exist which you contemplate might arise through the Bill passing that compounding was in existence with reference to rents not exceeding £10?—I think that is a high enough rental for compounding. We have not much loss from rents over that.

9504. If compounding stopped at £10, while the short lets went on to £20, do you think you would still be able to collect your rates?—Yes, we have not so many removals over the £10 as under.

9505. Is it your experience that above £10, even with the right to remove, there would not be such an appreciable increase in removals?—No.

9506. But you think that below £10 it is essential that there should be a direct right to recover from proprietors?—I think so.

9507. (*Mr Binnie.*) And that would involve a commission individually for the amount of allowance that should be given them for collecting the rates?—Yes.

9508. Think of this. You were already asked part of it. Assume that removals were spread over the whole year, as proposed by Mr Cross. He tells me to-day that if he introduced the Bill he will raise the rent to £20 instead of £16. Well, take Partick, you have a very large proportion of your rents £20 and under?—No, I think the greater portion is over the £20 with us.

9509. Is it. How much?—We have 150,000 up to £20. We have about 200,000 over the £20.

9510. That is of rental?—Yes.

9511. Can you give us the number of ratepayers up to £20 and above £20?—I could not.

9512. It would be a very large proportion, I suppose?—Oh yes. I can give you the number of houses of one, two, and three apartments.

9513. Assume that removals in this very large proportion of your burgh were spread over the whole year, and that the assesssment roll, although made up and handed to you at the time when you can send out your assessments at the 1st of November; suppose that the assessments were by statute made to run from 1st November to 1st December, is there anything to object to in that?—No, I don't think so

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9514. Then, as you have been able to get your assessment roll into use, would there be any great difficulty in levying your rates quarterly?—Well, you see, the financial year of all burghs under the 1892 Act finishes at 15th May.

9515. We are proposing to alter the law, and this proposal of Mr Cross's will involve alteration of more laws than one or two. Assume that you were allowed to close your books at any term that was most convenient. Suppose you have permission to make your survey immediately after 1st January, and you get into shape for collecting your assessment on 15th May, is there any reason why you should not collect your rates quarterly?—I don't see that it would make any difference whether you made the assessment run from 1st November to 1st November or 15th May to 15th May.

9516. But would it not enable you to collect your rates quarterly? Your objection at first was that six months of the year was practically over before you could begin to get in your money. Take your survey earlier and get your money in at the beginning of the year, and collect it quarterly.—You would have to alter the letting term from 28th May.

9517. Mr Cross's Bill is for that purpose alone, and his Bill would affect more than three-fourths of the people in Partick, I think, so that, you see, 28th of May as a term would cease to be, so that it would be of very little difference what period you took up your survey. Do you see that?—Yes.

9518. Well, assuming that your survey was in the beginning of January, and the finished assessment roll was put into your hands so as to enable you to begin collecting at 15th May, could you not do it quarterly?—Not with the present staff, I think.

9519. Is there any difficulty except additional trouble in your office?—No, I don't think there is.

9520. You have made up a statement on page 4?—Yes.

9521. And you say that the proposed discounts under Mr Cross's Bill will amount to £474?—Yes.

9522. Whereas you actually lost on assessments £539, 16s. 5d., and you relieve people to the extent of £659, 17s. 8½d. In your opinion the allowances under Mr Cross's Bill are inadequate?—Yes, too small. That bears that out.

[ADJOURNED.]

TENTH DAY.

MONDAY, 28TH JANUARY 1907.

At the Town Hall, Aberdeen.

Present:

LORD GUTHRIE, *Chairman.*

SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, Bart.
MR THOMAS BINNIE.
MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.
MR GEORGE B. ESSLEMONT.
MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

Mr W. Meff., jun., and Mr A. M. Munro. 28 Jan. 1907.

Mr WILLIAM MEFF, Junr., City Treasurer, and Mr A. M. MUNRO, called and examined.

9523. (*Chairman to Mr Meff.*) You have been a member of the Town Council of Aberdeen for twelve years, and in 1905 you were appointed City Treasurer?—That is so.

As City Treasurer you are Convener of the Finance Committee of the Town Council.

9524. (*To Mr Munro.*) When were you appointed City Chamberlain?—In 1905.

9525. Do you look after the Corporation properties?—I do.

9526. Have they any house property?—Considerable.

9527. Of the class that we are dealing with in this inquiry?—Yes.

9528. With rents from what to what?—From 30s. for the small houses to £11.

9529. In different parts of the town?—Yes.

9530. Were they acquired in connection with city improvements, or how?—Mostly, although some have been

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built for workmen's dwellings, with which experiments were made by the Town Council.

9531. Are they partly old houses renovated, and partly new houses?—Entirely new houses.

9532. How are they let?—They are let yearly.

9533. Are there any specialties in regard to them, such as employment of caretakers, as in Glasgow?—No, we have a factor who manages that property along with other Corporation property, as far as regards looking after repairs and collecting rents.

9534. They are managed like ordinary house property of a similar class?—Yes.

9535. Roughly, what is the rent drawn from the town property?—I have the number of tenants, but I have not the total rent. The total rents of property would amount to probably £2000, all over the city.

9536. And the rates are collected from these tenants just as from others?—Yes.

9537. Do you collect the police and the municipal assessments?—Yes.

9538. (*To Mr Meff.*) Tell us about the practice in Aberdeen prior to 1901: what was the practice?—There was a report which came before the Town Council in December 1901, asking that an alteration should take place in the date for letting houses. Up to that time 2nd February was the date, and the alteration asked was to the 10th March. This matter came before the Town Council for further consideration, and they agreed to it, and I believe this was commenced; but only continued for a very short time. I don't know whether it would be the house proprietors who fell back, or the people just getting anxious to settle in houses at an early date. I believe, however, it is back again to the old date.

9539. Prior to the Council considering the matter, there had been a public meeting of house proprietors and factors and tenants in Aberdeen?—Yes.

9540. And the resolutions submitted were as follows:—

(1) That it is desirable, alike in the interests of tenants and landlords, that the letting period of houses should be altered.

(2) That the time for inquiry as to the renewal of tenancy be altered from 2nd February to 10th March.

(3) That all proprietors and tenants in Aberdeen be recommended to co-operate gradually in carrying out the change in the letting term which this meeting has now decided to adopt.

(4) That copies of the resolutions be forwarded to the Town Council and other large proprietors and factors.

The result was that a report by the Committee of the Town Council was approved, and was to the following effect, "That the Committee were of opinion that an alteration 'of the term for letting houses was desirable in the 'interests of both proprietors and tenants, and accordingly 'resolved to recommend that the date for inquiry as to 'renewal of tenancies should be altered from 2nd February 'to 10th March, and that all proprietors and tenants in 'the city should be requested to co-operate in carrying 'out the change." Now you say that while that was recommended by the Council and carried out for a time, matters have been going back to the old method?—That is so.

9541. And is it the case that the Aberdeen House Proprietors Association wrote last year to the City Chamberlain as follows—on 23rd February 1906:—"I 'am authorised by my Committee to say that they are 'sorry the 10th of March is not now generally observed as 'the letting period, to thank the Town Council for the lead 'they gave in the matter, but to add that the Association 'cannot expect it to delay beyond 2nd February"?—Yes.

9542. When was the attention of the Town Council first directed to the question involved in Mr Cross's Bill?—It was about the middle of December 1906.

9543. Had their attention been directed at all to the previous Bills which had been before Parliament?—I don't think so. This was the first time, as far as I can recollect.

9544. Did the Town Council, having considered the matter, appoint you and Mr Munro to give evidence here, and at the same time resolve "that it be an instruction to the 'witnesses that the evidence to be given by them before the 'Committee is to be to the effect that the Council do not 'approve of Mr Cross's Bill, and that as regards Aberdeen, 'the existing system of house letting does not, in the 'opinion of the Town Council, call for alteration"?—Yes.

9545. As far as you know, has this matter been agitated at all, as in Glasgow for instance, by being brought before ward meetings?—No, not in Aberdeen.

9546. Or, as far as you know, before Parliamentary candidates?—No, not as far as I know.

9547. Or by correspondence in newspapers?—I have never seen any.

9548. Or by deputations to the Town Council?—No.

9549. Was the Council unanimous in that resolution?—I think they were.

9550. Was any amendment proposed?—No amendment.

9551. Now tell us about the number of smaller class dwelling houses in Aberdeen. In 1905-06 the total not exceeding £20 was 31,203?—Yes.

9552. Out of a gross total of 35,337 in the city?—Yes.

9553. Of the 31,203, there were not exceeding £5, 5734?—Yes.

9554. Above £5, and not exceeding £10, 16,128?—Yes.

9555. Above £10 and not exceeding £12, 4035; above £12 and not exceeding £15, 2796; and above £15 and not exceeding £20, 2510; making the total you already gave us, 31,203?—Yes.

9556. In that way, houses of £20 and under represent 88 per cent. of the whole dwelling houses in the city?—Yes.

9557. Under Mr Cross's Bill, you are proposed to be dealt with as within the £16 limit?—Yes.

9558. Of the 28,700, what proportion would that be of the total 35,337? Taking approximately the limit of £16, and applying it to houses under £16 would give you 80 per cent. of the whole?—81 per cent.

9559. That would be affected?—Yes.

9560. (*To Mr Munro.*) There has been a suggestion of a £10 or £12 limit. Suppose you take a £12 limit, that is 25,897, what percentage is that, about 75 per cent.?—Yes.

9561. (*To Mr Meff.*) In your view, and in the view of the Council, there is no demand in Aberdeen by the public for the proposed legislation?—That is the opinion of the Council.

9562. You observe that the Bill contains an optional clause?—Yes.

9563. What do you say to that as meeting the wants of Aberdeen, consistently with the requirements of the public? Clause No. 10, "This Act shall not come into operation 'in any Burgh until it has been adopted in whole or in 'part by a resolution of the Town Council or by the local 'authority of such Burgh at a meeting called for the 'purpose"—it has been objected to that, even in places where the Act would not be adopted, probably, that it is desirable to have a uniform system for the whole of Scotland?—That is our opinion here. I don't think that would work at all.

9564. Tell us about the vacant houses. The total applicable to 1905-06 was 1656, of which 1446, or 87 per cent., were houses of £20 and under. Is that about the normal amount, or is it not unusual?—It is a little over what is usual here.

9565. The numbers were, not exceeding £5 rent, 455; from £5 to £10, 524; from £10 to £12, 241; from £12 to £15, 131; and from £15 to £20, 95?—Yes.

9566. You are not under the general Burgh Police Acts, are you?—No.

9567. You have an Act of your own of 1881, and several other Acts, I suppose?—Yes.

9568. And under that you have power to charge the owner the municipal rates levied in respect of premises not above £5 rental?—Yes.

9569. Subject to a reduction of 25 per cent. of the amount?—Yes.

9570. That can be recovered by consent from the tenant?—Yes.

9571. What is the landlord entitled to recover from the tenant? The whole money paid by him or only 75 per cent. which he pays to you?—He is responsible to us for the whole rate.

9572. But you give him a reduction?—We give him a reduction of 25 per cent. for collecting it.

9573. What does he recover from the tenant?—There has been some difficulty in the interpretation of the clause by some of the sheriffs. The Act says that the owner shall have the right to recover the sum so paid from the tenant of the premises. One of the sheriffs held he was only entitled to receive the sum actually paid by him. The intention was that the 25 per cent. was to cover his loss and the cost of collection when the Act was drawn.

9574. Is the result that the landlord only gets 75 per cent?—In many cases.

9575. But has the sheriff held that he is not entitled to get more?—Not very definitely.

9576. That is Section 37?—Yes.

9577. Under Section 34 premises above £5, not being let for a year—whatever the rent may be—the rates of all premises not let for a whole year are payable by the owner without abatement?—Yes.

9578. (*To Mr Munro.*) Is that put into force?—Yes, regularly without exception.

9579. Do you know in these cases what was the theory as to giving no abatement when the abatement is given under £5?—In a great number of cases houses that are thus let are houses of larger value which have been, perhaps, in such a state that they could not be let in May;

they are then let during the year. It was considered that the landlord ran no risk in the letting of these houses.

9580. But supposing you have £10 houses in Aberdeen let monthly, the landlord there has to pay the rates and he gets no abatement?—No abatement.

9581. The consequence of that will be very much to make the landlords disinclined to go in for any such lets?—That is so.

9582. (*To Mr Meff.*) What is the general period of letting of dwelling houses in Aberdeen?—Whitsunday to Whitsunday.

9583. With the exception of those below what rent would you say roughly?—Below £5.

9584. And the habit of payment of rent is what?—Every six months, Martinmas and Whitsunday.

9585. Above £5 rents are there many cases, or are they quite exceptional, of what we may call short lets under a year?—Last year there were only 407.

9586. Have you got a table showing that: you have not shown us that?

9587. (*To Mr Munro.*) Have you a table showing the number of short lets above £5?—No, not a table.

9588. (*To Mr Meff.*) Now, you say there are 407 as far as returned to you? These are the only ones?—They are forced to make a return on the Valuation Roll above £5, and in 1905–06 there are only 407 actually on the roll.

9589. Can you say what the reason of these 407 is? Under what circumstances are there monthly lets above £5?—In many cases houses of larger value than £5, even as large as £80 and £90, may be let during the year; they are included as smaller rents under this clause.

9590. That accounts for the majority?—No, the majority, I should say, run from perhaps £5 to £12.

9591. Has the number of such houses been increasing?—No.

9592. (*Mr Esslemont.*) Do these figures apply to monthly lets at all?—No, they are not monthly lets. They are houses which would have been let ordinarily from year to year, but were lying vacant at the Whitsunday term.

9593. For which tenants were secured in the course of the year?—Yes.

9594. (*Chairman to Mr Meff.*) Would these houses largely be new houses that happened to be finished between terms, or not let at the term, for which a landlord takes up a tenant in the middle?—Both.

9595. Have you any idea whether there are any of them that were voluntary arrangements for short lets at the term?—I have no information as to that.

9596. You have no knowledge of that being such a common practice?—It is not at all a common practice.

9597. And these 407 would represent a rental of how much?—I can hand that in.

9598. Is it £2953?—Yes.

9599. Suppose the whole houses of £5 and under with the 407 already specified were monthly, the percentage on the total number of houses would only be 17?—That is so.

9600. Do you think, as far as there is a demand for monthly houses in Aberdeen, it is satisfied by the smaller class of houses?—Quite.

9601. It comes to this, there is no demand for short lets in houses with rents above £5?—I never heard of any.

9602. You would have heard of it if it existed?—I would, previous to this.

9603. Is the number of houses under £5 decreasing in Aberdeen as in other places?—Yes.

9604. And quite right that they should?—Yes.

9605. They are of a very inferior class?—Very.

9606. Comparing the assessable rental of 1882–83 with 1895–96, I think in 1882–83 it was £456,000?—Yes.

9607. And the rental of houses of £5 and under amounted at that time to about £30,000, or 6·5 per cent. of the total rental?—Yes.

9608. In 1905–06 the assessable rental was £891,000, and the rental of £5 and under was £20,000, or 2·2 per cent.?—Yes.

9609. Suppose, contrary to your view, short lets were introduced, what would follow about the rates?—We would require to make the owner responsible for all the rates.

9610. There are two suggestions, either that, or that you should collect more frequently, say quarterly. What do you say to the latter?—We have no objections to collecting the rates every three months, so long as the time of letting is not altered.

9611. But do you think, looking to the arrangement in connection with the Valuation Roll, and the business following on it, that it would be practicable to collect the rates four times a year?—Not at present.

9612. There would require to be changes on the valuation Acts?—Yes.

9613. Subject to these two things, there is nothing amiss?—Nothing, as far as I see.

9614. We know, I think, the arrangements about the Valuation Roll, but we get your experience in Aberdeen. Under the present system of making up that roll, a complete roll is not delivered to the collector till September. Do you find that the demand notices cannot be issued till the end of October?—Not before.

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9615. So that about a half of the period for which the assessment is imposed has run before the notices are in the hands of the ratepayers?—Yes.

9616. Don't you think it would be an advantage to the smaller ratepayer if he paid his rates more frequently than once a year?—It might in some cases be an advantage.

9617. I see you point out that there would be a certain disadvantage to him in so far as he would have to make immediate payment after the demand was made?—Yes.

9618. At present, as you pointed out, there is a long period elapses after the time of the assessments before payment is actually demanded?—Yes.

9619. Do you in Aberdeen take partial payment of rates?—Yes, we do in some cases. For instance, if a man is out of employment, or laid up ill, and not able to pay the rates, we take it as we are able to get it from him.

9620. It is a matter of practice, not under statute?—Simply a matter of practice.

9621. In Aberdeen, have you a provision entitling you to give relief?—Yes, I believe there is.

9622. What is that?

(*Mr Munro.*) It is under the 1862 Act on the ground of poverty.

9623. (*Chairman to Mr Munro.*) Is there a Court held for consideration of these cases, or how is it?—It is managed by a Committee of the Town Council, the Appeals and Arrears Committee.

9624. Do they sit once a year or what?—They have several meetings in February and March to consider the appeals which are sent in.

9625. Who does the Committee consist of?—It is a Committee of the Town Council.

9626. How many does it consist of?—About eleven or twelve. Each of the representatives of the respective wards is entitled, whether he be on the Committee or not, to sit along with the Committee when his own ward is being dealt with.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) They are considered ward by ward.

9627. (*Chairman.*) What is the use of that?—I suppose in many cases they have special knowledge of the circumstances to guide the Committee.

9628. Now tell us about the number relieved in 1956 over £5, Mr Munro, and not exceeding £10?—1732.

9629. And over £10 and not exceeding £15 the number was 265?—Yes.

9630. Are there any relieved above £15 rental?—121.

9631. To be added to the 1997?—Yes.

9632. What is the total?—2118.

9633. And the amount of assessment remitted was £1698, or 6·2 per cent. of the total of £27,113 imposed on rentals from £5 to £15?—That is so.

9634. What was the total amount of arrears remitted on the ground of poverty?—£1898.

9635. Out of a total assessment of how much?—About £125,000.

9636. Can you tell me how much of that was due to the people who were on the Poor Roll?—£320, representing 421 persons. We take them off. They are certified to the inspector as being on the roll.

9637. Is that under your statute?—Yes.

9638. Can you tell me how much they amount to in money?—£320.

9639. You might see to this, Mr Munro. We have had a calculation made in one or two towns, of this kind. Suppose you take your total assessment; suppose you take the amount remitted on the ground of poverty, or because they are on the Poor Roll; suppose you also take the proposed allowances by Mr Cross in his Bill, what remains? Perhaps you might be able to make that up. You say it has appeared in one or two cases that if you give effect to the remittances on the ground of poverty, and the Poor Roll, and give effect to Mr Cross's commission, it appears rather as if there would be no benefit to the rating authority in that case. You might kindly make it up, and see how Aberdeen stands in that way?—Yes, I will.

9640. Now, as to arrears. The number of ratepayers in arrears with payment of assessment at 31st May 1906 on the smaller houses was—above and not exceeding £10, 1139. The amount was £979; the number of ratepayers in arrears with payment of assessments was 1338: that is to say from £5 to £15?—Yes.

9641. The total amount of arrears was £1252?—Yes.

9642. And the percentage of ratepayers from £5 to £15 in arrears was 5·82 per cent?—Yes.

9643. And the whole percentage of the assessments imposed applicable to those above £5 to £15 was 4·61?—Yes.

9644. Do these percentages represent the actual loss of assessments?—No.

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9645. Why not?—Because we are continually collecting the arrears from the tenants after 28th May. Our collectors are always anxious to get as much as possible in of the arrears after 28th May.

9646. What difference would that make on the total figures you have given?—The 1338 ratepayers, by the 14th of December, were reduced to 704 who had not paid, and the amount of assessment outstanding at that date was £669, in place of £1252, reducing the percentages to 3·06 and 2·4 respectively.

9647. Suppose you did not make these remittances on the ground of poverty, have you any idea how much the Town Council would manage to get out of them in the end?—Very little, I should say.

9648. On the other hand, are there not many people who may not pay their rates when you come down on them for a big lump sum, who could pay monthly through the landlord well enough?—It might be more convenient in many cases, I admit.

9649. It would mean in many cases so much going in less desirable directions?—Yes, in other expenditure.

9650. Is there any idea in your view theoretically, apart from the practical question, that collection through the landlord, say once a month, would yield a larger gross amount of rate than the present system?—I don't think there would be a very material difference.

9651. I am not talking about allowances you are to give, but merely of the gross amount. Would the gross amount be larger to begin with?—Yes, there would be no deductions.

9652. But if you give a sufficient allowance to the landlord, and make provisions on the ground of poverty, there may be no gain to the rating authority?—I don't think we would have any gain.

9653. (*To Mr Meff.*) If the owner was to pay the rates, then there would be no disqualification municipally, as at present of a voter?—No.

9654. Do you see any drawback in that?—No.

9655. It is so in England?—Yes.

9656. And there you have a considerable class entitled to vote municipally, who are disqualified in Scotland?—I was not aware of that.

9657. It necessarily follows?—Yes.

9658. Give us figures on that point. The number of householders over £5 and under £10 rental who were returned to the City Assessor as in arrears with payment of their assessment at 20th June 1906 was how many?—808.

9659. And they were disqualified?—Yes.

9660. Out of how many voters? What is your total?—I will supply that.

9661. You have no views, have you, on the question which may be said to be subordinate, of a proposed alteration of the date of letting from February to March?—No, no views on that.

9662. Nor the question which has been brought in incidentally of the abolition of hypothetic?—you leave that to others?—Yes.

9663. (*Mr Howden to Mr Meff.*) What are the principal industries in Aberdeen?—Granite, paper, shipbuilding, fishing, and combs.

9664. Are any of these of a fluctuating nature?—Yes, most of them are.

9665. Do they necessitate people shifting occasionally from Aberdeen?—Well, sometimes, not often.

9666. (*The Chairman.*) Which most?—In the shipbuilding trade I should say people remove more quickly.

9667. You mean shipbuilding?—No, the ordinary building trades.

9668. And shipbuilding?—To a smaller extent.

9669. (*Mr Howden.*) And the fishing industry?—It fluctuates very much, but they don't shift from the place at all; they don't remove from the place.

9670. Do they not follow their occupation as fishermen up and down?—No.

9671. Isn't it the case in Aberdeen that they shift?—No.

9672. What is the average rent these people pay, the average tradesman?—I could not tell you that.

(*Mr Munro.*) It varies. We get them as high as £20 and as low as £9 in the case of some artisans in our workmen's dwellings.

9673. (*Mr Howden to Mr Munro.*) The ordinary artisans stay in houses from £9 to £20 rental?—Yes.

9674. (*To Mr Meff.*) Have these men never complained that there was a grievance in long letting to your knowledge?—No, I have never heard of any complaint.

9675. (*Mr Munro.*) You have told us in your list of percentages here, that you only lose 4·61 in your total assessment: is that the case?—That is so. We don't lose that ultimately. That was only at 31st May.

9676. Even that is reduced?—Even that is reduced.

9677. You have studied the schedule attached to Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

9678. Would you give us your opinion of what the charges are that he proposes for compounding?—Well, the landlord would have greater difficulty in recovering than the Corporation. I am not prepared to say that, as far as the landlords are concerned, the allowances would be extravagant.

9679. Why would the landlord have more difficulty than you?—Because we have greater power than he would have.

9680. If he collected more frequently, would that matter?—It would.

9681. Then probably the loss to the landlord would be practically more than what it is to the Corporation at the present time?—Yes, with more frequent collection.

9682. (*Mr Binnie to Mr Meff.*) You say that if a system of monthly or quarterly letting were introduced, the occupiers' rates would require to be made recoverable from the owner?—Yes.

9683. And you said also that there would be no difficulty in collecting the rates quarterly?—I don't think so.

9684. You must have misunderstood the question put to you, I think?—There would be no difficulty to owners, I mean, collecting.

9685. But to the municipality?—Oh, I misunderstood the question: there would be difficulty.

9686. And why?—We would have difficulty in knowing what the rates really were according to the valuation.

9687. Yes?—But there must be alterations of the law if this Bill of Mr Cross's, or any similar Bill, is to pass.

9688. Now, could you not, assuming that removals are to be spread over the whole year in a greater number of houses, make up your Assessment Roll previous to Whitsunday?—No.

9689. What is your difficulty? Couldn't it be done in February or March instead of June, July, and August?

(*Mr Munro.*) The principal difficulty in the Corporation assessing quarterly would be that at whatever period the rate was for, the financial year of the Corporation must end at a particular date, and there would be a difficulty in properly estimating the amount of assessments required by the Corporation, the rent would be so fluctuating.

9690. You can estimate that in May as well as in September?—We estimate that in September, when we get the definite valuation.

9691. Suppose you get the finished roll, as I am suggesting, at the end of April or beginning of May, you could estimate your assessments then?—Yes, that would do, if all the letting was going to be monthly in the city, but you are only proposing that for a certain section of it.

9692. That is the vast proportion of the houses in Aberdeen?—Not as far as rental is concerned. It may in regard to numbers, but not to rental.

9693. But it would be easy to ascertain at the end of the year what the yearly lettings would be for the following year?—At present it takes the assessor all his time to September.

9694. Beginning in May?—Yes.

9695. But if you began in January?—You would have all your warehouses, far and away the larger portion of the assessment, which would only be let from May to May.

9696. Not in May, but from May to May?—Yes.

9697. And let at a much earlier period?—That might be.

9698. And what difficulty would there be in ascertaining that?—No difficulty, so long as the roll could be delivered.

9699. That is what I think, and then if the roll were delivered to you in May, what difficulty would there be in collecting the rates quarterly?—Well, the first quarter I expect would be practically gone before we could be in a position to collect.

9700. Why?—We might find one half of the tenants gone before we could collect at all.

9701. Only if the rents are paid monthly; you say very few are paid in Aberdeen?—That is so. Still, it would be by the end of August we would have to collect our first quarter.

9702. The beginning of August?—Well, if you shift your date to the 1st May, it would be three months afterwards, the beginning of August.

9703. Well, what difficulty would that make?—If the roll, as I say, could be given to the collector in sufficient time for him to send out notices, it is a matter of six weeks to get them out. He would have very little time before the first quarter to collect his rates from a removing tenant.

9704. You could collect by 1st August surely?—You might and might not.

9705. You give us here the losses. Do those losses you have given us include or not include the unpaid assessments of the people who were relieved on account of poverty?—The losses of £1252, on assessments from £5 to £15, is exclusive of those relieved by poverty.

9706. In 1906?—Yes.

9707. Have you given us in another place the amount you do relieve?—Yes.

9708. Is it £1698?—Yes.

9709. What is the cost of the collection of rates?—In Aberdeen it is a very difficult thing to state, because the office staff, who do the collecting, are engaged in other work, but I calculated it as nearly as possible, and it is a little under 1 per cent.

9710. That would be about £1250?—Yes, about that, but it is really very difficult to state.

9711. (*Sir John Stirling-Maxwell to Mr Meff.*) I understood you to say you were opposed to the clause in Mr Cross's Bill under which it would be optional to adopt the law or not. Am I right?—Yes.

9712. Would you enlarge on that a little?—In what way.

9713. I want to know what the objection is?—A different system in different places. There is no desire for it here.

9714. Under the Bill you would not be bound to adopt it. Would it do any harm if other people adopted it?—I cannot answer for other people, only for ourselves locally here.

9715. But under the Bill as it stands, it would entirely lie with the Council of Aberdeen whether they would adopt it or not?—That is so.

9716. In that case I do not quite understand how the Bill does harm to Aberdeen?—If it became law, it would do harm to Aberdeen, if we were compelled to act according to it.

9717. That is not proposed under the Bill?—It is optional, I understand.

9718. Would you be opposed to a Bill with the optional clause?—It would be better than a general Act, I think.

9719. You cannot give any reason?—No.

(*Mr Esslemont.*) Mr Munro was asked to state the number of municipal electors; I find from the hand-book that there are 33,014.

9719*a*. (*Chairman.*) What date is that applicable to?

(*Mr Esslemont.*) 1906–07.

9720. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Munro.*) Referring to Sir John Stirling-Maxwell's question, if a Bill like this is required in the west of Scotland, I would like to know whether the view of the Aberdeen Corporation is that, in the event of its being required in the west of Scotland, it should, on principle, apply to Aberdeen, or whether the preferable course would be to retain the optional clause, so that Aberdeen should only adopt it if it thought fit?—Certainly, of the two evils, the optional clause would be the least, but what we feel is that if there is to be a special remedy like that, requiring special legislation, it would be far better to do it locally.

9721. It does not apply to one city, but assume that in the whole of the west of Scotland it is required, may I take it that Aberdeen would prefer the optional clause?—Distinctly.

9722. With reference to the cost of collection, I assume that the cost of collection at present is more serious in regard to assessments on houses under £16 relatively?—Relatively we have more trouble to get assessments on rentals under £16 than for the higher class of rentals.

9723. Assuming, as you told us, the cost overhead was 1 per cent., presumably the cost of collection of houses under £16 would be above 1 per cent.?—Well, it is very difficult to say that it would be so, because we employ a great number of collectors. They get in our heaviest assessments for houses rented on £50 to £60 or up to £100, where they bulk largest.

9724. That will affect largely the percentage if you took the smaller houses only?—A good deal depends on getting as much money in as possible.

9725. Do you assess unlet property in Aberdeen?—Owners' rates only.

9726. Does this percentage give us exemptions on the ground of poverty?—That is so, under £15, 6 per cent.

9727. Does that percentage include the relief given to paupers?—Yes.

9728. Can you give us any idea of what may be the amount of relief from paupers?—£320.

9729. To get any idea of the total cost to the Corporation in respect of rates under £16, we would require to take your 4·61 per cent.?—That sum is reduced to 2·4 per cent.

9730. And add to that the percentage in respect of exemption on the ground of poverty?—Yes.

9731. The amount remitted in respect of no paupers being assessed?—That is so.

9732. The percentage in respect of cost of collection?—That is so.

9733. Have you any subjects known in Aberdeen as house and shop more frequently used as a house?—There are a number of these smaller shops let with dwelling houses attached.

9734. Can you tell us what course is available in Aberdeen to the landlords who wish to eject tenants? Has your Burgh Court any such powers?—For yearly lets, and the Sheriff Court for monthly tenants.

9735. A Magistrates' Court for yearly lets only?—Yes.

9736. Tell us why that distinction should exist?—I can hardly tell you how it arose, but it seems to be that there are only powers in the Burgh Court with reference to yearly letting, and the Sheriff Court with reference to those less than a year.

9737. Do many landlords go to the Burgh Court for warrants in the case of yearly lets?—On an average there would not be more than three in the twelve months.

9738. (*To Mr Meff.*) Can you tell us whether there are any populous places outside the city limits in the landward part of Aberdeen that might not be affected under the Bill?—No.

9739. The city includes the whole building area?—With the exception of one or two places.

9740. There is substantially no large area outside?—No.

9741. Under Mr Cross's Bill there is a clause authorising the sheriff on a resolution by the Corporation adopting such a Bill as this to apply the Act?—Yes.

9742. In some centres the suggestion has been made that the sheriff should have discretion, assuming the Corporation applied to him?—He would hold an inquiry before using the power given to him.

9743. He should not simply act on being satisfied that a majority had decided? You think the sheriff ought to have that discretion?—I think so.

9744. With respect to the exemption on the ground of poverty, is there one committee or two?—One committee, and they take the appeal papers as sent in, each ward by itself. They sit for perhaps three or four evenings on one ward and go over every paper, and of course they have been thoroughly inquired into before coming before the Committee, and they may exempt either the whole or part of the assessment. In any case it is very carefully gone into.

9745. It has been suggested, assuming the Bill is to pass, that it is desirable to retain the privilege in favour of the poorer tenants getting exemption all round. That could be operated in the event of the rates being collected through the landlords.

(*Mr Munro.*) There would be no difficulty with the first class, namely, with those on the Poor Roll. I think the collector of poor rates would certify that these were on the Poor Roll. The landlord would there and then be exempt. With the second class exempted on the ground of poverty, it would be difficult to hold an inquiry.

9746. Assuming compounding, how is the tenant to get the benefit which he at present has of exemption from rates?—I see the difficulty. He presently loses under £5, and they would probably lose the same benefit if it was extended.

9747. The burgh of Paisley have framed a clause which shortly means that the tenant is to be able to appeal at present for relief, then the landlord is to be credited with the amount of rate from which the tenant was thus relieved, so that he would give a corresponding abatement to the tenant paying monthly or quarterly rent. Do you see any practical difficulty in applying some such clause as that?—No, I do not see any practical difficulty. The same inquiry would hold by the Council as is at present done by the Appeals Committee. That of course would not need to be a method by which the landlord's rates as a whole were deleted.

9748. I presume you agree that the present right of appeal should continue?—Yes.

9749. Tell us this. At present under £5, where the landlord pays the whole rates, does he distinguish the rate from the rent when he recovers from the tenant?—I think as a rule he does. He states so much. In many cases it is the exclusive rent, and no rates are mentioned. In other cases the rates are mentioned, where there is yearly letting, and charged only to Martinmas term.

9750. Above £5, who pays the burgh rates? You have them divided?—Between owner and occupier: practically one-third and two-thirds, one-third to the owner and two-thirds to the occupier.

9751. Above £5, is this 25 per cent. allowed both on the owner's portion and the tenant's portion?—Only on the occupier's; there is no deduction for owner's rates.

9752. So that he pays his own burgh rate in full, and three-fourths of the tenant's rate under £5?—Yes.

9753. (*Chairman.*) In regard to information, it is suggested that we might have the exact amount of the total assessments that you say roughly is £125,000; the amount of assessment under £5, from £5 to £10, from £10 to £15, and from £15 to £20?—On houses, yes.

9754. Was the total assessment that you gave us, £125,000, on both owners and tenants?—Yes.

9755. We want the total assessment on tenants only,

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and then we will be able to compare the difference on small rentals under £20?—I will supply the assessment on these various rentals.

Then you might give us the exact figure of the amount of assessment on owners and occupiers per £.

9756. (*To Mr Munro.*) Could you get us any information as to the amount of loss there is on Parish Council rates without bringing a witness to Edinburgh?—I will endeavour to see before the Committee rises.

9757. The corresponding figures?—Yes.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) Under £10 and under £16, and £20 also if possible.

Mr J. Rust.

Mr John Rust, called and examined.

9758. (*Chairman.*) You are City Architect, and have been so for fourteen years?—I have.

9759. And you yourself are an architect, and have carried on practice in the city of Aberdeen on your own account for thirty years?—Yes.

9760. Were you for a number of years President of the Aberdeen House Proprietors Association?—I was.

9761. You resigned that office when you became City Architect?—I did.

9762. You yourself have a number of properties throughout the city, yielding an annual rental of £3500 a year?—I have.

9763. What rents do these run from?—From £5 up to £105.

9764. They are let to 312 tenants, and 23 of them are from £4, 5s. to £5, 12s., these being one-roomed houses; 157 two-roomed houses from £7, 5s. to £9; 92 three-roomed houses from £8, 10s. to £12; 20 four-roomed houses from £14, 10s. to £19; 6 thirteen-roomed houses from £70 to £105; and 14 shops from £10 to £28?—Yes.

9765. What are the parts of Aberdeen where the smaller class of dwellings are?—As a rule in the east end, but they are gradually being demolished.

9766. Then where are the houses of the better working class?—They are situated in different parts of the city. There are a lot of them in connection with the harbour at Torry, and in the west end and Rosemount district, and in the north district, and round the suburbs on each side.

9767. We had from Mr Meff a statement that the chief industries of Aberdeen were granite, paper, shipbuilding, fishing, and combs. Which employs the largest number of men?—I should say the fishing industry at the present time.

9768. Do you mean residents?—Yes. The district of Torry, which has sprung up within the last ten or fifteen years, is three-quarters composed of those engaged in the fishing industry.

9769. Is it increasing?—Yes.

9770. Within the burgh boundaries?—Yes. I have seven houses there, and seventy tenants, and three-quarters are in connection with the fishing industry.

9771. What kind of rents?—From £8 to £12.

9772. In Aberdeen, what employment is there for families, especially women?—There are a number of large mills where they are employed. The fishing industry employs a great number of women, and there are two or three large mills.

9773. Granite does not employ any?—None as a rule.

9774. Paper does?—Yes.

9775. And combs?—Yes.

9776. Is the whole of your property let from year to year?—It is.

9777. With half-yearly payments?—Yes.

9778. Except the larger self-contained houses, of course? Yes, they are let on lease.

9779. Suppose that Mr Cross's Bill were passed, which makes the period of let the same as the period of payment, it would practically, for houses above £5 in Aberdeen, convert yearly lets into half-yearly lets?—Yes.

9780. Returning to Section 4 of that Bill, which I have just summarised, what do you say about houses with rents from £3 to £5. In point of fact, at the present moment they are on short lets, aren't they?—As a rule the small rents, very small rents, are monthly lets.

9781. Are there any houses in Aberdeen at or under £5 yearly lets?—Not many.

9782. In what case would there be yearly lets?—Single rooms, if let as such, would be let to yearly tenants, and the monthly tenants are all confined to the older class of houses, what we call the slum property, but of the newer class of property above that, I don't think there are any monthly tenants. They are all yearly tenants.

9783. Even although in single-roomed houses?—Yes, I have some there with yearly lets.

9784. You have twenty-three?—Yes.

9785. Are these all in new property?—Comparatively speaking.

9786. All respectable people?—Yes, widows and single individuals.

9787. What do you say in regard to this? Do you think it is a good system that with such small lets as these the tenancy should be yearly and the payment only half-yearly?—My experience is that that is the best way, and I have always found that the tenants themselves like to get settled for a year.

9788. Did you try collecting the rents more often?—Yes. I had a good deal of trouble in getting the rents. I thought I would try making quarterly collections, and started letting houses by the twelve months, with quarterly collections. It was almost a complete failure. One or two complied, but the bulk had not the rent when I sent round, and said, "Oh, I forgot. We did not know you were going to collect quarterly," and they objected to it. I tried it for a twelve months, and reverted to the old system.

9789. Was that not partly because it was new. Do you think that you gave it a fair trial?—Well, I found it was a failure so far as I was concerned.

9790. You have never tried short lets anything shorter than a year?—No; when we let a house, we always let it for the twelve months without option for subletting. We don't allow them to sublet, but, as a rule, if any tenant wants to remove, we ask him to bring a new tenant, and we always allow them to go away.

9791. But the evidence we will get from you is not the result of experiment entered upon in Aberdeen. Has anybody tried letting the better class of workmen's dwellings except for a year?—I don't think so.

9792. From the landlord's point of view, is it your view that letting for less than a year is not desirable?—I don't think it is.

9793. And from the tenant's point of view, you think on the whole he would gain by it?—I think so. I don't think he would gain anything by taking the house for six months.

9794. Does it come to this, that cases which may arise of occasional inconvenience, from a man having to remove in the middle of a term, are so few, that the other drawbacks would more than compensate for any benefit there?—I think so. In my own case there is only, I should say, a very small percentage of the tenants who want to remove during the year.

9795. Then is it your view also that while this occasional hardship might be met, the tenant would have to face forehand rent?—Yes.

9796. Would he like that?—I don't think so. I don't think he would be able to do it. The ordinary working man, at any rate, would not be able.

9797. In cases of houses that are let monthly in Aberdeen of the small description, is there forehand rent?—Some of them pay forehand, that is if the tenant is not really considered good, but even in the houses that are let monthly, if the tenants are respectable, they get a month of their house before having to pay.

9798. Is there any system in Aberdeen, that we have heard complained of elsewhere, of cautioners being demanded?—Well, it is difficult to say. I don't think so.

9799. Do you ever employ that system yourself?—As a rule not. I make inquiry about the tenant and take steps accordingly. We always make inquiries, and never let a house without asking of their former landlord what sort of tenants they are, and what sort of houses they keep.

9800. But suppose the law of hypothec still remained, would not that be sufficient without forehand rent?—I don't think so. A great number of tenants have not so much furniture as would pay rent supposing it was sold.

9801. What is your view on the question of hypothec on the whole, both as to the tenant's and landlord's advantage?—I think it is very good, to hold over the tenant's head, that you have this hypothec, but at the same time it is not very often exercised. In very few cases do I exercise it. More often we allow them to go and take their furniture with them rather than have any humbug with the furniture, because the selling of it does not pay the expense.

9802. Do you find that there are cases where the tenant does get an advantage from the fact of the landlord's hypothec, in the way of relaxation, being allowed to remain even although a little in arrears?—Oh yes, often.

9803. Your terms of payment are Whitsunday and Martinmas, aren't they?—Yes, or Martinmas and Whitsunday.

9804. What about the Martinmas term, isn't that a very difficult term for tenants?—Yes, we always find that is the worst term of the year to get our half-year's rent.

9805. Work is less, and more fuel is needed, and more clothing for children?—Yes, and during the last year or so

the building trade in Aberdeen has been very dull, and a great number of tradesmen have been out of work. From my own point of view, and from that of others, we have had to give a good deal of time for the tenants to pay the rent, and we do it, especially if they have been with us for a number of years.

9806. When the building trade is dull and men are out of work, have you not found many of them removing from Aberdeen?—Several of them.

9807. But to no large extent?—No, a number of them have gone out of town, and a number of them leave their wives and families in the houses.

9808. Having gone out of town?—To look for work in other towns or in the Colonies.

9809. Then is it the case that it does not necessarily follow that a man wants to remove his family though he wants to remove himself for a time?—No, if he is only removing temporarily from want of work, because some of the family may be employed in the town.

9810. What is done in Aberdeen suppose a man does want to remove his family between terms, and there is a clause against subletting, what is your experience?—My experience is, I always ask the tenant if he can get another tenant, and this man, if he wants to go out, looks out for another tenant and offers him some little advantage, agrees, say, to pay the year's taxes, and allows the new tenant in free of taxes, and if he comes we always allow the first tenant to remove.

9811. It has been suggested that the landlord does not care so long as he has the original tenant liable. I suppose a landlord likes to have his house occupied, not shut up?—Yes.

9812. He has an interest to assist the tenant in subletting?—Certainly, and tries to get the house let himself, but as a rule, when the house is sublet, I take the subtenant, and relieve the old tenant altogether.

9813. What do you charge for subletting?—Nothing.

9814. In other cases, have you known landlords accept of payment for cancelling the let?—That might be the case.

9815. How many cases within the last ten years have you known in your own practice where a man has had to pay a double rent, the rent of the house he took from you, and also of the other house he removed his family to? Have you had any such cases?—Very few.

9816. Give us any notion. How many tenants did you say you had?—300. I would say 1 or 2 per cent. at the outside.

9817. What percentage of removals have you in a year out of your 300 tenants?—About 10 per cent. Of course in that percentage of removals it is not removing out of my property altogether. They remove from one district to another and take a house from me.

9818. What percentage of removals between terms might you have last year?—Maybe 5 out of the 300.

9819. Now, as to the question of the termination of the tenancy, and notice of removal, were you at the meeting in 1891 that we heard about from Mr Meff?—I was.

9820. And it represented both house proprietors and tenants?—Yes, it was a public meeting.

9821. Had there been agitation for some time before that meeting on the subject?—There was.

9822. And was the meeting unanimous in thinking the date should be changed from February to 10th March?—Quite.

9823. Why has the thing broken down, is it the factors' fault or the tenants' fault?—Partly both, principally the factors'.

9824. Are you still of the same opinion as you were in 1891?—I am.

9825. Would the period of 10th March apply to rents of £5 and upwards?—Yes.

9826. Up to any rent?—Well, up to £40 or £50, say up to £25 at all events.

9827. Does your experience show that the thing cannot be effected by voluntary arrangement?—I don't think it can.

9828. We have been told the same history took place in Edinburgh?—Yes.

9829. They thought it advisable, and then broke down?—My experience is that tenants don't want to settle for their house until a certain time before the term, in case their work may fail them. Giving them to 10th March would be abundant time to ask them to say definitely.

9830. The present system really makes a sixteen months' tenancy instead of twelve?—Yes, and we find, as a rule, a great number of tenants won't bind themselves, say till 10th March, and if they are good tenants we just hold on.

9831. What would you propose?—I propose the 10th of March should be the legal term to ask them to say whether they are going to stay or not, and that any let up to that time would not be binding—that up to that time the tenant could resile from his bargain.

9832. Suppose, without going that length, the date for warning out were made later than 4th April?—Well, I think there is rather little time between 10th March and 4th April.

9833. What date would you make the date of warning out?—I don't see why it should not be 1st May, or about the end of April.

9834. Suppose the warning-out date were made 1st May, would that not almost automatically, without interfering with the other matter, produce the same result?—No, I don't think so.

9835. Is not part of the same difficulty due to the warning out being so early?—No. I think it was just that houses began to increase in Aberdeen faster than the demand, and factors began to try and get good tenants, and went back to the old system.

9836. What about the new houses that are ready between the terms?—They would be let whenever ready for occupancy.

9837. In regard to the question of monthly rates, we have heard from Mr Meff and Mr Munro: what view do you take about landlords paying the tenants' rates up to £16 in Aberdeen?—I think it would be a great mistake. I think it is a great mistake even from £5 down.

9838. Is there any other case in Aberdeen except the rates below £5, and the rates on short lets above that? What about water rates?—It is the same with water rates. The Town Council charge the water rates, but the poor rates and school rates the landlord is not responsible for at all.

9839. What about stair gas?—That is an arrangement between the landlords and the tenants in the houses.

9840. But the landlord pays it?—If it is a private meter the landlord pays it in the first place. In all newer houses we charge the tenants according to their own meters. Each tenant has a light, and the tenants arrange that one tenant shall light it one week and another another week.

9841. So that the Corporation in that case can force the landlord to pay stair gas?—Yes, if the meter is in the landlord's name. In all my 300 houses I have only two houses where I pay the stair gas as a landlord.

9842. Suppose you are wrong in thinking that the present system of making the landlord pay under £5 is a bad one. Suppose it is a good one, is there any reason why they should not pay above £5 up to £10?—It means a lot of trouble for the landlord.

7843. It would aggravate the difficulties?—What I have always found is that it is a very difficult thing to get the rates out of the tenant.

9844. Under £5?—Yes, and even under lets for a shorter period than a year, you will find it a great difficulty to get tenants to believe that the landlord is not taking an undue advantage of him when he asks for rates.

9845. That would be cured if it were universal?—I suppose it would.

9846 To some extent?—Yes.

9847. What about the abatement of 25 per cent under £5?—I don't think it pays the landlord.

9848. How much would you say?—Because it is a very, very small rent, not only do you lose the rates, but the rent too, and you have to pay rates to the Town Council when you don't get it yourself.

9849. Of course, with the higher rents along with the better class, you would not have the same risk?—No.

9850. Suppose that, contrary to your view, the landlords were made to pay their rates between £5 and £16 in Aberdeen, what do you say of the proposed allowance in Mr Cross's Bill, which comes to 7½ per cent. and 5 per cent.?—I think it is very fair so far as the allowances are concerned.

9851. What do you understand that covers? If the allowance is intended to cover cost of collection and loss, that is one thing; but if also to cover unlets, that is another thing. Are you assuming that to cover all three?—No, not unlets.

9852. In any system of allowance, do you think unlets should be separately dealt with by the landlord showing the town that the thing was unlet and nothing charged?—I do. I think it is very unfair, the landlords having to pay at the present time landlord's taxes on unlet houses.

9853. In what case have they to do that?—In every case. For instance, if I have £100 of unlets during the year, I have to pay landlord's taxes on all that £100, although the houses are standing vacant.

9854. There is no case where the landlord has to pay tenants' taxes when deducting unlets?—No, you have no tenants' taxes to pay on unlets.

9855. Do you see why you should do it where he has to pay his own?—I think it is an injustice.

9856. I suppose there is, too, that, as far as policing goes, for instance, his unlet does get the advantage?—Certainly.

9857. Might there not be a distinction made in the rates, as to policing, for instance? He might fairly have to pay that, but not some of the others on unlets?—Yes,

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there is not the slightest doubt he gets the benefit of policing.

9858. What about the effect this suggested compounding would have, debarring the poor class of tenants from getting relief?—At the present time all tenants who pay £5 and under get no relief from their rates. The landlord charges them, and he has to pay the rates himself to the town, and if it was raised to £10 there would be no relief granted to needy persons under £10.

9859. What is your experience as owner about the effect of this relief? Is it abused?—In some respects it is.

9860. Tell us your view about it.—My impression is that the parties who are most in want of relief are the parties who are paying the smallest rents, and the higher the rent the less are they in need of relief.

9861. And, in addition, it is above £5 that men are most ready to make application?—I think so.

9862. Suppose that, by some method or another, the rates were collected either by the rating authority or through the landlord more frequently than at present. I suppose a number of those people who are not able to pay one rate in a lump sum could pay it periodically well enough?—They might. Of course it would always take more to collect, and in very small sums the collection of it means a good deal.

9863. In addition, what do you say to the period when rates are collected at the present moment: is that a good time to get rates?—Of course the rates are due on 11th November, but, as a matter of fact, they are not obtained until after the New Year. They are legally due on the 11th November, but there is nothing said to the tenant, nor is any action taken against the tenant, although they are a little later in paying them. Of course when houses are let from year to year, 11th November is the middle of the time, I suppose the best time for collection of them, because the Town Council require a certain time to get out their notices, and it gives them time to allow themselves a little time, as it does the landlord, supposing he is not able to pay the whole amount at the time.

9864. I suppose tenants are very ready to make complaints if they have to pay rates in one sum? Not as a rule; I don't think so. My experience is, no.

9865. Equally in regard to long lets, have you yourself had complaints from tenants about the disadvantages of long lets?—Not as a rule, except, for instance, from parties coming in from the country. They want to work temporarily in the town and only to get a house temporarily. Whenever they get a chance they want to go back to the country. An ordinary workman who works in the town has no objection.

9866. Have you ever had a case of one of your tenants under a yearly let coming to you and saying, "I would like to change the monthly to a quarterly"?—Never.

9867. If such a desire had existed, would you expect to have it expressed to you?—I think so. I have had a tenant coming to me and saying, "I am going to work in a different part of the town, could you give me a change of house," and if I could give it to him, if he was a good tenant in that district, I would do it.

9868. If he said that notwithstanding the increased facilities for travelling from one part of the town to another?—Of course it means money to him for tramway fares.

9869. Have your facilities increased in Aberdeen?—Yes, tramways go all through the city.

9870. And is there no system of trains used by working people from one part of the town to another?—No. There is a system of workmen's trains to Donside, but that is without the boundary.

9871. Is that a different thing?—Yes. The mills on Donside employ hundreds of men and women.

9872. Do they stay in Aberdeen?—A number of them do. They go out to the paper mills.

9873. For what reason do they continue to reside in Aberdeen?—Well, they are mostly say girls, working in these mills, and their parents are in Aberdeen, and if the parents are in Aberdeen, sometimes they reside in Aberdeen because some of the family may be working in the town.

9874. What about the charge for the tramway from any of the big works to working people's houses?—No less than a penny as a rule. There are some halfpenny fares, but a penny is the usual fare.

9875. Do you know of any reason to think that the conditions of work are different, say in Glasgow, from Aberdeen? Is there a more shifting population or anything else of that kind?—Well, I think our works are steadier, and our workmen are steadier in Aberdeen, so far as there is not so much shifting of workmen as there is in Glasgow.

9876. Suppose a case where a man wants to change his family residence between terms, you don't think that would be so frequent in Aberdeen as in Glasgow?—No, I don't.

9877. You see, the limit suggested in Aberdeen is £16, as against £20 in Glasgow. Would our rents in Aberdeen compare with a place like Glasgow?—A good deal cheaper, I should think; 15 to 20 per cent. cheaper in Aberdeen upon the same class of house. I think the differentiation is a fair one. If Glasgow is £20, I think it is a fair thing to say £16 for Aberdeen.

9878. It is £15 under the 1905 Bill?—£16.

9879. It is £16 under the 1906 Bill?—Yes.

9880. So you say £16 is a fair limit for the ordinary working man's house?—I think it is over it. I would say £12 in Aberdeen is a fair limit.

9881. Cases above that being perhaps those of men in a position of foreman or with wage-earning children?—Yes, the ordinary working man does not pay more than £12 unless he has some of the family bringing in a wage.

9882. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Do you require to resort to ejection often?—Very seldom. I have never been at the Burgh Court.

9883. Are you in favour of exemption on the ground of poverty applying to rents below £5 as well as above?—I am.

9884. You told us that tenants hang back for about a month rather than take a house, in case they may have to leave and follow their employment. Would that not rather point to some disadvantage attending the taking of a house for twelve months?—No, I don't think so, because when we ask them on 2nd February to take the house they don't know where their work is going to be at Whitsunday, and they want to hang on as near as possible.

9885. At the risk of having to follow their employment about?—My experience of tenants is that they will rather be at that disadvantage than flit. They will rather walk and be at a considerable disadvantage than shift from the house, unless it is going to be a permanent change of work.

9886. Above £5 there are no rates charged on empty property, is there?—Yes.

9887. Owners' rates?—Yes.

9888. Not tenants'?—No, there is no tenants' rates charged on empty houses.

9889. Supposing under £5 the house is occupied when the Assessment Roll is made up, and the tenant leaves between the terms, have you any claim for abatement?—No

9890. In short lets, assuming that the tenant left between terms, between May and May, would that be an additional loss to the property?—It is risky, but I would not say it would be a great loss, because you could always find plenty of tenants for these monthly houses.

9891. You would not be entitled to recover from the successor of the tenant?—Certainly not, that is the loss to the landlord.

9892. In dealing with Mr Cross's Bill, you think that reasonable enough?—Yes.

9893. You do not take into account the risk of loss through short lets becoming prevalent, and that loss therefore increasing?—Well, as I say in respect to those monthly tenants, I have no personal experience of monthly tenants myself, but as City Architect I know there is a factor employed by the Town Council, and I have to look after the properties, and he tells me he found no difficulty.

9894. (*Mr Howden.*) You told us, I think, that there were between 1 and 2 per cent. of removals between terms?—Yes.

9895. And also that where a man got a sub-tenant you usually accepted him?—Yes.

9896. Where the tenant does not get a sub-tenant, what is your experience?—We hold him to his bargain.

9897. Do you find in Aberdeen there is any particular rush before the May term?—To get the houses ready, as a rule there is.

9898. Followed by a corresponding slackness afterwards?—Yes, that has occurred in Aberdeen for three or four years.

9899. Did it occur at one time?—Yes, the working class house is hurried up for the May term.

9900. Has that not been the cause of some friction between employer and employee?—No, I have never heard of friction.

9901. In connection with the yearly bargain, for instance?—You mean between landlord and tenant?

9902. No, between employer and employee as to what date they should sign their agreement?—Yes, there have been some that have been employed as a rule on weekly wages.

9903. But between the Unions that make the bargain and the employers?—As I understand, they settle what their week's wages are going to be about March or in May.

9904. But it has been a cause of friction as to what date should be fixed?—From the men's point of view they thought that was the best time to fix the wages,

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because they thought the masters were in a difficulty, and from the masters' point of view, they would like the wages fixed after the May term.

9905. But it is directly in consequence of the removal term being 28th of May?—Well, no, it is just the spring work. It tends to it. Building going on as a rule has always to be got on with by Whitsunday, and the men have the advantage before that time.

9906. (*Mr Binnie.*) In reply to the Chairman, I think you said you did not think the abatement of 25 per cent. on rates of houses under £5 paid?—No, if you got all the money it would pay, but you don't. Those monthly tenants are the worst class of payers.

9907. Then you said, I think, that the rates under Mr Cross's Bill, you thought, were fair?—Yes.

9908. What makes the very great difference between 25 per cent. under £5, which does not pay, and 7½ per cent. on rents from £4 to £7, which you say would pay?—The 25 per cent. is quite sufficient when you get it, but when you don't get it! This 7½ per cent. would be quite sufficient if you got it all.

9909. But you have to run the risk of that, and you were asked that particularly?—If you run the risk, as I say, 25 per cent. does not pay, and I am sure the landlords would rather have nothing to do with the rates at all than have only 25 per cent.

9910. But I wish to know why you said 25 per cent. under £5 does not pay, and 7½ per cent. from £4 to £7 would pay?—Because from £4 to £7, I would say £5, if it were £4 to £5, 7½ per cent. is far too small; but when you make the average £4 to £7, the number between £5 and £7 is very considerable, and if you were to get 7½ per cent. of abatement on all the rates on property from £4 to £7, I think it would be fair enough, but if you only get 7½ per cent. on £5 and under, I think that would not be sufficient.

9911. But do you think that 7½ per cent. on rents from £4 to £7 is sufficient to pay the cost of collection and the risk that the landlord would run of loss?—As I understand, this clause is that all rates are going to be payable by the landlord instead of the tenant, and therefore, when you have that payable, say monthly, or some such term, you would not have so much risk of losing the rates, and I think 7½ per cent. is a fair enough deduction for the landlord for his trouble in collecting. We run the risk of losing some of our rates, and of losing our rents, which we sometimes do, and on the broad principle I think 7½ per cent. is a fair enough abatement.

9912. What factorage does the landlord pay to a factor for annual lets from £4 to £7?—In my own case I keep a factor permanently.

9913. But in the ordinary case, where people have so large property, what percentage would they pay?—I think it is 5 per cent.

9914. So that you think 2½ per cent. would be sufficient to cover the risk of loss on rates?—Yes, if they have to be collected by the landlord. The only thing is, my impression is that if the rates are going to be put on the landlord to keep themselves right, they will make the rent sufficient to allow them for any loss.

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9915. That is just his making the tenant pay extra in another way?—I think that would come if the landlord is to pay the rates.

9916. Then you think the allowance given to him is not sufficient?—It just depends on the class of property and the class of tenant.

9917. (*Chairman*)—You think to cover the chance of its not being sufficient, he would put on something extra?—I do.

9918. What proportion of the police rate does the landlord pay in Aberdeen?—One-third.

9919. Of the police rate proper?—Just for policing purposes, you mean?

9920. Yes?—Well, it is not detailed when they send out the taxes now. They put on the whole rate of 1s. on owners, the whole city rate. That includes all the owner's rates and does not detail how much is for policing alone in Aberdeen; on occupiers it is 2s. 3½d.

9921. Perhaps you will not be able to answer this question, but I would like to ask it. Have you ever considered what proportion of the policing of the town is occasioned by the preservation of peace and what by the protection of property?—My impression is that the policing for the protection of property itself is a very infinitesimal part.

9922. Have you ever considered what proportion?—No, I could not say the proportion.

9923. Then, in regard to the relief of rates, you think it is abused?—Yes, in certain cases.

9924. Is it the case in Aberdeen, as in other places, that shortly before the elections, when a man stands, a number apply to him for certificates?—Yes, I myself was a member of the Town Council for six years, and I have known cases where relief was granted when it ought not to have been, and sometimes where it ought to have been granted, they have not had sufficient power or pressure brought to bear, and it was not granted.

9925. And we are told that relief is given just about election times?—Well, no, not in Aberdeen.

9926. When is it given?—I think about the month of March; the election time is about November. They are all gone very carefully over by the Committee, but, as Treasurer Meff stated, members for the ward are always present when the notices of that ward are being gone over, and of course it is a natural thing that the member should try and get as many reliefs as possible in his own ward, so as to try to keep in with the electors. That would be all right if no relief should be given over a certain rental.

9927. But if a widow has taken her house to let it to lodgers and has had no lodgers for six or twelve months, would that not be a case of relief?—Well, it may be, but she would not keep her house long if she had no lodgers. They would not go on year by year, and any person able to pay say a £10 rent should have to pay the taxes.

Provost John Taylor.

Provost John Taylor, Clydebank, called and examined.

Provost John Taylor.

9928. (*Chairman.*) You appear here with Councillor R. Davidson on behalf of the Town Council of Clydebank?—Yes, I have been sent here.

9929. We know that Clydebank is down the river from Glasgow, and has had a remarkable increase of population within recent years?—Yes. We have grown from 5000 in 1880 to 38,000 at the present time.

9930. The industries are shipbuilding, Singer's works, and certain iron works?—Yes, the two largest shipbuilding yards in Great Britain, Brown's and Beardmore's, and Singer's Sewing Machine Factory are included.

9931. You have in the burgh at the present time altogether how many dwelling houses?—I have the details here.

9932. Are there 1340 one-roomed houses, 5079 two-roomed houses, 688 three-roomed houses, 130 four-roomed houses, 86 five-roomed houses, and 73 six-roomed houses and over?—Yes.

9933. In addition to the resident population, I think you have a large number of men who travel daily?—About 10,000 men travel to Glasgow and the Vale of Leven out of Clydebank every day.

9934. What do they pay by tram and by train?—They pay 1s. a week by train and much more by tram. It costs them 3d. to go to Glasgow by tram each way.

9935. Why do they not move to Clydebank?—One reason was the want of houses for a time, and another reason was that there was no employment for families, only for males, and a number of men had come from Glasgow, and had their associations there, and did not care about breaking off these associations.

9935*a*. Do you expect these cases will continue in the future, as in the past, or will they gradually come to reside more in Clydebank?—Yes.

9936. But always with certain numbers leaving for Glasgow for the reasons mentioned?—Yes.

9937. In Clydebank Town Council the question of Mr Cross's House-letting Bill has been considered, and carefully considered?—That is so.

9938. The population of Clydebank, of course, with few exceptions, is of the working class?—Almost entirely.

9939. You have no idle villa population at all?—No. We are not old enough for that.

9940. I may take it that the Town Council represents the working classes of Clydebank?—Yes, a number of them are working men.

9941. And a number of others have been working men?—Yes.

9942. What is your own business?— Painter and picture decorator.

9943. And Mr Davidson?—Wine and spirit merchant; but Mr Davidson is also owner of a number of houses, and has factored these houses, and notwithstanding that he is in favour of this Bill of Mr Cross's.

9944. The question came up on 11th April 1904, and each member was supplied with a copy of the Bill, and they resolved to consider it later. Then it was remitted to a committee, and the Finance Committee, who reported on 27th February 1905, unanimously agreed that the Bill, as presently drafted, altering its provisions to rents of £10 and under, would be of little or no service, and recommended that it should extend to counties, that the mini-

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mum rent should be £25, and the deduction allowed on assessments payable by owners in no case should exceed 1 per cent. In the end the Town Council itself, I see, resolved as follows:—"It was agreed to support the pro-'visions of the Bill, but to urge that it should be made 'applicable to all houses of £20 rental, and that the Bill 'should extend to the whole of Scotland, and not be con-'fined to burghs." That is the view that you have come here to represent on behalf of the Council?—That is so. The rental of £10 would be of no use whatever to Clydebank.

9945. Why not?—We have very few houses of £10 all over.

9946. Have you many of the working class who are labourers, or are your working people mostly skilled?—No. We have a good many labourers, but labourers get a fair rate of pay, and are able, at least with keeping lodgers, to keep larger houses.

9947. Have you found the working class in Clydebank are divided on this question of Mr Cross's Bill?—No. We have had no indication of anything but approval of it. We have had many deputations who have come to us asking the Town Council to support the Bill. When the candidates for Town Council honours appeared before their constituents, the question has been put to everyone, and they have all given an answer that they would support the Bill. Otherwise I have no doubt their seats would be very precarious.

9948. Have you had Parliamentary meetings too?—We have, of Parliamentary candidates, both Liberal and Conservative, at the last election, and that was a question put to both candidates, and both were in favour of a modification of the existing state of things.

9949. Do you find in Clydebank the shipbuilding employees more of a shifting population than say men in Singer's works?—Yes, naturally. One portion of the work may be very busy and another very quiet, and where ships have to be built in haste, iron-workers complete their work first, and then the wood-workers and the engineers. The iron-workers may be very busy, but when their portion is done, if there is no other ship to be built, they must necessarily go and find employment elsewhere, and it is a very frequent occurrence in Clydebank for a man to take a house, and in the middle of the year to find that he has to go perhaps to England or some other place to get employment.

9950. And do you find there are undoubtedly cases where a man wants to remove his family as well?—Yes, when anyone goes so far away, at least he always takes his family with him.

9951. Have you always found, as between a man in Singer's works and a man in Thomson's yard, say, any difference of opinion on the matter?—No, they are all at one, although it does not apply so widely to Singer's works. They don't have to shift so often. Their employment is of a more permanent kind; but notwithstanding that they are in favour of this Bill. Councillor Moir, who brought the matter up, was an employee in Singer's.

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9952. (*Mr Dobbie.*) I see your Council want the Bill to apply to the whole country?—The reason for that is that we are surrounded, at least we were surrounded before we got our extension, by a population of 10,000 people who worked in our burgh, but who lived in the immediate outskirts. We have now got that 10,000 within our own borders, but we have other places quite close in Renfrewshire, where the people work in Clydebank, and stay outwith. If it only apply to Clydebank, people coming from Renfrewshire into Clydebank would have difficulty in finding houses.

9953. If Aberdeen was dead against it, why should not you refuse home rule to Aberdeen?—We did not think so much of Aberdeen; it is too far away, although we have come here to-day, but our position was that we were more immediately concerned with the counties outside our own district.

9954. More like the larger areas than the present burghs. You think the Bill should apply to larger areas, so as to include the population?—Houses within at least ten miles of our burgh.

9955. But you don't think it would be necessary that the Bill to be operative in Clydebank should extend to every other burgh in Scotland?—Well, if it is optional for them to take it up or not, there is no reason why Aberdeen or any burgh should object to those who want it.

9956. So long as the optional clause is there?—Yes.

9957. (*Mr Howden.*) You mentioned that there were two of the largest shipbuilding yards in the world in your district?—That is so.

9958. You also told the Chairman that you could get from Glasgow down to Clydebank for 1s. a week?—Yes.

9959. Does that apply to Beardmore's work and Dalmuir?—No, they pay 6d. extra, 1s. 6d.

9960. You are perfectly certain £10 would not meet the difficulty so far as Clydebank is concerned?—Not at all. I think very few houses, with the exception of some new ones put up by Mr M'Alpine, are under the £10 limit.

9961. On the other hand, you think £25 would be the limit?—We have a number of houses, three rooms and kitchen, that they pay £25 for.

9962. (*Mr Binnie.*) Mr Cross suggests £20?—£20 is the last decision of the Town Council.

9963. Now what is your opinion on the schedule at the end of Mr Cross's Bill as to compounding. Do you think it is a fair scale? You have seen the scale, I suppose?—No, I have not seen the scale; we did not go into that so much. They did at one time, but not at the last discussion on the Bill.

Mr F. J. Scott.

Mr Francis John Scott, called and examined.

Mr F. J. Scott.

9964. (*Chairman.*) You are a solicitor in Aberdeen?—I am.

9965. You are President of the Aberdeen House Proprietors Association?—I am.

9966. And you are authorised to give evidence on their behalf?—That is so.

9967. The statement you supply to us has not, I understand, been submitted to the Association?—It has not, but I may say a public meeting was called under the auspices of the Association, at which I criticised Mr Cross's Bill, and, generally speaking, the views expressed in my *précis* are the same as the criticism I offered there, and the public meeting unanimously agreed to ask me to give evidence in opposition to the Bill.

9968. Your firm, I think, collects annually nearly £2000 of rent from about 200 tenants occupying houses with rents of from £7 to £12 per annum?—That is so.

9969. In Aberdeen, is it the case that there are few tenements containing flats or half-flats let at a rental exceeding £16 per annum?—There are very few.

9970. The greater portion are between £7 and £12?—Yes.

9971. Would you say the proportion of that class of houses are let by the year?—I have put it here at nine-tenths, but after what Mr Munro said to-day, I am inclined to think there is even a smaller proportion of them than one-tenth let other than by the year.

9972. You would put it that more than nine-tenths of the houses are let by the year?—That is so.

9973. What proportion of these houses have the rent paid half-yearly?—All of them, I should say.

9974. Do you agree with what has been said of the practical result of Mr Cross's Bill if made applicable to Aberdeen in reducing yearly lets to half-yearly lets?—That is so.

9975. Have you any experience of houses of the poorer class let by the month and week?—I have none.

9976. What is your own practice about a stamped missive?—I issue a missive when it is for the first year of tenancy. I produce a few copies of the missive which I issue.

9977. So that you have no experience yourself of anything but long lets?—That is so.

9978. Is that in a form that is practically universal?—I think this form is pretty nearly universal.

9979. In all cases, it is the custom to prohibit sub-letting?—It is so.

9980. We have been told about what took place in 1891 with your Association. Do you yourself consider the arrangement then proposed was a reasonable one?—I think so, and I think it was a pity it had to be gone back upon.

9981. What view do you take as to whether the legislature should interfere to secure that arrangement being observed?—Well, it might be objected to if you make it compulsory or illegal for a proprietor to let his house before 10th March. Some people might object to that, and say that their liberty was being interfered with, and unless you had some such remedy, proprietors would take tenants, and tenants offer to take their houses, and fall back on the old way.

9982. That arrangement failed in Aberdeen?—Yes.

9983. The same as in Edinburgh?—Yes.

9984. In both places it broke down?—That is so.

9985. And that is a case for the interference of the legislature?—I think so.

9986. It would not be a case for having no optional clause,

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would it? That would be a question affecting equally the whole country?—That is so. Of course I think the period between 10th March and the latest day for warning out is too short, and if you are to alter the date to, say, the 10th of March, an alteration would require to be made as to the forty days for warning out.

9987. How far would you go there? We heard the 1st of May suggested?—I think the 1st of May is a very suitable suggestion, or the 28th of April, making a clear month to the 28th of May.

9988. In regard to the present position of matters as far as the landlord not being able to get rid of a bad tenant is concerned, what do you say?—I think the ejection laws ought to be simplified in order that the landlord could turn out a bad tenant on, say, five days' notice on a complaint simply.

9989. Are you talking of the Sheriff Court?—Of the Sheriff Court; I have had no experience of the Burgh Court. It was only when I went into this matter that I discovered that there was a Burgh Court in Aberdeen for that purpose.

9990. In regard to the Sheriff Court, is it the case that you just first proceed to give an order of sequestration?—That is under the Small Debt Amendment Act.

9991. Is it not competent to issue at once a common law action for ejectment?—I think so, but if you bring your action before the period of removal has expired in order to make sure that the tenant will go out, that is an expense which the landlord must bear, the amount of which he cannot recover from the tenant.

9992. Is it considerable?—Very considerable.

9993. The method taken is under the Sheriff Court Act, 1838?—Yes.

9994. And how long after you begin is it before you get the tenant out, suppose he uses all the powers of the common law in his favour?—Under the summary complaint it might take a month.

9995. Would it come to this, that tenants would be in arrear for how long before you took your action, and he would sit there, and you would lose a month's rent, in addition to being put to the expense of the proceedings, because if you do not recover your rent, you cannot recover the expense of your proceedings? What would the expense of putting him out under that method come to?—From £1 to £2, I should say.

9996. That would only be if you had to employ the sheriff's officer to eject him?—Yes.

9997. What proportion is due to that?—I should think about one-half.

9998. It has been suggested that a landlord should be entitled to put a tenant out without going to the Court at all. Do you agree with that?—I think perhaps if the landlord took an affidavit or swore before a Justice of the Peace that a tenant was in arrear and that was taken to a sheriff clerk, a warrant on that ought to be given to eject the tenant.

9999. Would you not give the tenant an opportunity of stating defences, as, for instance, that the term had not expired?—Yes, I should say so.

10,000. Isn't it inevitable that there must be some opportunity for the tenant to state the defence, if he has one?—I think they should have an opportunity for so doing on a forty-eight hours' *induciæ*.

10,001. That would protect the rights of the tenants if acting *bona fide*?—I should think so.

10,002. We were told that in Glasgow, where the proceedings generally are in the Burgh Court, a tenant, merely by appearing, whether he has any defences or not, gets delay. How is that in Aberdeen?—In the Sheriff Court delay is given if a tenant says that there is illness in the house or that through some such reason he cannot leave. Perhaps the Court will allow him the matter of five days, and that is in an exceptional case.

10,003. Now, in these cases, does the sheriff apply his mind in each case?—There is really no proof led as to whether there is illness or not, and it is a frequent excuse.

10,004. We were told that, in Glasgow, a man by paying 6d. is entitled to lodge answers and then he need not make any excuse?—It is in the Burgh Court, and I have had no experience, but it is not so in the Sheriff Court here.

10,005. In regard to the present system, you have told us the process of ejection is too long and too expensive?—That is so.

10,006. Suppose a tenant is not in arrear but unsatisfactory in other respects, a disorderly neighbour, is there a satisfactory mode of getting rid of him?—There is not, and I think some procedure should be adopted analogous to the Small Debt Court procedure.

10,007. Under the Small Debt Act?—Yes.

10,008. Have you yourself found occasion to complain of the absence of such procedure?—I have.

10,009. What kind of tenants are referred to when one is talking of that?—On one occasion, unfortunately, I had let a house to an immoral tenant, and I had very great difficulty in getting that tenant put out. The Chief Constable said he could do nothing in the matter, though the party conducted the house in an immoral manner; she did not employ others to assist her, and in that case he could not interfere, and the thing was a perfect nuisance in the place.

10,010. The rent was regularly paid?—Yes.

10,011. But the neighbours complained?—Yes.

10,012. And you were unable to do anything in the matter?—I could do nothing.

10,013. At present, suppose you exercise your hypothec, the goods must be sold at the Market Cross?—Yes.

10,014. That is an old-fashioned provision and not a very proper one?—It is very objectionable, because my experience is that it usually costs more than the value of them.

10,015. What is your view of the value of a landlord's hypothec?—Well, I should say in about 75 per cent. of the cases it is of very little use in the smaller class houses.

10,016. We were told by Mr Rust that it had the advantage of holding something over their heads. Is there anything in that?—I don't think there is a great deal. Of course, if the landlord's right of hypothec were abolished, something ought to be given in its place in the way of getting rent in forehand. There would have to be some protection to the landlord.

10,017. If the hypothec were abolished, that would come as a matter of course?—I think it would.

10,018. In regard to the tenant's point of view, you know it is alleged by many working men that they are placed in circumstances of great difficulty frequently by the present system, because they cannot remove when they ought to be in a position to remove. What do you say to that, as far as Aberdeen is concerned?—I have had very few cases of tenants wishing to remove to another locality. If they say they have got employment elsewhere, they are asked to find another tenant, or perhaps to put an advertisement in the papers at their own expense, and if a suitable tenant is found, they are allowed to sub-let, and nothing is charged beyond the actual cost of the advertisement.

10,019. Is it your view that, whatever theoretical grievance there may be, there is no practical grievance?—None in Aberdeen.

10,020. Have you any notion of how many go from one industrial centre to another? How many have you yourself found?—One in about 500.

10,021. And have you yourself had any experience of this case—a man being compelled to pay double rent, the rent to you as his landlord and the rent in another place?—I have not come across a case of that kind.

10,022. Do you think Glasgow would fairly compare with Aberdeen, or has Glasgow, do you think, a more shifting population?—I think it might, but I cannot speak for Glasgow.

10,023. What about the increased means of locomotion and the facilities for getting from one place to another?—That is one reason why the objection alleged by the tenant does not apply, because we have in Aberdeen, at any rate, the electric car and the suburban railway, whereby tenants can easily get to their work either on Dee side or Don side at a cheap rate.

10,024. These facilities are going on improving and increasing?—They are.

10,025. So that, if there has been any grievance in the past, it has not got worse but diminished?—Yes.

10,026. Do you find that working people show a preference for a particular locality in the city?—I do.

10,027. Do you find that very often the working men's houses are really the centre for the different wage-earners in the family?—That is often the case, particularly where there are different wage-earners.

10,028. In regard to subletting, suppose you sublet, what do you charge?—Nothing.

10,029. I understand in Aberdeen there are very few regular factors, that the factoring is mostly done by law agents?—That is so.

10,030. Is it the ordinary practice not to charge in such cases?—I believe it is.

10,031. And I suppose you agree with what we were told that it is the landlord's interest to get a sublet?—It is not good for a house to stand empty, and if he gets a subtenant, the chances are that the tenant will stay on for the next year.

10,032. What do you say to the inconvenience to people removing, from all the removals taking place in the same day of the year, compared with the English system?—I do not think there is any real grievance there, because my experience is that the removals don't all take place in the one day, but that the tenants arrange amongst themselves. They find out when the tenant in the house which they have taken is removing, and then arrange amongst themselves for getting possession before the term day.

10,033. We have been told that there is this substantial grievance, that the rates for removing come very much higher. What about Aberdeen?—I have no knowledge of the rates being higher.

10,034. Have you any knowledge of this, that the rates for getting anything done in the way of painting and papering, and so on, are higher?—I have some experience of that, and I don't find it higher. I find the painters charge the same rate at Whitsunday as at any other time.

10,035. It is said you might have to bribe the painter to go on with the work at once?—I have never had to do that.

10,036. (*Mr Howden.*) Is it not left to the tenant to do that?—Occasionally the tenant has to wait for a week or two when the painter is busy.

10,037. (*Chairman.*) I suppose the convenience or inconvenience depends a good deal on the weather. If the removal day is a bad one and the furniture has to lie out for a time, it would certainly be inconvenient?—That is so, but there are very few cases of that kind in Aberdeen, because tenants arrange among themselves, and some of them remove a week or a fortnight before the term.

10,038. In regard to the remedies proposed, and particularly in the case of short lets, you know that there has been a good deal of agitation for this remedy?—I suppose there has been, in Glasgow.

10,039. If there is no grievance, how do you account for the agitation?—I don't think there has been any agitation for short lets in Aberdeen. There has been in Glasgow, I understand.

10,040. Do you make that remark about Aberdeen looking to all the ordinary sources from which you would learn that there was a grievance?—As your lordship put it to-day to some of the witnesses, in municipal elections I don't know that candidates have ever been asked about this grievance, nor do I think that in Aberdeen in Parliamentary elections candidates have been heckled on the subject.

10,041. You think the effect would be serious for landlords?—It think it would be.

10,042. Without any corresponding benefit to tenants?—I think so, because it would destroy the value of the property. The number of changes would be greater, and the repairs account would be very much increased, I think.

10,043. What would be the effect of all that on the rent? Would the result be to leave rents as they are, or raise them?—I think to raise the rents materially.

10,044. Do you think the feeling in favour of short lets, so far as it assumes that rents won't be raised, is a wrong basis?—I think so, and I think that a tenant, if he only takes a house for a month or three months, won't take the same interest in the property as he otherwise would.

10,045. We have been told in some places that there is a certain social element in the matter as between long and short lets. Do you find that?—Yes.

10,046. Isn't it due to the fact that the short lets are all the poorest class of houses?—That may be the case.

10,047. That is to say, that would right itself in the course of time?—If there were only monthly lets there would be no distinction.

10,048. Did you take steps actually to ascertain in the case of certain properties what the tenants thought about this matter?—I did so. I selected two different blocks of properties in opposite parts of Aberdeen, and put the question to forty-eight tenants as to whether they were in favour of the present system being changed.

10,049. In the first place, tell us what the rents were?—From £9 to £12.

10,050. Did you select these just at random?—Yes.

10,051. What was the exact question put to them?—Just if they were in favour of the present system of yearly tenancy, or would they prefer a change to monthly.

10,052. Orally or in writing?—Orally.

10,053. What was the result?—Thirty-nine are in favour of yearly tenancies, and six decline to give any answer, and three, not that they are in favour of shorter tenancies, but would be prepared to give the monthly system a trial.

10,054. Have you discussed the matter with those forty-eight, or simply told them what the question was?—I simply instructed the assistant in my office who takes charge of the properties to put the question, not to discuss it in any way, to put the simple question and bring back his report, and this is his report.

10,055. As far as you know, none of them raised the important question of whether rents would be raised or not?—No, I have not known of them raising that question.

10,056. You think these people fairly represent the ordinary class of working men?—Yes. I may say that in both these properties they are very good working class people in the houses I took.

10,057. These would be the best kind of working men, not the shifting, improvident class?—That is so.

10,058. Would these generally be skilled men or labourers?—I should say skilled men.

10,059. Artisans?—Yes.

10,060. Does that seem, in your view, to point to the fact that the necessity for removal between terms does not bulk largely in their minds?—That is so. It was my impression before, and that confirmed it.

10,061. Are you assuming that short lets would mean more frequent removals, taking the year as a whole?—I think it would mean more frequent removals, but I don't know to a very large extent.

10,062. But suppose it did not mean more frequent removals, would not a great many objections to short lets disappear?—That is so.

10,063. A great many are based on the assumption, are they not, that short lets would lead to more frequent removals?—Yes, that is so.

10,064. And deterioration of the property, etc?—Yes. On the other hand, I think that if a tenant has taken his premises for twelve months, he is more likely to take an interest in the property than he would otherwise do.

10,065. What is your view on the important question of compounding? In the first place, do you think compounding of rates would necessarily follow?—I think it would.

10,066. Suppose it did, what do you say about it?—I think it is objectionable that the landlord should be made the tax-gatherer.

10,067. Why? He is the tax-gatherer just now under £5?—Well, I believe those who have experience of that rather object to it.

10,068. Of course you have not?—No.

10,069. Have you had an experience of the water rate collection?—The water rate in Aberdeen is collected along with the city assessments.

10,070. But from the landlord?—From the tenant.

10,071. What do you say to the suggestion about there being no hardship because Aberdeen does not need to adopt the Bill?—I think it very desirable that there should not be a difference in regard to letting in different parts of the country, and I think the same should apply to Aberdeen as to other places.

10,072. I see you say in your *précis* that this would introduce an inequality of treatment in circumstances precisely similar. Now, suppose in Glasgow—they have shifting population which Aberdeen has not—might there not be room for such a remedy in Glasgow, although not warranted in Aberdeen?—There might be.

10,073. Do you think it is very desirable to have a uniform system?—Yes.

10,074. Which would you rather have, suppose you were offered a choice?—In that case, I should say that I should have the option.

10,075. Do you go the length of objecting to the landlord paying up to £5?—I do. I think the tenant ought to be made to feel that he has some share in keeping the assessments low, and he will not have that unless he is made to pay direct—at least, not to the same extent.

10,076. What do you think has led to the landlord being made to pay up to £5?—I don't know what the reason is.

10,077. Does it appear to show that short lets are necessarily associated with compounding?—I should think that would very likely be the reason.

10,078. Under £5 of course are practically all short lets?—Yes, I understand so.

10,079. In what you have said about the law of hypothec, I understand that has not been considered by your Association?—No, it is entirely my own view.

10,080. But if the law of ejection was simplified, there is no reason why this law should remain?—No, as far as lets up to £25 are concerned.

10,081. (*Mr Howden.*) You talked about an immoral tenant, one you had some difficulty in getting rid of. If you had shorter tenancy you could have got rid of that tenant?—That would be so.

10,082. It would have that advantage at least?—It would have that advantage.

10,083. (*Mr Binnie.*) In regard to shortening the time for warning away, would it not do quite well if you gave a fortnight or three weeks in that case. The tenants know quite well whether they have got a real let of their own house or not, and warning away is simply a legal form very much?—That is so.

10,084. Would it not do a fortnight or three weeks before the actual removal term?—I think a fortnight rather too short.

10,085. Why?—If one has got a great many tenants to deal with, it is a great deal of work for one thing, and if there is any dispute to arise as to the warning away in the longer period of a month, the dispute might be adjusted by finding another house.

10,086. But if your ordinary letting term were a month earlier than the warning-away term, a tenant would gather

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in the course of that month whether he was to get the house or not?—I think he would probably, but there might be a risk, and I cammot see any particular advantage in making it fourteen days.

10,087. The advantage would be that you could bring the letting term much nearer the removal term. If you warned away say on 7th May, you might make the letting term begin on the 1st of April, that is a whole month and a week for letting?—Well, I think fourteen days is rather short. Thirty days is what my view is.

10,088. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) You said you attached great importance to having a uniform system all over Scotland?—Yes.

10,089. Is that on general grounds, or is there any inconvenience you foresee?—I think grievances are conceivable. From the lawyer's point of view one wants to know the law all over the country, and if there are different systems prevailing, it is very awkward. If a tenant comes from Glasgow to Aberdeen, it is desirable that the same rule should apply as applies in Glasgow or Edinburgh or elsewhere.

10,090. That is what I call general grounds. There is not any particular inconvenience you see?—I cannot suggest any.

10,091. (*Mr Esslemont.*) I take it that one of the chief grounds of your objection to the shorter lets is, that more frequent removals might take place?—That is one of the grounds.

10,092. With consequent deterioration of the property?—That is so.

10,093. But if you had satisfied yourself that more frequent removals would not take place, your objection would be to a great extent removed?—It would to a great extent.

10,094. Would it not be a convenience to wage-earners to pay rates and rents more frequently than at present in instalments?—It might be an advantage to pay quarterly to wage-earners.

10,095. Would not it be a real advantage to pay it monthly?—I believe in some cases it would.

10,096. Would not it be an advantage to the owner as well to have his money coming in month by month, or quarter by quarter, or half-yearly?—I think it would be an advantage.

10,097. It could not possibly be a disadvantage?—I don't see that it could.

10,098. House-owning is a business?—That is so.

10,099. And people in business want to get in the money as quickly as possible. They rather prefer a prompt to a deferred payment?—Yes.

10,100. Do you not think it is remarkable that house owners should object to a system which would enable them in the course of three months to have one-half of their obligations paid?—Yes, but if I collect my rent monthly, it is a monthly let.

10,101. We are not discussing the Bill. We are inquiring into the system of house letting generally, and we wish to consider the interests of the proprietor along with those of the tenant, but you don't see that it would impose no prejudice on the owner?—Nothing beyond the additional trouble of collecting the money.

10,102. But I have never heard of anyone in business complaining of the trouble in connection with the collection of money. I have always thought it was an advantage to have it paid as quickly as possible?—Yes, I believe that is so.

10,103. Speaking as a business man, I would much prefer to have a settlement with my customers every month than one every six months?—As I have said, I don't see any objection to that if I am not compelled to let my house by the month.

10,104. You are not compelled?—If this Bill passes I would be.

10,105. (*Mr Dobbie.*) In the two tenements in which you took a plebiscite, were the tenants yearly tenants?—All yearly tenants.

10,106. Then, if the Bill of Mr Cross's became law, they would become half-yearly tenants?—That is so.

10,107. Not monthly?—No, because they pay the rent half-yearly.

10,108. The question put was as between one month and twelve months, and you did not put it to them as whether they would have a six-monthly let as against a twelve-monthly?—No, I did not.

10,109. Why do you think, if this change were made, it would result in more frequent removals?—Well, some people are very fond of changing. I believe if tenants were not asked at 10th March whether they intended to stay or not, they would simply go on if the matter of change was not brought before them. I believe there is a good deal in that. If you continually suggest change to a man he will probably take advantage of the suggestion, but if not, he will not think of it.

10,110. You would not rather put it that, if the Bill results in more frequent changes, the absence of the Bill would keep people where they would rather not be?—I do not think so. If there is any real need for a change, they will soon get it.

10,111. Is there any suggestion as to practical remedy for dilatoriness in regard to ejections?—I think some procedure analogous to the Small Debt procedure should be introduced.

10,112. Over and above that, do you think there might be given to the Burgh Courts more drastic powers to deal with smaller houses?—I don't see any objection to that to meet the difficulty, or to the Sheriff Court.

10,113. In Glasgow, the great bulk of the ejections are in the Burgh Court?—Yes.

10,114. Then, with reference to short lets, I suppose the great objection landlords have to short lets is that it would put upon them the duty of collecting rates?—That is the chief objection.

10,115. If there was reasonable allowance made to landlords in respect of the rates to be collected, that would largely get over that?—That would, if a reasonable allowance was made.

10,116. Have you seen the scale attached to the Bill?—I have.

10,117. What is your view in regard to the rates suggested?—I think it is far too small. We have it from those who have had experience in collecting rates that 25 per cent. is more like a reasonable allowance up to £5, and I should say 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. would be required, based on the experience of landlords dealing with rents under £5.

10,118. Would that 25 per cent. cover not only irrecoverables but also empties between terms?—No, I don't think so. It would cover irrecoverables, but not where the house was empty. It is conceivable that a man might have a whole tenement of property empty on which he would have to pay not only landlord's but tenant's taxes. I think it is a hardship at present to pay landlord's taxes on empty houses.

10,119. That is based on the present exemption on the ground of poverty being continued?—Yes.

10,120. (*Chairman.*) Suppose an optional clause were introduced, and the adoption of the Act were made optional to the various authorities, do you think it would be reasonable that there should be provision for a revision of it within a certain number of years?—I think so, because, as I understand the Bill, it is simply put to the sheriff to confirm it, and I cannot see the force of doing that, because the sheriff, according to the Bill, has simply got to confirm whatever is passed, and has got no discretion in the matter whatever.

10,121. Do you remember in any of the other Acts, where power is given to adopt or not, if there is a provision for periodic revision within so many years?—I cannot say.

10,122. I have an idea there is in some of them, but I am not sure about that?—I really cannot say.

Mr A. M. Williamson and Mr A. Ledingham.

Mr A. M. Williamson and Mr Alexander Ledingham, called and examined.

10,123. (*Chairman to Mr Williamson.*) You are an advocate in Aberdeen, and have been requested by the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen to give evidence here?—Yes.

10,124. You have been in practice for twenty-six years?—Yes.

10,125. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) You are Vice-President of the Society of Solicitors in Aberdeen, and have been asked by the Committee of that Society to give evidence?—Yes.

10,126. (*To Mr Williamson.*) May I take it that in Aberdeen, as contrasted with Edinburgh and Glasgow, the factoring is generally done either by owners or law agents?—Yes. Occasionally the law agents may employ others, such as retired tradesmen, to do the actual letting and collecting of rents; but these people account to the lawyers for all their intromissions.

10,127. Do you yourself do any factoring?—There is a little done in our office.

10,128. You are not a property owner?—No.

10,129. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) You have had a long experience in connection with the management of houses, and you are Secretary of a Property Association, which owns property with a rental of over £5000?—Yes, I have had experience of over thirty years.

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10,130. And factor for several clients?—Yes, and I have been asked to represent the views of one of the largest proprietors in Aberdeen, who did not want to trouble you with evidence. His rental altogether is over £4000.

10,131. In what class of houses?—He has houses of a less rental than £16, going down to £4 of rent. His aggregate yearly rental from such houses is £815.

10,132. (*To Mr Williamson.*) We heard about the houses in Aberdeen above £5 being generally let by the year, with half-yearly payments?—Not under £5.

10,133. Over £5?—Yes.

10,134. And is it the case, as we have heard, that forehand rents are practically unknown?—That is so.

10,135. And quarterly payments are rare?—Yes.

10,136. Now, in other places, quarterly payments seem to be very common for houses of that kind. Is there anything in the circumstances of Aberdeen to explain the difference?—I don't know anything exceptional in the circumstances of Aberdeen, but it is a fact that quarterly payments of dwelling houses over £5 are practically unknown.

10,137. We were told by Mr Rust that he had tried it, and had not found it a success. People did not like it. Do you know of its having been tried?—We have not tried it.

10,138. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) Have you?—No.

10,139. (*To Mr Williamson.*) What do you say about the evidence we have heard to-day in the direction of thinking it desirable to go back to the old arrangement about the 10th of March for letting houses?—Well, I think it is certainly better to have a later date than Candlemas, and I don't think the 10th of March is at all too late in the season.

10,140. Would you approve, at the same time, of altering the date of warning away to make it later?—I should certainly shorten the period between the warning away and the date of leaving.

10,141. To what extent?—Well, I think the removal term being 28th May, probably if warning were given before 1st May that would be satisfactory.

10,142. Do you think that can be carried out without statutory enactments?—No, it would require that, I understand.

10,143. It has been tried by voluntary arrangement and has broken down?—I am not aware that it has been tried.

10,144. The shortening of the period has been tried?—Oh yes.

10,145. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do you say on that point?—If you retain the forty days' notice between the 28th of May and the date of warning out, the letting period would be too short. The tenants must have a reasonable time to see about suitable houses. I see no objections to delaying the date of warning to the end of April or the beginning of May.

10,146. And in that case?—The evil, if there be an evil, would right itself, because the landlords and tenants have no interest to hasten one another in coming to a bargain, and the house-letting season would extend over March and April.

10,147. Is it your view that the legislature should only interfere to the extent of altering the warning-away date?—That is my view, and the other evil would right itself.

(*Mr Williamson.*) That is the view I meant to express also.

10,148. (*Chairman to Mr Williamson.*) Do you gentlemen think if that were altered any grievance that really does exist would be sufficiently met?—Yes.

10,149. Suppose, however, you consider a Bill like Mr Cross's Bill, do you think that the effect of it would be in any way to increase rents with short lets—in short, would mean increased rents?—That is what we have found. We have always found that a proprietor who puts his money in that class of property where there are short lets, looks for a considerably larger percentage on his investment.

10,150. Why?—Well, there is a good deal more tear and wear on the property, a good deal more expense in the collection of rents, and in the letting, and what is, I think, of still more importance, it is not such a class of property that is so favoured by lenders, and if one wants to borrow money on that class of property one has to pay a higher percentage for it, and they don't get the same ratio, such a proportionately large sum on the capital value.

10,151. But isn't that all fallacious, because you are not comparing like with like? The experience of short lets hitherto has been in relation to the poorest class of property. Suppose you are rather applying short lets to the best class of working men's properties, wouldn't all that disappear?—Not altogether. It is a great advantage to a lender to know that the rents are to come in at the same time as his half-yearly interest is due. He can take much more ready means to protect himself for his interest, if his security becomes inadequate, or if there is any reason to be apprehensive about getting payment of his interest. He has a whole half year's rents to fall back upon.

10,152. But suppose actual payment of rent is concerned, isn't it more natural for a working man to pay frequently when his wages come in?—It is a good deal what he is accustomed to.

10,153. Any change of the amount would produce dislocation at first, but one must look forward. In the long run, would short lets in the better class of property produce that?—It rather looks as if one had no confidence in the providence of the working man. Does it not depend on what our view is as to whether short lets would produce more frequent removals or not?

10,154. Perhaps, if not, the objection as to more repairs would disappear?—You could not reduce the extra cost of factoring the property.

10,155. That would remain, that is the cost of collection, but is not the factor's clerk about the property on other business, would it add substantially to the cost of collection?—It would be very considerably more. If you collect twelve times a year instead of once, the expense is very much greater, because the time occupied in doing it is very much greater.

10,156. That, I think, would remain. Do you know of anything else that would remain. I am not talking of compounding, but, apart from that, would there be anything except the increased cost of collection to heighten rents?—There is what I mentioned. I believe the man who had the monthly tenants would have to pay more for his money if he were dependent upon borrowing.

10,157. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do you say on that very important question whether or not short lets on the better class of property would mean an increase of rent to the tenants?—I think short lets would be irksome to the landlord and in the end lead to increased rents. Probably for a time the bulk of tenants would still go and come at the May term, but if a landlord were left at the end of an intermediate quarter without a tenant, he would have more difficulty. He would have no full market. The full market would be for the May term. These would be half terms, and he might be a long time without finding a successor. Then he would have the increased cost of collection, more voluminous accounts, and collectors, more frequent calls, and the cashier would have a bigger account to keep.

10,158. That would be substantial?—I think so.

10,159. But I suppose one of the greatest reasons why you apprehend an increased rent is in connection with what we are coming to, namely, that compounding must necessarily follow?—That is also a serious matter. He must guarantee all the tenants' taxes, for which he must be compensated.

10,160. Is it your view that the necessity for compounding following on short lets is a very important thing to be kept in view by this Commission?—I don't see how you can have short lets without compounding. The present system of taxing once a year is because the Valuation Roll is made up once a year. If the Valuation Roll is made up once a quarter, there could be quarterly collection of taxes. If the Valuation Roll is to be made up only once a year, and if the landlord is to be burdened with his tenants' taxes, it means that he guarantees not only payment of his tenants' taxes, but has to pay out of his own pocket the tenants' taxes at any part of the year during which the house may be vacant.

10,161. But would you not comtemplate that, along with compounding, the landlord should get free from payment of rates so far as his house is unoccupied?—It would involve a great deal of expense and a clumsy system. The landlord would have to ask back part of his taxes on the ground of empties.

10,162. You have no experience of how it is done in England?—They have quarterly collections there. I have no experience.

10,163. From proprietors?—Of rates.

10,164. From proprietors?—Both proprietors and tenants.

10,165. Well, we are to hear about the English system afterwards, but do you agree that if it could be done, it would be in the interests of everybody that rates should be paid more often than once a year?—I do not see any benefit.

10,166. Don't you think that if a working man has to pay out at once a lump sum, perhaps £2 or £3, it is a serious thing?—To a provident man that is a good thing. He puts part of his weekly earnings into a Savings Bank, and a great many of the Aberdeen working men are in the Co-operative Society, and receive a dividend once in the year. They have that in hand to pay their taxes, and I believe many of them rely on that to pay both rent and taxes.

10,167. That is perfectly true about the ideal working man, and there are many; but take the most, or at least a

very large number, who live from day to day and from hand to mouth, isn't it the fact that a great deal of money would be got, and would be paid, which at present goes in other directions, just because it is not collected frequently?—I think undoubtedly so, but if a working man pays rates weekly or monthly, he thereby causes a great deal more trouble to the landlord, and assuredly will have to pay for it in the shape of higher rent.

10,168. You think that is nigh certain?—I think so.

10,169. You have not only the increased cost of collection, and the other matters you have already referred to but you would have the increased rent in connection with compounding?—That is my view.

10,170. (*To Mr Williamson.*) Do you agree with that?—Entirely.

10,171. And you think these elements would all go not only to affect the borrowing and lending on house property, but also the erection of house property for the labouring classes?—I think so. One does not readily go in for an undertaking if he foresees much trouble in connection with it, and unless he has a reasonable expectation of a remunerative investment.

10,172. It is a business like anything else?—No doubt, but it is to a large extent taken up by people who are engaged in other occupations for the employment of part of their savings.

10,173. Suppose that the landlord in connection with compounding gets a sufficient allowance, do all your objections disappear?—You refer to a sufficiently high rent.

10,174. No, sufficient deduction from the occupier's rate he pays. It is proposed to give him a certain amount by way of percentage by reduction?—But he would require a very much larger deduction than is proposed.

10,175. Suppose he gets a sufficiently large deduction, would all your objections disappear?—Well, no, there are a large number of tenants who are more or less in poor circumstances, and who on application are exempted by the public authorities from payment of rates. It would be impossible to leave it to an individual landlord to discriminate as to who were the deserving applicants and who were not.

10,176. In your experience, is that power to remit fairly applied?—I know nothing to the contrary. I may say it is applied much more extensively than I had any idea of when I made some inquiry at the Town Hall and the Parish Council offices in connection with this inquiry. I had no idea until then that relief was granted to any such large amount.

10,177. Isn't it granted to a considerable number who are not the most deserving class?—No doubt that must be to a great extent with so many applicants. I understand there are about 1900 who get exemption from city rates, and something like 1100 who get exemption from parish rates; these being over and above recipients of outdoor relief who, as a matter of course, are exempted.

10,178. Have you any notion how many get exemptions compared with the number that apply?—I cannot tell that.

10,179. Do you see any reason why, if that is the relief system, it should not be extended to the poorest of all—those under £5 rents who get no exemption whatever?—I see no reason.

10,180. Do you believe, in regard to what we heard from Mr Scott about the circumstances of Aberdeen, the nature of the employment in it, and the facilities for getting from one part to another, that these relieve the alleged grievances which are said to exist in a place like Glasgow?—Yes, I think I may fairly say that in Aberdeen there is no real hardship caused to anyone through having to change the place of his work within the town or the suburbs.

10,181. Do you think the existence of a large amount of unlet property illustrates and proves that?—I don't very well see the connection between the two subjects.

10,182. Suppose, for instance, that there was a demand, as is said to exist in other places, for short lets in a good class of property, do you think that is consistent with the existence of so much unlet property?—Well, I think when there is so much unlet property, that those desirous of a shorter tenancy could easily secure it, because a landlord, if he has not let his house for a year about the ordinary letting period, with the prospect of it hanging on his hands for a twelvemonth, will much prefer to have it off his hands in monthly lets.

10,183. We have been told in Glasgow that that is not so, and that people won't let property that is usually let on yearly tenancy at a short let?—I think they must be luckier than we are here, and have their property more fully let on a yearly tenancy.

10,184. So it comes to this, if there was a big demand for short lets of the better class of working class property, that unlet property would meet it?—In the present state of the market, that demand would certainly be met.

10,185. And if it existed without that in your view, and Mr Ledingham's, we are bound to have heard of it?—Yes.

10,186. Have you seen any sign of it in the way of agitation such as one is generally able to take from the newspapers and ward meetings, etc.?—No, I have not seen the slightest sign of it. On the other hand, we have been told by several people who manage their own properties that they had spoken to some of their tenants about introducing more frequent collection of rents—it is not the change from the yearly tenancy but the more frequent collection of rents—but they got no encouragement.

10,187. Rates or rents?—Rents.

10,188. Have you any reason to think the views you have stated as existing in Aberdeen are different in places like Peterhead, Stonehaven? Have you heard of any agitation there?—I have never heard of any agitation, but it might exist without my knowing it.

10,189. The proceedings in places of that kind are reported in the Aberdeen papers: for instance, have you seen any indication in that way?—I do not recollect having observed any.

10,190. Would you expect that, suppose a Bill such as Mr Cross's were passed with an optional clause, it would not be adopted in Aberdeen?—I should say it ought not to be adopted; but whether it would or wouldn't is a different matter. I should apprehend that some one or two members of the Town Council would make it their business to get it adopted, and if they continually, in season and out of season, pressed the point on the other members of the Town Council, in the absence of anyone making it his business to prevent its being adopted, sooner or later they would probably find a majority and force it upon us.

10,191. Do you think, if there was an option that there would be an opportunity at periodic times for revision?—That would certainly to some extent lessen the evil consequences of its adoption.

10,192. Because your view is that, if it were adopted by a chance vote, it would be found not to be a benefit but a drawback?—That is my present impression.

10,193. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do you think, Mr Ledingham?—I would just apprehend that once it were adopted and applied to different towns, it would be found very difficult to alter the system.

10,194. And what do you say to the uniform system all over Scotland?—I think the system should be uniform, because there is a great deal of removing from one place to another. Take Aberdeen, we have beyond the city boundaries very large suburbs, both along the Dee and the Don, people who are employed in Aberdeen. Many of the people in these places are working in Aberdeen, and it would be very awkward to have different systems prevailing.

10,195. These are not within the burgh?—No.

10,196. (*To Mr Williamson.*) Do you think that the short let would lead to more removals on the whole than the present system?—It is difficult to say. I think at first we might find a good many tenants would remove at the first opportunity, going into a house and not giving it a fair trial for some small thing they considered detrimental, but if they were forced to give the house a fair trial, they might like it, and live there for years. After they had been for a certain time in the house, I don't think they would be so readily inclined to remove as they are under the present system.

10,197. Has not the present system this drawback, that it rather suggests removal to people by this annual missive being sent?—I don't know that there is much in that.

10,198. We have been told there is in Edinburgh and Glasgow what is called a house-hunting fever at Whitsunday. The ladies especially are all on the go?—With a certain class of people. We find those who are not the most desirable tenants are always on the out-look for a completely new house that they will get clean. We do find that.

10,199. Do you not think that owing to there being one removal term there is considerable inconvenience to the working classes and more expense?—No, I do not think here that the working classes pay more for removal at Whitsunday term than they would at any other period.

10,200. Your experience is the same as Mr. Scott's?—I was not here during the whole of his examination.

10,201. He said what we had here, in other places, about increased expense, did not apply?—I think so. We have large carting firms and good carters' plant here, and I don't think that applies.

10,202. What about tradesmen's charges?—I am not aware that anything more is charged than at other times.

10,203. And what about there being an over-pressure on the tradesmen, the builders, joiners, plasterers, etc.?—Doubtless a little pressure is put upon different tradesmen in connection with the finishing of buildings, but it is generally a blessing, because otherwise the buildings would take months before they are finished.

10,204. We have heard something about the law of

hypothec. Do you find any general complaint on the part of tenants?—I cannot say I have found complaints either on the part of the tenants or the landlords. I find no complaints with regard to the existence of the law of hypothec.

10,205. The complaints are rather on the part of the tradesmen?—Well, I don't think there are many complaints. They quite understand that that right exists to the landlord, and they can give credit or withhold it accordingly.

10,206. Do you propose any change in the law of hypothec?—No.

10,207. You would have things remain as they are?—Yes.

10,208. Suppose short lets were introduced?—Well, I think that if short lets were introduced, the tenant is not getting the benefit of the half year in which to pay his rent. The landlord would more than likely ask the rent to be pre-paid, and if that were done, there is no occasion for hypothec. But the existence of the landlord's right of hypothec undoubtedly enables him often to give a tenant help temporarily and allow him to tide over his difficulty.

10,209. But suppose short lets were introduced, the landlord, if he made the rent forehand, would have no occasion to use it?—Not the occasion that he has at present, but supposing a tenant just finds himself in a temporary difficulty, then I imagine he could not get the indulgence that he does at present from his landlord.

10,210. Have you anything to say on the desirability for more speedy and cheap ejectment?—Yes, I think it would be very desirable, if it were possible, to lessen both the expense and the time required.

10,211. But is it possible, looking to the humanarian elements that must enter into the question of the ejection of a family?—Well, of course that is difficult, because one must allow for reasonable precaution to avoid the infliction of hardship. Still, say the effects have been sold under sequestration, if there is not more than enough to meet the past due rent, the landlord has no hypothec for the current rent, and naturally he says to the tenant, "You must replenish this place or go." At present, he has to get the case brought into Court, and a report as to the result of the sale. Then *pro forma* a warrant is given for service on the tenant of a notice that the case will call in Court again, with the view of getting a warrant of ejection, if the rent had not in the meantime been paid. I would suggest that the officer, when he has sold and found that the furniture is exhausted, and the rent not fully met, or no provision for the current rent, might, without going back to the Court, intimate to the tenant that on a certain day the case will call again in Court.

10,212. Would that alter the period at present occupied considerably?—That would depend on the date that the Court sat. It might be the saving of a good few days, but it would be a certain saving of expense; but, seeing the tenant has not an opportunity of appearing in Court at this first calling, it does not seem to be necessary; it affords him no protection.

10,213. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do solicitors think about the law of hypothec?—They think it beneficial both to landlord and tenant, and they see no call to do anything.

10,214. Suppose short lets were introduced, how would that affect it?—It would be an experiment which we could hardly know the result of.

10,215. Suppose Mr Cross's Bill passed, would you expect the only result would be, as far as lets are concerned, to kill yearly tenancies, and make them all only half-yearly tenancies, or would the effect be to go further and produce quarterly or monthly tenancies for the better class of houses?—It might inconvenience both landlord and tenant, because the landlord might have difficulty in letting his house during an off season, and a tenant seeking a house during an off season might have too limited a choice.

10,216. But it would not necessarily produce monthly or quarterly tenancies? Would you expect it to do so?—There is no reason to expect that.

10,217. What do you say about the power of ejection?—The present proceedings are far too cumbrous and expensive, and a little ingenuity would enable the proceedings to be shortened.

10,218. In the Court?—The Sheriff Court; we don't know the Burgh Court.

10,219. We have heard of the Burgh Court being composed of over-compassionate magistrates?—The recourse has not been to the Burgh Court at all in Aberdeen.

10,220. You prefer to leave the matter in the hands of the Sheriff Courts?—Very much.

10,221. If a tenant has failed to pay rent, the landlord could have power to bring the contract to an end. He can do that just now?—No, you have first to apply for a warrant of sequestration.

10,222. But is that a necessary preliminary?—Yes, and then to sell, and it is only after you have sold that you can present a second application to the sheriff representing that there is not sufficient furniture to pay the rent. It might be made competent to the Court, when a tenant is in arrear, to grant all necessary powers to the landlord, on one application by him.

10,223. Do you think there would be no ground on the tenant's part to object to that?—I think not; he has not paid his rent, and has broken the contract.

10,224. (*To Mr Williamson.*) If there is to be compounding, have you anything to say about the rates in Mr Cross's Bill?—His Bill proposes, I think, to throw upon the landlord the burden of paying the whole rates, with the right of relief against the tenant, and in the receipt he gives his tenant, he has to specify how much is rent and how much is assessment.

10,225. I am not talking about that, I am talking about the schedule:—"Deductions to which the owner shall be entitled from assessments leviable on the occupier in respect of any dwelling houses situated in Aberdeen" are: over £4 and under £7, 7½ per cent.; £7 and under £10, 5 per cent.; £10 and not exceeding £16, 2½ per cent. Have you applied your mind to consider whether these are adequate or not?—With the class of tenants whose rates would be paid punctually and fully, these deductions might be fair, but they are not enough to make up for bad debts, and there is no provision for giving an exemption that a large proportion of impecunious tenants have been accustomed to.

10,226. Have you considered what would be necessary in place of these percentages to recover bad debts as well as cost of collection?—I have not gone into it, and I don't think anyone could guess it, because you would not let your house to any of these people who have been in use to obtain exemption. I do not see how these people who have been in use to obtain exemption, and who will necessarily look for it in the future, are to get houses at all.

10,227. Is it your view that these people who have been in use to obtain exemption would, if the exemption had not been granted, not have paid?—Many of them might pay. There might be a hardship in making some of them pay. I understand that some of them who pay the largest rents are lodging-house keepers, but perhaps on the representation that they have been unfortunate for a year, or had their rooms standing vacant, have had exemption. It is all very well to allow that out of the public purse, but the individual landlord would not give it, and he would simply not give houses to these tenants at all.

10,228. But you cannot suggest something to give in place of Mr Cross's percentages. You see under £5 the allowance is 25 per cent. You think they are inadequate if they are to cover more than the cost of collection?—Yes, and I don't think any discount could be specified to cover the loss on these people who have been accustomed to exemption.

10,229. It would really amount to this, that they would be deprived of exemption just as they are under £5.

10,230. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do you say?—I agree with Mr Williamson. Take a £5 rent. The taxes amount to £1, and the commission you get for collecting them and distinguishing on the receipt and reckoning with your client is 6d.

10,231. And losses?—Besides the risk of losses.

10,232. Have you any suggestion to make to percentages to replace Mr Cross's?—I have the utmost objection to having to collect tenant's rates at all. You might almost as well ask me to pay for his groceries.

10,233. In any case, you don't contemplate empties being covered, either partial or whole?—Quite.

10,234. Is it your view that you should get deduction for loss as well as any charge for collection?—It would be difficult to carry out that idea. It might be said that the landlord's pressure to obtain payment had not been sufficiently drastic, that those rates might have been recovered.

10,235. Have you anything to say about the present proposal in regard to lending money on building property?—That it might be more difficult to get a loan on property. The more trouble and difficulty you put on the landlord, the less he will be able to borrow.

10,236. Will all that go in any degree to increase the rents?—I think so.

10,237. The tenant pays in the end?—He does.

10,238. (*To Mr Williamson.*) I understand your view, gentlemen, is that while the present proposal would be clearly detrimental to the landlord, it would not be of any substantial advantage to the tenant?—My view is that it would rather be to the tenants a disadvantage, for the better class of tenants here prefer the security of tenure that the yearly tenancy gives them.

10,239. Apply your minds to the third person in this equation, the rating authority. Do you think, if they gave a proper allowance to the landlord and continued the exemptions of the poor, they would be any better in

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the end than they are now?—I do not see that they would be any better. They ought to be able to collect the rates quite as cheaply as any other one can do, and under existing legislation have a certain preference, and preferences in bankruptcy. In order to put the landlord on an even footing with him there, he would require to have the right of hypothec extended to cover not only the rent, but also the sum he had to pay for taxes.

10,240. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) What do you say about the position of the rating authorities? Do you think they would be the gainers in the end if a proper allowance were given by the authorities?—It depends on the allowance. They ought to collect as cheaply as the landlord.

10,241. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Ledingham.*) You have charge of properties bringing in a rental of £5000?—Yes.

10,242. And, if we assume that a change in the system of letting would not create more removals than existing at present, do you think the interests of the Property Association would in any way be prejudiced?—Even if there were to be no more removals of tenants, there would still be disadvantages.

10,243. You have not stated how many removals you have among your tenants, but let us assume that the number of removals in any one year remains normal; that a change of system does not create more frequent removals, but instead of taking place on any one day, they take place at different days during the year. Do you think that would prejudice the owners in any way?—I think the owners would not have the same facility in finding new tenants, because they would be trying in an off market.

10,244. But under the present system, if you miss a tenant, you have to wait till the next Whitsunday?—Unless you get an odd one.

10,245. Would not there be more odd ones?—Yes, but it would be less convenient. In off seasons, away from Whitsunday, the demand and the supply would both be irregular.

10,246. Don't you see that if tenants had an opportunity of leaving other property and coming into yours, you would have more chance of letting your un-let property during the remainder of the year?—It would be more troublesome.

10,247. If they did not increase in number?—If I had empty houses in off seasons I would have to advertise them. At present my advertising is confined to one recognised letting season. All the year round my assistants would require to be on the amble, as against two months at present.

10,248. But at Whitsunday, if you miss a tenant, you miss him till next Whitsunday?—There is a chance.

10,249. There would be more off chances?—We would be in a turmoil all the year round.

10,250. You would only distribute your wealth?—It is more easily done within two months than over twelve months.

10,251. I don't agree with you. I would rather have it distributed over twelve months?—Well, it is more convenient to have only one letting season in the year.

10,252. You would get a fuller market under this system?—No, you would have a broken market, at most seasons of the year.

10,253. You defend the existing system on the ground that it encourages thrift on the part of working people. Do you seriously contend that this monthly payment would encourage thrift?—In the case of good tenants it would.

10,254. In any case, is the system of credit likely to inculcate the virtue of thrift?—It teaches saving.

10,255. I understand the people who want the longest credit are the most improvident class?—If the tenants ask me to collect the rents every month instead of six months, I would do it, but they will have to pay more rent.

10,256. But wouldn't it be an advantage to you?—No, it would be very troublesome. I am content with my hypothec.

10,257. If you receive £2500 every half year, do you think it would be a positive inconvenience to receive half of that £2500 at the end of the first quarter?—It would be more troublesome.

10,258. How could it be an inconvenience?—More work, four collections in the year instead of two.

10,259. And would there be no compensations?—You would have the use of the money from the collectors, in each case, three months before you would have it otherwise.

10,260. As a business man, would you value that?—It would not come to a great deal. Tenants don't come to one's office on the term day and pay what they owe and go away. You have to send round and beat up for weeks before getting payment of rents.

10,261. Did you ever hear of a man who had a debtor owing him £12 who would say to him when he came at the end of January and said, "That is £1 of what I owe," and at the end of the second month said, "That is another £1,"—"I don't want it; it is a bother to me to take it?"—If he had security for his debt he would very likely say so.

10,262. The security is what?—The furniture.

10,263. (*To Mr Williamson.*) You say in your *précis* that if monthly lets are introduced, owners of property would find difficulty in borrowing to the same extent as they do at present on the security of these properties, and that the proprietor, paying a higher rate of interest, would require a higher rent to give him a fair return on his capital?—That is our present experience in dealing with houses that are let on monthly tenancies.

10,264. But isn't that due to the character of the house?—You would reduce all houses to that character.

10,265. I would not alter the character of the house, only the system of letting them. We have been told in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other places, that tenants who want houses on monthly or weekly or quarterly tenancies have to be content with the poorest class of property in these cities, and it is undoubtedly the case, is it not, that it is somewhat more difficult to borrow on the security of these houses than the security of more modern and better class properties?—Yes.

10,266. Isn't the real difficulty in regard to the bond, the character of the property?—The lender or proposing lender does not go and poke his nose into the houses; he gets a report on the class of property.

10,267. And the rental?—And the rental, and if that is a rent that is paid monthly and not half-yearly, probably he will have nothing to do with it. If he does, he looks for a higher margin and a higher rate of interest.

10,268. Why?—He does it; he does not like the security so well.

10,269. Is it due to the fact that the class of property letting that way just now is a poorer class of house?—Not entirely. You have to take care that there is a fund out of which you will get your interest at the half-yearly terms of Martinmas and Whitsunday. If the borrower has no interest coming in, the security is so much worse, because you don't know that he will be able to pay the interest. You might collect the rents; that is one of the advantages of having his security. If he has not got payment of his interest he will enter into possession and collect the rents. He always has it open to him to do that.

10,270. Whether he fails to pay nor not?—No, he would do it even before the date of payment if he has reason to believe that his borrower is in impecunious circumstances.

10,271. That would only be the case when he had failed to pay on the previous occasion?—Of course, it is not the ordinary case, but in dealing with a security, you have to take into account what may happen.

10,272. (*Mr Dobbie to Mr Ledingham.*) I suppose if Mr Cross's Bill passes it would simply convert in nine-tenths of the cases yearly lets into half-yearly lets, and therefore the payment of rents would simply be half-yearly as at present; there would be no change made by Mr Cross's Bill in regard to the collection of rents?—No, not in regard to collection of rents.

10,273. I assume that if the landlord was called upon to pay the tenant's rates and got no abatement, he would require to raise the rents?—He would.

10,274. The more reasonable allowance he gets, the less risk there is of rents rising?—That is so. If you give him a very liberal allowance, more than enough, rents would fall.

10,275. In England, in most burghs the compounding rates are 15 per cent. where entries are not guaranteed, and 30 per cent. where the owner takes the risk of empties. Now does that appeal to you as more like the rate to apply?—In small houses I should not think it was sufficient, but we have not a great deal of experience.

10,276. It is the experience of England that the usual compounding allowance is 30 per cent., say to £10?—And are the landlords satisfied?

10,277. The Corporation, I understand, have an option of compelling the landlords to compound, and they do it, so it seems to pay the Corporations?—But if that be not adequate in England, although the landlords may compulsorily have accepted it, the effect may have been to raise the rents.

10,278. The suggestion is that it at all events pays the Corporation to give the 30 per cent., seeing that they have the option to exercise it in England?—Quite.

10,279. (*Mr Binnie.*) What is the rate paid to a factor for managing properties where the rent is paid half-yearly, and what is the rate where rents are paid monthly?—We have no skilful adjustment of the scale of charges, as you have in Glasgow; it is very much a matter of arrangement in Aberdeen. I could not quote rates generally applicable.

10,280. Would the factor take the collection of the rents in a property monthly or quarterly for the same rate as if

half-yearly?—No, he would require higher commission if he had to collect monthly or quarterly.

10,281. You have apparently looked into a matter that has been troubling some of us a good deal, that is the question of the shortening of the time for ejectment and reducing the cost. Would it trouble you too much to put in writing what you have suggested to us?—I would be glad to do so.

10,282. Some of us are anxious on that point, and the clearer you can make it for those who are not lawyers the better?—I think a simple system could be devised.

10,283. That would be of great assistance to some of us. Then I think you said that if this Bill was passed the system should be uniform throughout the country?—Yes.

10,284. Have you thought of the position of a place like Stonehaven, or other places where people go in summer to take houses for the season. If short lets were introduced, how would those people in spring let their houses for people wishing to go there in August?—In Stonehaven and these little towns and villages for summer visitors the houses are let furnished.

10,285. I know, but if Mr Cross's Bill were passed and shorter lets were introduced, I think it is the practice for people to go early in spring and take their houses for summer and autumn. How can a person in such a place let a house for autumn if the let is quarterly? They might lose their houses at the end of any quarter?—Evidently he could not let his furnished house for a longer period than he was sure of getting it from his landlord.

10,286. Does that not suggest that there are certain cases in which the Bill should not apply?—It suggests that you should not interfere with freedom of contract

10,287. But suppose there is a case made out for this Bill, in some quarters, does it not suggest that in certain other quarters there should be a power not to be subjected to the Bill?—I cannot see how you get over your difficulty with the Bill being made universal.

10,288. I am not proposing it to be universal; I think you said it should be universal if it passed at all?—The country should be subjected to a uniform system and not a patchwork.

10,289. Then the difficulty I pointed out would arise?—And the remedy is to leave things alone.

10,290. That is a very drastic way of dealing with it.

10,291. (*To Mr Williamson.*) In regard to this question you have spoken to already, the lending of money on property on short lets, you say if the lets were at shorter intervals, the bondholders would not be nearly so sure of punctual payment of their interest?—I have said so.

10,292. I do not see how that arises. Would you kindly explain it to me? A landlord at present can lift his rents on the 15th of May?—Yes.

10,293. And if a man were not intending to pay his interest, I suppose he would be very likely to go and get all his rents in on the 15th of May if he possibly could?—Of course, the lender is still liable to that chance, but I was looking to the case of the honest, though temporarily impecunious landlords. The collection of rents on 11th November puts him at once in funds with which to pay his interest if he chooses to do so.

10,294. And if he is an honest, straightforward man, he will have been collecting these monthly or quarterly during the six months previously, and if he wishes to pay his way he would have been putting the money aside to meet his interest?—Yes, but you have not the assurance that he has been putting that aside.

10,295. But we are dealing with an honest man?—Well, he has got it in by driblets over six months. There does not seem to be the same intention of doing the lender out of his interest as if he hurries through things on the term day and goes away on that same day with the money.

10,296. Do you really think any man collecting his rents monthly or quarterly, if he is an honest, straightforward man, does not look forward to the term day for his interest?—There is a chance of the borrower coming to grief, getting into financial embarrassment during the six months.

10,297. Is that at all so common as to require any special arrangement of let connected with it?—I do not say it is just so very common, but it is always an element that would enter into the minds of the intending lender or his agent. It is certainly an element that would enter into my mind.

10,298. You have been in business for a long time in a large way. Have you known that occur half a dozen times?—Well, you see, here we don't have our rents paid monthly; we have them paid half-yearly. I have certainly known cases, not many, but some, where we had on the eve of the term day to take measures for securing the rents to the bondholder, without an interposition of the borrower at all.

10,299. Because the borrower could not be trusted?—Yes.

10,300. And in that case he (the lender) would have lifted the rents?—Lifted the rents and paid feu-duty and interest.

10,301. And if the rents are paid at shorter periods than six months and the man did lift the rents and not pay his interest, you would all the sooner get part of your interest paid, in a month or in a quarter?—But they only pay a month's rent: it is scarcely worth while the bondholder lifting that, and probably the bondholder finds himself in the position of having to pay taxes and feu-duty and has no half-year's rents coming in to meet them.

10,302. And it is this very unlikely case you think should be specially provided for? You think these cases are so numerous as to require special arrangement of let?—I think they are an element to take into consideration in determining whether the existing law should be altered or not.

10,303. Then you say that in many cases within the last year or two, owing to scarcity of work, many working men have gone abroad to look for occupation who did not take their families with them, the family occupying the house until the tenancy comes to an end?—That has not been at all uncommon in Aberdeen during the last two or three years. Trade is bad at present, but we find our tradesmen here who cannot find employment in Aberdeen as a rule do not go to other towns in this country. As a rule they emigrate, but they don't take their wives and families with them. The men go there simply in search of employment.

10,304. And they will not have as much money to send to their families as they do when in work here?—That does not follow, for sometimes they get excellent wages in Canada and the States.

10,305. If they are wandering about in search of employment? That is your own statement.—That is only for a short time as a rule, and perhaps they want to move about until they get a start.

10,306. Don't you think that during this uncertain period the wives and family would like to go into a cheap house?—No, I don't think that follows: there will be other wage-earners in the family.

10,307. You say also, "I cannot but think that if there 'were any general wish on the part of the tenants to have 'shorter tenancies, they would secure these for themselves 'without any fresh legislation"?—That applies in Aberdeen at the present time.

10,308. They could secure that?—I see no difficulty about that.

10,309. What harm, then, would it do to arrange by legislation that they should have the option which they could secure at present?—There is no need of fresh legislation to secure what they can secure at present.

10,310. But what harm would the legislation do?—But this is all a hypothetical case. I say, "If there were the demand." We don't want to have a new system thrown upon us. If there were a real demand of this sort, it would certainly be met by the landlords. They have their houses at present standing vacant. For my part, I don't want a monthly tenant, but I would rather take a monthly tenant than no tenant at all.

10,311. Then monthly tenancies would not reduce the value of the property?—I think it would rather reduce the selling value of the property if you had it under a monthly tenancy instead of half-yearly.

10,312. But you would willingly do it?—Yes, in an exceptional case, certainly. In an exceptional case, I would much rather have the monthly tenants than none at all; I would not convert my property into a property wholly under that monthly tenancy if I could help it.

10,313. Have you thought of any way of arranging the payment of rates if the landlord should become responsible for them, so that there could be relief given to poor tenants?—I don't see how the poor tenant who gets exemption just now could possibly get a corresponding exemption from the landlord.

10,314. You think that is impossible?—Practically impossible.

10,315. (*Mr Howden to Mr Williamson.*) I think you spoke about tenants valuing the security of tenure they had with yearly lets. What induces the landlord to part with a tenant if he pays his rent and is otherwise a good tenant?—Oh! he need not be frightened for being turned out.

10,316. The same thing would apply under a monthly system of lets?—Undoubtedly, to some extent it would.

10,317. What method does the landlord take in Aberdeen in fixing the rents?—The rents are to a great extent fixed by the law of supply and demand.

10,318. You simply take as much as you can out of the property?—The landlord does that.

10,319. It will not be too evident where the rise of rent comes from?—Of course, he has to consider the rent other people are getting for corresponding houses, else he need not expect a good tenant to sit in his house.

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10,320. In connection with pounding tenants' effects, what financial results do the landlords usually get?—You mean what percentage?

10,321. What is the price they usually get for goods that are pounded from the tenants?—A poor price.

10,322. What I want to get at is, what is the value of the goods having to be sold to realise £5 of rent?—I have not the experience of a sheriff's officer in this matter, but I know that the goods that are sold are generally sold at a very low price, and you want a fairly good houseful of furniture to produce a year's rent at anything from £10 to £12.

10,323. Would it be a fair statement to say you only get one-third of the value of the goods?—I could not say that. I could not tie myself to any figure.

10,324. (*To Mr Ledingham.*) And you, Mr Ledingham?—I have not enough experience of that. A sheriff officer would answer that to the most advantage.

10,325. They don't get the value of the goods?—They are sold under undesirable conditions.

10,326. (*To Mr Williamson.*) Do you think it is just to sell all the effects belonging to the tenant under such circumstances?—You cannot say a man is unjust in exercising his legal rights. He may occasionally be harsh.

10,327. But isn't there a moral right as well as a legal right?—I don't know that moral rights are the subject for inquiry.

10,328. Put it in another way. Do you agree that even the wearing apparel and bedding, which are the necessary articles of furniture, the goods should be taken from the poor tenant and sold at the Market Cross?—I am afraid that if the tenant has not the wherewithal to pay his debts, he has to give up his estate, whatever it is, to someone, and the injustice, if there is an injustice, is not between the landlord and tenant; it would be between the landlord and some other creditor. It is a matter of indifference to the impecunious debtor whether the trade creditor or the landlord gets, by his hypothec, the value of the furniture. Often the tendency would be to give the landlord the preference, in the expectation that he would be allowed to sit in the house until he finds another roof to cover him.

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10,329. But selling off the wherewithal that that man has to live by?—No, what he lives by is his tools, and they are safe to him.

10,329*a*. He has to get a reasonable amount of shelter?—The shelter is afforded by the house.

10,330. But the house does not afford a great amount of shelter if there is nothing in it?—No, but he would not be left with his movables in the house even if he had not a landlord with the right of hypothec.

10,331. I presume if the landlord loses this right of putting a tenant absolutely to the door, you would not object to that right being taken from other creditors. I wish to protect the tenant, up to a certain amount, against all creditors. If the right is taken from the landlord, do you see any reason why the right should not be taken from the other creditors?—Well, it would not do the landlord any good if it were taken from him, but I don't see where you are to stop if you are to allow a man to retain his estate and not pay his debts.

10,332. There is a law known in America as the Homestead Act, which preserves to a tenant a certain amount of goods, whereby he can go out into the world and face the world: would you object to any such law as that in Scotland?—It depends on the extent you are saving to him. I don't object to his tools being saved to him.

10,333. His wearing apparel?—Yes, no one takes his wearing apparel.

10,334. And bedding?—Well, it is difficult to draw the line.

10,335. That is what we want to get at?—That is what you want to get at. If he is going in search of other employment, his bedding is of little use to him.

Mr J. Croll, Mr W. Davidson, Mr W. Johnston, and Mr A. Edwards.

Mr John Croll; Mr William Davidson; Mr William Johnston; Mr Adam Edwards, called and examined.

Mr J. Croll, Mr W. Davidson, Mr W. Johnston, and Mr A. Edwards.

10,336. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) You are the Secretary of Aberdeen Trades Council?—Yes.

10,337. (*To Mr Croll.*) Are you a member, and what is your position?—I am a member of the Trades Council.

10,338. And Mr Davidson also?—Yes.

10,339. (*To Mr Johnston.*) How long have you been Secretary?—Twenty years.

10,340. How long has the Society existed?—Since 1868.

10,341. The Council consists of 180 delegates, representing 52 trades unions, with a membership of over 9000, fully two-thirds of whom are householders in the city?—Yes.

10,342. What is your occupation?—I am Secretary for the Trades Council and Manager for their building.

10,343. (*To Mr Croll.*) What is your position?—I am by profession a solicitor.

10,344. (*To Mr Davidson.*) And you, Mr Davidson?—A joiner.

(*Mr Johnston.*) There is another party here, Mr Edwards.

10,345. Just bring him forward?—He represents the building trade.

10,346. (*To Mr Edwards*).—You are a member of the Trades Council also.

10,347. (*To Mr Johnston*).—When did the question of the house letting first come up before the Trades Council?—It has been up every year for the last five or six years back.

10,348. What brought it up first?—The resolutions on the Agenda for the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

10,349. When did Mr Cross's Bill first come up?—I think four years ago.

10,350. What is the Council's view about Mr Cross's Bill. They always instructed their delegates to the Congress to vote in favour of the resolution which was in favour of Mr Cross's Bill.

10351. Do they approve of the Bill as a whole, or have they any objection to the Bill?—Well, I never heard any serious objection made to the Bill.

10,352. The question of whether it should be monthly or quarterly letting, I think, was discussed, but there was no definite decision come to in regard to whether it should be monthly or quarterly.

10,353. But, you see, under the Bill, it would neither be monthly nor quarterly in Aberdeen, because the effect would be to change the yearly system to half-yearly?—Yes.

10,354. Have they any views on that? Are they willing to accept the principle which is to make the period of let the same as the period of payment?—As far as I can judge, and can remember, every time it came before the Council, they were in favour of Mr Cross's Bill.

10,355. There is one detail, they think the rental to be applied should be at £30?—Yes. It was discussed in Committee, and we thought there are some houses in Aberdeen where there might be a rental as high as £30, where the occupier kept lodgers and that.

10,356. You also would be in favour of making the statute compulsory for the whole country?—Yes.

10,357. Instead of being optional?—Yes.

10,358. What do you say to the amount of commission or allowance proposed by Mr Cross's Bill?—I should say the commission is fair and reasonable, and in Aberdeen here 25 per cent. is allowed for rentals under £5. Of course from those paying rents above £5 the rates are more usually got.

10,359. But you have no special knowledge on that matter?—Yes, I have been a member of the Town Council in Aberdeen for fourteen years.

10,360. We want all information of that sort. You were in the Town Council for how long?—Fourteen years.

10,361. Do you factor any properties yourself?—Yes.

10,362. Of what class? Is it working class property?—Yes, with rentals from £10 to £17.

10,363. Have any of the other gentlemen anything to tell us? Have any of the other gentlemen been in the Town Council?—No.

(*Mr Croll.*) I have been on the Parish Council.

10,364. (*Chairman to Mr Johnston.*) Does your Council think that there is in Aberdeen and district a substantial grievance due to the length of the tenancy for the better class of working men's dwellings?—I do.

10,365. The poorest class is already supplied with short lets?—Monthly lets, yes.

10,366. Therefore it is the better class we are considering?—Yes.

10,367. How does that grievance in your view arise, in what circumstances?—I could give you one or two instances.

10,368. I see that in this *précis* you have given very conveniently the different cases apparently where the question arises, and you put them thus:—"A tenant does 'not leave a house except—for a better house, a better 'landlord, a better neighbourhood, change of work, want 'of work, increase or decrease of family, convenience of the 'family, desire to retrench or death"?—That is right.

10,369. That seems to be pretty exhaustive?—Quite.

10,370. (*To Mr Croll.*) There is nothing else occurs to you?—No.

10,371. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Do you think that any of

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these cases frequently produces the necessity for shifting between terms? Of course, in any of these cases you see, a man may shift at the end of a let. How is it that in any of these cases, apart from death, the question should arise between terms, and cannot be considered just as well when the tenancy expires?—Well, you see, a man in the middle of the year may lose his employment, and have to shift to another town, and is responsible for the rent in Aberdeen. Then he may have to pay most likely a rent in another town. I have known instances where they have had to pay eighteen months' rent in one year.

10,372. What class of employment are you referring to?—I am referring to artisans particularly.

10,373. Not so much people employed in the paper and comb works, more builders?—Yes.

10,374. What were the men in the instance you have in your mind?—This man was not an artisan, but came under my observation a short time ago.

10,375. What was he?—He was an ironmonger.

10,376. Had he a shop?—No, he was traveller to a firm.

10,377. What rent did he pay?—He took a house from myself at Whitsunday, with a rental of £12, and through dull trade he got employment for a short time in Aberdeen, and latterly a situation in Glasgow. Under the usual conditions he had to find a suitable tenant, but had to pay £6 of rent here up to Martinmas, and at least nine months' rent in Glasgow.

10,378. Why six months' rent here, if a suitable tenant was got?—A sub-tenant was not got until December.

10,379. Of course such cases must occur. What we want to get at is whether they are at all numerous. You may have a grievance in anything. We want to know whether it is a substantial grievance or not?—I think it is more intensified than it used to be.

10,380. Tell us about that?—The conditions of finding employment now are more precarious than they used to be, and there is more shifting. If men cannot get work in one town they will go to another.

10,381. Is that due to machinery shortening the time during which jobs last?—That is it.

10,382. That would apply to the same class of trades as you have mentioned, like shipbuilding, and so on?—Yes.

10,383. Would it apply to the fishing industry in Aberdeen?—Well, of course we consider in the fishing industry that they are a shifting class.

10,384. They are not represented in your Trades Council, are they?—Yes.

10,385. What class of fishery people?—Enginemen and firemen, and the fishermen on the steam vessels, that is the trawlers. There are over 400 members represented in the Trades Council in the case of trawlers, and over 300 enginemen and firemen.

10,386. We have been told to-day by Mr Scott, a gentlemen who factors a large amount, that he made an experiment and asked the whole of the tenants selected at random whether they would prefer the present system to remain or that the present system should be changed to monthly tenancies, and that with the exception of nine, they all said that they would prefer the present system to remain. Six would give no reply, and three seemed to want to try the short tenancies. What do you say to that?—We called a meeting last Friday evening of all the office-bearers in connection with the building trade to get their views before we appeared here, and they were all in favour of shorter lets, and we consider these men voice the opinions of their fellows.

10,387. Would something depend on the class of employment? We probably should have asked that more particularly of Mr Scott. Suppose the great majority of the people Mr Scott spoke about were in a kind of permanent employment in paper works, would their view be different from that of men like shipbuilders?—Well, I suppose there is a number of working men who don't like to shift their houses, and if they put the question whether they would not like some security of tenure, they having steady employment, it does not give them any more bother.

10,388. Is it your view that if a man is a good tenant he does not need the long let. It is in the interest of the landlord to retain him?—That is my experience, and I have over sixty tenants.

10,389. In your experience, can you give us a notion of the percentage of the removals in a year among your tenants?—I have never made that calculation, but we have not many removals. Some of them have been in the property since ever it was erected ten years ago.

10,390. Do you think short lets would mean on the whole and in the end more removals, or merely that they would be spread over the year more?—I don't think so. I think it will make better tenants.

10,391. Do you think the present system of suggesting to tenants the idea of removal is a good one?—I don't think the tenant has any terror of removal if the party is a good tenant.

10,392. We are told that through the missive system the tenants have the idea of removal put into their heads, whereas in England nothing is said, and they just remain in the same house. What do you say to that?—Possibly if the law was altered there would be that feeling among a number of them, that they would be more shifting than they are in the meantime.

10,393. But, in the end, do you think they would be more shifting or not?—I don't think so.

10,394. Do you contemplate that short lets would increase the rents or not?—No, I think rents would be regulated by supply and demand.

10,395. You see, it is suggested that if you have frequent payments of rents, say monthly instead of half-yearly, and especially if the landlord collects the rates as well as the rents, the cost of collection would be a good deal increased. What is your view about that?—Of course if they collect the rates too, they would get a commission for that, and as far as the cost of collecting the rents is concerned, I don't see that there would be very much expense incurred there.

10,396. And you would insist, in place of the rates being paid direct, that the landlord should be recouped for collecting the rates in the shape of an allowance, and the rates would not be paid by the tenants?—Yes, and besides, if the landlord gets his rent monthly, he has the money in hand and the interest which would accrue, which he loses in the meantime.

10,397. In Aberdeen, is there any inconvenience found in connection with the rush at the one legal term—28th May?—Very much.

10,398. How does it show itself?—Well, I have known parties having to give a contractor as high as 5s. for a lorry for an hour.

10,399. Instead of what?—Instead of 1s. or 1s. 6d. at the outside.

10,400. The factors who appeared before us were not acquainted with that, and have not found that?—But I know it from experience.

10,401. Do you think that is exceptional, or would there be many cases of that kind?—Well, those that are hiring contractors generally pay it at that time. They know they can get it.

10,402. What about the difficulty of getting tradesmen, with so many orders all at once?—Mr Edwards and Mr Davidson can speak to that.

10,403. (*To Mr Edwards.*) What do you say, Mr Edwards, about that: does the necessity for executing so many orders at the same time produce a rush?—There is certainly a rush. It occurs annually in connection with new properties, due to delay in starting operations, and allowing them to lie over until too near the term. The rush of work is brought about and overtime is invariably introduced to get the work over for the letting term, especially, I should say, in the painting trade. It has also a very serious effect on the tenants who occupy the houses, owing to the place not being dry, and the paints not dry, and in many cases it is an outstanding grievance in Aberdeen that properties are not finished for weeks after the tenants are in. For instance, the stair rails are not in.

10,404. Do you find all that results in a want of work at other times of the year?—It is certainly responsible for a good deal of the want of work. When the term is over, there is always a large number thrown out of employment as the result.

10,405. (*To Mr Davidson.*) What do you say to that?—That is my view of the matter. I have seen it myself frequently, that joiners were only beginning to put on the boards of a house when the tenants were in. Very often the walls were to paper, and some of the woodwork probably was omitted altogether, in the painting. The tenants were in and anxious to get the tradesmen out, and the tradesmen were anxious to get out of their way.

10,406. That applies to trades that are last in order in the house?—Yes, carpenters and joiners and painters.

10,407. (*To Mr Johnston.*) Do you think it would be an advantage for all the members of the family, women and children as well as the men?—Yes, certainly. I have known a house taken even before the stair was made, and what Mr Edwards and Mr Davidson say is quite true. It is getting worse every year. There is a rush always prior to the term, and the painters are feeling this, I believe more than any others, that just about the term time they are busy for a month or so, and then they have scarcely anything to do all the year round.

10,408. It has been suggested that the grievance that does exist would be remedied by shortening the time between the taking of the house and the term of entry?—Most certainly, the work would be better spread over the year.

10,409. That would be a good thing nowadays?—Yes.

10,410. But is it the opinion of the Council that that

would not relieve the real grievance which is in the length of the let?—No, it would not.

10,411. We have heard a great deal about the consequence of making short lets drawn from the experience of existing short lets. Do you think that is a sound view that the existing short lets are all of the most inferior property?—Well, I think that is one of the causes of any feeling that might arise against shorter lets amongst the better class. They feel that they are brought down to the level of those who are on monthly lets in the meantime in the lower class of property.

10,412. Of course that would disappear if the better class of property were made all monthly lets?—Just so.

10,413. Objections have been stated on behalf of money-lenders to short lets. I suppose their associations with the existing short lets are due to the fact that it is an inferior class of property?—Yes.

10,414. What would be the effect, in your view, of making short lets compulsory? Would the bad properties disappear, or what?—It would have a tendency that way, I think.

10,415. Make them unlettable?—Yes.

10,416. If there be this demand for short lets, how do you account for the fact that it does not show itself more? For instance in Aberdeen there are a great many unlet properties just now. We are told that landlords would let them on any terms if they could only get them let, but they say nobody asks for short lets?—Well, I think I have said already that yearly lets having been so long the custom, the working men and the wife like some security of tenure, and I think there would be some difficulty in getting a number of them to think that monthly lets would be more suitable.

10,417. But you think that if it were a system all over, that would disappear?—Yes, I don't believe in its being optional.

10,418. Do you know any reason why, assuming that short lets are a success in England, they should not be so in Scotland?—I see no reason why they should not be the same success here.

10,419. You don't think there is anything in the conditions of trade or other conditions to justify the difference?—No. I think it is getting more necessary, because the population have easy means of transit for shifting from one place to another when they are out of work. It is more necessary now than it was some time ago.

10,420. That cuts two ways. It is said, on the other side, that the increased facilities for going from one part of the town to another make removals less necessary?—Well, of course if a man is working in another town, and his wife is living here, he has his lodgings and his rent to pay, and if they were monthly houses it would be of more advantage to shift his wife and family to the town he went to.

10,421. It is not a desirable arrangement either in respect of money or the well-being of the family, I suppose?—No.

10,422. Have you known cases where men had to do that, pay lodgings in other towns, having to remove in the middle of the term?—Many a time.

10,423. And it may result in very little profit being got?—I have known a number of men that I have sent for that could get employment elsewhere out of Aberdeen, and they would not go simply because they had to pay lodgings and keep up a house here. It was too expensive.

10,424. Even although the work they could get elsewhere might be better?—Well, it was employment at any rate, and they were going idle.

10,425. I see, in regard to the other matter that has been brought up, landlord's hypothec, you view is that that should be abolished?—We think the landlord should just rank with any other ordinary creditor if there were monthly lets.

10,426. And as against landlords and all other creditors, is it your view that not only should tenants' tools and clothing be protected, but a certain reasonable amount of house furnishing?—We think it is a great hardship, inhumanity in fact, to take every bit of furniture that anyone has if they are liable for rent, not even a bed left in some cases.

10427. What limit would you put?—I should say they would be left with bed and bedding to cover them, tools, and the necessary utensils to cook food.

10,428. You agree with the evidence we have heard, I suppose, that when landlord's hypothec is exercised, it does not produce anything like the value of the article sold?—I believe that is so, but I have had no experience. I had only one case where we had to exercise that power, but it produced more than covered the rent.

10,429. But the articles don't realise anything like their full value usually?—I believe that is generally the case.

10,430. You give us one figure here. The number of tradesmen in the different Unions connected with the building trades at present idle here is about 600. Is that in Aberdeen?—Yes.

10,431. What is that due to?—Dull trade and house-building at a standstill.

10,432. Has house-building been overdone in Aberdeen?—Well, trade got bad, and there has been a number of people who emigrated from this town to other places where they could find employment, and of course that has left a number of empty houses.

10,433. If what we have been told is a fact, there has not been in Aberdeen, at ward meetings or Parliamentary candidates' meetings, or in the columns of the newspapers, the agitation on this question that has been found in Glasgow?—Aberdeen is not such a large town by a long way, and in such a large place the population is more shifting than here. That is to say, they have greater distances to go to their employment. Aberdeen not being such a large town, there would not be the clamant demand for this.

10,434. But you still think, although that is so, there is a substantial grievance here?—I do.

10,435. (*To Mr Croll.*) Have you anything to add?—I would just point out that this 600 by no means covers the people in the building trades going idle.

10,436. These were the skilled men?—Yes, and it doesn't even cover all the skilled men, only these connected with the Trades Council who sign their books.

10,437. (*Mr Esslemont to Mr Johnston.*) I rather gather from your answers that you are under the impression that, if this Bill became a law, a system of monthly lets would be introduced?—I think monthly lets would be very acceptable.

10,438. Don't you see that under the Bill the only change that would take place in Aberdeen, would be that the lets would be half-yearly instead of yearly, because the periodic payments of rent are presently half-yearly. The Bill provides the time of lets shall be fixed by the periodic payment of rents: that if you paid weekly, the tenancy would be weekly; if monthly, the tenancy would be monthly; if quarterly, quarterly; and if half-yearly, half-yearly?—I don't see any objections to weekly lets the same as in England, but I don't know that we in Scotland are prepared to go that length just at the start.

10,439. Even supposing Mr Cross's Bill became law, it would not introduce in Aberdeen a universal system of monthly lets unless payment of rents were monthly?—Of course I understand if there were monthly lets there would be monthly payment of rents.

10,440. Mr Cross puts it the other way, and says if there were monthly payments, there must be monthly lets; but I take it that parties whom you represent would regard it as a great advantage if they had an opportunity of paying rent and rate more frequently, at shorter periods than at present?—In the meantime the payment of the rates comes at the very worst season of the year for these men. The accounts are sent out about October, and they have to be paid at latest by the end of March, and that is the very worst season of the year for them, for tradesmen or any working man having to pay rates.

10,441. Why have you such an objection to the optional clause in the Bill?—I don't think it would suit very well, because, if the law was not the same in Aberdeen as in Glasgow, for instance, the party might come from Glasgow and not get a house here, unless it was for perhaps nine months in the year. He might come from Glasgow for a job for six months, and if it was made the same all over, of course he could take a house for a month.

10,442. Of course the practice is not universal at present. In Glasgow there is a very large number of houses let by the week, month, and quarter?—Yes, I know. I read the evidence.

10,443. Wouldn't you rather have a measure of this kind with an optional clause than no measure at all?—Well, I don't believe in it being optional. I think there should be the same law in Aberdeen as all over Scotland.

10,444. You would rather not have the Bill at all?—I don't know if it is fair to put it in that way to me.

10,445. I mean there are two alternatives, and you have to consider them.

10,446. (*Mr Howden to Mr Johnston.*) I presume you represent the Aberdeen trades?—Yes.

10,447. Is the present letting term detrimental to the Aberdeen trade as a whole? Is that your experience?—Yes, certainly. It is the experience of those engaged in the building trade.

10,448. That applies to the whole of the branches of the building trade?—Yes.

10,449. And without any difference of opinion? That is the opinion of the building trade in Aberdeen?—As far as I can gather, yes.

10,450. You heard the question put in connection with the Homestead Act in America, and I see you have a clause in the Trades Council *précis*. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

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10,451. Have you considered any amount you would like to recommend?—No.

10,452. (*To Mr Croll.*) Have you?—Well, as far as the workman is concerned, I think he should have the ordinary things he has about him, because if he is deprived of that he is demoralised.

10,453. Could you put a figure on it?—Well, you don't find a working man having many unnecessary things about him.

10,454. (*Mr Howden to Mr Davidson.*) Do you agree with that?—Oh yes.

10,455. You have an expression of opinion in connection with security of tenure: do you think monthly tenancies would really reduce the security of tenure to the working classes?—I don't think so.

10,456. Assuming that it did, we had a case put to us that a tenant should have the right of security of tenure up to six months, while he could break his tenancy at one month: what do you say to that? That was put by Provost Keith of Hamilton. Of course it applied more to Hamilton, because they have men staying in employers' houses there. Have you any men staying in employers' houses in Aberdeen?—Very few.

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10,457. These men are usually in constant employment?—Yes.

Mr Scott, in reference to the tenants to whom he had put the question that he referred to in his evidence, explained that they represented almost every class of trade, and put in a list showing their occupations.

[ADJOURNED.]

ELEVENTH DAY.

WEDNESDAY, 30TH JANUARY 1907.

At the New Court, Parliament Houes, Edinburgh.

Present:

LORD GUTHRIE, *Chairman.*

SIR JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, Bart. | MR JOSEPH DOBBIE, S.S.C.

MR THOMAS BINNIE. | MR EDWARD COX.

MR JOHN T. HOWDEN.

Mr W. E. Nelson.

30 Jan. 1907.

MR W. E. NELSON, Estate Offices, 22 Lord Street, Liverpool, and 196 Liscard Road, Liscard, Cheshire, called and examined.

Mr W. E. Nelson.

30 Jan. 1907.

10,458. (*Chairman.*) Have you the management of property in Liverpool?—Yes, my firm has.

10,459. What kind of property?—All kinds of property, but to a large extent cottage property.

10,460. What is the lowest rent that you have to deal with?—We go down to 3s. 6d. per week.

10,461. We have been calculating it by the year; how much is that?—£9, 2s.

10,462. And going up to larger rents?—Yes.

10,463. You manage both dwelling-house property, and shop property and works?—Yes.

10,464. Entirely in Liverpool, or in other places also?—Yes.

10,465. Waterloo and so on?—Yes, and in Birkenhead. And for some miles round Liverpool.

10,466. How long has your firm been in existence?—Forty years. I have had twenty-three years' personal experience, and during that time a large number of cottage properties have passed through my hands either as agent, trustee, or receiver for mortgages, and in other ways. I acted for some years as secretary to a local property owners' association, and in that connection was continually brought in contact with owners of cottage property, and questions of management were constantly discussed. I have attended as delegate many of the Property Owners' Conferences held annually in different towns of England. I am therefore well informed on matters affecting cottage property.

10,467. You refer to cottage property. Have you in Liverpool the same system of working men living in what we call flats or tenements as we have in Scotland?—No, not generally. There are a number of flats, but it is not the rule.

10,468. Is that system increasing?—No, I think not.

10,469. In the case of cottage property, each householder has his own separate house?—Yes.

10,470. Of how many storeys?—Generally the ground floor and one above.

10,471. In the case of any of the cottages, are they occupied by two families?—They might be, but that is a matter that does not come under the observation of the landlord. He lets the house to one person.

10,472. Have you in Liverpool any cottages where there are gardens attached?—In some cases.

10,473. But, generally speaking, do the working men have any gardens?—No, yards.

10,474. Yards in the rear?—Yes.

10,475. In Liverpool the houses are built of brick?—Yes.

10,476. And also in the other places in the district round that you are connected with?—Yes, mostly.

10,477. Do you know at all how the rents for similar accommodation compare in Liverpool with other places in England?—I think our rents are rather higher in Liverpool than in other parts. In inland towns the rents are lower than with us.

10,478. How do you compare with London?—We are lower than London.

10,479. As to your rates, are they normal in Liverpool, or are they higher or lower than other places?—About normal.

10,480. Do you know how they compare with London?—I think we are lower than in London. I think I can give you that.

10,481. If you have it at hand, yes, because we have other evidence, and we would like to know how it compares?—I am afraid I have not got it, but I could give it later in the day.

		s.	d.
	Liverpool, . . .	7	9
London districts.	West Ham, . . .	10	4
	East Ham, . . .	9	7
	Westminster, . .	6	8
	Croydon, . . .	7	4
	Islington, . . .	7	8
	Kensington, . . .	6	8

As the basis of assessments vary, a reliable comparison is impossible.

10,482. Up to what rent does a working man of the ordinary respectable class, who is not a foreman and who has no wage-earning members of his family, pay?—Up to £19, 10s. From about £7, 16s. to £19, 10s.

10,483. Then the £20 limit in Liverpool would cover the ordinary working man's dwelling?—Yes.

10,484. When you talk of the payment by the working men to you, is that the whole payment, including the rates as well as the rents?—Yes.

10,485. Could you tell us the assessed rental?—The assessed rental of a house letting at £19, 10s. would be £13.

10,486. And of £7, 16s.?—It would probably be £4 or £5.

10,487. Now, as to the accommodation—the number of rooms in these respective houses—take the houses let at £7, 16s.: how many rooms have they?—They probably have two rooms.

10,488. How high will the two-roomed houses go?—They might go to £8 or £9.

10,489. Assessed rental?—No, not assessed rental, gross rental.

10,490. Then, when you come to three-roomed houses, what would be the variation there?—I think the next step would be four-room houses.

10,491. From two to four; have you no three-roomed houses?—We have very few, and they are disappearing.

10,492. The four-room houses would go up to what?—About £13 gross.

10,493. What is the length of tenancy in Liverpool for working men's houses?—Weekly.

10,494. Are there any monthly houses?—There might be a few, but it is quite the exception.

10,495. Have you any yourself?—I cannot remember now.

10,496. Could you give us any notion roughly of how many working men's houses you have the management of?—Probably 800 or 900.

10,497. Between the rents you have mentioned?—Yes.

10,498. And all these cases, with a very rare exception, are weekly tenancies?—Yes.

10,499. Do you suppose that your experience is just like that of other estate agents in Liverpool?—I feel confident that is so in Liverpool.

10,500. Is that so also in the district that you told us you had to do with?—Yes.

10,501. Do you yourself know about other parts of England, whether the tenancy is as univarsally weekly there as in Liverpool?—Yes, in a great many places I know it is weekly.

10,502. Such as?—Burnley, Accrington, all the Lancashire towns. Manchester is weekly.

10,503. How many days' notice do you give to turn out the weekly tenant?—One week's notice, which usually expires on the Monday.

10,504. And how often are the rents paid?—Weekly.

10,505. The rent and rate?—Yes, weekly.

10,506. Are they collected by one of your clerks?—Yes.

10,507. And what receipt is given?—I have a form of rent book here,—perhaps you would like to see it?

10,508. Yes, please?—I have filled it in with a supposed rental.

10,509. Tenant's name, John Jones; date of entry, 22nd January 1907; rent 5s. 6d. a week,—how much is that a year?—£14, 6s.

10,510. That would be how much assessed rental?—About £9.

10,511. I see that among the conditions there is a prohibition of subletting without permission?—Yes.

10,512. That is pretty universal, is it?—We object to it pretty strongly.

10,513. It is a common provision?—Yes.

10,514. May I take it that these are just the ordinary conditions?—Yes, universal. They are not printed specially for us.

10,515. I see you have definitely stated, "a week's notice in writing to be given before leaving"?—The stationers print those books for universal use. They put our name on or anybody else's.

10,516. I see you have a provision, that if at any time the house is left unoccupied, or your tenant does not give up possession according to notice, or in default of payment as above, it shall be lawful for the landlord or the agent to enter the premises by force, and whatever goods may be on the premises shall be taken to defray the rent and the expense incurred, after which possession shall be given to the landlord without any legal process whatever, and as effectually as if the landlord obtained judgment. Under that condition you do not require to go to any court?—I am afraid that is not legal.

10,517. You do not think that could be enforced if objected to?—No.

10518. In the case of such property as you have been telling us about, is there any written agreement other than the rent book with these conditions?—None at all.

10,519. Does the tenant sign these conditions?—No.

10,520. Is the system you have been describing to us a recent system, or, so far as you know, the system from time immemorial?—I should think that it has been in operation for fifty or sixty years. In Liverpool it took its rise probably over one hundred years ago.

10,521. Before 1846 what difference was there?—I cannot tell you. In that year the Liverpool Corporation had a special Act of Parliament to deal with the matter.

10,522. How often are wages paid in Liverpool?—Weekly, except at the docks. In that case they are paid probably daily.

10,523. Do the tenants in your properties include working men of all occupations?—Yes.

10,524. Connected with the docks and other industries?—Yes.

10,525. Above £19, 10s. do you come into another system of tenancy, or are there still weekly tenants?—We are gradually increasing the weekly system above £19, 10s.

10,526. As compared with what system?—Monthly or quarterly. Formerly the tenancies were either monthly or quarterly from £19, 10s. to £25 or £26. Above £26 the tenancies would be quarterly, but the tenants, even up to £26, often like to pay weekly or monthly.

10,527. Is the tendency to increase the weekly tenancies due to the desire of the tenants to pay weekly or the desire of the landlords to collect rents weekly?—To the tenants.

10,528. It is more trouble in the way of collection?—Greatly.

10,529. Is there any advantage to the landlord in it?—None at all above £19, 10s.

10,530. But below £19, 10s. you think the rents are better got if collected weekly than monthly?—That is the only way we could get the rents. There is no alternative.

10,531. Why?—Because if we waited to collect those rents monthly, we would probably lose half of them.

10,532. Is that because, the wages being paid weekly, the money would not be there for you?—Yes.

10,533. Is it your view that frequent payment of rent is desirable in connection with the class who get frequent payment of wages?—Yes.

10,534. And the one as near as possible to the other?—That is so.

10,535. Have you any cases in Liverpool of fortnightly rents?—No.

10,536. We have heard of it in Glasgow?—If the tenant asks to pay fortnightly, we would not object, but it is quite the exception.

10,537. Have you found, on the other hand, any tenants who would prefer a longer tenure than a weekly?—No.

10,538. Have you not found cases of people who say, "We do not want the risk of being turned out, and we would like to take the house for six months or a year"?—That does not occur at all.

10,539. You never met with it?—It is not a risk that would tell. If a tenant is a good tenant, he is perfectly free to stay there as long as he likes.

10,540. It being your interest, of course, to keep him?—Quite.

10,541. In the case of weekly tenancies, tell me how, first of all, the repairs and then the improvements are done. Take repairs: what does the landlord do?—In Liverpool, he practically does everything.

10,542. Of course, to start with, he keeps the house wind- and water-tight?—Yes.

10,543. What in the way of painting and papering?—When a tenant goes in, he would clean that house down, and probably clean it periodically, as occasion arises, as long as that tenant remains, and of course, when a new tenant comes in, some cleaning is always necessary.

10,544. What do you mean by cleaning?—Papering and whitening and painting.

10,545. Of course, as far as painting goes, it is in the interest of the landlord to keep the place painted to preserve the wood?—I mean inside painting.

10,546. Then, in the ordinary case, does the tenant do anything?—Very seldom. That would apply almost entirely to Liverpool. In the country places, the tenants do pretty nearly all the internal work themselves. We have a number of properties in Cheshire and the country parts of Lancashire, where the tenants do everything entirely.

10,547. In Liverpool, have you any special removal terms, or are people removing all the year round?—All the year round.

10,548. I may tell you that in Scotland there is practically only one removal term, that is the 28th of May, Whitsunday?—I understand so.

10,549. And at that time there is a great complaint of over-pressure, immense demand for the men that remove the people, and for painters and so on who work on the houses, and then want of work at other times of the year. Have you anything of that kind in Liverpool?—No, we have nothing of that kind. I could conceive that it would be a great drawback having all the tenants removing at one time.

10,550. But in Liverpool you have no such drawback or grievance?—No.

10,551. You described the system. Do you find that with your system of weekly tenancy and weekly payment,

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as compared with the Scottish system of long tenancy and infrequent payment, there are any complaints about your system by the tenants?—I have never heard of any.

10,552. There is no grievance, so far as you know, on the part of the working classes of England in connection with the tenure of their houses?—No grievance at all.

10,553. I suppose the only grievance is that the rents are too high?—Yes.

10,554. What is your experience about houses which are on a longer tenure? You have a higher-rented house at the monthly tenure!—Yes.

10,555. Quarterly?—Yes.

10,556. And anything higher?—The biggest rents are paid quarterly. That constitutes a yearly tenancy. That is to say, any person who pays quarterly is liable to give six months' notice, to expire at the date corresponding with the date of entry.

10,557. Is that understood to be a yearly tenancy?—Yes.

10,558. In that case, is there any document in writing entered into?—Usually a written agreement. Of course, if that agreement contained any special clause about notice, that would over-ride the general law.

10,559. Suppose you have a yearly tenancy with a written agreement. As the time goes, is that renewed in writing or just allowed to run on?—Usually allowed to run on.

10,560. You do not send at a certain day to ask whether they mean to remain?—We never do that.

I may tell you that what is proposed in regard to Scotland in a certain Bill, with many other things we have to consider is that the length of tenancy should be made the same as the period of payment—that is to say, that suppose the rents are paid weekly, the tenure should be weekly; suppose they are paid monthly, the length of tenure should be monthly; and suppose they are paid quarterly, quarterly; and six-monthly, for six months.

10,561. If you paid once a year, that would be a tenancy for a year. In England, in the case of a weekly tenancy that is the principle?—Yes.

10,562. In the case of monthly tenancy, is the payment once a month, or may it be weekly?—Monthly.

10,563. In the case of quarterly tenancy?—That would be a yearly tenancy if paid quarterly, which would expire at the date the tenant entered in any year.

10,564. Then have you any cases of half-yearly payment?—We have a few, but very few.

10,565. Quite exceptional?—Quite.

10,566. With the higher class of property?—Yes, up to hundred of pounds.

10,567. Now, suppose the tenant fails to pay his rent, and you cannot proceed on that condition that we look at, about turning him out, have you to go to the Court?—Yes, up to £20, we have to go to the Police Court.

10,568. The Police Court?—Yes, they send a summons to the tenant. That summons costs us 3s. 6d. Then the tenant is asked to appear at the Court. The tenant would then appear at the Court, and the matter would be argued out before the magistrate, and he would probably make an order that that tenant should be ejected any time between twenty-one and twenty eight days from that date, and the further cost would be 9s.

10,569. In that particular case, how much rent would you lose? He would be in arrear how long when you applied to the Court? What would be the maximum?—Probably he would owe us two or three weeks to start with. We would give him one week's notice: that is perhaps four weeks. It is a month before we get him out.

10,570. You lose two months' rent?—Yes.

10,571. How much would it cost you?—It would cost us 12s. 6d. at least.

10,572. Suppose you actually had him turned out, would it cost you more?—No, the police would do that.

10,573. Is there any complaint on the part of landlords in England about that process being too lengthy?—Yes, great complaint.

10,574. And expensive?—Yes; but chiefly on account of the length.

10,575. Has any proposal been made for shortening the time?—It has been discussed, but I do not think anything has been before Parliament so far. It is discussed regularly by the Property Owners Associations and other organisations.

10,576. The time I suppose you want to be shortened would be the twenty-eight days?—Yes, a week would seem to be sufficient.

10,577. Unless, of course, he has some good answer?—Yes. Then, in the case of rents above £19, 10s., we go to the County Court, and in Liverpool we pay a plaint fee of £1, 1s. The case is then heard probably twenty-one days after we have entered it, and the judge may probably order possession to be given in a fortnight or three weeks or a month. That costs us £2.

10,578. And what delay would that involve!—It probably might run to three months sometimes.

10,579. As to the law of distraint in England, tell us about that?—It is really a survival of the old feudal system, and it has been altered. Formerly the landlords had the power to take the tenants' goods, and hold them till the rent was paid. Then by later legislation they were given the power to sell everything, and then by more recent legislation they were bound to leave a certain amount—I think it is £5 worth of goods and bedding in the house in addition to tools and clothes, and there are quite a number of other exceptions. Then the distraint now has to be made through a certified distraint officer appointed by the County Court, not personally.

10,580. In point of fact, has it often to be enforced?—It is often used, I think, to get a tenant out, but not often carried to the end.

10,581. It appears in Scotland that when a sale does take place of goods nothing like their true value is obtained?—I am afraid that would be the case in England too.

10,582. It is said that in Scotland practically the only people who appear are brokers and dealers, and probably something like a third of the value is got?—That would probably be the case.

10,583. So that in Scotland it is very seldom worth while to carry it to the bitter end?—It would be the same way in England.

10,584. Is it the fact that, in regard to short tenancies, the earliest statute which appears to recognise them is the Act 59, Geo. III. cap. 12?—That will be so.

10,585. And then after that came the Poor Law Act of 1869, and the Public Health Act of 1875?—Yes. Those are the two Acts upon which we go now.

10,586. And in these Acts the limit is £19, 10s.?—In the 1869 Act the limit is £8 in England generally, I think £12 in Manchester, £13 in Liverpool, and £10 in London. Under the Public Health Act the limit is according to the discretion of the local authority.

10,587. In Liverpool, do you find that the men in some trades or employments are more liable to remove than in other cases?—Yes.

10,588. Which?—Dock labourers.

10,589. Men in factories are more stationary, I suppose?—Yes. Of course we are not a manufacturing city.

10,590. What are the industries beyond shipping?—Shipping and railways, mostly transit, and a few manufactures.

10,591. What kind of manufactures,—cotton?—No, not cotton mills. Of course we have the sale of cotton, soap works, large jam works, and minor industries of that kind. We have really no staple industries.

10,592. You cannot give one any idea among your 800 householders what percentage of removals there may be in the course of a year?—I should think that in Liverpool it may reach 20 per cent.

10,593. Do you at all associate the number removals with the short tenancy?—No.

10,594. You see, it is a question in Scotland,—that, suppose our long tenancies were changed to something like your short tenancies, whether the total number of removals would be increased or not. Now you have indicated that with you a tenant has really security of tenure provided he is a good tenant?—Oh yes.

10,595. You rather think that the net number of removals in the course of the year might not be affected although they were spread over the year?—I should think that would be so.

10,596. And of course in Liverpool, with your population as in all similar places, the occasions for the working men wanting to remove are numerous?—Yes.

10,597. And often at short notice?—Yes. It would be a great hardship in leaving to make the working man take a tenancy other than weekly.

10,598. It might prevent him getting better employment?—Well, not that exactly; he might be in a small house and his means might improve, his salary might improve, and he naturally would want to get into a better house.

10,599. Or *vice versa*?—Yes. Probably in the small house he might be under a great inconvenience, which would be reduced if he could get a larger house.

10,600. And there are other contingencies in human life besides wages, such as the family increasing or decreasing, questions of death and so on?—Yes.

10,601. Suppose it were proposed to your tenants to change their tenancy from weekly to half-yearly or yearly, what would they say to that?—They would say, "No, thank you."

10,602. Unanimously?—Quite. There is not the slightest doubt on that.

10,603. It has been suggested that a weekly tenancy would involve more expense to the landlord through more frequent repairs and more cleaning and more painting and

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papering. What do you say to that?—It might do that, but I think he would gain considerably in having his rent paid weekly.

10,604. One would go against the other?—Yes, and that would only apply to coast towns like Liverpool. In inland towns the works generally give regular employment, and the tenants remain in their cottages year in year out.

10,605. You see, the view in Scotland, which appears to be rather derived from the experience of short tenancies—but this rather applies to the bad class of tenants, the worst class of houses——?—Yes, those are the tenants you want to get rid of soonest.

10,606. I suppose, in the experience derived from them, the injury that comes from short tenancies would not necessarily apply to the better class under short lets?—No.

10,607. Is it your view that, taking the thing as a whole, the weekly payment of rent undoubtedly yields a substantial amount more than an infrequent payment would?—I should think that would be the case.

10,608. That would not be so, I suppose, with the very best class of working man, who has a big savings bank account? He is right enough whether he pays short or long, but if you take the ordinary working man, who is not more than any other class ideal?—The strain would be too great.

10,609. In England, have you a large system of co-operative societies?—In the Lancashire towns.

10,610. You see, it is said that in Scotland the best class of working man who is a co-operator gets his dividend say every half year and that comes in very handy for paying his rent and relieves him of any difficulty. I suppose that would be so in England also?—That would apply to towns in Lancashire where the co-operative system is in operation.

10,611. If you take your dock labourers and others, you have a large number of people who have neither savings bank accounts nor an interest in co-operative societies?—No, the very great majority.

10,612. And just when the money is there you get your fair proportion of it?—Yes.

10,613. How about the present position of Liverpool in respect to building or over-building? Is it normal in regard to the number of empty houses?—At present we are about normal. At the present time I think we have about 5000 houses empty. (Actual figures: 1904, 4293; 1905, 4353; 1906, 4627.)

10,614. Can you tell me roughly the number of houses that there are in Liverpool?—I am afraid I cannot tell you.

10,615. You could send that?—Yes. Number of houses in Liverpool, 149,000.

10,616. You said that the percentage of removals, you thought, would be about 20 per cent. If you could kindly, when you go home, just check that and see what it actually is as near as you can.

10,617. (*Mr Howden.*) If you could not give us it on the whole property, you could perhaps give us the actual percentage on your own property?—That is what I understand you want. Taking 489 of our cottages in Liverpool, I find that there were 175 changes of tenancy during 1906, or, say, 35 per cent. Taking 282 cottages in Wallasey for the same period, I find 88 changes of tenancy, say 31 per cent. 1896 was a good year for the first six months, but in the latter half of the year we had a large number of changes.

An analysis of these totals gives the following result:—

	Houses.	Changes.
Rentals up to £13 0	171	65
„ 15 12	246	105
„ 18 4	162	67
„ 19 10	44	5
„ 26 0	148	21
	771	263

10,618. (*Chairman.*) For a normal year?—Perhaps I might say that in twenty years we have only had two cases where we have had to apply to the Court.

10,619. For the order to eject the tenant?—Yes.

10,620. I think you have spoken to everything now except rating?—I have a copy of Mr Cross's Bill, and I would just like to point out something—Clause 5.

10,621. What was your point there?—That clause seems to indicate that all tenants, whether weekly or otherwise, weekly tenants at any rate, would have to give a week's notice to expire on the 28th of the month. Would that not perpetuate the system that is objected to?

(*Chairman.*) Yes.

10,622. (*Mr Binnie.*) Do you not have any definite day for removal?—Any Monday. Seven days' notice, to expire on any Monday, and that is a convenient day, because it is rent day and there is no apportionment of account to make out. The tenant would pay his 5s. and be done with it. If the notice was to expire on the Wednesday, that would be two days' further rent to pay.

10,623. What day does your clerk go round?—Monday.

10,624. And the wages are paid on Saturday?—Yes.

10,625. Is there any other clause in the Bill that you want to direct attention to? Look for instance to Clause 7,—"This Act shall not apply to any dwelling-house which 'is let along with land for agricultural purposes, or with 'a fruit or vegetable garden, nor to any dwelling-house 'let in conjunction with a shop, workshop, stable, byre, 'or the like." Are these properties which are excepted in Mr Cross's Bill, equally the subject of weekly tenancies in Liverpool, houses with gardens?—It is rather a wide definition, because a garden may be so small. If the garden is any size and the tenant takes an interest in it or makes anything out of it, that tenant naturally wants to get a longer tenure.

10,626. How much longer would he want?—Probably he would be an annual tenant.

10,627. The course of the seasons?—Yes.

10,628. Suppose a dwelling-house is let in conjunction with a shop: what is the tenure?—At the very least yearly, but probably on a lease. A man does not want to build up a business and be liable to be turned out on short notice.

10,629. But then, if there is practical security of tenure, provided he is a good tenant, is there that feeling that he would be liable to be turned out?—Well, a business is very different from a dwelling-house. A man makes his reputation in a certain place, and it is desirable that he should remain there.

10,630. Not only desirable but perhaps essential?—Yes.

10,631. So you think that that is a fair enough exception?—I think so.

10,632. Look at No. 9, the subject we are coming to immediately. You see the provision there about the owner paying the taxes up to a certain rental only applies to burgh assessments. The poor rates and school, registration and special parish rates are excepted. So far as your compounding system goes in Liverpool, all rates are included?—Yes, all rates.

10,633. Look at that clause; the latter part of it seems a very awkward clause for the landlord. Just read it?—"Provided always that the receipts for payments furnished 'by owners to occupiers shall separately distinguish the 'amounts which are paid for rent and the amounts which 'are paid for rates and assessments." That would be an almost impossible thing to work out in practice. Have you looked at that rent book I gave you? You see that the rents and the rates are there included without any distinction.

10,634. Yes, the practice in England is to make no distinction?—No distinction.

10,635. What would be the difficulty, in giving effect to the latter clause of Section 9? Do you mean the figuring would be so irksome?—The taxes vary, they go up and down, and I suppose when any alteration took place on the taxes under that section you would need to inform the tenant. It would throw a lot of work upon the landlord, which would seem to me to be unnecessary in England.

10,636. There would be no difficulty, instead of what is provided there, in having a provision that the rate per £ of the different taxes that the occupier has to pay through the landlord should be noted on the rent book?—That would be very awkward.

10,637. Why?—Dealing with a large number of tenants, it would tend to be neglected. You would have to put a penalty clause in, and I am afraid you would have a lot of trouble with the landlords.

10,638. It would not introduce friction, would it, between the clerk and the tenant?—I do not think it would. It would not make any difference to the tenant.

10,639. But do you not find the tenant sometimes saying, "Oh, you are putting too much on me, because the rent and the taxes together do not come to what you are asking"? Do you never find that?—Never. The tenants really get the benefit in cottages, and the landlord does not alter his rent except when the rates go up very much. We have had no cases like that in our experience where we have raised the rent. The rates have varied for the last twenty years, but the rents have always been about the same.

10,640. Do you find that the tenants raise any difficulty in the shape of saying that the landlord has no business to be the rate collector?—Never.

10,641. Do you find that estate agents object to be made rate collectors?—I have heard that objection from some.

10,642. Have you yourself experienced the difficulty?—No.

10,643. Or have you found your clerks complaining about it?—Oh, not at all.

10,644. I suppose among systems of that kind, once they

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are recognised and universal, difficulties disappear?—Yes, this system has worked so long in England that we have practically got used to it. Then the tenant feels a great relief from having not to trouble about the rates. That is a great advantage to landlords. The tenants are not inclined to move to avoid payment of rates, because they are already paid for them.

10,645. That cuts both ways. They do not want to have the trouble of the rate, but it is suggested that they should have the trouble of the rate, so that they would take an interest in it?—Well, with us they seem to take quite a keen interest in it.

10,646. I suppose tenants do not desire specially to have rate collectors coming about them? Do you think they rather prefer to have just the one person?—There is a very considerable objection against the rate collector amongst all classes.

10,647. You have to do with watering places like New Brighton, have you?—Yes.

10,648. It is suggested to us that although the proposal in Mr Cross's Bill might be quite proper for Glasgow, it would be very awkward for places like Rothesay, where a person goes say in autumn and takes from a Rothesay tenant a sublet of the house for a great many months in the next summer. It is suggested that that would not be possible, because the tenant who would thus be letting the house would be turned out and the sub-tenant would find himself out in the cold. How do you find that in England?—Take New Brighton as an example. None of the cottages in New Brighton are let for lodging houses. It is a better class of house, houses about £25.

10,649. Of how long tenancy?—Yearly.

10,650. Then the difficulty cannot arise?—I do not think so.

10,651. You never knew of a cottage in New Brighton being taken by somebody in Liverpool from the tenant who has it on a weekly tenancy?—No.

10,652. Now we will pursue the compounding. The chief Acts that have to be considered in the rating of owners instead of occupiers in small tenements are the two you have mentioned, the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act, 1869, and the Public Health Act, 1875?—Yes.

10,653. In individual localities they have their local Acts?—Yes.

10,654. And of course they have their local Acts in Liverpool?—Yes.

10,655. The 1869 Act is enforced throughout England?—Yes.

10,656. And the 1875 Act applies chiefly to small towns and burghs and urban and rural districts, larger towns having their own Acts?—Yes.

10,657. Tell us about the amount of allowance which is given by the rating authorities. First of all, you talk about the Poor Law Act of 1869?—Yes.

10,658. What is given under that?—In assessments of £8 and under, the landlords are assessed if the overseers wish, and because of that, they are entitled to 15 per cent. If the landlords like to enter into an agreement with the authority to pay these rates, whether the houses are occupied or not, in that case they get another 15, altogether 30 per cent.

10,659. Is that in the case of the vestry resolving to make it compulsory?—Yes. I have a form of agreement which I put in.

10,660. Then has the vestry first of all to resolve to avail themselves of the compulsory clause of the Act?—Yes.

10,661. And then if the owner pays the occupier's rate, he gets 15 per cent. reduction neccssarily?—Yes, and if he signs that agreement, he gets another 15.

This agreement runs thus,—

(*a*) In the case of business premises.

PARISH OF LIVERPOOL.

Agreement for Payment of Rates by Owner, 32 and 33 Vic. cap. 41, sec. 3.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this day of 190 , between of the one part, and the Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, of the other part.

WHEREAS, the said is the owner of certain hereditaments (specified in the schedule hereunto annexed), the rateable value of which said hereditaments does not annually exceed thirteen pounds, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the said Overseers to become liable to them for the Poor Rates assessed in respect of such hereditaments, for a term of one year from the date hereof, and until further notice, and to pay the Poor Rates whether the said hereditaments are occupied or not. And whereas the said Overseers are empowered by Section 3 of the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act of 1869, to enter into such agreement, and are willing to receive from the said the rates to be assessed in respect of such hereditaments, and to allow to him on the payment thereof a commission of 25 per cent. on the amount of such rates. Now, therefore, it is agreed by and between the parties hereto, and the said shall become liable to the said Overseers for the term specified for the payment of all Poor Rates assessed in respect of such hereditaments, whether the same be occupied or not, and shall pay the same, and that the said Overseers shall, subject nevertheless, to the control of the Vestry of the Parish, receive such rates from the said and shall allow to him a commission of 25 per cent. upon the amount thereof.

Signed by the said parties hereto this day of 190 .

No. of Street.	Street or Situation.	Name of Occupier.	Name and Address of Owner.

(*b*) In the case of cottage property, in respect of which an allowance of 30 per cent. is made.

PARISH OF LIVERPOOL.

32 *and* 33 *Vict., cap.* 41, *secs.* 3 *and* 4.

TO THE OVERSEERS OF THE POOR OF THE PARISH OF LIVERPOOL.

I, the undersigned, being the Owner of certain rateable Hereditaments in the said Parish, each of which includes a Dwelling-house, and each of which is of the rateable value of not exceeding £13, do hereby give you notice that I am willing to be rated for a term of one year from the date hereof, and until further notice, in respect of all such rateable Hereditaments, whether the same be occupied or not.

Dated this day of 190 .

Name

Address

Schedule of Hereditaments to which the foregoing Notice applies, being the whole of such Hereditaments of which I am the Owner.

Street Numbers of the Hereditaments referred to.	Situation.

10,662. In that case, is the rate of allowance agreed upon or is he entitled to another 15 per cent.?—It is agreed upon.

10,663. So that he gets an allowance of 30 per cent. altogether?—Yes.

10,664. Would you just give us a reference to the section for convenience?—Yes, 13 and 14 Victoria, Chapter 99, Section 4, empowers the vestry of any parish from time to time to order the owner of all rateable hereditaments, which include dwelling-houses, and which do not exceed a certain prescribed limit, shall be rated in respect of these hereditaments instead of the occupiers. Then they give the prescribed limits, that is to say, in the

metropolis £10; in parishes within the city of Liverpool, £13; in parishes without the city and in Manchester or Birmingham, £10; and in every other parish in the country, £8. I gave you those figures just now.

10,665. That is the one section. What about the one applying to voids—does Section 4 cover it? 32 and 33 Vic., C. 41, Sec. 4, applies to voids.

10,666. When you talk about poor rate, that includes a good deal more than the expense of the maintenance of the poor, but also the county expenses, cost of education, general expenses of rural district councils (including highways, overseer's expenses, and the upkeep of police)?—Yes.

10,667. And in country and rural districts it is the only rate levied?—It is becoming from year to year the only rate levied. I find that in Birmingham and Manchester they levy all their rates through the poor rates. With us we have two sets of rates, the general rate and the poor rate, but that is not the case in Manchester and Birmingham.

10,668. Take high-rented houses: how are the rates paid there? Do the occupiers pay direct?—Usually, but there are many exceptions.

10,669. We were told, for instance, by an ex-member of Parliament, Mr Provand, that he paid three hundred and something pounds in London, including rates?—That of course would be furnished.

10,670. That may be. In that case it would be one payment?—Yes.

10,671. In very sparsely populated counties, where the cottages are scattered, how is it done there?—Direct to the tenant. It is a very small rate indeed.

10,672. Generally speaking, however, in the case of cottage property throughout England, the assessment is on the owners instead of occupiers within the rateable limits stated?—Yes.

10,673. The result being that in some cases there is an allowance of 15 per cent. and voids, and in others 30 per cent. and no voids?—Yes.

10,674. Then how are the voids arranged between the landlord and the rating authority?—That is a difficulty. In a good many cases we pay the rates in full, and a few days before the end of the financial year we send a list of our voids to the authorities, and they send us cheques for the amount of the voids.

10,675. Then if they choose to question your voids, they can do so?—They come and look at our rent books.

10,676. Take the original 15 per cent.—what elements does that cover? It covers cost of collection and losses and unpaid rates?—The 15 per cent.?

10,677. What is it allowed for?—I suppose it is allowed for the landlord collecting the rate weekly and paying it to the authority in one sum.

10,678. But does it not include the two elements, first, of your cost of collection, and, second, cases where you do not get either the rate or the rent? Of course the tenant might make a moonlight flitting?—Yes, it would cover that.

10,679. And the third element of the voids is a separate one that the additional 15 per cent. has to bear?—Yes, and you will notice that the authorities invariably get those agreements signed if they can. The Act says that the landlord must agree with the authority, but the authority prepare the agreement, and they are very anxious that the landlord should sign. These forms are sent out by the authorities.

10,680. Then the Public Health Act, 1875, takes a step further in the direction of compounding. That is the Act 38–39 Victoria, Chap. 55, and under Section 211 the owner, instead of the occupier, may at the option of the urban authority be rated in cases where the rateable value does not exceed £10, or where the premises are let weekly or monthly, whatever the value may be, or where apartments are let separately?—Yes.

10,681. What does that mean where houses are let separately?—There are in some cases big houses let separately.

10,682. Single rooms?—Yes, a decayed neighbourhood.

10,683. Is there much of that?—In Liverpool we have a few such districts. In that case the owner is assessed on a reduced estimate of not less than two-thirds and not more than four-fifths of the net annual value, or if the authority wish to avoid allowances for unoccupied property they must assess on one-half the assessment.

10,684. What do you mean by tenements? Is that the same as we mean?—Yes.

10,685. By the Liverpool Improvements Act, 1867, where the net rateable value does not exceed £13—this means £19, 10s. rent—the owner shall be assessed on half the value of his premises, whether the same be occupied or not, and by the Liverpool Water Act, 1871, owners are assessed at three-fourths of the rateable value on £13 and under, and you have produced a total showing the allowances to owners assessed in place of occupiers in a few of your districts?

	Poor Rates.	General Rates.
Liverpool	30 per cent.	50 per cent.
Birkenhead	30 „	20 „
Bootle	30 „	20 „
Waterloo	30 „	20 „
Wallasey	30 „	20 „
Litherland	30 „	20 per cent. for all small tenancies.
Exeter	25 „	None.
Blackburn	5 per cent. to all who pay early.	5 per cent. to all who pay early.
Bristol	30 per cent.	25 per cent.
York	No allowance.	No allowance.
Burnley	10 per cent.	10 per cent.
Portsmouth	30 „	50 „
Burton-on-Trent	30 „	20 „
Thornaby	30 „	20 „
Harrowgate	30 „	25 „
Chester	30 „	30 „
Barrow	30 „	None.
Huddersfield	10 „	10 per cent.

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10,686. In that table I see you have the heading "Poor Rates." Is that poor rates proper for the maintenance of the poor only?—It includes the other things I mentioned.

10,687. What are general rates as distinguished from poor rates?—Roads, gas-lighting.

10,688. Parks, libraries, and so on?—Yes.

10,689. It has been suggested that there are two ways of securing the advantage to tenants of frequent payment of rates, either the one that you have been expounding or a system of getting the rating authorities direct to collect frequently, say quarterly. Is that tried anywhere in England so far as you know?—No, it is very often collected half-yearly, but not quarterly.

10,690. By the rating authority?—Yes.

10,691. Direct from the occupier?—Yes.

10,692. In what cases is it collected half-yearly?—Poor rates. I think the tendency probably will be that the general rates will merge into the poor rates, and we will have one rate levied once a year, one Bill, and the tenants may be allowed to pay in four instalments, but this would not apply to cottage property.

10,693. And so far as you know they are allowed to pay, but then they pay by going to the office?—Mostly.

10,694. The rating authorities do not send round?—They send round if you required, but it is mostly paid over the counter.

10,695. So far as you know, is there any difficulty experienced in carrying out that system?—The system I outlined?

10,696. Yes?—But that is not involved at present, that is a system which I think we will probably attain to. The present system is half-yearly or yearly.

10,697. But I am talking of the half-yearly payment of rates direct to the rating authorities by the occupiers. You say that that is in existence?—Yes.

10,698. Is any difficulty found in carrying it out so far as you know?—I do not think so.

10,699. What is your own view as between a system under which the rating authority would collect direct say four times a year from the tenants and the system of making the landlord the rate collector?—I do not think any other system except the present system would do for cottages in England.

10,700. Of course, if you could make the rating authorities collect weekly, that would do?—That would increase the expense enormously.

10,701. Theoretically it is possible, but not in practice?—No.

10,702. Of course the landlord's clerk is collecting the rent anyway?—Yes.

10,703. And he may as well get the rate too?—Yes.

10,704. In the one sum?—Yes.

10,705. How often do you landlords pay over your rates that you have thus collected?—Once a year in Liverpool.

10,706. And you have the advantage of the interest of the money that you have thus been collecting during the year?—We pay about halfway through the year when the rates have been running about six months.

10,707. You have had some of it for the first six months?—Yes. The other six months we still have to collect.

10,708. You are out of pocket six months, and in pocket six months; the one would balance the other?—Yes.

10,709. I see. You say on page 4 of your *précis*, at the top, that "In discussing the question of the advantages 'and disadvantages of rating of owners instead of occupiers, 'it must at once be admitted that theoretically it would

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'appear better for each occupier to be assessed directly, 'and be directly responsible to the local authority, as by 'this means, it is argued, ratepayers would be more likely 'to cultivate that attention to local affairs which is so 'desirable in the public interest; but I am of opinion 'that the practical advantages of the compounding system 'outweigh the theoretical advantage of a direct tax pay-'able directly, without the intervention of the owner." You adhere to that rule?—Yes.

10,710. Is that the view of the Royal Commission too? Did you see the passage in their report?—Yes.

10,711. They were against compounding on principle, but admitted it could not be avoided?—Yes. I have had conversations with many public officers, with borough accountants and district accountants, and they are all against it in theory, but they admit that it is the only possible system. This system comes in for revision every year when the authorities levy the taxes. There is always a temptation to save it if they can, because authorities are generally hard up.

10,712. I suppose that while the system of paying direct once a year may be quite natural in Scotland with yearly tenancies, short tenancies of weekly or monthly would necessarily involve the compounding system?—I should think so.

10,713. And you think that there is sufficient enterprise among political parties in regard to the question of the tenants taking an interest in taxation to ensure that the matter will be kept well in front?—That is our experience in Liverpool.

10,714. And of course the working classes are now taking a much more keen personal interest in politics than they did, and in the question of taxes?—Very much.

10,715. And they have also organised themselves in a way they did not do formerly?—Yes, nearly every trade has its organisation now.

10,716. You have also ratepayers' associations and different social organisations concerning themselves with matters of local government?—Yes.

10,717. I see that you mention here—you referred to it before, but I should just like you to emphasise it—you say in the middle of page 4 that, "By the payment of the 'rates in the rent a uniform system is carried into effect 'and, year in, year out, a working man pays the same 'sum although the rates are continually fluctuating, and 'generally on the rise, which is a great benefit to a man 'with a wage barely sufficient to meet all his daily require-'ments." Have your rates in Liverpool increased much?—Yes, they have gone up a good deal in the last five years. The education rate has gone up 1s. nearly.

10,718. How do you account for it that the total sum paid by the working man has not gone up? You must either have been getting too much before, or you must be getting too little now?—No, I think we were over-built.

10,719. And that brought down the rents?—It meant that practically.

10,720. Now things have righted themselves?—Yes. We are fairly normal at present.

10,721. Do you think also that, in the interest of the tenant, the landlord even in his own interest finds it desirable to make allowances to a tenant that of course a tax collector is not entitled to do?—Yes, the tax collector would have to take the tenants before the Court, which would hurt the feelings of a great many of the tenants.

10,722. And there may be many reasons why it would not even pay a landlord to be too strict?—It is not to their advantage, for if it is found that a certain landlord is harsh, then people avoid his houses.

10,723. We have heard it said that there is a feeling in England that you landlords and estate agents get too much. Have you worked that out to see how the thing stands?—Yes, I have one or two cases here. I could give you a few figures.

10,724. First of all, may I take it that you have yourself tested the matter, and averaged out the results in the case of properties under the control of your firm, and you are of opinion, while in some cases the allowance may appear high, yet, taking everything into consideration, the landlord is not too well paid for the risk and extra work put upon him?—Yes.

10,725. So that you think on the whole it works fairly now?—Yes.

10,726. Have you any notion how these percentages were arrived at by the legislature?—None at all, but they seem to be very good working percentages. Although at first sight the allowances seem to be high, still, they don't work out in practice excessive. Then the parties have discretion, you notice, so that the system is wide and works differently in different towns.

10,727. There is no differentiation apparently?—Yes, you see under the Public Health Act they can decide on the amount of the allowance.

10,728. Yes, one amount, but what I mean is that we are told that the expense and the risk in the poorer class of houses is much greater than in those that are higher rented, and Mr Cross in his Bill proposes to give effect to that, because he differentiates the allowances. In England, if you have your 15 per cent., there is no differentiation. In the £7 houses, where there is more trouble, you do not get any more than in the £15 houses?—No. The allowance on the low rental will probably mean a loss, whereas on the higher rental it might probably be a little gain.

10,729. So that the 15 per cent. must have been a statutory average?—Yes.

10,730. Because the loss in the lowest rentals would be more than 15 per cent., while on the highest it might be less?—Yes.

10,731. Have you any opinion as to whether that is a better system, rather than Mr Cross's, of differentiating? It is the easier system, of course?—Yes, I do not think Mr Cross's system would work out. I think he would have to make a bigger allowance and leave the discretion more with the various local authorities.

10,732. We will come to that. He proposes for over £4 and under £7, 10 per cent.; £7 and under £10, 5 per cent.; £10 and not exceeding £20, 2½ per cent., halving it again. I suppose the simpler system is to have one average allowance?—Yes.

10,733. And I fancy in all these matters the less complication there is, the better?—Yes. It will be very awkward to work Mr Cross's system out.

10,734. Do you apply that at all to the proposal in Mr Cross's Bill, that the adoption of his measure should be optional? It has been suggested to us, that to have different systems in different towns in Scotland would be awkward. Now you have great differences in England, as you have been showing us?—Yes. I think it might safely be left to the local authorities, because they know best the local requirements.

10,735. I suppose, in the end, the tenant pays everything?—Yes.

10,736. However the system is worked out?—That undoubtedly generally is the case.

10,737. And in the question of rating, you have to consider the three interests, the landlord, the tenant, and the rating authorities?—Yes.

10,738. And at the present time, is it your view that all three are satisfied that whatever theoretically may be desirable, compounding is the best system?—Undoubtedly.

10,739. You include the rating authorities?—Yes.

10,740. And show that by what you said about their interest to get these arrangements signed?—Yes, and by the fact that they make these allowances practically throughout the country. They are not bound to make them, but they do make them.

10,741. For their own advantage?—Yes.

10,742. In reference to the amount, I see at the bottom of page 4, you note that in Liverpool on 1st June, at the time when they are paid, the Corporation can depend upon receiving something like £94,000 in a lump sum?—Yes.

10,743. Is the result that they do not require to overdraw their bank account to the same extent as they would otherwise?—I do not think they overdraw in Liverpool at all. The estimate during the year carries them on.

10,744. Has there been any proposal on the part of the rating authorities in England that the landlords should remit the rate more often than they do?—You mean more than once a year.

10,745. Yes?—No.

10,746. You referred to the Act of 1869. Has there been any tendency to go back on the arrangement there outlined or rather to extend it?—Rather to extend it. You see the 1875 Act perpetuates the system and carries it a step further than the 1869 Act.

10,747. And what about local Acts generally?—They follow suit.

10,748. You refer on page 5 to the Corporation of Liverpool introducing the 50 per cent. arrangement. What do you refer to there?—Within recent years, we have had added to the city a number of urban district areas. Those districts, prior to their inclusion in the city, were under the Public Health Act.

10,749. Of 1875?—Yes, and the allowance to owners was 20 per cent. The moment they are included in the city, the 20 per cent. is dropped, and the city gives 20 per cent. and no voids. Our City Accountant in Liverpool is an expert on these matters, and I am quite sure he would not allow anything of that kind to pass, unless he had fully considered it, and it has in fact been considered by the City Council on more than one occasion. But it is perpetuated wherever they add an new area.

10,750. How long do you say there has been a practical experience in England of the compounding system?—About forty years.

10,751. Is the only other point on which there is any

real difference of opinion, the amount of the allowance to be made to owners?—Yes.

10,752. And there is a wide discretion there given to local authorities?—Yes.

10,753. Is it your view that, instead of fixing any rate of allowance under an Act for Scotland, that should be left to local authorities?—I think a rate of allowance, a maximum and a minimum, should be fixed by the Act, and that the authorities should operate between these two extremes. I understand in Scotland that half the rates have been paid by the landlord hitherto, and that they get no allowance. If they have to pay the whole of the rates in future, and get 15 per cent., and that would be equivalent to 30 per cent., would it not.

10,754. Is it your view that, whether it be owner's rates or occupier's rates, landlords should not pay on voids unless they get an allowance above that?—Yes.

10,755. Is it the case that you find a difference in the amount of allowance between places like Liverpool and Portsmouth, with large floating populations, and inland towns with staple trades giving constant employment?—Yes, that is very marked.

10,756. And the difference is justified by the different conditions?—Yes. I have a letter here I would like to read. It is from the City Accountant of Westminister, Mr Lester Woodhouse, formerly accountant at Birkenhead, who went to Burnley, and now is at Westminster, so I thought his experience would be valuable. "At Burnley 'we were able to get in the rate without compounding, but 'the pressure upon the Council was so great that after I 'left they had to make arrangements to adopt that plan. 'The statement of the people was that they could far easier 'pay 1s. a week than 26s. at one time. At Birkenhead 'compounding was in force the whole time I was there. 'Here for six months the various Workmen's Dwellings 'Associations declined to compound, and our experience 'proved that it was very much cheaper to collect the rates 'ourselves than to compound. But, again, the wishes of the 'ratepayers decided the matter in favour of compounding. 'I do not think to-day that you could find any Council 'willing to go back to the direct rate of collection, as, if so, 'the majority would, I believe, lose their seats at the 'following election. As to the question whether more 'interest is taken where the rates are paid direct, I can 'only say that one year in Burnley the rates were increased '11d. in the £ and the price of gas 5d. per thousand feet, 'but all the rates were then collected from the occupiers 'and not a single councillor lost his seat. So far as West-'minister is concerned, the percentage is only very small."

10,757. In Liverpool, is there any system under which persons are entitled to apply for relief of rates on the ground of inability to pay or from poverty?—Under this 1869 Act any person can apply to the magistrates and be relieved.

10,758. Do they do so to any large extent?—No; of course there are a number of cases, but I do not suppose the Council would lose more than £200 or £300 in a year in that way.

10,759. In that case, how is it done,—the landlord has already paid the rate?—But not for that class. That is for the class of tenant who pays direct.

10,760. Then there is no means for those who have paid through the landlord of getting it back?—No.

10,761. Is there any agitation for such a relief being instituted?—None at all.

10,762. I suppose you think that in many cases in Scotland where a tenant may in the case of one lump rum of rate be unable to pay, he might quite well be able to pay if it was spread weekly over the year?—Yes.

10,763. (*Mr Binnie.*) In Liverpool, how do you arrive at the assessed rental? Apparently in some cases it is two-thirds of the gross rental, but in other cases it seems to be in a smaller proportion? Is there any rule?—The assessment is made by the overseers, and they have a discretion as to what allowance they make. Taking the rental of £19, 10s., that is 7s. 6d. per week, they assess that at £13, and it is in their discretion what the assessment shall be.

10,764. In another case you say £14, 6s. was——?—£9.

10,765. So that the allowance in that case is still greater than one-third?—Yes, it varies according to the information before the Assessment Committee. The poor rate assessment establishes the general rate assessment.

10,766. And all rates are charged on the lower sums, not on the larger?—Yes.

10,767. That is, a tenant who pays £19, 10s. to you, pays rates only on £13?—Yes.

10,768. Then, in order that we may judge of that compared with our practice, would you tell us what the rates really amount to in Liverpool?—In the £?

10,769. Yes?—The general rate under the compounding.

10,770. The gross before you get your discount?—3s. 8d.

10,771. 3s. 8d.; that is general?—Yes.

10,772. And then poor?—3s. 6d. And then there is a water rate of 6d., and a watch rate of 1d.

10,773. Now, on the 3s. 8d.—that is the general rate—you get off that 50 per cent., do you?—Yes.

10,774. That is 1s. 10d. And you pay 1s. 10d. Then the poor?—30 per cent.

10,775. That is 3s. 6d. 30 per cent. is 1s. 1d.,—that leaves 2s. 5d. Then the water, you get a fourth of that. That is 4½d. And the watch rate?—That is levied in full.

10,776. So that you pay in that way 4s. 8½d.?—We generally reckon about 5s. That is about it.

10,777. Then thirteen times that is £3, 1s. 3d.: is that about it?—We generally estimate in round figures about £3, 5s. for a house of that description.

10,778. So that in reality the landlord gets a rent of £16, 5s. when the assessed rental is only £13?—Yes.

10,779. In other cases of course the proportion will be somewhat similar?—Yes.

10,780. Then to follow up this point,—you told us about the rents of the houses, with which let us compare the rents of Scotland. You say that a four-roomed house would let at anything up to £19, 10s.?—No, a four-roomed house would be about £13.

10,781. Up to £13?—Yes.

10,782. Can you give us the size of these houses? Give us the length of the frontage and the width of the building?—Probably the entire frontage would be anything from 16 to 18 feet.

10,783. You have not the 14 feet frontages that they have in London?—Probably we would have some 14 feet.

10,784. I don't want to suggest anything, but I know a good deal about it?—It varies considerably. So that in the smallest-roomed houses, two-roomed houses would have a kitchen and a bedroom above and probably a little yard behind and a little pantry. Probably that house might not measure more than 12 or 14 feet frontage, but if you go to a four-roomed house, it would probably have a little entrance hall, a passage about 4 feet wide, and that would increase the width of the house.

10,784*a*. You say that would be about——?—About 16 to 18 feet.

10,785. Say 17?—By 24—12 for the front room and 12 for the back room.

10,786. Do you know the cost of these houses?—The cost of building?

10,787. Yes?—I am not inclined to say. It varies so very much that I really could not say.

10,788. You have promised to give us particulars as to the actual facts of the changes in the course of the year, because 20 per cent. in our experience seems so very great. —Yes, in my own experience.

10,789. Then, in regard to the rating, you say there are two 15 per cents.?—Yes.

10,790. The first one is compulsory; the landlord is bound to collect the rates——?—If the authorities so decide.

10,791. Yes, if the authorities resolve, then the landlord must collect, and he must be allowed 15 per cent.?—Yes.

10,792. Even if they resolve to adopt the practice of arranging with the landlords about paying for voids, that is not compulsory on the landlords; they are not compelled to do so?—No.

10,793. And when the rate there, if it is an insufficient rate of compounding, is offered to the landlord, he can say, "I decline to accept it"?—Yes, that has been done more than once.

10,794. Then you said that you thought that in Acts regarding compounding, there should be a maximum and a minimum rate fixed; but if the Act makes it imperative upon the owner to gather rents, to compound, what advantage would there be in having a maximum and a minimum rate? Would the authorities not be certain just to fix on the minimum?—In practice that is what it amounts to. They do not give a penny more than they are obliged to.

10,795. Then what would be the advantage of having a maximum and a minimum, assuming always that the landlord is bound to collect the rates?—But there might be cases, and no doubt there would be cases, where they would probably make a larger allowance and include the voids.

10,796. There is no use having a maximum and a minimum if the landlords are compelled to collect the rates?—Perhaps not.

10,797. And then the Acts should define what allowance should be given?—It would appear so.

10,798. In regard to paying for voids, you think that that is a case where there should be agreement between the parties that the landlord should not be compelled to pay for voids unless he comes to an understanding with the assessing authorities as to the amount to be given to him? —That would be so, and then maximum and minimum would come in.

10,799. I understand it in that case. Then, in regard to this matter of compounding. Can you account for the great difference in Liverpool between the allowance given on the different classes of rates? There is 50 per cent. on the general rate, and there is 30 per cent. on the poor rate: can you account for the difference in any way?—The poor rate is levied under the General Public Health Act.

10,800. I know, but apart from the difference of Acts, can you account for the fact that in one case the allowance is 30 per cent. and in the other case it is 50 per cent.?—Of course we levy under our local Act, and probably it has been found in practice that 50 per cent. was a proper allowance to make, and it paid the Councils to make that allowance.

10,801. But in other places, Birkenhead, for example—which is just across the river from you—they only get 20 per cent. on the general rates, and in a majority of towns they only get 20 per cent. The highest of any town except Liverpool is Portsmouth, where it is 50 per cent. or so, and the next highest is Chester, 30 per cent.; Harrowgate, 25 per cent.; Bristol, 25 per cent.; and all the others are 20 per cent. or 10 per cent., and then no allowance in some places. Can you account for Liverpool being 50 per cent.? Is there anything peculiar about Liverpool that accounts for that great difference?—It is a seafaring town, and there are a great many changes in tenants, and a great deal of rates would be lost if they had not this arrangement.

10,802. Would you lose more of the general rate than of the poor rate?—I suppose not.

10,803. And yet the allowance in one case is 30 per cent., and in the other 50 per cent.; you cannot account for that? No.

10,804. Can you tell us how, in places like Exeter and York, there is no allowance made on the general rate, no allowance made on any rates?—York and Exeter are two very old-fashioned cities, where there is principally a resident population, and practically no industries. The small tenants in places like that would be more people who were more or less dependent on the gentry of the town.

10,805. But the strange thing is that there are no allowances in York upon the poor rate: now I thought that was regulated by an Act that specified 15 per cent. allowance?—The overseers are not bound to avail themselves of the Act, you see.

10,806. But can they then recover from the proprietor?—No, they must go to the tenants direct.

10,807. And when you say "no allowance," it would perhaps be more correct to say "no compounding"?—Yes.

10,808. May we alter that then?—I put it in purposely, so that you could see there were places where there was no allowance.

10,809. No allowance means no compounding?—Yes.

10,810. Then Blackburn, there is 5 per cent. allowed to all who pay annually?—Yes.

10,811. Do you know where any landlords take advantage of that, or do they just leave it?—I don't know, but they levy under a local Act there.

10,812. You cannot say whether in respect of this allowance of 5 per cent. any of the landlords pay their tenants' rates or not?—I believe so, but I cannot say definitely. I see the allowance for voids in Blackburn amounted to £8500.

10,813. Was that the amount of assessment allowed?—No, the amount of rate allowed.

10,814. This is the rate allowed in respect of voids?—Yes.

10,815. And also in Barrow, where you say on the general rates no allowance is given. I suppose that will be no compounding?—Yes, no compounding.

10,816. Then in Litherland there is 20 per cent for small tenancies. What do you mean by small tenancies?—They have a very peculiar arrangement in Litherland. They assess the landlords in all cases where the tenants pay their rent weekly or monthly.

10,817. It is 20 per cent. for all tenancies let weekly or monthly?—That is so.

10,818. You have told us that in Liverpool the very poor get no relief at all?—That is so,—from the magistrates.

10,819. What do you mean by suggesting that landlords may allow? Is that founded on any practice, or is it each man just dealing with each case as it arises?—That is so. The cases are dealt with as they arise, and, as a matter of fact, the landlord is on better terms with his tenant than any rate collector is likely to be.

10,820. Then you yourself will have some very poor tenants?—Yes.

10,821. Have you any system for instructing your rent collectors?—We find out the real facts of the case, and if we find that the tenant is in difficulties owing to no fault of his own, we ask him to leave the house and forgive him any arrears of rent that he owes—to leave at a week's notice.

10,822. You have no system of allowing a certain proportion of the rates in respect of their poverty?—No, each case would be dealt with separately.

10,823. In regard to subletting: how do you prevent that subletting?—It is an exceedingly difficult thing to do.

10,824. I know the district of Wallasey very well, and I know that in some of the cottages there with two storeys of 14 feet frontages, there are sometimes four families. In Liverpool, does that prevail to any extent?—I am sorry to say it does.

10,825. So that there is a good deal of subletting?—Yes, that we do not know anything about.

10,826. That must subject the property to a great deal of tear and wear?—It does.

10,827. And how do you recoup yourself for that? Do you in certain districts charge extra rent because of the extra tear and wear?—No, I do not think so. Of course anyone buying that class of property would pay so much less price in consequence of that, in view of the fact that probably there would be a greater wear and tear on that than on the average property.

10,828. And you find the lower-rented houses sell at a comparatively small number of years' purchase?—Yes.

10,829. Is there any time of the year in which there are a larger number of removals than at any other, or are they spread pretty generally over the whole year?—Speaking of cottages, they are spread over the year.

10,830. Pretty largely?—Yes. Of course in larger houses the spring is the time.

10,831. I think you said that in twenty years you had only twice to apply to the Court for an ejectment order?—Yes, only twice.

10,832. Does that mean the County Court, or does that include the Police Court?—Both Courts. One case in each Court.

10,833. In twenty years?—Yes.

10,834. How do you get tenants out?—In the first place, we give them notice, and if they do not leave the house at the expiry of that notice, we send them a further notice that we intend to distrain if the house is not vacated. If they do not leave, then we issue a warrant and a distraint officer takes that to the house and he has our instructions to say to the tenant, "If you get out at once you can take 'all your furniture, but if you do not we will be reluctantly 'compelled to distrain upon you," and that means that they go. You can distrain, you know.

10,835. And you put in an officer?—Yes.

10,836. Into the house?—Yes, always, and we have to pay him 5s. 6d. for every case. We practically get possession for 5s. 6d., whereas by going to the Court we would have to pay 12s.

10,837. And then in England you can put a man in possession, I think?—A distraint officer is an officer of the County Court.

10,838. That is only on an order of the County Court?—He is appointed by the County Court. You must distrain through him.

10,839. But that officer can put a man into the house?—Yes. He can go and take the furniture out subject to a number of exceptions. He cannot turn the tenant out.

10,840. He cannot turn the people out?—No.

10,841. But he can put a man in possession?—No.

10,842. How is that?—We have no power to take possession unless we get an order from the Court.

10,843. We were told by someone that you can put an officer into the house?—Yes, but that man can only distrain on the goods and take them away. He cannot even stay on the premises unless the tenant asks him to stay.

10,844. He can take away everything?—Yes, except these large number of exceptions.

10,845. Tools and bedding and a large number of other things up to what?—£5. That means that in some cottages we must leave everything.

10,846. We were told by some factors in Glasgow that there are quite a number of tenants who move very frequently from house to house, paying perhaps a month's rent when they go in and no more, and sit on practically rent free, to the great hardship of the landlords, and they do so for the greater part of their lives?—Yes, we call them squatters in Liverpool.

10,847. How do you get rid of them?—It is very difficult to get rid of them. We often give them something to go out. We do not get very many of that class of tenant, but they are exceedingly difficult to deal with. After they once get into your premises, it takes a great deal of trouble to get them out. That is the class of tenant who likes to take the house on a yearly tenancy.

10,848. Are any of your rents paid in advance?—Occasionally, but very seldom.

10,849. When a tenant is moving, you would just get the rent as they leave the house?—Yes.

10,850. And if the clerk happens to call in the afternoon?—They may have gone.

10,851. You have no arrangement for getting the rent out of them earlier than that date?—No.

10,852. It was suggested to us that the rating authorities should be required to serve on each tenant once a year a notice of the amount of the rates that are payable in respect of the house they have occupied, to make them take an interest in municipal affairs, and also to let them know how much more than rent they had actually paid. Is there anything of that kind done in England?—No.

10,853. The only way in which a tenant knows the amount of rates is just from the newspapers?—That is so.

10,854. (*Mr Howden.*) What percentage do the landlords pay factors for the collection of rents?—5 per cent. on weeklies and 2½ per cent. on monthlies and quarterlies.

10,855. Could you give us any idea of what the arrears of rent are in connection with your own property, the net amount, or the percentage?—I have some figures here. To take a case where we have an estate of 142 cottages, the nominal rental is £2176. We actually collected last year £1888, so that we lost £288.

10,856. (*Chairman.*) That is independent of unlets?—That includes voids.

10,857. (*Mr Howden.*) But it is not voids I want. Deduct the voids?—I am afraid I could not do that. I could probably send you the information.

(*Chairman.*) You might send it to us.

Voids, ...	£175 10s.
Loss of rent, ...	112 10

10,858. (*Mr Howden.*) And it would also include the rates; that would include everything?—Yes. Might I be allowed to give you this. I tried to estimate what is the result to us as landlords in this particular property, and I have taken the nominal rent as £2176. We collected £1888, and that leaves £288 loss. The rates from that property, if paid in full, would be £680. That is practically a third of the rental; I have taken it as a third. We have lost £288, and I say that if the rating authorities had collected direct they would have lost a third of that amount, because the rates are one-third, and a third is £96. So they would have lost £96 on that property. Then I assume the cost of collection would be £40, the cost of office staff £40, for general rates, and the same for poor rates, making a total of £256 that it would cost the Corporation to collect those rates. They actually allowed us £241.

10,859. (*Mr Binnie.*) It would have cost the authorities how much?—£256, and I think that I have erred rather on the side of leniency than otherwise, because there are so many expenses a Corporation has that an outsider does not know about.

10,860. And you got £241?—Yes, that is in the city of Liverpool.

10,861. (*Chairman.*) That is nothing exceptional?—I have taken out two or three cases, and they practically come to the same.

10,862. (*Mr Howden.*) I think you told us that you paid the rates to the local authorities in the month of June?—Yes.

10,863. When does your financial year begin?—It commences on the 1st of January and ends on the 31st of December.

10,864. When is the roll of voters made up?—On 1st January, on the occupation of the previous July. A man who is in in July will get his vote on 1st January. He will be put on the roll.

10,865. On 1st January?—Yes.

10,866. It takes him practically six months to make up that roll?—Yes.

10,867. You have a paragraph in connection with distraint for rent. You tell us that any implement by which the tenant makes a livelihood—"goods in actual use"—what are the goods in actual use?—I suppose that would be foods, bedding.

10,868. Bedding and clothing. Your paragraph led me to believe bedding is in addition to that?—Might I trouble you with an extract; but perhaps I could give you that again. The exceptions are fully set out in Woodfall's *Landlord and Tenant* (a leading authority), 1898 edition, pp. 442–536.

10,869. Yes. You tell us on the general letting question,—that is also in your precognition, third paragraph,—that the custom rests either on a verbal agreement or parol agreement, or based on lease or decisions of the Court. What do you mean by "decisions of the Court"?—There are various decisions. For instance, it has been decided that a weekly tenant should give a week's notice, and a monthly tenant a month's notice, and a quarterly tenant six months' notice, to expire at the date of entry in any year?—Yes.

10,870. But, as a matter of fact, when a weekly tenant enters a house, he does not take the house for a week, only for such time as he gives a week's notice?—Yes.

10,871. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) I suppose the number of empty houses varies?—Yes, very much in a place like Liverpool.

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10,872. How much has the rate been varied, for voids?—It has not been varied for years.

10,873. Although the number of voids varies a good deal?—Yes.

10,874. Has there been any discussion about altering the rates?—It comes up almost every year for discussion, and they still adhere to the arrangement. They must allow 50 per cent. if they are not going to allow voids.

10,875. Taking one year with another, it comes all right?—Yes.

10,876. You said you thought it would be difficult where there was compounding to separate rates from rent in making a statement to the tenants. I did not quite understand in what the difficulty lay?—Taking a case of a £19, 10s. house, the rates there would be about £3, 5s. Well, it is very awkward to divide £3, 5s. into fifty-two amounts and mark it correctly in the rent book. It would lead, I am afraid, to mistakes and errors occurring frequently.

10,877. Fractions of a penny?—Yes. And suppose a tenant is in arrears, how much of that arrear is to be rate and how much rent?

10,877A. Well, from my point of view, the sum would be one. He has got to recover it. He has got to lose in any case when he is answerable for the rates. The point of the question was that the tenant should see what he was actually paying in rates. Do you think the tenant as a matter of fact does know?—Not the amount. He knows he is paying pretty heavily for rates, because it is constantly borne in upon him by agitation.

10,878. Suppose I asked an average workman what rates he was paying, could he tell me?—No, I do not suppose he could. He would tell you they were very heavy.

10,879. But he would not know whether they had gone up or not?—I think he would know that, because there is so much discussion.

10,880. He would know he had not to pay any more?—That is so. It would not affect him.

10,881. Would it not be an advantage to the landlord, if it was possible, to indicate that the rates were going up, because he would be able to put the increase of the rate directly to the tenant without raising his own rent?—I do not think so. It might be if the authorities concerned notified the tenants once a year of the amount of the rate. That would be the best way if it was to be done at all. Then the authority has direct connection with the tenant, and they know that he gets the information. To throw the onus on to the landlord is awkward, and unless you have a penalty clause I am afraid it would not work.

10,882. It is rather difficult with weekly rents as compared with monthly rents?—Yes.

10,883. (*Chairman.*) I see that the Statistical Officer of the London County Council gives us a Memo., and he says that tenants in London express their view of the subject usually in the statement that they had no rates to pay at all. Is that so in Liverpool?—I do not think so. I have heard many tenants talking about the rates being heavy when they were paying through the landlord.

10,884. They know quite well that they are paying the rates through the landlord?—Yes, that is constantly referred to.

10,885. (*Mr Cox.*) Can you tell us at all how what you call the rateable value is arrived at in England?—It varies so much. You see the assessment committee have a discretion, but, generally speaking, it is somewhere between 10 and 25 per cent. of the actual rental.

10,886. Do you send in a form every year of what the rentals of your various properties are?—We send in a form whenever we are requested to.

10,887. Whenever you are asked. How often is that?—Perhaps every two or three years. They can request it every year.

10,888. And off your rental they can deduct how much?—It may be anything between 10 and 25 per cent.

10,889. And that is what you call the assessable value?—Yes.

10,890. And you have a deduction of a third or a fourth more before you pay your taxes?—That is so.

10,891. So that in that way you are really paying upon about half the value?—Yes.

10,892. I am afraid it is different with us here. We pay on the larger amount, so that it may not be exactly the case that English rates are higher than they are here, because you pay on the smaller value?—Of course it does not make any difference if the system is the same; whether the rates are high or low they pay the same.

10,893. To bring out a comparison between the two countries you must take these two things into account?—It is almost impossible to compare, and it is almost impossible to compare town with town in England.

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10,894. (*Mr Dobbie.*) Are written agreements common among tenants in England?—Above cottages, yes.

10,895. And are they usually stamped in accordance with the Stamp Act?—I am afraid that a good many of them are not stamped. I think that opens up a very awkward matter. There is an agitation in England to have the agreements stamped with a penny stamp. At present it is *ad valorem*.

10,896. At present the stamp duties are 1s. 6d. above £10, and 2s. from £15 to £20. Is that thought to be an excessive duty?—Yes.

10,897. Apart from agreement, I think you told us that the notice to quit was rather a lengthy notice. In the case of quarterly lets, six months' notice is given?—Yes.

10,898. And in yearly lets it is six months also?—Yes.

10,899. Is that a common law rule applied to England?—It may be.

10,900. In the absence of an agreement, one requires to get notice?—Usually: some of the lesser tenants want a three months' notice.

10,901. In giving us the figures about the removals, you might distinguish between the removals say up to £10, and between £10 and £15, and £15 and £20. Then, under any conditions, does the death of a tenant cancel a let?—No, it does not. I should like to see that reformed. I think there should be something for that. (See previous reply.)

10,902. Then, under these exemptions from distraint, is it found in practice that the limitations of £5 limit in regard to tools, etc., and these other exceptions, operates harshly towards the landlord?—It means that he gets nothing.

10,903. Is there a grievance that this distinction should exist in favour of the tenant?—The grievance is rather that you cannot get rid of a bad tenant quicker.

10,904. In Scotland we do not have any £5 limit or any restriction. The landlords do not complain of that if they have more ready means of ejection?—Yes.

10,905. In the case of shorts lets, where your tenants leave on the Monday—that being rent day—if your clerk finds him in process of leaving and he does not pay the rent, is he helpless?—Yes, quite.

10,906. You must just let him go?—Yes.

10,907. I do not quite understand the figures about the typical case that you gave to Mr Howden. Do I understand that the total irrecoverables was £288?—That is the amount we lost between voids and loss of rent.

10,908. Voids, irrecoverables, and unlets?—Yes.

10,909. The rates upon that property are £680?—Yes.

10,910. From that would you get 30 per cent. deduction?—The sum we received amounted to £241. We actually paid £439.

10,911. But the rebate you got was £240?—Yes.

10,912. Which would mean that on that property, owing to the system of compounding, the loss to the property in respect of unlets and irrecoverable rents was £47?—Yes, except that you must take into account that he is collecting the rates for the authorities.

10,913. Apart from the trouble of collection?—Yes.

10,914. £47 represents the total loss on a rental of £2176? That would be so.

10,915. When rates are payable by tenants, what is the rateable value?—They vary just as they do in the other assessments.

10,916. Of course in that case there would be no allowance given for rates?—The rateable value is not the rental value.

10,917. It would have to represent repairs and insurance rather than rates?—Yes.

10,918. The object of giving the increased deduction off the gross rents in the case of compounding is that the sum put in includes the rate, and therefore perhaps a quarter must come off for that?—Yes, a rental of £30 would mean assessment on £25 or £26.

10,919. Is there any statutory authority in England for taking assessments by instalments?—No.

10,920. The system of half-yearly collection will be statutory?—Yes.

10,921. But any more frequent payment is simply a case of paying up arrears?—It is a matter of arrangement with the local authority.

10,922. There is no statutory arrangement for getting payment, say quarterly?—No.

10,923. Then, apart from compounding, are rates charged on empty property in England?—Direct to the tenant.

10,924. In the case of voids?—No. It is only in the case of compounding that any deduction requires to be made in the case of voids.

10,925. We have a different system from the one in England. You have no taxes charged direct as owner's taxes?—Except under the compounding system.

10,926. Apart from that?—No.

10,927. The whole rate is charged on the tenant?—There are a few exceptions.

10,928. I mean generally?—Yes.

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10,929. Coming to compounding, have the Corporation of Liverpool attempted to make an agreement with the proprietors to compound and to collect at less than 15 per cent.?—No.

10,930. They have to compound by agreement—to arrange for compounding?—No. They have not the power now under their Act. Every assessment value of £13 and under must come under the 50 per cent. allowance.

10,931. Under the Public Health Act?—No, their local Act.

10,932. In Liverpool?—Yes.

10,933. They have no choice now. The Corporation must, where the assessment value is £13 and under, allow 50 per cent. to all owners, and no voids, and that is the system they are perpetuating in all districts they take in.

10,934. With regard to burgh rates?—Yes, burgh rates are practically the general rates.

10,935. Not the poor rates?—No, the poor rates come under the general law of 30 per cent.

10,936. I was talking of poor rates, which differ rather in regard to the application. Coming to poor rates, have the Corporation of Liverpool attempted to induce the factors to compound for less than 15 per cent.?—No, they have no power to do that. That is settled by the 1869 Act, and the Corporation do not levy the poor rate. It is the overseers.

10,937. I mean the rating authority. In some of these burghs, the allowance is only 10 per cent.?—That will be under a local Act.

10,938. If you look up the clause, you will find the position is that that by agreement between the two parties there can be a less rate than 15 per cent.

(*Chairman*). Not exceeding 25 per cent.

10,939. (*Mr Dobbie.*) And in some burghs the landlords have agreed to collect the owners' rents under 15 per cent., but in Liverpool has any attempt been made to induce you to do that?—No.

10,940. Then, coming to the voids and the general collection, is 30 per cent. the allowance in Liverpool?—For poor rates, yes.

10,941. Did the Corporation attempt, or have they attempted, to arrange on a smaller sum?—No; you see, if they go under the 1869 Act, they cannot.

10,942. Undoubtedly, if you look at Section 4?—Which Act?

10,943. The 1869 Act, Section 4. In regard to the arrangement for voids, the allowance for voids is not to exceed 15 per cent.?—That is to say, if the overseers like to make an arrangement with the landlords, they must allow that 15 per cent.—or they "might" allow them, yes.

10,944. The point is, whether they have taken up the position that 15 per cent. would be too much in respect of voids?—No, they have never attempted to suggest a less amount.

10,945. In the London burgh you gave us, Westminster, the allowance on voids there is only 1 per cent.?—Yes, that is so.

10,946. I was wondering about the comparison between Liverpool and some other places?—I notice the Liverpool rates collected are about 90 per cent., so they lose 10 per cent.

10,947. That is the whole rate?—Yes.

10,948. Under compounding, you don't know how much they would lose in the absence of compounding?—No.

10,949. In London, where they don't compound, they lose about 6 per cent., we are told. Can you tell us the percentage of irrecoverables above the compounding in England. What is lost in Liverpool, say, above rent where compounding prevails?—I could not tell you that.

10,950. Up to what point does compounding apply in Liverpool?—£19, 10s.

10,951. Which means a rateable rental of £13?—An assessment value of £13.

10,952. Can you find out what the Corporation lose, say on assessable rentals of from £13, 10s. to £19, 10s.?—The Corporation of Liverpool lost last year on voids £45,000, on a total rating of £750,000. Would that answer your question?

10,953. As near as possible—of course, if we had the different classes of houses and different rentals, making the comparison?—I could get that from my own books.

10,954. If you take some of your own houses, where the tenants are assessed direct, and attempt to discover what occurs in the case of rents immediately above the compounding limit?—Say from £13 to £20.

10,955. If you could do that it would be useful. Then of course in the assessment roll the tenant's name won't appear at all in cases of compounding?—Yes, the landlords are bound to supply the names of the tenants under a penalty.

10,956. Is the tenant liable himself?—The landlord is liable, but the tenant's name is entered.

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10,957. Are they both liable?—No, only the landlord.

10,958. We are struggling with two different systems. In Scotland, as you know, our tenant is liable for tenant's rates, and we get an assessment put on the individual who happens to be on the roll at the moment it is made up, and the practical difficulty we have is how to pass on that liability to an intermediate tenant. That difficulty does not occur with you in England, for you only have the landlord assessed?—That is so. It would occur above the limits.

10,959. Well, what happens above the limits?—You see, they may make the rate in May for a term ending 25th March following, and then there is no rate between then and the previous March.

10,960. But what happens if the tenant assessed leaves?—A tenant in that period does not pay any rate, but a man who happens to come in may have to pay the full rates.

10,961. Is he not remitted?—None at all, because, if so, the rates, while they are for a year, run for the period between May and May to the following March.

10,962. Can the tenant evade getting on to the assessment roll at all?—Sometimes that occurs.

10,963. It may be done?—Yes.

10,964. We would have the same trouble accentuated here with removals spread over the whole year?—Yes.

10,965. Can you tell us what preference the landlord has in the event of the bankruptcy of his tenant?—He comes after the imperial taxes.

10,966. After what period?—I think it is six months. In case of bankruptcy he gets six months' rent.

10,967. Has he preference over the ordinary creditors in every case?—Yes.

10,968. Supposing the ordinary creditor had a judgment summons, and attempted to attach the furniture, would he become liable for the rent?—No. He could take the furniture and remove it, and is not liable for the rent; but the landlord may stop him removing it if he finds out. Once it is moved it is gone.

10,969. We have a more excellent system in Scotland. We can have a direct claim against anyone touching the furniture, and can bring it back also?—I know, if it is taken under a judgment and removed off the premises.

10,970. Can the landlord get a warrant from any court to get the tenant to furnish his house?—No.

10,971. Then, if a tenant is found to be in difficulties, can he take any steps to procure the furniture before the rent is due?—No.

10,972. We still have some advantages in Scotland. What are the Police Courts you refer to?—The Courts for petty affairs of everyday life.

10,973. Judges or magistrates?—Stipendiaries and Justices of the Peace. We have two stipendiaries in Liverpool, assisted by a Bench of something like 200 unpaid Justices.

10,974. Has the unpaid Justice power to grant ejections?—Yes.

10,975. In regard to the franchise, I assume there will be no disqualification in respect of failure to pay rates where compounding exists?—No.

10,976. Assume you had no allowance at all, in respect of compounding, you would simply have to increase the rents, so as to make up for the loss through empties or irrecoverables?—If they had no allowance, the rates would be collected direct, wouldn't they.

10,977. If they were collected from the proprietor with no abatement allowed?—The rents would go up undoubtedly.

10,978. Therefore the more reasonable the abatement is, the less the increase will be upon the general rents of that class of houses?—I should think so.

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10,979. (*Chairman.*) Under Section 3 of the 1869 Act, there is a provision applicable to Liverpool, that in the case of the heritable value of any hereditament which does not exceed £13, if situated in any parish within the burgh of Liverpool, the owner of such hereditament is willing to enter into an agreement in writing to pay the poor rates, the overseers may agree with the owner to receive the rate from him, and may pay him a commission not exceeding 25 per cent. on the amount thereof. Is that provision availed of in Liverpool?—Not in Liverpool, but it is in some places.

10,980. Liverpool, as far as the 1869 Act is concerned, deals with the fourth clause, where the vestry orders that owners shall be rated?—Yes.

10,981. In some cases under that clause, the 15 per cent. is allowed, and in some cases owners enter into an agreement with the overseers?—Yes.

10,982. In what proportion is the additional 15 per cent.?—In all cases of £8 and under, and in Liverpool, in all cases of £13 and under.

10,983. But, according to the terms of the Act, it is only allowed if there is a notice given by the owner to the overseers that he is willing to be rated. Now is that used by the owners?—The authorities go to the owners.

10,984. And the owners are always found willing?—Yes.

10,985. Of course, if the authorities went to the owners with a proposal for 1 per cent., it would be otherwise?—It might be.

10,986. (*Mr Dobbie.*) They have not attempted it at all?—I have not heard of any such attempt.

10,987. (*Mr Binnie.*) You have promised to give us some figures in regard to unlets?—Yes.

10,988. What I would like to get—I don't know if it is what you have noted down—is, in an ordinary town, what percentage of unlets would you have in the course of a year, when there is a good brisk demand for houses?—The best way would be to give you the percentage over five years.

10,989. Anyway you like, but I don't want the percentage for a time when there has been over-building or an excessive demand for an increase of property?—Last year in Liverpool it was ordinary, but in Birkenhead it was a very bad year. You want a fair average.

10,990. You said something about Liverpool Corporation losing £45,000 on a total assessment of £750,000?—That is in addition to the allowance made to the owners.

10,991. That is what I wished to show. The £750,000 is the gross assessment, is it?—Yes, the gross amount of the rate.

10,992. Including what is paid by landlords?—Yes.

10,993. Then you would require, in order that we may understand the proportion of the loss of £45,000, to deduct from the £750,000 the part that is paid by landlords?—Yes, that is £94,000. They allow landlords £94,000, and tenants and voids £45,000 in round figures.

10,994. (*Chairman.*) I don't know whether you could do it, but we are very anxious to know what is the effect of short tenancies on the number of removals. Some people say that if we introduce short tenancies in Scotland, people will be moving continually; others say it won't affect the total number, but spread the removals over the year. Can you give us any notion of the average duration of your tenancies?—Yes, I think so.

10,995. It would be very interesting if you could supplement that in any way by enabling us to have any notion of the extent to which the tenants, although weekly tenants, are affected?—If I take the 400 houses and gave you an average of that?

(*Chairman.*) Details of how many have been in so many years. You cannot do it fully but roughly.

Mr J. G. Watson.

Mr John G. Watson, 4 New Bridge Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, called and examined.

Mr J. G. Watson.

10,996. (*Chairman.*) You are an estate agent?—Yes.

10,997. Have you had thirty years' experience of letting and managing property in Newcastle and district?—Yes.

10,998. What does the district cover?—Practically Tyneside.

10,999. Are there any towns?—Gateshead, North and South Shields, Tynemouth, and Whitby.

11,000. What class of dwelling-house property in Newcastle and district have you had experience in?—In all classes, but mostly in the commercial central city property.

11,001. Have you had experience of working men's dwellings?—Yes.

11,002. What rents?—Ranging from half-a-crown to 12s. and 15s. a week.

11,003. Give us that in pounds?—£3, 15s. to £31, 4s.

11,004. Could you give us a notion of how many working men's dwellings you are managing just now?—Not so many as Mr Nelson. It is more mixed, more commercial and city property, but I should think we have one hundred tenants on the weekly system, and of course my position as house valuator in the way of buying and selling property brings me into touch with the weeklies. While we have not so many tenants as Mr Nelson, we come across them in the way of valuation.

11,005. What do you call an estate agent in Scotland?—A factor, I understand.

11,006. But in addition you are a valuator?—Yes.

11,007. You have a business in the way of buying and selling property for clients?—Yes.

11,008. You heard Mr Nelson's evidence in regard to the condition of matters in Liverpool as far as the ordinary range of tenure is concerned, as far as the periods of payment, so far as the method under a certain rental of

the landlord paying taxes, and getting an allowance from the rating authorities are concerned?—Yes.

11,009. Can you tell us to what extent your Newcastle experience confirms Mr Nelson's, or differs from his. Take first the period of lets?—Weeklies, you mean?

11,010. Yes; is it the same?—Exactly the same.

11,011. Have you many or any cases of rents under an assessable rental of £20 let monthly?—Yes. They are put down as weekly.

11,012. How do you mean?—The larger proportion of houses let at that rent are let weekly. The tendency is to get from long tenancies, quarterly or monthly, to weekly. Sometimes they pay fortnightly or monthly, but in the case of the tenancy having to cease, a week's notice is sufficient.

11,013. So that it is a weekly tenancy?—Yes.

11,014. And the tendency is to go for that?—Yes, with a rental like that.

11,015. What induces that?—The necessity of tenants to get rid of the nuisance of the payment of rates in large sums. They want to know the extent of their weekly liability. These people have a weekly income, and the tendency is for them to find a means of ascertaining their weekly outgo.

11,016. It is a tendency on the part of the tenants and not any movement on the part of the estate agents?—It is entirely from the tenants' interest. It is the demand.

11,017. As to the periods of payment, are wages paid weekly in Newcastle?—Yes, all wages on Tyneside: there are no fortnightly wages.

11,018. Besides shipping, what are the industries?—Largely mining and chemicals, although that is on the decline, engineering, shipbuilding, and shipping generally.

11,019. And shipbuilding very largely?—Yes, on the banks of the Tyne.

11,020. And ironworks?—Yes.

11,021. Are there some of these occupations more shifting than others?—Shipbuilding fluctuates. We may have a period of prosperity for two or three years, and then have bad times for a year or two, aud in consequence of that there is a large migration of tenants from one district to another. We have a good many of these men from the Clyde coming when shipbuilding is busy.

11,022. Do these men from the Clyde bring their families with them, or take lodgings?—They take lodgings for a short time, till it is convenient, and then the families come.

11,023. In short, among these people are there very frequent occasions when a man wants to move his house on short notice?—He can move at a week's notice. He knows that.

11,024. Are there many occasions due to circumstances of the men's employment when they require to move?—No, not many.

11,025. I thought you said that they have to shift from one district to another very much?—Yes, in times of depression, but in times when work is busy in the yards there is very little moving.

11,026. It is more in times of depression, is it?—It is from some extraordinary general cause that they have to move.

11,027. Take such a time of depression, may that come on suddenly?—Sometimes it does.

11,028. If it came on gradually, would there be any difficulty, even if they had a longer tenancy, in looking ahead?—My experience is that the working classes don't look ahead. If they find they are going to lose their work in any district, they immediately give notice to leave, and go to another district.

11,029. And owing to your system they have no difficulty?—None at all.

11,030. Supposing it were proposed to introduce the Scotch system into Newcastle of a yearly tenure, what would your tenants say?—It would be utterly impossible. We could not conceive of such a system being worked. It could not be done.

11,031. Mr Nelson said that in the case of people who have a bit of garden ground they want a longer tenancy. Do you find that?—Yes, in rural districts. Where there is a fair extent of garden, the tendency is to make the tenancy as long as possible.

11,032. And what is the tenancy usually in such cases?—We call it a yearly tenancy, subject to an arrangement to accept three months or six months' notice, as may be agreed.

11,033. But that state of matters does not apply to what may be called industrial centres?—No, not at all.

11,034. You know enough of the system, or have been informed of the system of yearly tenancy in Scotland?—Yes.

11,035. How does it strike you in relation to working men from your experience in England?—I think it works against the working man. It must be exceedingly inconvenient and irksome to working men, who, through circumstances over which they have no control, may, although having agreed to take a house for a year, in a very short time find that they have to remove from the district, and that they are liable for the rent of a house there, and have to pay for the rent of another house.

11,036. Does it surprise you that that system should have continued so long?—It does very much.

11,037. Do you know historically whether the present system has always obtained in regard to such dwellings?—On the weekly tenancy?

11,038. Yes?—Well, in my own experience, for forty years.

11,039. It has been the same?—Yes.

11,040. And there was, so far as you know, no new introduction then?—No, I think it would be a gradual outcome of modern demands.

11,041. Might it arise from the more modern houses having no gardens attached to them, as compared with the old-fashioned towns, where even the working men had their gardens? Would that account for the change of system?—It would, but even in the case of the garden, when a man ceases to have his employment, and has to move from that district, even his garden must go. It would be no tie on him.

11,042. Are you aware of any difference in the condition of working men's employment or habits in Scotland that can account for the difference in practice?—No, I do not know.

11,043. Conditions of work are apparently the same?—Apparently the same. It must be that this old system here has continued so long that the people have not been able to introduce or initiate another system.

11,044. In your view, the English system is much more in the interest of the tenant than the Scotch system?—I would not say that. For that class of property I think it is as much to the interest of the owner.

11,045. But it is to the interest of the tenant?—Yes.

11,046. About the owner, what do you say?—An owner who buys that class of property, knows it is weekly property. Owners are attracted to it as an investment, because they know the income is more regular, and as a rule they can get a greater percentage for their money. They get a much better investment in weekly than they will in quarterly houses.

11,047. Why?—Well, I do not know why, but the houses pay better.

11,048. It has been suggested that if the short tenancy were introduced into Scotland in place of the long tenancy for that class of property, it would reduce the value as an investment on such property. You have not had that experience in England?—No.

11,049. It is also suggested that people would not be so ready to build that class of property if the tenure were weekly or quarterly instead of half-yearly. Have you found any difficulty in England of that kind?—No. I think it is the other way. Builders find that there is a good demand from investors for that class of property, and I may say that what we mean by flats is very different from what you mean by flats. In Newcastle — it is almost peculiar to Newcastle and Tyneside, Northumberland and Durham—we have houses say with a flat of three rooms on the ground floor, with a scullery and yard and a front door, the yard being separate to that tenant; then on the upper floor there are three or four rooms, according to the size of the flat, with the same accommodation, and a separate front door, and a separate yard. A weekly tenant has his own house to himself, on the principle that an Englishman's home is his castle. I suppose it is a Scotchman's as well.

11,050. You have talked of the advantages to the tenant of the English system in being able to move when he requires. Are there, on the other hand, any drawbacks which are the subject of grievance on the part of the tenants?—To the weekly tenants?

11,051. Yes?—No.

11,052. Of course that system may have its recommendation to counterbalance drawbacks?—I don't know of any. I don't see how there could be, because we could not get lower than weekly tenancies.

11,053. Is there no complaint of this kind, that whereas a landlord, if he lets his house for a year, is willing to do a good deal for it, he won't do much if it is taken on a short tenancy?—He would do more for a tenant likely to stay for a longer period.

11,054. Do you find any complaint of that kind from the tenants?—No.

11,055. Do you agree with Mr. Nelson that although the tenancy is nominally weekly, if the tenant is a responsible person, he can stay as long as he likes?—Entirely. We have some tenants on weekly tenure for fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years, and on any Monday morning they can give notice that they will leave the next Monday, and that will be perfectly agreeable and satisfactory on both sides.

11,056. Have you in Newcastle, any more than in Liverpool, any set term when there are a great many removals, or are they spread over the year?—No, in the weekly tenancies they are spread very fairly over the year.

11,057. You have no time of over-pressure or difficulty of getting people to help in removals?—No, that is averaged.

11,058. Do you think that, as a result of weekly tenancies, you will get in the end of the year as a net return more rent than you would if the period of payment were say half-yearly?—Well, it is a different class. We expect different results from different classes.

11,059. Take the case of men who are getting paid their wages weekly. Do you think that in consequence of your getting your rents weekly you get more out of them than you would if they only paid a big sum once half-yearly?—Yes, in that they are all agreed.

11,060. Of course what applies to rent will apply to the payment of the sum you give which belongs to the rate?—Yes.

11,061. The same thing?—Yes.

11,062. You have heard what has been said about the desirability of frequent payment of rate and the two ways of doing it, either for the rating authorities to collect frequently from the occupier, or a system of compounding?—Yes.

11,063. What is your view as between these two?—From the point of view of the authority or the point of view of the owner.

11,064. The authorities?—I would say the authorities have a greater security in collecting their rates from the owner than they would from the tenant.

11,065. Suppose it were practical to collect from the tenant four times a year. Some of them told us it is not, but suppose it were, would that be the better system than collecting through the landlord?—No.

11,066. Do you think it would yield as much in the shape of rates as the present system of collecting weekly?—No, because the risk of credit comes in there, the same as in any other business. Ready money is better than credit. The same principle applies to rents.

11,067. It is said that the Savings Bank and Co-operative Societies meet the difficulty. I suppose you have a large number of working people who have neither a Saving Bank account nor are members of a Co-operative Society?—I am sorry to say we have, and that is the class of tenant that gives most bother.

11,068. You agree with what Mr Nelson said, that there is no friction created between landlord and tenant, because the tenant knows that the landlord is really the rate collector?—Not the slightest.

11,069. You never heard a whisper of that?—Not a whisper.

11,070. Suppose you had to distinguish on your receipts between what you were giving as rent and rate, would that make a difficulty?—A very great difficulty; it would be almost impracticable.

11,071. Why? You know it is proposed in Mr Cross's Bill. What he proposes is, at the end of Clause 9: "Pro-'vided always that the rates for payment applied by owners 'to occupiers shall separately distinguish the amounts which 'are paid for rent and the amounts which are paid for rates 'and assessments." What would be the objection to that?—It would be very difficult and lead to confusion.

11,072. In the first place, would it be very difficult to figure out?—Yes, especially in the case of a small tenement, and, so far as my experience goes, there is no wish and no thought of that in England. They don't care; they pay their 5s. or 6s. a week and are content with it. They know they have paid the rates. I wish they had a little more connection with the rates.

11,073. There is a wish on the part of political economists that the tenants should have brought to them the amount of rates paid. You sympathise with them?—I do.

11,074. Do you see how, under the English system, that could be given effect to?—I cannot at the moment see a practical way of carrying it out, especially in relation to smaller rents.

11,075. You don't think this is a practical way?—I don't think so.

11,076. It would be quite practicable to put on to the receipts the rate per £ that the rates are at?—We would have to alter our schedules and rent books and our whole book-keeping. We would require to have a column for that.

11,077. Is it the case in Newcastle, as Mr Nelson told us it was in Liverpool, that you don't alter your total sum as the rates fluctuate?—We have attempted to do that in certain districts in Newcastle and Tyneside, but you can only do that when there is a good demand for property, that is to say when there are very few houses empty. But where we suffer, as we do in Newcastle and Tyneside at present, from over-building, it is a question of regulation by demand and supply.

11,078. It has not been much attempted?—No, it has been attempted perhaps a matter of 3d. or 6d. a week added, and it is for that very purpose, in order that there might be a demonstration to the tenant that it is not an advance on the rents, but on the rates, and as a lesson to the tenant, but it has not succeeded.

11,079. I suppose you don't maintain that if compounding takes place the landlord should make any profit out of it? He ought just to get such an allowance as would keep him safe?—That is it, and he makes his calculations accordingly.

11,080. You know the allowances vary very much?—Yes.

11,081. Have you ever done what Mr Nelson said he tried to do—to see whether the allowance actually received is a fair one or not?—No.

11,082. You have not figured it out?—No.

11,083. In Newcastle, are you under local Acts?—Yes.

11,083*a*. The Poor Law of 1869 applies to all England?—Yes.

11,084. You cannot contract out of it?—No.

11,085. You get your 15 per cent., and if there are no voids, other 15 per cent.?—Yes.

11,086. In the case of that Act, are there any voluntary arrangements under Section 3, or is it all done by the assessing authority making an order?—By the assessing authority making an order, and there is an option to the tenants as to whether they accept the 30 per cent. or 15 per cent.

11,087. Has there been any attempt in regard to the extra 15 per cent. to bring it down and get owners to accept less?—No, it is 30 per cent. in Newcastle, just as in Liverpool.

11,088. What is your own opinion, apart from having figured it out? Does the landlord make money out of it or lose?—He does not make any money, and he does not lose. He reckons that is the amount which has become standard.

11,089. Is there no agitation on the part of the assessing authorities to bring it down?—No.

11,090. Have there been any Bills brought into Parliament to alter that rate in the 1869 Act?—No, not for ten years past.

11,091. I suppose you only manage the best class of property. Might not the allowance be much worse in the case of another man who only managed the poorest class? It might be too little?—It only applies to the one case.

11,092. I know; but then the nearer you come to the highest that it applies to, the cost of collection is very much less?—Yes.

11,093. And the losses are very much less?—Yes.

11,094. But it is an average applicable all over?—Yes.

11,095. But the average implies, doesn't it, that it may be too little at the bottom and it may be too high at the top?—I could not say.

11,096. You think all over it is fair?—It has been so long in practice that if it were radically altered, the rents would have to be altered, because it is an absolute calculation that whatever the rates are, it is 15 per cent. or 30 per cent. We calculate accordingly. In some districts where there are not likely to be voids, the owner exercises his option and does not take that.

11,097. I suppose the fact that Clause 4 is optional on the assessing authority; they don't need to make an order unless they like?—That is so.

11,098. The fact that they all make the order seems to mean that they don't think that 15 per cent. is excessive?—That is so, and it is general, as we heard this morning; it is not confined to any particular locality.

11,099. Take the better class of property nearer the maximum. Do you compound on it as well as on the lower class of property?—No.

11,100. Take Clause 4 of the 1869 Act, under which the vestry may order that the owners of all heritable hereditaments to which Section 3 of this Act extends—it is the one giving the maximum—shall pay the poor rate instead of the occupiers. Does that apply to all the different districts of Newcastle?—Yes.

11,101. And when that order is made, you as an estate agent cannot say, "I will compound for the cheapest 'property; I won't compound for the better. That 'applies to everything up to the maximum?"—In Newcastle the poor rates are collected by the poor rating authorities, and not with the municipal rates, as in Liverpool.

11,102. Up to £8?—Yes.

11,103. Does it come to this, that in Newcastle you are under the £8 limit?—Yes.

11,104. And above £8 there is no compounding in Newcastle?—There is compounding up to 5s. 4d. a week, which is practically £8 net.

11,105. Has there been any proposal that the limit should be less?—No.

11,106. How do you account for the limit being £20 in

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London and only £8 in Newcastle?—I cannot account for it.

11,107. And then £13 in Liverpool and £10 in Manchester, you don't know why those different limits were fixed?—No.

11,108. In Newcastle, the mode of ascertaining the valuation for rating purposes is to take one quarter for rates, one-fifth for insurance and repairs?—Yes.

11,109. Suppose you take a rent of £100: you take one-fourth for rates—that gives you a balance of £75—then one-fifth for insurance and repairs, £15—that gives you a balance of £60 on which assessment takes place?—Yes.

11,110. 30 per cent. is allowed off for compounding, the landlord paying the rates whether the property is occupied or not. Compounding is compulsory on all rents up to £13?—Yes, gross, £8 net.

11,111. Where tenants pay the rates, the allowance is one-sixth off for insurance and repairs?—Yes, that harmonises with the statement made by Mr Nelson this morning, practically 15 per cent.

11,112. Do you agree with Mr Nelson about the law of distraint and the consequence of that?—Yes, excepting that his charges are rather more than we pay in Newcastle, but the difference is only a few shillings.

11,113. In the course of your experience, how often have you had occasion to put the law into force in cases of distraint for rent?—The number is not great at all. It depends largely on the district and the class of tenants. We have the "squatters" referred to, and they are very difficult to deal with. They know the law as well as the landlord does himself. There is one point I thought was not clear this morning. The question was asked about the man in possession. The man comes in and makes a levy. If the tenant pays at once he only has the levy to pay, but if the tenant does not, or cannot, or will not, pay at once, the officer puts a man in possession for six days, the idea being to give the tenant time to pay.

11,114. And what is the duty of the man in possession? Is it to see that the furniture is not removed?—That is it.

11,115. Who pays for him?—It comes out of the amount realised.

11,116. In regard to the question of giving any exemption from the rates to the poor, what is your practice in Newcastle?—The landlord paying the rates practically collects both rent and rates, but it is called rent, but we know the rent includes rates. The landlord does not allow the tenant for rates. If he did, he would allow it as rent. It is a matter of option with them and to their feelings.

11,117. So that the rating authorities themselves give no exemption?—No, not when the landlord has compounded and pays the rates.

11,118. Suppose it were thought desirable that there should be an allowance, do you see how it could be worked practically?—No, because of the old principle of the men's income being weekly, he has paid his rents as long as he was able, and when he is not able, he does not pay his rents nor his rates.

11,119. So it would be difficult to say he was not able when he had actually paid?—That is so.

11,120. Would not the case of poor widows occupying houses where the landlords don't pay the rates; exemption from the poor rates is allowed by the authorities. Is that under the statute, that they have power to do it?—That is not in regard to poor rate, but in reference to municipal rates.

11,121. Do they do it under powers?—Under their own powers.

11,122. We have been told that in some cases where people have no power, they do it by simply not exacting the rate. Do you know whether that is done in Newcastle by actual exemption?—It is only allowed after very minute inquiry has been made into the circumstances of the tenant. In the case of a widow, it is invariably allowed.

11,123. And what about the poor rates?—It is not allowed on poor rates.

11,124. (*Mr Dobbie.*) With reference to the man in possession, is he put in by the landlord at his own hand without any warrant from any Court!—Yes, he can fill in a form, and give it to the bailiff who goes into possession.

11,125. Then, after five days, does the bailiff sell off without any warrant?—Yes. The furniture is removed and sold.

11,126. And suppose the tenant had a good defence, supposing the tenant says, "I am not due the rent; I have a counter claim against the landlord"?—He would have a remedy by action at law against the landlord.

11,127. Can he stop the sale of the furniture?—If he could show to the landlord anything of that kind from his own interest, apart from sympathy, the landlord would say that discretion would be the better part and not proceed to distress.

11,128. Assuming the landlord is unreasonable?—I cannot imagine a landlord being so unreasonable as to do an illegal thing wilfully, because the law is very severe.

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11,129. Is it not common that a tenant would go to Court and say, "I have a counter claim here, and I want to stop this landlord from selling my furniture"?—He could not.

11,130. So that the landlord simply, five days afterwards, sells off the furniture, and leaves the tenant to go into an action for damages if he thinks fit?—Of course, as you know, the law of distraint and distress is a very big one; it occupies 100 pages of the Act with different definitions. I am giving you it from a layman's point of view.

11,131. Under your private Act, have you power to exempt on the ground of poverty, or is it confined to the case of widows?—Yes, that is all. You see, very poor people are not living in quarterly houses or yearly tenancies, generally in weekly properties, and their rate is paid with the rent.

11,132. One benefit of our present system is that small tenants can claim and get exemption. Any change in the direction of your English system would put an end to that benefit?—I see.

11,133. In arriving at weekly rent to be asked, do you take into account the actual current rates, or just fix the sum you can get?—We fix the highest sum we can get, and if we cannot get that, the highest according to the market.

11,134. You treat the outlay for rates as you do an outlay for repairs or insurance?—Yes, you have to calculate for that, just as you have to calculate for your repairs and other contingencies.

11,135. Then, where you don't come under a provision dealing with voids, and only get 15 per cent. of abatement, how do you transact with the rating authorities in regard to empty houses?—Where we don't compound?

11,136. Where you don't get the second 15 per cent., and you, in fact, have empty houses, how do you get back your money?—We are not entitled to anything if we don't take the second 15 per cent. We only get the second 15 per cent on condition that we agree to pay the assessment, whether the houses are occupied or not.

11,137. But if you are assessed on the beginning of the assessment year on the whole rental as let at that time? My point is, suppose, during the year, a part of the property becomes unlet, and you are not taking the allowance, in respect of voids, don't you get a refund in respect of the part of the property unlet?—We don't get it in the way of a refund. When we are paying the rates, in the case of a large owner or estate agent, it is a considerable amount, and we pay up to the time, and we say that, "so many tenements empty," and we point that out and satisfy the collector that that is so. The collector, being on the ground collecting other rates and taxes, is in a position to check the statement, and is satisfied that so many houses are empty, and they deduct it at the time of settlement.

11,138. You don't pay and get back at the end of the assessment year?—No, speaking from my own personal experience, it is considerable; we have not done that. It is just deducted at the time of the payment off the rates.

11,139. But you pay rates in the middle of the year? We were told by Mr Nelson that it was at the end of six months?—Half-yearly.

11,140. Supposing you made the payment half-yearly?—Well, the rate is generally made in May, and it is towards the end of the six months that the whole of the rates are completed, and it is then that the largest owners pay their accounts.

11,141. (*Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell.*) How many different authorities collect in Newcastle?—Two.

11,142. They collect separately?—Yes, the poor rate and the other. They practically make four collections.

11,143. What do you call the other?—The municipal rates.

11,144. You don't compound the municipal rates?—Yes, they follow the poor rates.

11,145. What is the rate of allowance of that?—The same, 30 per cent. They follow the poor rate assessments.

11,146. (*Mr Binnie.*) Have you ever made an estimate of the percentage of unlets that you have one year with another or the year over?—No.

11,147. Do I understand your explanation as to not paying rates on unlets? Is it this, that you state at the time you are paying the rate the number of unlets you have at that particular date?—Up to that time.

11,148. And that is deemed to be a fair average for the whole time for which you are paying rates?—That is it, and that works out with the next payment. It is from the same reckoning, from that date to another date, so that we get a fair average.

11,149. What is the gross amount of the poor assessment?—With us it is 1s. 1d.

11,150. 1s. 1d. per £?—Yes. The municipal is 4s 7d., making 5s. 8d.

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11,151. And from these two you get a deduction of 30 per cent. ?—Yes, up to 5s. 4d. a week.

11,152. We are dealing now with the smaller ones. You get 30 per cent. off that. That is fully 1s. 8d.: we will say 1s. 8d. That is about 4s. per £ that you pay ?—Yes.

11,153. And yet, while you collect £13, 17s. 4d. from a tenant, that is 5s. 4½d., and you pay four times eight, £1, 12s., of taxes. Do you follow ?—Yes.

11,154. That leaves £12, 5s. 4d. that you get; yet you are only assessed on £8 ?—Yes.

11,155. What do you pay income tax on: is it the assessed rental or what ?—Imperial taxes follow the assessments.

11,156. So that you pay your income tax on £8 ?—Have you my evidence before you. I work it out in another way.

11,157. Let me understand it any way, what page ?—Page 3. I am showing there how we get at the assessment. The Scotch system, as I heard this morning, is that the actual rental is the assessment. I am not showing by that that ours is not; but that it is a lower assessment when these allowances have been made.

11,158. And your imperial taxation is on the same assessed rent, is it ?—It is on the actual rent.

11,159. Well, in that £100 that you deal with, what income tax would you pay ?—The whole of the income tax. I am not following you there, I am afraid.

11,160. You are taking a house at £100 ?—Yes.

11,161. Then you take off one-fourth for rates: that is £75 ?—Yes.

11,162. And there is for insurance and repairs £15, leaving £60, and that is the assessed rental, what we call in Scotland the Valuation Roll ?—Yes.

11,163. Do you pay income tax upon £60, £75, or £100 ?—It follows the assessment of the poor rates.

11,164. Then is it on the £75 you pay the taxes ?—Yes, and yet hardly. The imperial taxes, speaking particularly, are general to Scotland and England and Wales. The income tax is fixed at a certain amount, say 1s. or 1s. 6d., or whatever it is. The assessment with us is somewhere between. They don't always follow the poor rates. For instance, if the assessment is low, the assessors of the income tax take their own view of what the rateable value is.

11,165. But Newcastle, what is the tax ?—I am not sure. I cannot give you a definite answer.

11,166. Will you inquire, and let us know ?—I will be glad to do that. The evidence I was asked to give was as to the practicability of short tenancy and short terms. I did not prepare myself for these other questions.

11,167. Don't suppose we are blaming you.—Thank you.

11,168. But we are wishing to know, so as to compare the rating systems. If you will kindly inquire and let us know, we would be much obliged ?—Yes.

11,169. In Scotland, the actual gross rent paid by the tenant is taken, and deduction made in respect of rates.

11,170. (*Mr Howden.*) What percentage do landlords pay to factors for collection of rents ?—On weekly tenancies from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent., according to the class of the property and tenants.

11,171. Then it varies ?—Yes

11,172. According to rental ?—Yes. Where you have small rentals, and a large number in a poor locality, the collection is difficult and sometimes dangerous.

11,173. What would be about the average percentage for collection on the class of houses we are dealing with ?—I should say nearly 7½ per cent.

11,174. Is that all on weekly tenancies ?—Yes; I am only speaking of the weekly.

11,175. What do you charge for monthly tenancies ?—Probably 5 per cent.

11,176. Could you give us any idea of the amount of the arrears of rent you have in England ?—It is largely the outcome of management. If an owner or a factor is very stringent he will have a fewer amount of arrears than the man who is more lenient. I cannot give you an answer in percentages.

11,177. You heard Mr Nelson's evidence, and he gave us some figures in connection with that particular ?—He was able to give you concrete cases in a particular estate.

11,178. Could you give us anything approaching that ?—I could not.

11,179. Could you get it for us ?—Yes, I could give you that.

11,180. (*Chairman*). If it would not be too much trouble ?—It would not be for such a large area, but the percentage of arrears generally for five years.

11,181. (*Mr Howden*). There is one more question I would like to ask you. You told us you have weekly rents up to 12s. per week, and more ?—Yes.

11,182. Do you compound on all weekly tenants ?—No, we can only compound up to £8.

11,183. And how do the rating authorities do in weekly tenancies in which they don't compound ?—In weekly tenancies the landlord pays the rates, because the authorities only collect their rates once a half year, and they won't take the payment from the weekly tenant.

11,184. That is compounding, is it not ?—No.

11,185. The landlord puts on a slump sum for rent and rates, and he pays the rates ?—Yes, although up to 12s. or £1; it is for the convenience of the tenants, who say, "We don't want to be bothered with the rates,"—especially in the case of strangers—"tell me what the whole thing will come to, and charge me accordingly," and if the landlord is agreeable he fixes a sum and it is paid weekly. In some cases it comes to 12s., and in other cases nearly 20s. a week.

11,186. You don't get any deduction from the authorities in view of that slump sum ?—No, not more than the 15 per cent.

11,187. You get your 15 per cent. ?—No, the owners don't; the tenants do. A quarterly tenant gets his one-sixth off, as I have already told his lordship.

11,188. But it is the weekly and monthly tenants I want to be clear about. You say that up to £8 you have what we call compounding ?—Up to £13 gross, making it down to £8 net.

11,189. You have weekly tenants above that ?—Yes, we cannot compound for them.

11,190. But you pay the rates ?—Yes.

11,191. And the difference between the one and the other is that you have no fixed percentage to receive back as an abatement from the authority ?—No.

11,192. You simply make your accounts square by taking a slightly larger rent from the tenant to cover the rates ?—It is practically the same rent, plus the current rates, to meet the convenience of a tenant.

11,193. But do you not charge anything in the shape of a percentage on that at all ?—To the tenant for rates ?

11,194. Yes ?—We put the actual rates on.

11,195. Just the actual rates on ?—Yes.

11,196. You get no deduction, so that you are actually, in the case of a £19, 10s. rental, collecting the rents for the authorities without any cost ?—That is so.

11,197. (*Chairman.*) You say the loss of rates on small houses where rates are collected from the tenants is very small, almost nil. You mean collected directly by the rating authorities from the tenants ?—Yes; I thought that would be a very difficult question to answer.

11,198. What small houses are these ? Are these small houses to which compounding does not apply ?—Yes, £12 to £14, or £18 or £20.

11,199. Above the £13 ?—Yes.

11,200. The rating authorities collect direct from the tenants there twice a year ?—Yes.

11,201. Is there not considerable loss in these cases through there only being a biennial collection ?—As I was saying, I felt this to be a difficult question. In a way I formed my actual opinion that it was small. But in consultation with our rating authorities of Newcastle, I asked them about that particular point, and while my phraser was "very small," I ascertained that it was "almost nil," so that it more than confirmed my own opinion in the matter.

11,202. That seems to point to the system of the rating authorities collecting direct being a system that does not result in loss ?—I daresay.

11,203. But we have been told that in consequence of making only an annual or biennial collection, a great many people don't pay their rates who could pay if they paid weekly through the landlord. Now, apparently that is not so in Newcastle ?—Well, we get a better class of tenants in these quarterly tenancies, and the rate collectors in the different wards and different districts are on the ground practically every day, and have facilities for following up anyone who wishes to evade payment. That brings the result, as I say, of loss almost nil.

11,204. Suppose the same system were applied to the poorer class of houses below £13, would there be substantial loss ?—Yes, because you come to a different class of tenants, who have always been used to paying their rates in place of rent weekly.

11,205. (*Mr. Binnie*). I would like to clear up a reply you gave to Mr Howden. You stated at an earlier period that, in consequence of a large discount allowed on the rates, the rents were——?—I think it was Mr Nelson who stated that.

11,206. Does it mean you look to the result of the whole, and you can do with a smaller rent ?—Yes, I answered to his lordship that if there was any alteration in the amount of 30 per cent., the rents must of necessity go up.

11,207. And in the cases where you have to collect the rates and get no allowance, that is in the short tenancies about £8, you will just need to charge more rent to make

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up for loss of an allowance?—Yes, if the 30 per cent. should be disallowed from any cause at any time, we should have to add to the rent.

11,208. In the case where you don't get the 30 per cent. now, you have just to make that up?—Yes, that is it. It has been put in another way. I follow you better that way.

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Bailie H. Baird.

Bailie HENRY BAIRD, Paisley, called and examined.

Bailie H. Baird.

11,209. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You are a member of Paisley Town Council?—Yes.

11,210. And you are here on behalf of the Paisley United Trades Council?—For the Trades Unionists of Paisley through the Trades Council.

11,211. Have you been authorised by your Council to give evidence here to-day?—Yes They had a meeting last night. Through some misunderstanding I ought to have been at Glasgow, but it was only this week I discovered the mistake. They had a meeting last night, and I asked them if they thought it was worth while going, and they were unanimous in saying they would like to be represented here.

11,212. What is the Paisley United Trades Council?—They practically represent the whole of the Trades Unionists in Paisley, because there are a little over four thousand Trades Unionists, and there are over three thousand of these affiliated to the Trades Council.

11,213. Are these largely ratepayers in Paisley?—Yes, I would say most of them are ratepayers. There will be a few young men who are not yet ratepayers, at least directly, but the bulk of them will be.

11,214. Can you tell us when your Council had this question first before them?—To consider the change of let?

11,215. Yes?—As a matter of fact, they have been discussing it for a good many years back, and assisted in every way ever since the matter came before Parliament. They have not only passed resolutions, but organised meetings in favour of it, passed resolutions, and sent them not only to the Town Council, but to members of Parliament and members of the Government, at various times.

11,216. What is the question: what is the grievance?—The chief grievance is the letting system. For instance, I might give you an example with regard to myself. I have to send in my missive to-morrow, not later than the last of this month, to take my house for the next year, or they will consider the house is to let, and may let it over my head. That means practically sixteen months. That notwithstanding that the Paisley Tenants' Protective Association and the Landlords' Association came to a compromise two years ago to the effect that the latter would not insist before the 28th of February. It seems that some of them are going back on that, and they want us to take the house for sixteen months. It is a great grievance, because a good many workers affiliated to the Trades Council sometimes find it advantageous to work in Govan, Glasgow, and surrounding districts.

11,217. Is the grievance felt in Paisley largely the grievance that the missive day is too soon?—Both that and that they are tied to their house for such a length of time. For instance, I am engaged in the building trade, and that is a pretty fluctuating trade. I might have to go out of town or to the other end of the town, say at the beginning of the year.

11,218. So that both grievances are felt: first, that the letting day is too early, and, second, the yearly lets are open to the objection you mention?—They are too lengthy.

11,219. And on what grounds do you think yearly lets are open to exception? You mention, for example, removals at one day?—That is a very serious objection. The whole of those who wish to remove must remove on 28th May by 12 o'clock, and the possibility is that they may not get into the house they are removing to before 12 o'clock and they might not get any time. I myself on one occasion had to get the people coming into my house to assist me to get my furniture out, and then I had to assist them in. I had to assist the other party out of the house. I wished to get in and got his assistance.

11,220. What is the population of Paisley?—About 84,000 to 86,000.

11,221. Can you say how many removals you will have on an average annually?—Last year in particular we had 2900 removals, which would be equal to about one in six houses.

11,222. How do you get that figure? We have been looking for it in some other towns?—I will tell you, and I think it is the most certain way. I went to the Gas Office. They must get a notice after every removal, so that they may go and turn off the meter or take it for the benefit of the out-going and in-coming tenants, and from their books I find out that there must have been at least 2900 removals that year.

11,223. Can you tell us anything about removals between terms from the same source under the present system?—There may be a few, at the half term in November, but there are very few, because even although you desire to change your house at the half term, there will be great difficulty in doing so. They will hold you the next half year. People have either to make a big sacrifice if they do remove or hold on to the house.

11,224. Don't the house factors in Paisley take the missive off your hands?—Not very readily.

11,225. We were told by one house factor from Paisley or some other place that on paying 10s. he was quite prepared to cancel the missive?—He must have been speaking for himself. It is not usual. The usual thing is that if they permit you to give up the house they leave it to you to find a tenant to take your place, and that tenant must be subject to their approval. I have known cases where they demanded the full year's rent before they let them go.

11,226. What is the most popular industry in Paisley, the thread industry?—Of course, as you know, that is a pretty large industry, but in Paisley trade is very mixed. We have the large engineering works, and even four shipbuilding yards on the Cart, and the starch manufactory.

11,227. Is there a shifting population?—There is a large number who move back and forward. Of course, there is also a large stationary population, but in the shipbuilding and house-building and such-like trades, they have to move to surrounding districts.

11,228. One objection to any change to short lets which is suggested is that the present privilege by which the very poor get exemption on the ground of poverty would be extinguished?—Yes, and that would be a very strong objection in Paisley. There is a large number of poor people who really require to be exempted. At present in Paisley they have the right to appeal to the Town Council to get off, and we anticipate that if this Bill were passed into law that right would be done away with, and we feel it would be a hardship.

11,229. You would therefore have a clause in any new Bill containing that privilege?—That is the opinion of the Trades Council. They have discussed this thoroughly.

11,230. Another clause in the Bill is making the Bill optional in different areas. For example, it might be wanted in Glasgow, and not in Aberdeen. Have your Council any views on that?—That was also discussed at some length, and of course some of those represented there would feel it keenly. For instance, we might adopt it in Paisley. They might adopt only a part of it in Govan; they might adopt another part or none of it at all in Partick or in Whiteinch. We have workers who travel to these places, and if they were removing it would create confusion, and they believe it would be much better if it were a general Act made compulsory.

11,231. For the places that want it?—Yes.

11,232. What about the places that don't want it?—Well, of course I think they would be very few. I have no doubt that in some mining districts they might have an objection, but I think that could be got over in other ways. I do not know, but in many mining districts at present, if the Truck Act was put into full force, it would assist them greatly.

11,233. I suppose you are aware that any change in the direction of short lets would necessitate a collection of the rates from the landlord?—I don't know that it would necessitate it, but certainly it is proposed, and I believe it is desired by the large body of the workers to have that easier method of paying the rates.

11,234. Do they want to pay periodically small payments?—Small payments, and in Paisley it has been felt pretty strongly and discussed, not so much from this point of view: at least it was before this Bill was considered. Two years ago there was an agitation to get their rates paid to the Corporation by easier methods than at present, and the Trades Council and several other bodies sent resolutions to the Town Council asking them to do something. They appointed a small Committee, of which I was a member, to inquire into another method, say quarterly, or perhaps easier if possible for payment of rates. We made some inquiry and discussed it, but there was strong opposition from the officials and the Chamberlain's department. They felt it was going to entail a great deal more work. However, as compared with the proposal to compound the rates, I believe that the amount which it would cost us in Paisley for the landlords to lift the rates, would go a long way to assist them in doing it the other way, that is to say, the Corporation taking the whole rates but receiving them quarterly. I do not know that the expenditure would be any greater by the Corporation taking them quarterly or monthly than by the

method proposed in the Bill. My own opinion, and I believe the opinion of a good minority, is that it would be preferable if the Corporation up-lifted the whole rates. I must, however, admit frankly that there is a large majority of workers in Paisley in favour of compounding all rates, and paying them with the rents.

11,235. Supposing the rates are compounded, have you seen the scale of allowances attached to Mr Cross's Bill?—Yes.

11,236. What is your view upon that scale?—I may say it has met with the approval of the Trades Council, and, as a matter of fact, they feel that if it was it would be a burden on them unjustly. They believe that is quite a generous compensation to the landlords. I abase that on some personal experience. I might explain that in Paisley landlords already uplift a good portion of the rates. For instance, all the rates on houses of £4 rental and under, also all the rates on houses for which the rents are paid more frequently than half-yearly, and for that they get a percentage on both the domestic and public water rates of 25 per cent., and on the roads and burgh improvements rates they get 10 per cent., and what I was going to say before explaining that, was that I know there is a strong desire on the part of them to uplift this portion of the rates. In my own case I prefer to pay my rent half-yearly, because in my trade, owing to the way it fluctuates, I find it much easier to pay at the May and November terms than at the other quarterly terms. I always try to get that privilege, and I always find that most of them are willing enough to grant it, provided that I let it remain as a quarterly payment, so that I pay the rates to them instead of to the Corporation. So my belief is that it pays them well enough, and they desire it. Now, we have considered that in the Paisley Town Council, who at present have an order in Parliament, at least they are promoting one. It is in the hands of the examiners, a Provisional Order for many things, chiefly in connection with waterworks and gasworks. There are some minor items, and one is asking power to compound the rates up to £15 rental. Mr Cross's Bill is up to £16 rental, but it is based on a percentage almost the same as Mr Cross's 7½ per cent. up to £4 rental, 5 per cent. up to £10 rental, and 2½ per cent. up to £15.

11,237. What did you mean by saying that it would appear harder on the workers if the allowance for compounding was increased beyond the sums indicated in Mr Cross's Bill?—Well, it would bear hardly on them in this way, that presently, even for the uplifting of that small part of the rates, it costs us somewhere about £812.

11,238. Whom?—The ratepayers. They pay that in percentages to the landlord at the present time.

11,239. You mean the whole community?—Yes.

11,240. You don't indicate that the increase would bear hardly on the occupants of small houses?—It would tend to increase their rates, for even with the percentage in Mr Cross's Bill it will cost us about 1d. on the rates. It will add, I believe, a halfpenny.

11,241. We have had excellent evidence from Glasgow to the effect that one great argument for a change in the law is that Glasgow Corporation is going to make money out of it?—Glasgow Corporation may. It depends how they view it. At present perhaps it loses a good portion of the rates, but the landlord would take good care that he did not lose, and of course the landlord would have to pay, whether he lost them or not, to the Corporation.

11,242. In Glasgow at present 26 per cent. of the rates on property under £10 is irrecoverable, and accordingly Glasgow authorities would, if they could, get that done for 5 per cent., which would save money. Can you tell us what in Paisley is the experience of the authorities in collecting rates from tenants of small houses?—I cannot give you how much they lose, but I know that they lose something in that way, because, while there is a large number of the poor appeal to get relief, there are a number also who relieve themselves without appealing.

11,243. Can you tell us roughly what proportion of the total assessable rental applies to £15 houses and under, and what above that. My point is that this abatement will undoubtedly come out of the pockets of the ratepayers, that the great bulk of it won't be recovered from property above £15 value?—Admittedly so. Say a man has a £10 rental, it will cost him 5d., and it will cost a man with £100 rental proportionately more.

11,244. But if the abatement is not sufficient, then the owners of small tenements will recover, not from the community, but will recover the loss which they sustain in the way of empties from the other tenants of the small houses, so that it has been argued to us, that unless the landlord's allowance is reasonable and adequate, the loss will fall directly on the occupants of small houses?—By increasing the rents?

11,245. Of these small houses, yes?—That is so.

11,246. Can you speak of this Provisional Order of Paisley Corporation?—Yes.

11,247. In this Provisional Order you ask power in a private Bill to give effect to what Mr Cross seeks in his Bill?—Practically.

11,248. Do you see any objection to Glasgow and any other town that thinks such a change of the law desirable proceeding in the same way rather than having a general Act of Parliament?—I do not see anything wrong with proceeding in that way for towns pressing on for a reform, but it will not be satisfactory until it is done.

11,249. To those localities that desire the change?—Yes.

11,250. But assuming Edinburgh and Aberdeen do not want the change, is it not arguable that Glasgow and Paisley, who do want it, should proceed by private Bills just as Paisley is proposing to do?—Yes, I don't think they should require to wait.

11,251. By Clause 54 of this order, Paisley Corporation does seek power to make owners liable for rates up to £15?—That is so.

The clause runs thus:—"Owners of dwelling-houses and 'other premises within the burgh let at a yearly rent not 'exceeding £15 shall be liable equally with the occupiers 'of such dwelling-houses and other premises for payment 'of tenants' rates and assessments in respect of such 'dwelling-houses and other premises, and the Corporation 'may assess either the owners or occupiers of such dwell-'ing-houses and other premises for such rates and assess-'ments, and such rates and assessments shall be recoverable 'from the owners or occupiers of such dwelling-houses and 'other premises as the case may be, in the same manner 'as other rates and assessments imposed by the Corporation 'irrecoverable, provided that the Corporation shall allow 'to owners who may be assessed under the provisions of 'this section the following deductions, that is to say—in 'the case of dwelling-houses and other premesis let at a 'yearly rent exceeding £4 and not exceeding £7, a deduc-'tion equal to 7½ per cent. of the amount of the assessment; 'in the case of dwelling-houses and other premises let at a 'yearly rent exceeding £7 and not exceeding £10, 5 per 'cent. of the amount of the assessment; and in the case of 'dwelling-houses and other premises let at a yearly rent 'exceeding £10 and not exceeding £15, 2½ per cent. of the 'amount of the assessment, and every such owner charged 'with and paying any such assessment shall have relief 'against the occupier of the dwelling-house or other 'premises assessed for the full amount thereof without 'deduction, provided that the occupier of any dwelling-'house or other premises referred to in this section in 'respect of which the owner is assessed, shall be entitled 'to appeal against such assessment on the ground of poverty, 'and in the event of such appeal being sustained the owner 'shall be relieved from the rate or assessment appealed 'against in whole or in part, in accordance with the result 'of the said appeal or if such owner shall have paid such 'rate or assessment, he shall be credited with the amount 'so paid, and the owner shall not be entitled to charge the 'amount from the payment of which he is so relieved or 'with which he is so credited against the occupier."

11,252. And then they give their owners a compounding allowance similar to Mr Cross's Bill, and they do this also, they give the owner the right to recover full assessment from his tenant?—The right to recover.

11,253. Yes, but the owner charged is to recover the whole assessment with a deduction?—I don't think they make any differentiation. I don't think they make that any of their business. They leave that to the owner.

11,254. Yes, they say here, "and every owner shall be 'relieved against the occupier of a dwelling-house or other 'premises assessed, and that for the full amount thereof 'without deduction." It would mean, of course, that the landlord would pay less the allowance, and by this clause have the right to recover the full rate from his tenant?—Of course it is some time since we had that before us.

11,255. Then the same clause proceeds to enact that the exemptions on the ground of poverty are to continue notwithstanding the compounding arrangement?—That is so.

11,256. And I see what you propose in Paisley is that the present right of appeal should continue?—Yes.

11,257. And that in the event of any occupier being exempted on the ground of poverty, he should be credited with the amount so paid, and the owner should be entitled to charge that amount from the occupier holding such a certificate?—That is so.

11,258. In your view, and in the view of the Corporation, that would fit in quite properly with any scheme of compounding?—I should think so.

11,259. (*Mr Howden.*) Under what rental in Paisley do you think a Bill like Mr Cross's would be required?—I think, as it presently stands, it would give great satisfaction to people up to £20, of whom a large number in Paisley would benefit.

11,260. Is there much difference between the rents in Paisley and Glasgow?—No, I do not think so. There may be in some localities in Glasgow slightly over those in

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Paisley, but I think we are very nearly as highly rented in Paisley now as even in Glasgow.

11,261. For modern houses?—Yes.

11,262. Do you think it would be unfair to say that the £20 rental should also apply to Paisley as it applies to Glasgow? Do you think it would be unfair to raise the rental from £16, as proposed, to £20?—Certainly not, I think £20 would be quite fair.

11,263. How does the present system affect your trade in Paisley?—Very badly; there is usually a rush before the May term, and then there is a slackness, and men have to walk about.

11,264. Then, assuming we cannot get direct rating, which you favour, what is your opinion in connection with voids under compounding. That is, if houses are standing empty, do you think these should not be taken into consideration in fixing a compounding rate, but rather that the landlord should get a deduction for these voids?—While they are empty?

11,265. Yes?—Well, I have not really given that serious consideration. I know that is a question which excited a good deal of attention in Paisley for a long time. For instance, they were exempted up to the present year from paying rates on unlet property, and there was an outcry against it for some time, and this year they have agreed that they must pay rates on unlet property.

11,266. That is the landlord's portion?—The landlord's portion, of course.

11,267. But it is the tenant's portion that I am referring to?—Well, you can hardly expect it if they are not getting it from the tenant.

11,268. It would be a much more suitable system to let them get a reduction from unlets instead of giving you an additional rate to cover unlets?—I should think so.

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Councillor J. Graham.

Councillor JOHN GRAHAM, Falkirk, called and examined.

Councillor J. Graham.

11,269. (*Mr Dobbie.*) You are a member of the Town Council for the Burgh of Falkirk?—Yes.

11,270. Has this question been before the Town Council of Falkirk?—Yes. But not for any great length of time, and that was the reason why my precognition does not go into so much detail as it might have done.

11,271. When was it last before the Town Council?—It was before a Committee of the Council in the early days of this year, and before the last monthly meeting of the Council.

11,272. Had they Mr Cross's Bill before them?—Yes.

11,273. Did they appoint you to give evidence in support of that Bill?—Yes.

11,274. What is your business?—I am a pattern-maker.

11,275. Living in Falkirk?—Yes.

11,276. In Falkirk, it is the case, as in most other burghs, that in the case of houses with rentals under £4 at present the rates are collected from the landlord?—That is so.

11,277. Also, I assume, where the tenancy is less than a year?—Yes.

11,278. What allowance is given in Falkirk to landlords who collect under £4?—I am not aware that there is any allowance. The practice of less than yearly rentals is not very great. I don't think the landlords care much about entertaining it.

11,279. Is there any allowance under £4?—No.

11,280. Have you heard of any complaints from landlords owing to their being compelled to pay the rates for the small houses?—No, even as you will see there in my precognition where, the water area being much larger than the Burgh area, and the Council have not power to levy outside the compulsory area, the landlords lifted that rate for the water trust, and there has never been any complaint from these districts.

11,281. Do they make no allowance to the landlord from the water rate?—I do not think so. I could not exactly say.

11,282. Is the Council in favour of the provisions of the Bill for short lets?—Yes, that is their principal reason for sending me here. They consider it would be a great advantage to the working population.

11,283. What class of population have you mainly in Falkirk?—The staple industry is the iron foundry industry.

11,284. Is that a movable population to any large extent?—It is tending in that direction more than ever. The iron industry is spreading more, and there is a greater tendency to removals.

11,285. What is the population?—Approximately about 33,000.

11,286. Can you tell us what the normal average rent of a house occupied by a typical working man might be?—I would say the average would be about 10 guineas.

11,287. Are these houses presently let monthly, quarterly, or yearly?—Mostly yearly.

11,288. The rents are paid half-yearly?—Yes.

11,289. And what change do you think is called for, in order to meet the wants of those occupiers?—The first objection is, that a tenant has practically to sign on for his house fifteen or sixteen months in advance, and once that is done, the man is tied to his house, and has no way of getting rid of it unless there is a money demand.

11,290. You and your Corporation think the period between letting day and the term day should be shortened?—Yes.

11,291. Does your instruction go further; do you also object to the yearly let?—Yes.

11,292. Do you think there is any practical inconvenience in many cases in Falkirk in the tenants being tied to their houses for a year?—Yes, and it is on the increase now.

11,293. Owing to the shifting nature of the employment?—Yes, the tendency is greater now.

11,294. You see, under Mr Cross's Bill, in cases of houses let by the year at present, with half-yearly payments, that Bill would not alter that system, because it is simply to make a six monthly let?—Yes.

11,295. Would that meet the requirements of the Falkirk population?—To a certain extent it would, although we should prefer the privilege of shorter lets.

11,296. How did you come to vote? Was there a minority present at the Town Council against the Bill?—There was a small minority. The opposition was raised practically on the landlord being held responsible for the rates.

11,297. Did the minority consist of landlords, or had you any of them with you?—We had a good few landlords, but they did not wholly vote against it. One landlord in particular was greatly in favour of the Bill as a whole.

11,298. In spite of his being a landlord?—Yes.

11,299. Coming to the rates, what is your view as to the collection of rates, assuming short lets? Do you think as a rating authority that the present system should continue, and that you should collect the rates?—I should prefer that there should be another system.

11,300. What would you propose?—Either shorter periods for collecting by the Corporation, or as proposed in this Bill.

11,301. We have had evidence from rating authorities to the effect that it is impossible for them to collect oftener than once a year; would your experience suggest that?—My experience is not very old, as I only entered the Town Council in November.

11,302. Assuming the experts are right, and that rates cannot be collected by the Corporation oftener than once a year, in your view the next best thing would be to have the rates collected along with the rents?—Yes.

11,303. We have been told to-day, and at previous meetings, that it is practically impossible, assuming that this system should be selected, to distinguish how much is rate and how much is rent in monthly payments, and that in practice the tenant would be asked to pay one sum which might be to some extent rates and to some extent rent, but that they would not be extinguished. Do you think that would be a serious objection to any change?—I should prefer that there should be distinction as the Bills propose, but I don't think it would be a serious objection.

11,304. An alternative has been noted, namely, that once a year, say, the landlord should bring home to the tenant the actual amount of the current year's rates per £, so that he as a ratepayer would know that he was paying along with his rent so much per £ to the revenue of the burgh?—That is so.

11,305. If that were done, do you think it would be essential or necessary that the rate receipt should distinguish how much is rate and how much is rent?—I think if a notice was presented to the tenant yearly of the amount of rate per £, it would be sufficient.

11,306. In England there is no attempt made to distinguish. The landlord fixes the highest price he can get for his house, and he gets this payment weekly as a rule, and he has to say nothing about rates. The tenant knows he is paying everything?—I would be in favour of the tenant being kept in touch with the rates. The responsibility should be brought home to him in that way.

11,307. Have you views in regard to the effect on the Corporation of the transfer of the payment of rates of small houses from the occupier to the landlord. Would it pay the Corporation?—I believe it would. In Falkirk at least, I understand, although I had not time to get actual figures, there is a pretty large sum irrecoverable from that class.

11,308. In the case of small houses?—Yes.

11,309. You have not the amount?—I might get it.

11,310. If you could get it, it would be useful, the amount of actual loss on the present collection in respect of houses up to £10, up to £15, and up to £20. Do you think your Council had before them this scale attached to the Bill when they approved of it generally?—Yes, that scale was under consideration.

11,311. And what was the view taken by the landlord element in the Council? Did they think it adequate?—Well, they did not make any great pronouncement on it, but the opinion in general was that they thought it was very fair. I believe there was just a natural resentment on behalf of one or two of the members who were landlords, attributable, perhaps, to prejudice against the whole system.

11,312. It was natural also that the Corporation should want as small a scale as possible?—Just so.

11,313. (*Mr Howden.*) What do landlords usually charge for sub-letting a house to relieve a man of his bargain?—I believe it is 10s.

11,314. Do they relieve you altogether for 10s.?—Yes. I don't think that is altogether universal. The Landlords Association have, I believe, that rule, but I have known of a case where tenants have been warned out by mistake, and where an enquiry was made the landlord wanted 10s. to pay the expense of his mistake. There have been some difficult cases in the town, and great hardship in the way tenants have been treated, but I understand the Landlords Association take over the houses for a payment of 10s., but all the landlords in the town are certainly not in the association.

11,315. Have you known cases in Falkirk where a man has to pay the rent of the house he has left?—I have heard of such cases where the rent was forced.

11,316. Still you think—we had the evidence before us already—that 10s. relieves the tenant in Falkirk from further responsibility?—I understand that is the rule of the Landlords Association.

11,317. Do you think rental, as fixed in Mr Cross's Bill, would be a fair rental as applied to Falkirk?—I think so.

11,318. £16?—Yes.

11,319. Is there much difference between the rents in Falkirk and the rents in Glasgow?—I believe the rents in Glasgow are slightly dearer.

11,320. So that you think £16 would be a fair rental?—I think so, for this Bill in the present state of affairs.

11,321. How does the present system affect the building trade in Falkirk as regards the rush that takes place—if any takes place—just before the May term, and the slackness afterwards?—That is the universal experience.

11,322. Are you a member of the Falkirk Trades Council?—No, at present I am an ex-member; I am in touch with them.

11,323. You represent their views on this question?—Yes.

(*Mr Dobbie.*) That closes the taking of the evidence.

[Adjourned.]

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

MEMORANDUM on the PRACTICE OF COMPOUNDING FOR RATES in the ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF LONDON, prepared by EDGAR HARPER, F.S.I., Statistical Officer of the London County Council.

The practice of compounding, by which a landlord pays the rates on behalf of the occupier and obtains in return a rebate from the local rating authority, has been in force in London since the reign of George III. It was first regulated by Sturges Bourne's Act (59 Geo. III. cap. 12), but is now governed by the provisions of the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act, 1869 (32 and 33 Vic. cap. 41). The limits and conditions of compounding are contained in sections 3 and 4 of that Act, which read as follows :—

> 3. In case the rateable value of any hereditament does not exceed twenty pounds, if the hereditament is situate in the metropolis, or thirteen pounds if situate in any parish wholly or partly within the borough of Liverpool, or ten pounds if situate in any parish wholly or partly within the city of Manchester or the borough of Birmingham, or eight pounds if situate elsewhere, and the owner of such hereditament is willing to enter into an agreement in writing with the overseers to become liable to them for the poor rates assessed in respect of such hereditament, for any term not being less than one year from the date of such agreement, and to pay the poor rates whether the hereditament is occupied or not, the overseers may, subject nevertheless to the control of the vestry, agree with the owner to receive the rates from him, and to allow to him a commission not exceeding twenty-five per cent. on the amount thereof.
>
> 4. The Vestry of any parish may from time to time order that the owners of all rateable hereditaments to which section 3 of this Act extends, situate within such parish, shall be rated to the poor rate in respect of such rateable hereditaments, instead of the occupiers, on all rates made after the date of such order; and thereupon and so long as such order shall be in force the following enactments shall have effect :—
>
> 1. The overseers shall rate the owners instead of the occupiers, and shall allow to them an abatement or deduction of fifteen per centum from the amount of the rate :
>
> 2. If the owner of one or more such rateable hereditaments shall give notice to the overseers in writing that he is willing to be rated for any term not being less than one year in respect of all such rateable hereditaments of which he is the owner, whether the same be occupied or not, the overseers shall rate such owner accordingly, and allow to him a further abatement or deduction not exceeding fifteen per centum from the amount of the rate during the time he is so rated :
>
> 3. The Vestry may by resolution rescind any such order after a day to be fixed by them, such day being not less than six months after the passing of such resolution, but the order shall continue in force with respect to all rates made before the date on which the resolution takes effect :
>
> Provided that this clause shall not be applicable to any rateable hereditament in which a dwelling-house shall not be included.

The statutory conditions of compounding may therefore be briefly enumerated as follows, viz. :—

1. It is entirely at the discretion of the local authority.
2. It applies only to hereditaments with a rateable value not exceeding £20 (in London).
3. It may be made optional or compulsory to the owner.
4. If optional, the rebate must not exceed 25 per cent.
5. If compulsory, the rebate must not be less than 15 per cent. nor more than 30 per cent.

The following table shows the compounding arrangements existing in the Administrative County of London during 1906–7 :—

Cities and boroughs.	Maximum rateable value of properties in respect of which abatement is allowed.	Abatement allowed to owners.		
		If optional to owners (sec. 3, Act of 1869) with agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.	If compulsory to owners (sec. 4, Act of 1869)	
			Without agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.	*With* agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.
	£	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
City of London—				
Parish of St Bartholomew-the-Great	18	25	...	...
County of London—				
Battersea	20	...	15	20
Bermondsey (*a*)	1–10	20	...	...
	11–13	15		
	Tenement houses model dwellings.	10		
Bethnal Green	20	20	...	...
Camberwell	20	10 to 25 (*b*)	...	...
Chelsea	20	...	15	16 to 20
Deptford	20	...	15	17½
Finsbury	1–12	25	...	...
	13–15	20		
	16–20	15		
	Tenements up to £20.	20		
	Artizans' dwellings.	15		
Fulham	20	10 to 25 (*c*)	...	...
Greenwich	20	20	...	...
Hackney	20	...	15	
Hammersmith	20	...	15	20
Hampstead	20	...	15	25
Holborn	20	...	15	17½ to 25
Islington	20	10 (*d*)	...	...

(*a*) Bermondsey.—As from the 29th September 1906; before that date the maximum rateable value was £18, and the abatement allowed ranged from 10 to 25 per cent.

(*b*) Camberwell.—According to class of property.

(*c*) Fulham.—In fixing the rate of allowance each street is considered separately (1) as to rateable value; (2) as to class of tenants occupying the premises; (3) as to whether the property is let in tenements or in single rooms.

(*d*) Islington.—This abatement is allowed only on a few properties.

Cities and Boroughs.	Maximum rateable value of properties in respect of which abatement is allowed.	Abatement allowed to owners.		
		If optional to owners (sec. 3, Act of 1869) with agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.	If compulsory to owners (sec. 4, Act of 1869)	
			Without agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.	*With* agreement to pay rates whether property is occupied or not.
	£	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
County of London—*continued.*				
Kensington	20	5 to 20	...	...
Lambeth	15	15	...	...
Lewisham		Occupiers rated.		
Paddington	20	10	...	...
Poplar	20	...	15	25
St Marylebone	20	15	...	...
St Pancras	20	15	...	...
Shoreditch	Dwelling houses up to £20.	17½	...	...
	Model dwellings up to £20.	15		
Southwark	15	15	...	...
Stepney	15	20	...	...
Stoke Newington	20	...	15	17½
Wandsworth	20	...	15	25
Westminster (City)	20	...	15	16
Woolwich	12	15	...	...

The total amount allowed to owners by way of rebate in the year 1903–4 was £221,025, which is 1·68 per cent. of the gross amount of rates chargeable on all properties. No complete return exists for any other year; but it is safe to say that both the extent of compounding and the amount of rebate allowed exhibit a steady tendency to decline.

It will be noticed that in some cases the amount of the abatement varies in the same borough. In these cases the allowance made depends either upon the rateable value of the property or its class. In the case of Islington, the Borough Council allows only 10 per cent. and confines its compounding to a few special cases of block dwellings.

The marked tendency to reduce the rebate to the minimum at which owners are willing to compound is illustrated by the action of three metropolitan boroughs.

The Southwark Borough Council in 1898 reduced their compounding allowance from 25 to 15 per cent., and in 1901 to 12½ per cent. The effect of the latter reduction, however, does not appear to have been satisfactory, as at the expiration of one year the rebate was increased again to 15 per cent.

The Westminster City Council in 1902 also reduced their allowance to 12½ per cent. Several of the principal owners, however, refused to enter into agreements on these terms, and after six months' trial, during which representations were made to the City Council with regard to the hardships suffered by the tenants through being rated directly, the council passed an Order under section 4 of the Act. This involves an allowance of 15 per cent., and the additional allowance made by the City Council to owners paying on all properties, whether occupied or not, is only 1 per cent.

The St Pancras Borough Council, in January 1902, resolved to reduce the abatement from 25 per cent. to 15 per cent. for ordinary houses, and 10 per cent. for industrial dwellings and flats. On the owners of industrial dwellings receiving notice of this alteration they refused to accept the reduced rebate, and the Borough Council eventually decided to allow 15 per cent. in all cases.

From the experience of these three local authorities it would appear that owners will not, as a rule, compound for an allowance of less than 15 per cent.

In thus reducing the rebatement to the lowest percentage practicable, the Borough Councils are acting in the financial interest of the ratepayers as a whole. Large abatements to owners of properties under £20 cause a heavy additional burden on properties above that value. In Poplar (to take an extreme instance where there is a large proportion of small property) the abatement allowed for compounding was in 1902 30 per cent., and the additional charge included in the rate levied on properties above compounding value, to provide for the abatement on compounded properties, was in that year shown to be as follows:—

	s.	*d.*
Parish of Bow	0	10½
Parish of Bromley	1	1½
Parish of Poplar	0	9

In carrying out their policy of reducing the rebate the local authorities are no doubt seriously handicapped by the provisions of section 4 of the Act. As has already been mentioned, it appears that in practice owners will not, as a rule, compound for an allowance of less than 15 per cent. This is no doubt largely due to the fact that if owners are rated compulsorily an allowance of 15 per cent. must be made. Since they cannot be rated compulsorily without rebate of 15 per cent. being allowed (without agreement to pay full or empty) they are naturally slow to accept a smaller rebate *with* such an agreement.

The Governors of the Peabody Donation Fund, who own large estates of block dwellings in London, have left it to the local authorities to collect the rates from the occupiers direct in all cases where the deduction allowed for compounding is less than 15 per cent., and a similar course has been taken by the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company in the Borough of Islington. This has had the effect of bringing home to the minds of their tenants the true nature of their position as ratepayers. The compounding system undoubtedly disguises that position so far as the great majority of weekly tenants in London are concerned. They express their view of the subject, usually in the statement that they have no rates to pay. The tenants as a rule prefer this system, not only as saving them trouble, but also because the demand for a considerable sum only once in a half year is a difficult one for them to meet out of a limited income. Any system of collecting rates direct from occupiers of this class must, in order to succeed, provide for the collection of small amounts at short intervals.

It is necessary to draw a distinction between the two parts of which the compounding deduction consists, viz.:—

(1) Rebate in respect of the rating of owners.

(2) Allowance in respect of losses on empties, removals, etc. Although no separation is made between these two parts in the deduction under section 3 of the Act of 1869, it is important to keep the distinction clearly in mind, as the two parts of the deduction are essentially different in character. The former is in the nature of compensation to the owner for the trouble and expense to which he is put by being rated instead of the occupiers. The latter is an allowance for the loss incurred by the owner by paying rates in full whether the property is occupied or not, a loss which is of a much more indefinite and variable character.

With regard to the rebate, or first part of the deduction, there is a considerable difference between the percentage an owner can afford to accept and that which a rating authority can afford to allow. If owners are not rated the authorities are put to considerable expense in collecting rates from a large number of small occupiers, whereas if owners are rated the rates are collected as part of the rent, and the only expense the owners are put to is for the clerical work involved in making returns of periods of occupation and of rates payable, and perhaps a slight extra expense in enforcing payment of the higher rents necessitated by the inclusion of rates therein.

The rebate of 15 per cent., granted under section 4 of the Act, as commission to the owners for collecting the rates along with the rent, is extremely liberal. The extra expense to the owner would be adequately covered by a commission of 5 per cent.; on the other hand, it is quite possible that it would cost the rating authority as much as 10 per cent. in some cases to collect from this class of property. It would appear, therefore, that half the present statutory rebate (*i.e.* 7½ per cent.), while providing a liberal commission to the owner, might at the same time be a saving to the rating authority as compared with direct collection from the occupiers.

The allowance, or second part of the deduction (that in respect of losses on empties, etc.), is on an entirely different footing. Given that rating of owners is in force, the amount of the loss on empties, etc., sustained by an owner who undertakes to pay whether his properties are occupied or not, is precisely the same as would be lost by the rating authority in the absence of such agreement. But in substituting a fixed allowance for a varying loss, an owner requires to be assured against any loss on the transaction. Consequently as the arrangement is purely optional, unless the allowance offered was something more than the average loss on his property, an owner would not enter into such an agreement, and on all agreements with such owners, the rating authority must lose. In other words, if it pays an owner to enter into such an agreement, and to receive a certain allowance, it does not pay the rating authority to make that allowance.

And this consideration leads inevitably to the conclusion that the adoption of any uniform percentage for the allowance in respect of empties cannot operate equitably between owner and owner. In the case of tenements of a good class in a favourable locality, one tenant usually succeeds another without a break, except perhaps an interval of a week. The allowance to the owner of such properties is almost all clear gain to him. But property which for various reasons is less attractive has a considerable proportion of empties, and the allowance may then be little more than sufficient to cover the loss of rates due to empties.

These facts have no doubt influenced the Westminster City Council, which has passed an Order under section 4, and which makes an allowance of only 1 per cent. for empties in addition to the statutory 15 per cent.—obviously with the idea of minimising the loss incurred by the City Council, while securing the rating of owners of all property coming within the Act.

The only advantage to the rating authority of entering into agreements with owners, appears to be a more regular revenue enabling the produce of the rates to be estimated more closely than it otherwise could be.

It should be mentioned that outside the County of London there is an added complication, due to the fact that, while compounding takes place under the Act of 1867 so far as the Poor Rate is concerned, compounding for the General District Rate is governed by the Public Health Act, 1875, under which there are altogether different limits, both for the classes of properties to which compounding applies and the amounts of the deductions allowed. It will probably be undesirable to trouble the Committee with these complications.

The conclusions arrived at may be thus briefly stated:—

(*a*) The allowance for empties works inequitably.

(*b*) A rebate of reasonable amount to the owner, for relieving the local authority of the trouble and expense of collecting from each occupier, probably produces the most satisfactory result in a pecuniary sense.

(*c*) But it would be quite easy for the local authority to organise a system of direct fortnightly or monthly rate collection from occupiers on short tenancies at slight additional cost, if it be considered desirable to make clear the occupier's position as ratepayer.

Local Government and Statistical Department,
County Hall, Spring Gardens,
London, S.W.,
21*st January* 1907.

Answers to Questions as to Practice in London.

1. What is the amount per pound of assessed rental of the tenant's rates paid by the landlord or owner?—In London it is not the practice for the landlord to pay any proportion of the tenant's rates. He either pays the whole or none at all. The average rate for the whole of London during the current year is about 7s. 6d. in the £.

2. What is the amount per pound of assessed rental of the rates charged upon the landlord or owner?—In London no rates are charged direct upon the landlord except in pursuance of a compounding resolution passed by the local authority under section 4 of the Act of 1869. There is nothing corresponding to the Scotch practice of charging part of the rates upon owners direct.

3. Are any houses rented at less than £19, 10s. let for periods longer than a week or a month? If so, what proportion?—It may happen in exceptional cases that houses rented at less than £19, 10s. per annum are let by the quarter or by the year, but the proportion is trifling. The great bulk of such houses are let weekly or monthly.

4. What is distraint? What is the cost of evicting a tenant paying £10 or less and one paying £10 to £19, 10s.?—In distraint for the recovery of rent due, the landlord instructs a licensed broker, who, failing payment on his first application, distrains upon the tenant's goods by scheduling such of them as he thinks necessary to cover the debt and expenses. After six days have elapsed the broker may remove these goods and sell them. During the interval he is allowed to place a man in possession of the goods distrained upon, in order to guard against their removal.

There is no practical difference between the cost of evicting a tenant paying more than £10 and that of evicting a tenant paying less than £10. In cases where the rent is less than 7s. 9d. per week (£20 per annum) proceedings can be taken in the Police Court. The hearing fee is 2s., and the fee for the attendance of an officer of the Court at the eviction is 1s. In addition, the landlord has to bear the expense of putting the tenant's goods out of the tenement, and he also suffers a loss of rent for a period which may be taken at about six weeks on the average.

Where the rent is 7s. 9d. per week or more (over £20 per annum), proceedings have to be taken in the County Court, where the fees are:—entering summons, 1s.; hearing fee, 2s.; bailiff's attendance at eviction, 1s. 6d. Owing to the difficulties in fixing the date of hearing, the landlord usually loses a larger number of weeks' rent under this procedure.

5. What percentage of removals is there in a year from houses let weekly or monthly?—There are no returns of the number of removals in London as a whole, but in the Council's own dwellings a record is kept which shows that during the year 1905–6 there were 1720 removals out of a total of 6326 tenements. This is 27 per cent.; but it is probable that the percentage is less in the case of tenements belonging to private owners, who usually select their tenants, whereas the Council accept all tenants in order of application, provided they are of respectable character, no preference whatever being given on account of high wages or permanency of employment.

6. Do tenants get any official intimation of the amount of the rates for which they are liable where the landlords compound? Is any separation made in the landlords, receipts between rates and rents?—Where the landlords compound, tenants receive no official intimation of the amount of rates chargeable.

In certain of the Peabody buildings the amount of rent and the amount of rates are separately stated in the landlords' receipts; but in all other cases, so far as I am aware, no such separation is made.

7. Do very poor tenants get any relief from rates otherwise than through the consideration of the owner who has compounded?—No.

8. Is there any loss of rates on small houses where rates are collected from tenants? If so, what is the percentage of loss?—In Lewisham, which is the only district in London where no compounding is allowed, the Deputy Town Clerk, at my request, recently analysed his rate books for one quarter so as to show the leakages or losses of rates on properties not exceeding £20 rateable value. The results were:—

	Loss.
Houses under £10 rateable value . . .	9·2%
„ above £10 and under £15 . .	8·4%
„ „ £15 to and including £20 .	7·7%
Average for all houses up to and including £20	8·1%

The percentage of leakages for all classes of property in the borough for the year ended March 1904 was 6·45, of which 6·33 was due to losses by empties.

(Signed) Edgar Harper,
Statistical Officer of the
London County Council.

21*st January* 1907.

APPENDIX II.

TABLE A.

CORPORATION OF GLASGOW.

TABLE showing Amount of Occupiers' Assessment (*in cumulo*) Imposed, Collected, and Outstanding, as at the close of each year's Collection, including both the Assessments imposed by the Corporation for Municipal Purposes only, and those (*e.g.* Juvenile Delinquency and Lunacy Assessments) Collected by the Corporation, but not administered by them, (1) on Rentals over £4 and under £10, and (2) on Rentals of £10 and upwards.

On Rentals over £4 and under £10.

Year.	Nett Imposed.	Collected.	Out-standing.	Percentage Out-standing.
	£	£	£	
1878–1879	34,661	20,959	13,702	39·53
1879–1880	34,557	21,133	13,424	38·85
1880–1881	34,062	21,765	12,297	36·10
1881–1882	35,909	24,445	11,464	31·93
1882–1883	37,151	29,628	7,523	20·25
1883–1884	41,361	33,424	7,937	19·19
1884–1885	38,454	30,962	7,492	19·48
1885–1886	37,124	29,476	7,648	20·60
1886–1887	36,859	29,312	7,547	20·48
1887–1888	36,355	29,559	6,796	18·69
1888–1889	37,083	30,318	6,765	18·24
1889–1890	37,251	31,092	6,159	16·53
1890–1891	37,822	31,638	6,184	16·35
1891–1892	41,747	35,525	6,222	14·90
1892–1893	43,439	37,016	6,423	14·79
1893–1894	47,273	40,353	6,920	14·64
1894–1895	46,355	39,375	6,980	15·06
1895–1896	48,282	41,454	6,828	14·14
1896–1897	49,071	42,269	6,802	13·86
1897–1898	50,936	43,380	7,556	14·83
1898–1899	54,410	46,243	8,167	15·01
1899–1900	56,259	46,425	9,834	17·48
1900–1901	60,220	48,470	11,750	19·51
1901–1902	65,146	51,829	13,317	20·44
1902–1903	64,859	51,235	13,624	21·01
1903–1904	66,906	51,595	15,311	22·88
1904–1905	67,500	50,199	17,301	25·63
1905–1906	69,542	51,731	17,811	25·61

Average percentage outstanding over the eight years, 1891–92 to 1898–99, inclusive :—

Nett Imposed.	Collected.	Out-standing.	Percentage Out-standing.
381,513	325,615	55,898	14·65

On Rentals £10 and upwards.

Year.	Nett Imposed.	Collected.	Out-standing.	Percentage Out-standing.
	£	£	£	
1878–1879	264,012	256,084	7,928	3·00
1879–1880	260,828	254,163	6,665	2·56
1880–1881	253,674	248,650	5,024	1·98
1881–1882	258,535	255,149	3,386	1·31
1882–1883	267,905	265,086	2,819	1·05
1883–1884	288,377	285,787	2,590	0·90
1884–1885	276,696	274,234	2,462	0·89
1885–1886	276,537	273,859	2,678	0·97
1886–1887	265,190	262,445	2,745	1·04
1887–1888	256,633	254,203	2,430	0·95
1888–1889	258,552	256,650	1,902	0·74
1889–1890	259,017	257,417	1,600	0·62
1890–1891	265,638	264,146	1,492	0·56
1891–1892	308,053	306,838	1,215	0·39
1892–1893	330,780	329,550	1,230	0·37
1893–1894	353,458	352,135	1,323	0·37
1894–1895	345,492	343,995	1,497	0·43
1895–1896	361,813	360,458	1,355	0·37
1896–1897	370,578	369,175	1,403	0·38
1897–1898	394,124	392,602	1,522	0·39
1898–1899	418,517	416,670	1,847	0·44
1899–1900	439,407	437,047	2,360	0·54
1900–1901	488,005	484,997	3,008	0·62
1901–1902	531,722	528,446	3,276	0·62
1902–1903	536,030	532,951	3,079	0·57
1903–1904	577,321	573,519	3,802	0·66
1904–1905	602,447	597,955	4,492	0·75
1905–1906	621,602	616,564	5,038	0·81

Average percentage outstanding over the eight years, 1891–92 to 1898–99, inclusive :—

Nett Imposed.	Collected.	Out-standing.	Percentage Out-standing.
2,882,815	2,871,423	11,392	0·40

Taking the Assessments *in cumulo*, without distinction of Rental under and over £10, the average percentage outstanding over the eight years, 1891–92 to 1898–99, inclusive, was :—

Nett Imposed.	Collected.	Out-standing.	Percentage Out-standing.
3,264,328	3,197,038	67,290	2·06

[TABLE B.

TABLE B.

CORPORATION OF GLASGOW.

STATEMENT of Rental over £4 and under £10, on which the Occupiers' Assessments have been paid to the Corporation by the Owners, in consideration of a deduction allowed to the latter of 7½ per cent.:—

Year 1896–1897,	£4,979
Year 1897–1898,	5,982
Year 1898–1899,	8,552
Year 1899–1900,	8,696
Year 1900–1901,	9,810
Year 1901–1902,	10,468
Year 1902–1903,	10,627
Year 1903–1904,	10,623
Year 1904–1905,	10,861
Year 1905–1906,	15,824

STATEMENT showing the proportion of the above sum of £15,824 for the year 1905–1906, effeiring to each £ of rental from £4, 1s. to £9, 19s. inclusive, with number of occupancies at each £ of rental:—

	Rental.	No. of Occupancies.
£4, 1s. to £5 rental,	£1,946	419
£5, 1s. to £6 rental,	2,889	512
£6, 1s. to £7 rental,	3,402	518
£7, 1s. to £8 rental,	3,260	422
£8, 1s. to £9 rental,	2,315	267
£9, 1s. to £9, 19s. rental,	2,012	214
	£15,824	2,352
Of which £4, 1s. to £7 rental, £8,237		1,449
£7, 1s. to £9, 19s. rental, 7,587	£15,824	903 2,352

NAMES of Owners, or Factors, by whom the Occupiers' Assessments were paid to the Corporation as above for the year 1905–1906, with the proportion of rental effeiring to each:—

City Improvements Department, 22 King Street, City,	£5,926
A. Mitchell & Son, 173 West Scotland Street,	4,388
North British Railway Company, 14 West George Street,	1,632
John M'Fee & Son, 343 Crown Street,	890
Workmen's Dwellings Company, Ltd., 142 St Vincent Street,	607
R. M'Callum & Son, 69 Union Street,	491
Black, Son, & Todd, 114 South Portland Street,	292
Cowlairs Co-operative Society, Ltd., 19 Angus Street,	283
David Gillan, 44 George Street, City,	270
Hendry & Steel, 502 St Vincent Street,	211
Kyrle Society, Lynedoch Street,	165
David Watson, 455 Paisley Road,	161
Robert Robb, 12 Trongate,	134
William Buchanan & Son, 94 South Portland Street,	116
William L. Rome, 460 Paisley Road,	105
Stewart & Brown, 101 West Nile Street,	80
William Renton M'Allan, 65 Eglinton Street,	40
James M'Clymont, 91 Pollok Street,	33
	£15,824

TABLE C.

CITY OF GLASGOW.

STATEMENT of Assessments for Local Purposes (excluding Domestic Water Rate) imposed in Glasgow (City Parish), 1905–1906.

	On Rentals at £10 and upwards.			On Rentals over £4 and under £10.		
	Total Rate per £.	Of which payable by—		Total Rate per £.	Of which payable by—	
		Owners.	Occupiers.		Owners.	Occupiers.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Imposed by the Corporation for its own purposes,	3 $5\frac{22}{32}$	0 $10\frac{23}{32}$	2 $6\frac{31}{32}$	2 $9\frac{15}{32}$	0 $10\frac{23}{32}$	1 $10\frac{24}{32}$
Collected by the Corporation, but not administered by them—						
Juvenile Delinquency,	0 $0\frac{39}{32}$	0 0	0 $0\frac{39}{32}$	0 $0\frac{39}{32}$	0 0	0 $0\frac{39}{32}$
Lunacy Purposes,	0 3	0 $1\frac{16}{32}$	0 $1\frac{16}{32}$	0 3	0 $1\frac{16}{32}$	0 $1\frac{16}{32}$
*Parish Council Assessments,	1 $4\frac{23}{32}$	0 8	0 $8\frac{23}{32}$	1 $4\frac{23}{32}$	0 8	0 $8\frac{23}{32}$
†Glasgow School Board Assessment,	1 0	0 $5\frac{24}{32}$	0 $6\frac{8}{32}$	1 0	0 $5\frac{24}{32}$	0 $6\frac{8}{32}$
	6 $2\frac{11}{32}$	2 $1\frac{31}{32}$	4 $0\frac{12}{32}$	5 $6\frac{4}{32}$	2 $1\frac{31}{32}$	3 $4\frac{5}{32}$

* The above rate of 1s. $4\frac{23}{32}$d. is the equivalent, if imposed on the full rental, of the actual assessment of 1s. $8\frac{23}{32}$d. which is imposed on only four-fifths of the rental.

† The above rate of 1s. is the equivalent, if imposed on the full rental, of the actual assessment of 1s. 3d. which is imposed on only four-fifths of the rental.

TABLE D.

CORPORATION OF GLASGOW.

TABLE showing the Rate per £ of the various Assessments and the Cumulo Rate, imposed for *Municipal Purposes only* (*i.e.* excluding Juvenile Delinquency and Lunacy Assessments, which though *collected* by the Corporation are not *administered* by them), on (1) Rentals at £10 and upwards, and (2) Rentals over £4 and under £10, 1905–1906.

Assessment.	On Rentals at £10 and upwards.			On Rentals over £4 and under £10.		
	Rate per £.	Of which payable by—		Rate per £.	Of which payable by—	
		Owners.	Occupiers.		Owners.	Occupiers.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1. General Police Purposes (including Watching, Lighting, Fire Brigade, Cleansing Baths, etc.),	1 $3\frac{3}{4}$	...	1 $3\frac{3}{4}$	0 $7\frac{7}{8}$	...	0 $7\frac{7}{8}$
2. Repair and Maintenance of Roads, Streets, and Bridges,	0 $5\frac{7}{16}$	0 $2\frac{23}{32}$	0 $2\frac{23}{32}$	0 $5\frac{7}{16}$	0 $2\frac{23}{32}$	0 $2\frac{23}{32}$
3. County Road Debt,	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	...	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	...
4. Repair and Maintenance of Sewers, etc.,	0 $1\frac{3}{16}$	...	0 $1\frac{3}{16}$	0 $1\frac{3}{16}$	...	0 $1\frac{3}{16}$
5. Sewage Purification,	0 $4\frac{3}{16}$	0 $2\frac{3}{32}$	0 $2\frac{3}{32}$	0 $4\frac{3}{16}$	0 $2\frac{3}{32}$	0 $2\frac{3}{32}$
6. Public Health Purposes (including Hospitals, Reception Houses, Disinfection, etc.),	0 $5\frac{1}{4}$	0 $2\frac{5}{8}$	0 $2\frac{5}{8}$	0 $5\frac{1}{4}$	0 $2\frac{5}{8}$	0 $2\frac{5}{8}$
7. General Sanitary Operations,	0 $0\frac{11}{16}$	...	0 $0\frac{11}{16}$	0 $0\frac{11}{32}$	...	0 $0\frac{11}{32}$
8. Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act,	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$
9. Public Parks and Galleries,	0 $3\frac{3}{4}$	...	0 $3\frac{3}{4}$	0 $3\frac{3}{4}$	...	0 $3\frac{3}{4}$
10. Public Libraries,	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$
11. City Improvements,	0 $0\frac{3}{4}$	0 $0\frac{3}{8}$	0 $0\frac{3}{8}$	0 $0\frac{3}{4}$	0 $0\frac{3}{8}$	0 $0\frac{3}{8}$
12. Clyde Embankments,	0 $0\frac{1}{2}$	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{1}{2}$	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$
13. General Purposes under "City of Glasgow Act, 1891,"	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$
14. Municipal, Justiciary, and J.P. Buildings,	0 $1\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$	0 $1\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$	0 $0\frac{5}{8}$
15. Prison Payment,	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$
16. Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages,	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{4}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$	0 $0\frac{1}{8}$
17. Valuation of Lands and Heritages,	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$
18. Registration of Voters,	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{16}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$	0 $0\frac{5}{32}$
19. Inebriates Act,	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{16}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$	0 $0\frac{1}{32}$
20. Public Water,	0 1	0 1	...	0 1	0 1	...
Total Rate per £,	3 $5\frac{11}{16}$	0 $10\frac{23}{32}$	2 $6\frac{31}{32}$	2 $9\frac{15}{32}$	0 $10\frac{23}{32}$	1 $10\frac{3}{4}$

CITY OF GLASGOW, 1906.

Total Number and Rental of Subjects of all kinds.

	Number.	Rental.
	212,780	£5,104,715
Add to Rental, Railways and Canals, etc.,	...	665,856
		£5,770,571
Total Number and Rental of Dwelling-houses at—		
Rents under £5,	11,535	£52,632
„ £5 and under £10,	82,642	660,588
„ £10 „ £15,	33,844	406,902
„ £15 „ £20,	20,808	355,149
„ £20 and upwards,	26,449	1,002,492
	175,278	£2,477,763

(Signed) JAMES HENRY,
Assessor.

APPENDIX III.

TABLE A.

CORPORATION OF EDINBURGH.

STATEMENT showing (1) Charge for Occupiers' Proportion of Burgh Assessments; (2) Net Amount recovered; and (3) Percentage of Recoveries and Amounts written off on Rentals of £1 to £20, applicable to Year 1903–1904 :—*

Rental.	Number of Charges.	Assessable Rental.	Charge for Occupiers' Assessments 1s. 9¾d. per £.	Abated by Appeals Committee.	Irrecoverable.	Total.	Net Amount Recovered.	Percentage	
								Recovered.	Written off.
£		£	£	£	£	£	£		
1	356	356	32	1	1	2	30	93·75	6·25
2	261	522	48	1	1	2	46	95·83	4·17
3	287	861	78	2	4	6	72	92·32	7·68
4	350	1,400	127	5	14	19	108	85·04	14·96
†5	1,916	9,580	868	131	199	330	538	61·98	38·02
6	3,259	19,554	1,771	279	322	601	1,170	66·06	33·94
7	2,894	20,258	1,837	235	238	473	1,364	74·25	25·75
8	3,824	30,592	2,772	279	200	479	2,293	82·72	17·28
9	4,336	39,024	3,536	279	158	437	3,099	87·64	12·36
10	5,453	54,530	4,942	311	109	420	4,522	91·50	8·50
11	3,516	38,676	3,505	215	78	293	3,212	91·64	8·36
12	4,227	50,724	4,597	199	86	285	4,312	93·80	6·20
13	2,892	37,596	3,407	100	43	143	3,264	95·80	4·20
14	2,920	40,880	3,705	122	37	159	3,546	95·70	4·30
15	2,800	42,000	4,806	113	33	146	4,660	96·96	3·04
16	2,698	43,168	3,912	146	41	187	3,725	95·47	4·53
17	2,099	35,683	3,234	72	13	85	3,149	97·37	2·63
18	2,418	43,524	3,944	85	31	116	3,828	97·06	2·94
19	2,345	44,555	4,047	86	25	111	3,936	97·25	2·75
20	2,157	43,140	3,910	55	30	85	3,825	97·57	2·43
	51,008	596,623	55,078	2,716	1,663	4,379	30,699	92·04	7·96
21 and upwards	27,795	2,087,429	184,787	259	191	450	184,337	99·75	0·25
	‡78,803	2,684,052	239,865	2,975	1,854	4,829	235,036	97·99	2·01

* If Act limited to £10, would affect 22,938 out of 78,803 houses.
† Largest proportion of loss to rating authority is between £5 and £10.
‡ Compare number with 74,870 in Table No. I.

TABLE B.

CORPORATION OF EDINBURGH.

STATEMENT showing (1) Total amount of Charges for Burgh Assessments on Rentals—(*a*) Over £4 and under £7, (*b*) of £7 and under £10, and (*c*) of £10 and not exceeding £20; (2) Amount recovered; and (3) Amount written off, under each group of Rentals,—applicable to Year 1903–1904; and (4) Amount which would be allowed in deductions to Owners under Mr Cross' Bill.

Rentals.	(1) Charge for Burgh Assessments.	(2) Amount Recovered.	(3) Amounts written off as abated and irrecoverable.	Percentage of Loss.	(4) Amounts allowed to Owners under Mr Cross' Bill.
	£	£	£		£
(*a*) Over £4 and under £7, . . .	2,766	1,816	950	34·34	181
(*b*) Of £7 and under £10, . . .	8,145	6,756	1,389	17·05	338
(*c*) Of £10 and not exceeding £20, .	44,009	41,979	2,030	4·61	1,049
	54,920	50,551	4,369	7·95	1,568 or 36 per cent. of the amount written off.

Note.—The above figures include charges on business premises and amount recovered in respect of same, as time did not admit of these being eliminated. The amounts written off as abated and irrecoverable, however, may be taken as substantially correct, as applicable to dwelling-houses only.

TABLE B2.

CORPORATION OF EDINBURGH.

STATEMENT showing (1) Total amount of Charges for Burgh Assessments on Rentals—(*a*) Over £4 and under £7, (*b*) of £7 and under £10, and (*c*) of £10 and not exceeding £20; (2) Amount recovered; and (3) Amount written off as abated or irrecoverable, under each group of Rentals,—applicable to Year 1903–1904; and (4) Amount which would be allowed in deductions to Owners under Mr Cross' Bill.

Rentals.	(1) Charge for Burgh Assessments.	(2) Amount Recovered.	(3) Assessments written off.				(4) Amounts allowed to Owners under Mr Cross' Bill.
			Abated on Ground of Poverty.		Irrecoverable.		
			Amount.	Percentage of Loss.	Amount.	Percentage of Loss.	
	£	£	£		£		£
(*a*) Over £4 and under £7, . . .	2,766	1,816	415	15·00	535	19·34	181
(*b*) Of £7 and under £10, . . .	8,145	6,756	793	9·73	596	7·32	338
(*c*) Of £10 and not exceeding £20, .	44,009	41,979	1,504	3·42	526	1·19	1,049
	54,920	50,551	2,712	4·94	1,657	3·01	1,568

Note.—The total amount allowed under Mr Cross' Bill is equal to 57·81 per cent. of the assessments abated on the ground of poverty, and 94·62 per cent. of the assessments found to be irrecoverable.

APPENDIX IV.

THE "MODERN" RENT CARD.

SHOWING AT A GLANCE EXACTLY WHAT THE TENANT PAYS IN RENT AND WHAT IN RATES.

Name of Tenant.....

Address of Property.....

.....

Notice in writing of at least a week must be given to terminate tenancy, and is to be sent to :—

.....

.....

or handed to the collector when calling. Such Notice can only be accepted subject to due delivery of all keys, and inspection of premises by Landlord or Agent.

.....*Agent.*

The Tenants' attention is particularly directed to the form of this Rent Card, which shows separately the Rent for the premises, and the Rates payable on these premises, for it must not be overlooked that :—

The Landlord acts as collector of the Rates to obviate the Tenant being troubled by the Rate collector.
The Rent and Rates together constitute the charge for the premises.
The Rent is a standing charge and unalterable except by agreement.

Watch your Rates. Watch your Ward Member. Watch the Actions of your Council and Board of Guardians.

The House situate at.....

is let to Mr.....on the terms for Rent and Rates as stated on the inside.

The Rates are imposed quarterly by the Borough Council, and include the demands of the Guardians, both Council and Guardians being duly elected by Burgesses, and it is to the interest of every Tenant to see that the members of the Council and Guardians carefully administer their Trust, for any rise in the Rates will be duly charged, and any fall allowed. Therefore, Tenants should see that business men, capable of careful administration, are duly elected to serve them on the Council and Guardians.

This House being rated at £23 per annum, the Local Rates will be collected with the Rent as follows :—

When Rate made amounts to	but does not exceed	The amount payable weekly is	When Rate made amounts to	but does not exceed	The amount payable weekly is
per £ rateable value			per £ rateable value.		
8/9	8/11	3/11	12/1	12/4	5/5
8/11	9/1	4/0	12/4	12/6	5/6
9/1	9/4	4/1	12/6	12/8	5/7
9/4	9/6	4/2	12/8	12/11	5/8
9/6	9/8	4/3	12/11	13/1	5/9
9/8	9/10	4/4	13/1	13/4	5/10
9/10	10/1	4/5	13/4	13/6	5/11
10/1	10/3	4/6	13/6	13/8	6/0
10/3	10/5	4/7	13/8	13/10	6/1
10/5	10/7	4/8	13/10	14/1	6/2
10/7	10/10	4/9	14/1	14/3	6/3
10/10	11/0	4/10	14/3	14/5	6/4
11/0	11/2	4/11	14/5	14/7	6/5
11/2	11/4	5/0	14/7	14/10	6/6
11/4	11/7	5/1	14/10	15/0	6/7
11/7	11/9	5/2	15/0	15/2	6/8
11/9	11/11	5/3	15/2	15/4	6/9
11/11	12/1	5/4	15/4	15/7	6/10

The Rates levied by the Borough Council are :—

s. d. in £ s. d. in £

Quarter ending 31st Mar.....Quarter ending 30th Sept.....
do. 30th Jun..... do. 31st Dec.....

All Tenants have it in their power to vote in order that they may be suitably represented, and should do so if they wish their rates kept within bounds.

Then act in your own interest by seeing that the Rates are kept at the lowest possible figure.

You will then secure retrenchment with steady progress in your Borough.

The above is printed on the outside of the rent books ; while within are columns for Rent and Rates, thus :—

Due Date of Payment.		Rent of Premises as agreed.		Borough Rates as levied.		Weekly Total of Rent and Rates.		Received by
		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	

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TWELFTH REPORT

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

HORSE BREEDING.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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TWELFTH REPORT

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION ON HORSE BREEDING.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

We, the Commissioners appointed to dispose of the money granted by Parliament for the encouragement of Horse Breeding in Great Britain, humbly desire to submit to Your Majesty this, our Twelfth Report.

2. Since we had the honour of presenting our last Report to your Majesty in August, 1907, we have been able to offer, at the Show held in London on March 10th, 11th and 12th of this year, 28 King's premiums of £150 each, for which 88 thoroughbred stallions were entered for competition.

3. Compared with previous years, the number of stallions competing for King's premiums shows a diminution, but considerable fluctuations in the number of horses exhibited, which range between 80 in 1889, when the first London Show was held, 88 in the present year, and 124 in 1905, have been constant, and we do not attach any special importance to them. The figures for each year since the commencement of the Shows are as follows:—

4.

1889	1890	1891	1892	*1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
90	98	105	117	105	97	124	110	116	116

Premiums of £200 each.

1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
104	115	113	119	108	94	94	107	101

5. The Report which we received from the judges upon the horses competing for premiums at the recent Show, is as follows:—

> "Taking them as a whole, the stallions exhibited were of considerable merit, and the horses showed quality and substance combined, to a far greater extent than those we have seen in previous years.
>
> The Show was remarkable for the absence of weedy horses, and we are of opinion that the premium stallions were well up to the standard of excellence required for such animals. The stallions should prove of great benefit in the various localities they will stand in during the coming season.
>
> "Taking individual classes we should describe Class A as being very good. Class B moderate. Class C we consider was one of the best classes in the Show. Class D stood out very well indeed, the premium and reserve horses showing exceptional merit. Class E an excellent class. Class F, the premium winners and reserve, were all very good horses. Class G was a moderately good class.
>
> "The Scotch classes, though being weak in numbers, contained very good representatives."

---

* Since 1893 the Premiums have been of £150 value.

6. If the numbers exhibited were less, it is gratifying to know that, in the opinion of the judges, the general quality of the competitors was better than in former years.

The views which are expressed by the judges in the first paragraph of their Report, must be taken as relating, however, to the previous Shows in which they have been good enough to fill a similar position.

Your Commissioners are of opinion, taking them as a whole, that the competitors exhibited in 1908 were of average, but not more than average merit.

7. Much additional interest in the general question of horse breeding was aroused by the Conference which was summoned by Lord Carrington a year or more ago, and to which each of your Commissioners was invited.

8. As the meeting of that Conference has been followed by various criticisms of the work of this Commission, not always of a friendly character, it may not be unfitting if we submit to Your Majesty on this occasion a brief résumé of the work and proceedings of the Royal Commission since its first inception, and of the course which was pursued by the Commissioners in relation to the Conference which was summoned by the President of the Board of Agriculture.

9. As to the work of the Commission, which was appointed in 1887, it will be remembered that the terms of reference to this Commission were as follows:—

> "To consider and report to Us the regulations under which Our Royal Bounty may best be expended in prizes, to be bestowed by Us at the chief agricultural shows in Great Britain for the purpose of encouraging the breed and maintenance of a race of *sound* horses or in such other method as We may approve."

And with this object a sum, which was limited to £5,100, was placed at its disposal.

10. After their appointment, the Commissioners made it their earliest business to ascertain the cause of the deterioration of the breed which was already the subject of great and even general complaint, and their conclusions upon that point were expressed in their first report, which was issued on December 20th, 1887, from which the following passages may be quoted:—

> "Private enterprise was formerly sufficient to produce and to maintain a breed of horses in this country, which was unrivalled in the world; and that pre-eminence was successfully maintained until the Governments of foreign countries became alive to the importance of acquiring an equal advantage for themselves."
>
> "The foreign Haras, which were established for this purpose, in various countries on the continent, created a most serious drain upon our resources in this country."
>
> "There is no record, unfortunately, contained in any of the official statistics of the number of stallions which have been annually exported from the country, but it is a matter of common notoriety that year after year the United Kingdom has been swept by the agents of foreign Governments for the stallions and the mares best suited to their purpose, and they have been bought with public money, and taken from the country, frequently at prices with which it was impossible for private enterprise successfully to compete."
>
> "The consequence of this has been that with the exception of the highest class of stallions and of mares, for the breeding of race horses, this country has been left, for the most part, with the inferior and often unsound animals, which the foreign agent has rejected, and the result has been a gradual but marked deterioration in the general breed, for which England, at one time, was famous."

2000.—Wt. 1734/584. 5/08.

"Your Commissioners have therefore considered, in the first place, as the most effectual means of dealing with this evil, whether it was possible for them, by the formation of a Haras for stallions, to retain the most valuable animals, which at present leave the country, for the service and the use of the breeders of horses in the United Kingdom."

"We have not proposed, however, any scheme upon the subject, for the reasons which we state elsewhere; but we desire to express our strong and unanimous conviction that until some means are found of retaining in the country for the future such animals as we describe, it is vain to expect any marked or permanent improvement in the breed of horses."

"The formation of a Haras ought to be accompanied, we think, by a scheme for providing liberal premiums for competition by stallions; and if this were done we believe that most gratifying results would be obtained."

11. From these views the Commissioners have never departed. But with the funds at their disposal it has never been possible to carry out any schemes either for retaining the most valuable horses or for the general improvement of the brood mares in the country, which they likewise consider to be essential, and which is becoming more and more important every day. They had, therefore, to consider to what other purpose their limited means could most profitably be devoted, and the results of their deliberations were expressed in the following paragraph of the same report:—

"The means at our disposal are, however, insufficient to enable us to provide concurrently for each of these two schemes, and it is doubtful if they would have been sufficient for the formation of a Haras, even if we had thought it right to recommend that course alone. We had, therefore, directed our attention chiefly to the latter of these objects, viz., a scheme for the distribution of premiums for stallions."

12. On this point they came to the conclusion, having regard to the period of the year at which the Commission was issued, viz., December, 1887, and the amount of the funds at their disposal, that they will best be expended in the forthcoming year in premiums for thoroughbred stallions, suitable for getting half-bred horses for purposes of general utility, to be offered at a Show in conjunction with the Royal Agricultural Society, to be held in February, 1888.

They further expressed their opinion:

"That by a system of premiums, carefully guarded by adequate rules, some of the difficulties in the way of breeders of horses in securing the services of sound stallions could be overcome."

13. They also recorded their intention of taking further evidence and collecting all available information with reference to every recognised breed of horses in the United Kingdom, before arranging a scheme of distribution for 1889, and they recommended that in the statistics of the export of horses, the number of stallions, mares, and geldings should be distinguished and classified for the future, which has since been done.

14. The scheme for distribution in 1888 was embodied in the index of the first report of December 20th, 1887, and was signed by all the Commissioners, subject to a memorandum on a single point by Mr. Chaplin, in which he expressed the following views, while entirely concurring in all other respects, with the conclusions of his colleagues:—

"I dissent from Paragraph 15 so far as it limits the competition for the premiums exclusively to 'thoroughbred' stallions.

"I consider that horses with a stain in their pedigree, and which are not, therefore, in the Stud Book, are constantly found, and have frequently been proved to be among the best and most successful of country stallions; and it is, therefore, inexpedient and undesirable, in my opinion, that they should be excluded from all competitions for the premiums."

15. The result of the decision by the Commissioners to distribute the funds at their disposal under a system of premiums, may be traced in the ten subsequent reports of the Commission, which were issued from time to time.

16. In 1888, owing to want of funds, they were unable to take the further evidence which was thought to be desirable, upon the many important points affecting horse breeding in the country, but they make the following statement:—

> "Although, owing to want of funds, it has not been in our power to examine witnesses and take oral evidence direct, we have called for information from the local committees in the 22 districts, and having considered their replies to the questions submitted, which almost universally approved of the system hitherto pursued, we desire to express our opinion that no change in the system adopted last year is necessary, and that it will be advisable in the ensuing year to follow on the same lines."

17. But with the aid of a grant from the Treasury in the following year they state, in their Third Report for 1890, that they had been enabled to do so, and upon two most material points:—

> 1st. On the question as to what diseases should disqualify animals from the receipts of a premium—with the result that they were able to formulate a list of such diseases, which was embodied in a Schedule, and has remained in force with most gratifying results from that time to the present, and
>
> 2nd. Upon the general working and utility of the present scheme for the distribution of their funds.

Upon this latter question they point out that:—

> "It is gratifying to learn from the evidence that, bearing in mind the extent of the funds now available for distribution, the particular method of applying the grant which has been adopted by the Commission and approved by Your Majesty, is doing much to stimulate and encourage horse breeding in the country."

In a further paragraph they add:

> "It has come to our knowledge that one of the results of the present scheme has been that some high-class stallions, which would otherwise have been purchased to go abroad, have been retained in the country, and some of the evidence we have taken points to the probability that by augmenting the grant and by offering prizes for mares, a distinct inducement would be offered to owners to retain the best young mares in the country."

18. Again, the Commission called attention to the fact that a great number of the witnesses examined both orally, and by questions, were convinced that an increase of the funds of the Commission would largely augment the benefit of the good work they had been able to accomplish, and that, concurrently with this expression of opinion, notice had been given by the Royal Agricultural Society of England, which since 1887 had annually provided premiums for one of the seven administrative districts into which England has been divided, that the time had come when in their opinion premiums for all districts in the country should be supplied from the funds of the Commission. And the Society announced their intention to withdraw for the future the grant which they had hitherto devoted to one of these districts, and to that extent the work which had hitherto been carried out under the Commission was impeded.

19. Bearing this in mind, and in view of the practically unanimous opinion of the witnesses examined by them in their recent inquiry, the Commissioners suggested that the sum at their disposal should be raised to £10,000. In that case they considered, without binding themselves to any particular course, that it would be desirable to increase the number of premium stallions, to offer prizes for mares which had been served by them, and also prizes for young stock.

20. These complaints by the Commissioners of the inadequacy of their funds have been repeated again and again in 1895, in 1899, in 1901, 1903, 1905 and 1907. And they also point out, with regard to applications for premium stallions, and assistance for improving the supply of brood mares, and the benefit that a liberal concession on these points would confer on the Horse Breeding Industry, that they have been compelled again and again to reply:—That the provision either of more stallions, or of assistance for improving the supply of mares, was entirely beyond the resources of the Commission.

21. On the other hand, amid much that has been disheartening, it has been extremely satisfactory to learn from the information before us, that on two most material points the work of the Commission has been highly successful.

We find an increasing number of sound animals among the competitors for premiums and the young stock descended from winners of premiums. With regard to these latter, we would call attention to their rapidly-growing success as winners of prizes at agricultural shows all over the country.

22. Bearing in mind these results, and also the fact that this Commission was appointed "for the purpose of encouraging and maintaining a breed of sound horses," it seems to us that there can scarcely be a better test of the success of the present system of premiums which we have adopted, so far as we are able to extend it with our present means, and we desire once more to emphasise the great and general benefit to the Horse Breeding Industry, which could, we believe, with ease be accomplished by a sensible addition to the grant of £5,100 which is all that we have had at our disposal since the appointment of the Royal Commission for a great national purpose.

23. There are other matters of interest to which we think it is desirable to direct attention.

24. Up till 1903 the stallions had been judged entirely on their merits, the judges being given no information beyond their age and height. In that year, however, the Commissioners decided that if a horse had been through a course of training, remained sound, and had shown merit in his performances, these facts should be made known to the judges.

The effect of this decision will be best explained by two passages from the report of the judges in 1904 and1905.

In 1904 they say:

> "We found the information given by the Commission as to the length of time the stallions had been in training, and their performances on the Turf, to be of much assistance in enabling us to form an estimate of their natural soundness and constitution."

And again, in 1905, as follows:—

> "It was very gratifying to the judges to find that the efforts of the Royal Commissioners to ensure that none but sound stallions should be exhibited, has been so entirely successful, very few, indeed, of the horses sent to be examined failed to satisfy the veterinary surgeons. Finally, the judges desire particularly to express their gratification that the Royal Commissioners have allowed the Turf careers of the competing stallions to be somewhat taken into account when awarding the premiums. By this means, horses that, probably from some natural defect of limb, or temper, which effectually prevented their appearance on a racecourse, have been in some instances passed over in favour of others which have been able to bear the test of training. The judges did not consider it necessary that the horses competing should have actually won a race, but considered it much in their favour if they have been able to run respectably for a certain period."

25. Again, we have had constantly brought to our notice the question of the purchase of remounts for the Army; and the great encouragement that would be

given to horse breeding in the country if horses were purchased for that purpose at a somewhat earlier age than they are at present.

We are advised that horses are bought for military purposes by Foreign Powers now, in the United Kingdom, at the age of three years, and that consequently the best are gone before the English authorities come into the market.

In the interests of the horse breeding industry of the Kingdom, we can only repeat the recommendations we have made before, viz., that remounts should be purchased at the age of three years instead of four, thereby securing a double advantage for ourselves, viz., the first choice of our own horses for our own Army, and a distinct encouragement to the horse breeding industry of the Kingdom.

26. Lastly, there is the question of improving the supply of brood mares, which has been repeatedly brought to our notice. This question is dealt with in considerable detail in the Report of the Brood Mare Society, issued in May, 1907, with a memorandum of their conclusions, which was prepared after the close of the Conference summoned by Lord Carrington in July, 1906. They will be found in Appendix I. to this Report, and are deserving of attention and perusal by every one who desires to see the decadence of the English breed of horses checked, and its old supremacy restored before it is too late.

27. In summarising briefly the results of the work which has been accomplished by the Royal Commission since it was appointed in 1887, we may point to the following facts:—

583 stallions have been awarded premiums under the direction of the Commission, including 15 premiums which were provided by the Royal Agricultural Society between 1889 and 1903.

By these premium winners, there were served up to the end of 1907—30,836 mares, of whom, after allowing for 2,433 mares of which no returns were received, an average of 58 per cent., or, in round numbers, 14,250, were left in foal.

The returns of mares left in foal for 1907 and 1908 are not yet forthcoming, but applying the average annual production of foals to those two years, it would show, since the Premiums were first awarded in 1888, an average annual production of 783 foals.

28. This number of foals is, of course, but a trifling addition to our stock, compared with the requirements of the country, but it must not be forgotten

Firstly: That they are all of them the produce of perfectly sound horses.

Secondly: That for some years past their success in winning prizes for young stock at the leading shows* in the United Kingdom has been conspicuous, and

Thirdly: That during 1907 the descendants of these horses were winners of no less than 489 prizes.

29. We are well aware that the work of this Commission has been freely criticised, and numerous suggestions have been made for a different distribution of its funds, which the Commissioners have carefully considered, but its main and primary duty being, as we have already pointed out, to encourage the breeding and maintenance of a race of sound horses, it is permissible, we think, to doubt whether the Commissioners could have used their extremely limited means to better advantage for the purpose of the special duty which had been entrusted to them.

---

30. Turning now to the proceedings of the Conference on Horse Breeding held at the Board of Agriculture in October, 1906, your Commissioners were invited by Lord Carrington individually to attend it: and they were informed that the Conference was summoned "in consequence of the debate in the House of Lords on Horse

* The shows referred to are the shows at which medals are awarded by the Hunters' Improvement Society. They are 96 in number, in 52 different Counties.

Breeding in the month of July, 1906," for the following purpose:—"To discuss the question generally and to see if some arrangement could be reached as to the best lines on which a scheme should be drawn up for submission to the Treasury" with the special object, viz., "To improve the present position of the industry, and to find a remedy for the unsatisfactory and even dangerous state of things which admittedly exists at present."

31. In obedience to his summons, the Commissioners, being anxious to render Lord Carrington every assistance in their power, were, with one exception, present at the Conference. They took part in the discussions, and Mr. Chaplin, in particular, after tracing the causes of the difficulty and the deterioration of the breed, which was the subject of so much complaint, laid before the President and the Conference for their consideration, the outlines of a scheme, which was practically complete, for the improvement and gradual rehabilitation of the breed of English horses; recommending in the first instance that it should be tried as an experiment.

32. The scheme which was submitted in response to the invitation of the President was entirely in accord with the views expressed in the First Report of the Commission in 1887, and it rests upon the proposition that if the breed of horses in the United Kingdom is to be restored to anything approaching to its former excellence, it is essential, and, indeed, imperative, that the best horses and best mares of the class required to breed animals for purposes of general utility, which are at present bought by Foreign Governments for the use of foreign countries, should be retained in the United Kingdom.

33. With regard to the horses, it was proposed that the English Government should find the means for the purchase of the pick of these animals at all events, and keep them for our own use in the country.

That, when thus secured for our use, they should be kept at convenient depôts to be provided for them, and should travel at the proper season, in selected districts, precisely as an ordinary country stallion travels now, that the fee charge for their use should be moderate, and that the rule to be observed in the service of mares should always be as far as possible that the horses should go to the mares instead of the mares being sent to the horses.

34. With good management, in this way, each of these horses, on the average, should be self-supporting and earn his keep; and while the most valuable animals would be kept at home, the cost of their acquisition in any year, neither would nor could be great, because the number of horses annually produced, of the best and highest class for this particular purpose, perfect in shape and make, with power, bone, quality and action, but not fast enough for racing, is seldom more than three or four, and always very limited in number.

35. As to the provision of brood mares and their improvement as a class in the United Kingdom, it was pointed out that the policy suggested in the Third Report of the Brood Mare Society, issued in that year, was a means, and probably the best means of dealing with that branch of the question, and that it should be considered as an integral part of the scheme which was then submitted to the Conference.

36. The retention of the best of the stallions and the improvement and provision of brood mares having thus been dealt with, the means of encouraging breeders to make use of them had still to be considered.

The best inducement, it was pointed out, was the prospect of a quick return, and this, it was suggested, could most easily be given by a large and liberal addition to the prizes which are offered now for foals at agricultural and other shows and meetings in all parts of the United Kingdom.

In reference to this proposal we desire to add here that if the recommendations in Paragraph 25 could also be adopted, viz., that the purchase of remounts for the Army could be made at three years old instead of at their present age, a material encouragement would be given to horse breeding in this country.

37. There still remained the question as to the machinery by which these proposals should be carried out, and it was suggested that perhaps the simplest and the best means of doing it would be by a considerable addition to the grant already made to the existing Royal Commission (or such other central authority as the Government might appoint), to be used under their authority, and for the purposes already mentioned, viz., the retention in the country of the most desirable stallions, the improvement and provision of brood mares, and further inducements to be offered to breeders.

The central authority, it was thought, should be the distributing authority, with power to delegate the application of their funds to other bodies, subject to its supervision and control, if that course was thought to be desirable.

The sum mentioned in the Conference was an addition of £20,000 to the sum already provided for the use of the Commission. The Brood Mare Society, in their report for 1907, recommend an additional grant of £25,000. We concur in their recommendation.

38. That was briefly the purport of the scheme submitted for the consideration of the President of the Board of Agriculture at the Conference, and though it was submitted by a member of the Commission in his individual capacity, it had the concurrence of many of his colleagues at the time, and it has the sanction and approval now of this Commission.

39. Upon the question of horse breeding generally, and the measures which are needed for the aid and improvement of the industry, we desire, in conclusion, to direct special attention to the Report of the Brood Mare Society for 1907, which, by the permission of that body, is included in the appendix to this Report.

40. The Brood Mare Society is a voluntary association which has devoted much time, trouble and attention to the improvement of the brood mares in the country, and to a study of the measures which are needed for that purpose. We have carefully considered their proposals, and as we have already stated in paragraph 35 of this Report, we think that the general views which they embody should form part of any scheme which is adopted for the improvement of the breed of horses.

41. We desire to call special attention to the following paragraphs in the Memorandum of conclusions which was proposed by them and submitted to the Board of Agriculture shortly after the Conference summoned by the President had been held.

> (5.) " We think that the 28 King's premium stallions which are allowed for Great Britain are wholly insufficient for the wants of the country. We note the great use made in some districts, not only of unsound, weedy, thoroughbred stallions, seldom if ever exhibited, but also of inferior mongrel half-bred stallions, of bad quality. We regret the continual purchase by Foreign Governments of many of our best stallions, and we think that measures should be taken to counteract this evil which has been so appropriately referred to by the Royal Commission.*
>
> (6.) " The deterioration has steadily increased since this representation was made, and improvement is unlikely with the growth of the motor and tramway systems. We think that the Irish plan of providing funds to associations or individuals for the purchase of stallions in certain districts, with a provision for repayment by instalments, ought to be developed in Great Britain as supplementary to the system of King's premiums. Stallions should, as has been the case in Ireland, be eligible for prizes varying from £5 to £25, for the points gained by their stock exhibited at shows approved by the Department of Agriculture.
>
> (7.) " We do not think, however, that the Irish plan will be sufficient in itself, or that it would prevent Foreign Governments from continuing to get the best of our thoroughbred stallions, adapted for country purposes.
>
> (8.) " Something more than that is needed when, as in this case, we have to compete with the resources of Foreign Governments for their possession.

* See paragraph 10 of this Report.

(9.) "We consider it essential, for the real and permanent improvement of the breeds, that the majority of these horses which now go abroad should be secured for use in the United Kingdom.

(10.) "But if they are to remain in the country it can only be by the aid and the resources of the Government at home, in view of the competition for their possession by various Governments abroad, and we think that arrangements for their purchase and care should be made with the assistance of the Government, and that these arrangements should be under the control of some central authority, either the Royal Commission or some other body appointed by the Government for that purpose.

(13.) "In order to re-stock the country with suitable registered mares, we recommend the adoption of the system initiated by the Brood Mare Society which is described in their Report, and that the machinery of that Society be made available by constituting it the agent of the Royal Commission. The rules proposed by that Society for the purchase, custody, and distribution of mares and their stock, if appointed agents, are attached." (See page 9, Appendix J, of the Report.)

42. We concur generally in the views expressed in the seven paragraphs which we have quoted; we regard them as a valuable contribution to the discussions on this question, and we think they should be most carefully considered in connection with any scheme which may be formulated for the purpose of improving the breed of horses in the United Kingdom.

43. We are also glad to notice that the Council of the Hunters' Improvement Society thoroughly endorse the importance of this Memorandum, and that after full consideration the following resolution was unanimously adopted in its support:—

"This Council is in entire concurrence with the views expressed in the Memorandum on National Horse Breeding, and think it advisable to forward this Memorandum to the Minister for Agriculture, signed by the President of this Society, together with a covering letter, expressing the opinion of this Council as to the great and urgent need of a substantial addition being made to the grant already made to the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding."

44. It is likewise deserving of note that paragraph 14 of the same Memorandum practically embodies the suggestion made to Lord Carrington by Lord Sefton on behalf of the Commission on the 8th November, 1906.

"We recommend that the Royal Commission be invited to appoint a Central Committee in London to consider in detail the question of the purchase and maintenance of a proportion of Government stallions and the applicability of the Irish, Nomination, Premium, Stallion Registration, and Purchase system to registered mares in this country."

This paragraph, together with the resolution of the Hunters' Improvement Society, strongly confirm the opinion which we then expressed to Lord Carrington, that an arrangement as to a scheme such as he indicated could and should be arrived at without any serious difficulty by the various organisations concerned, provided the requisite funds could be available.

45. Seventeen months have now elapsed since the suggestions in Lord Sefton's letter, in November, 1906, were submitted on behalf of this Commission to the President of the Board of Agriculture, but we are still left in this country without the aid and encouragement for the horse breeding industry which is so urgently needed, though we believe it to be vital to its future wellbeing and prosperity. The main causes of the trouble are still in operation. The best of our sires and our mares, which are so greatly needed for our own requirements, continue steadily to leave the country, purchased by Foreign Governments, to improve the breed of horses in foreign countries.

No efforts on the part of this Commission to assist the industry, unless they are provided with further means, can effectually help it, and it becomes our duty once again to urge with all the force we can that the difficulties which confront an interest of so much importance to the welfare and even the safety of the nation, are increasing every year, and with every day's delay in dealing with the question they will continue to increase more seriously in the future.

ALL WHICH we humbly submit to Your Majesty's most gracious consideration.

GRANARD, *Chairman.*
PORTLAND.
COVENTRY.
MIDDLETON.
RIBBLESDALE.
HENRY CHAPLIN.
JOHN GILMOUR.
J. BOWEN JONES.

J. HERBERT TAYLOR,
Secretary,
12, Hanover Square, London, W.
13th April, 1908.

MEMORANDUM BY SIR WALTER GILBEY, BART.

I am in accord generally with the Twelfth Report of the Commissioners, with the exception of the paragraphs referring to the Brood Mare Society. It is a fallacy to suppose that all our best mares are being sold out of the country. I am strongly of opinion that there are plenty of good, sizeable mares available for breeding horses suitable for Cavalry, Artillery and general purposes, if it paid to breed them. Were the other recommendations of the Commissioners carried out, particularly the one advising the purchase of remounts for the Army at *three years old*, there is no doubt it would be an encouragement to breeders, and the country would be amply supplied with horses for all its requirements.

WALTER GILBEY.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

BY

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND, K.G., EARL OF COVENTRY LORD MIDDLETON, LORD RIBBLESDALE, RT. HON. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P., SIR WALTER GILBEY, BART., SIR JOHN GILMOUR, BART., AND MR. J. BOWEN JONES.

1. Had it been possible for us to do so, we should have been glad to avoid the necessity of dealing with the matters referred to in this Supplementary Report. But we pointed out in Section 8 of the Main Report that the meeting of the Conference summoned by Lord Carrington had been followed by adverse criticisms of the work of this Commission.

Coming, as they did in one case, from a prominent and unexpected quarter, we think that some reply is called for to an unprovoked attack upon its members, and we desire to add the following observations to those which we have signed already in the Main Report:—

2. At the close of the proceedings the President made a brief reply, in which occurred the following statements:—

> "It is absolutely necessary for us to have some scheme, some basis to work upon, and I am informed that a great deal of practical information has been laid before the Board" . . .
>
> "I am really encouraged to hope that after the valuable suggestions, with the help of the gentlemen I see before me, something useful and practical may be done. As Mr. Chaplin and the Duke of Portland have said, pounds, shillings and pence is at the bottom of everything."
>
> "The Chancellor of the Exchequer has a great duty to perform. . . . But if I am supported by the noblemen and gentlemen who are here to-day, and if I can put before him a definite proposal, I am not at all without hopes that Mr. Asquith would see the great necessity of doing something towards this great and important national object, and that we should be able to get some measure of assistance towards carrying out a scheme to remedy what is at present a thoroughly unsafe and unsatisfactory position."

He concluded with the expression of his hope that:—

> "This practical Conference may bring forth some practical fruit, and we may get some practical appreciation of it from the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

3. Encouraged by the sympathetic and the friendly tone of the President's reply, the Commission promptly held a special meeting to consider whether it would be possible for them by any means to take any further action for the assistance of the President, and the promotion of the object which he had in view.

And after some discussion it was resolved that a communication should be addressed to Lord Carrington by Lord Sefton, as President at that time of this Commission, embodying their views as to further steps which, in their opinion, might be taken.

4. On the 8th of November accordingly, after alluding to the proceedings of the Conference and the purpose for which it had been summoned, the President wrote as follows:—

> "November 8th, 1906.
>
> "I am requested by my colleagues, as President of this Commission, to assure you of their desire to render you any assistance in their power, in

so laudable an object, and to express their belief that an agreement such as that which has been indicated could, and should, be arrived at, without any serious difficulty. Provided, firstly,

"That the co-operation of public bodies connected with horse breeding, such as the Brood Mare Society, and others be obtained,

and secondly,

"That it is understood that if an agreement is reached, which is regarded by the Government as satisfactory, further assistance from the Treasury, in addition to that which is now placed at the disposal of the Commission, will be forthcoming.

"I am to add that the Commissioners attach great importance to this second proviso in view of the time, labour and possible expenses which concerted action with other bodies must mean and involve.

"May I, therefore, very respectfully inquire, when your Lordship has fully considered the Proceedings of the Conference, whether we may expect to hear anything further on the subject, and to receive any definite assurance from your Lordship on this point.

"I have the honour to be, My Lord,
"Your obedient servant,
"(Signed) SEFTON,
"President,
"Royal Commission on Horse Breeding.

"The Earl Carrington,
"President,
"Board of Agriculture,
"4, Whitehall Place, S.W."

5. Having already had some informal communication with other bodies interested in the question, some of the Commissioners were of opinion that if the various organisations connected with horse breeding could be brought together into council a general agreement could be arrived at, and that it would not be beyond their province to endeavour to arrange it. Hampered, as they always have been, by the want of funds, the Commission was not in a position to undertake it without some further guarantee on that point.

6. The letter of the President was acknowledged on the following day, but to that communication no other reply of any kind was received until more than twelve months afterwards.

7. The next public expression of the views of Lord Carrington upon the question of horse breeding was reserved for what appeared to him to be "a most fitting opportunity," viz., a meeting held at Scarborough on the 18th October, 1907. He was reported* at that meeting to have referred to the Royal Commission and its members in the following terms:—

"At the present time the encouragement of horse breeding in this country was entrusted to a Royal Commission, who received a grant of £5,000 a year, which was expended in improving sires by offering King's premiums. He arranged a Conference last year of those best qualified to advise on the subject, but almost the whole time of the Conference was occupied by speeches from members of the Commission, who enlarged on the need of more money, but proposed no plan for dealing with the question, and it was impossible to ignore the fact that many agriculturists were very dissatisfied with the Royal Commission."

8. Whether the President is more accurate in the final statement of the paragraph we quote than he is in others which that paragraph contains, we are not in a position to judge, nor would it be for us to say. But if it does exist, we believe it will be found that the feeling of dissatisfaction is entirely confined to those who are either ignorant of the difficulties that this Commission has always had to contend with, or who are unaware how entirely inadequate are the means at their control.

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*"Scarborough Evening News," October 19th, 1907.

9. The other accusations which are made against us in that statement are sufficiently refuted firstly by the record of the proceedings at the Conference, of which a verbatim report has been circulated by the Board of Agriculture, and secondly, by the explanation we have thought it right to give in this Report, of the plan which was submitted upon that occasion by one of our colleagues to the Conference.

On this point we are quite content to leave it to the public to decide between the President of the Board of Agriculture and ourselves, but we cannot refrain from expressing our regret that such statements should have ever been allowed to come from the quarter that they have done.

ALL WHICH we humbly submit to Your Majesty's most gracious consideration.

PORTLAND.
COVENTRY.
MIDDLETON.
RIBBLESDALE.
HENRY CHAPLIN.
WALTER GILBEY.
JOHN GILMOUR.
J. BOWEN JONES.

J. HERBERT TAYLOR,
Secretary,
12, Hanover Square, London, W.
13th April, 1908.

MEMORANDUM BY THE EARL OF GRANARD.

I concur generally with my Colleagues in the recommendations and reviews which are expressed in the Twelfth Report of the Commissioners which I have signed. The Supplementary Report by which it is accompanied relates to matters which occurred before I became a member of that body, with which I was not concerned, and which do not therefore call for any expression of opinion on my part; my appointment dating only from September, 1907.

GRANARD.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

The following are the Conditions under which the Show in the Spring of the Year 1908 was held (those for 1906 and 1907 forming an Appendix in the last Report), together with Details of Distribution for this year :—

The show was held in London in conjunction with the Hunters' Improvement Society.

Twenty-eight equal premiums, consisting each of £150, are offered for thoroughbred stallions (between four years old and not exceeding 20 years) for England, Wales, and Scotland.

Each stallion winning a premium shall serve not less than 50 half-bred mares, if required during the season, and shall stand or travel as the Commissioners may direct in the district for which he is exhibited, at a fee not exceeding 40s. for each mare and 2s. 6d. for the groom.

It shall be a condition that no premium stallion shall be allowed to be exhibited *for competition* during the season of service.

It shall be a condition that a stallion which has won four Queen's or King's premiums in the same district class shall be ineligible for entry again in the same class, but shall be eligible for any other district class.

Stallions shall compete in the district class *only* for which they are entered, and exhibitors may not enter more than one stallion in each class.

The Commissioners reserve power to award to a stallion unsuccessful in the district class for which he is entered a premium in the class for any other district *provided* the exhibitor enters the stallion on these terms. Should a premium be awarded in such other class, the obligations as to location and service shall apply to the district for which the premium is awarded, instead of the district for which the stallion is exhibited.

The following diseases shall disqualify a thoroughbred stallion for the purposes of this Commission, viz. :—

Roaring—whistling.
Ringbone.
Unsound feet.
Navicular disease.
Spavin (bone).
Cataract.

If any stallion winning a premium should not serve at least 30 half-bred mares during the season, the Commissioners reserve the power to reduce the premium.

The season of service commences :—

On April 2nd and terminates on July 31st.

The Distribution of Premiums for 1908, in the respective Districts for England, Wales and Scotland, was as follows:—

District Class.	Counties.	——	District Class.	Counties.	——
A	Bedfordshire Buckinghamshire Cambridgeshire Essex Hertfordshire Huntingdonshire Middlesex Norfolk Oxfordshire Suffolk	Three stallions at £150 each.	E	Yorkshire	Three stallions at £150 each.
B	Cumberland Durham Northumberland Westmoreland	Three stallions at £150 each.	F	Gloucestershire Herefordshire Monmouthshire Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire Worcestershire South Wales	Four stallions at £150 each.
C	Derbyshire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Nottinghamshire Rutlandshire	Three stallions at £150 each.	G	Cheshire Lancashire North Wales	Three stallions at £150 each.
D	Berkshire Cornwall Devonshire Dorsetshire Hampshire Kent Somersetshire Surrey Sussex Wiltshire	Four stallions at £150 each.	H	Roxburghshire, Berwickshire and district	One stallion at £150.
			I	Fifeshire and district	One stallion at £150.
			J	Ayrshire and district	One stallion at £150.
			K	Forfarshire and district	One stallion at £150.
			L	Ross-shire	One stallion at £150.

APPENDIX B.

Season 1906.

Percentage of Foals left by the King's Premium Stallions from the Half-bred Mares served during the Season 1906.

District Class.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	Percentage of Foals from Half-bred Mares served during the Season.
A	Mr. Hugh Arnold	Angel Court	65
	Miss Hester Bancroft	Drummonds Pride	65
	Mr. Geoffrey Fowell Buxton	Hindley	51
B	Mr. John Walton	Burnock Water	58
	The Otter Vale Stud	Kano	62
	Mr. C. W. Dixon-Johnson	Palaver	48
C	Mr. John Drage	Ethelbruce	60
	Mr. C. M. Prior	Rathburne	57
	The Castle Bytham Stud Co.	Teuton	69
D	Major-General J. Jago Trelawny	Battlement	62
	Dr. Walter John Jolliffe	Likely Bird	64
	Mr. William Wilson	Rightful	65
	Mr. Thomas Kinsman Bickell	Rockaway	62
E	Mr. Eustace Barlow	Frobisher	60
	Mr. Robert Charles de Grey Vyner	Mintseed	66
	The Lord Middleton	Wales	69
F	Mr. Stephen Mumford	Curio	62
	Mr. John Wynford Philipps, M.P.	Gold Medallist	74
	Mr. Frederick William Barling	King's Heart	47
	Captain H. F. Northey Hopkins	Rampion	60
G	Mr. John Wynford Philipps, M.P.	Golden Goblet	47
	Mr. Thomas James Hillman	Sir Charles	62
	Mr. John Forsyth Rees	Slowburn	19
H	The Buccleuch Hunters' Society	The Dale	63
I	Mr. William Wilson	Masterman Ready	63
J	The Radnorshire Polo and Riding Pony Co., Ltd.	Whitehall	43
K	Mr. John Hutchison	Boss Croker	46
L	Mr. Thomas James Hillman	Christmas Greeting	65
	The average percentage of foals left by the 28 stallions in 1906		58

APPENDIX C.

Return of the Number of Stallions exhibited in each District Class at the London Show in the year 1907. Names of Owners and Winning and Selected Stallions, with the Number of Mares served by each at the Royal Commission Fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* or under, and at the Owners' own Fee; together with the Names and Addresses of the District Committee:—

1907.

District Class.	Number of Stallions Exhibited.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	Served at Commission Fee.	Served at Owner's Fee.	Totals.	District Committee.
A	17	Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.	Flambeau	11	6	17	Mr. Martin Burls, Elsenham, Essex. Mr. W. Smith, The Links, Bishop's Stortford. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Arthur Waters, Cooperdale Lodge, Epping, Essex.
		Mr. John Barker, M.P.	Kennington	20	11	31	Mr. Henry King, Great Chesterford, S.O., Essex. Mr. Frank Stacey, Wickham Hall, Bishop's Stortford. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr, F. E. Ward, Manor Farm, Newnham, Baldock, Herts.
		Mr. James Archibald Campbell	Royal Majesty	34	—	34	Mr. B. Davies Cooke, Park Lodge, Kimbolton, St. Neots. Mr. Douglas Crossman, M.F.H., Gramsden Hall, Sandy Beds. Col. H. W. Hurrell, Great Shelford, Cambs. (*Corresponding Member.*)

District Class.	Number of Stallions Exhibited.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	Served at Commission Fee.	Served at Owner's Fee.	Totals.	District Committee.
B	10	Mr. Charles William Dixon-Johnson	Palaver	59	—	59	Mr. Charles H. Backhouse, Bank, Darlington. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. J. W. P. Page, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees. Mr. W. H. Ralston, Streatlam Castle, Darlington.
		Mr. William Jordison	Porsenna	44	4	48	Mr. W. Davidson, East Learmouth, Cornhill-on-Tweed. Mr. G. G. Rea, Middleton, Wooler, R.S.O., Northumberland. Mr. W. W. Rhoades, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Northumberland. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Frank A. Rickaby	Time Table	37	—	37	Mr. Fred Armstrong, George Hotel, Penrith. Mr. George John Bell, 1, Lonsdale Street, Carlisle. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. John Sewell Rigg, Elm Bank, Appleby, Westmoreland.
C	9	The Keynsham Stud Co.	Court Ball	31	1	32	Mr. J. Frederick Cartmell, Manor House, Kirby Bellars, Melton Mowbray. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. R. C. Cooper, Waltham, Melton Mowbray. Mr. J. G. Parr, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.
		Mr. John Drage	Ethelbruce	48	6	54	Mr. James Brown, Earls Barton House, Northampton. Mr. E. Messinger, Chapel Brampton, Northampton. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. H. R. Roe, Cranoe, Market Harborough.
		Mr. Ernest T. Hooley	Pollion	40	—	40	Lt.-Col. R. L. Birkin, Basford, Nottingham. Mr. Joseph Bostock, Spondon, near Derby. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. J. C. Heather, Risley Mount, Sandiacre, Nottingham.
D	14	The Otter Vale Stud	Kano	64	8	72	Mr. A. Chamberlyne Chichester, Gipsy Hill, Pinhoe, Exeter. Col. J. A. T. Garratt, Bishop's Court, near Exeter. (*Corresponding Member.*) Major L. C. Garratt, Mill Down, Clyst-Honiton, Exeter.
		Mr. William Wilson	Rightful	63	—	63	Mr. W. Worsley Ashcroft, 83, High Street, Croydon. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. W. A. Calvert, Broomells, Holmwood, R.S.O., Dorking. Mr. Murray Marshall, Springwood, Godalming.
		Mr. Thomas Kinsman Bickell	Rockaway	84	—	84	Mr. Reginald W. Fox, Grimstone, Horrabridge, S. Devon. Mr. Charles L. Hancock, The Manor House, Cothelstone, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton. Mr. E. P. Northey, Higher Bowden, Okehampton. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Thomas Child Grantham	Squire Jack	51	4	55	Mr. A. V. Courage, Bolney Place, Bolney, Sussex. Mr. Victor Foster, Bentons Place, Shipley, Horsham, Sussex. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. H. F. Sturdy, M.F.H., Pax Hill Park, Lindfield, Sussex.
E	10	Mr. Henry Arthur Cholmondeley	Foundling	77	2	79	Mr. H. Gill, Chestnut Grove, Boston Spa, S.O., Yorks. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Jacob Smith, Junr., Humberton, Helperby, York. Dr. G. D. Todd, 12, Park Street, Selby.
		Mr. T. L. Wickham-Boynton	Roe O'Neill	81	—	81	Mr. W. Brigham, The Grange, Burton Agnes, Yorks. Mr. Frederick Reynard, Sunderlandwick, Driffield. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. John J. Ridley, Osborne House, Beverley.
		Mr. Stephen Mumford	Sundorne	52	—	52	Mr. Gordon Leatham, Wentbridge House, near Pontefract. Dr. E. J. H. Sullivan, South Kirkby, near Wakefield. Mr. C. Howard Taylor, Hampole Priory, nr. Doncaster. (*Corresponding Member.*)

District Class.	Number of Stallions Exhibited.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	Served at Commission Fee.	Served at Owner's Fee.	Totals.	District Committee.
F	17	Mr. Stephen Mumford	Curio -	60	—	60	Mr. Philip S. Danby, Church Farm, Offchurch, Leamington. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. W. L. Hirons, Grange Farm, Chacombe, Banbury. Mr. Charles L. Kendall, Park Farm, Snitterfield, Stratford-on-Avon.
		Mr. John Bell - -	Descender	38	—	38	Mr. J. Baldwin, Green Park, Bath. (*Corresponding Member.*) Dr. Alfred Grace, Chipping Sodbury. Col. T. W. C. Master, Knole Park, Almondsbury, Bristol.
		Mr. John Forsyth Rees	Vendale -	60	3	63	Col. H. W. H. Brenchley, Glaneirw, Cardigan. Mr. Grismond Philipps, Cwmgwilly, Bronwydd Arms, R.S.O., South Wales. Mr. G. E. S. Prothero-Beynon, Trewern, Whitland, R.S.O., South Wales. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Charles Tuller Garland	Young Abercorn	6	—	6	Mr. Frederick Ames, Hawford Lodge, Worcester. Mr. E. St. John Greaves, Newtown Grange, Worcester. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Arthur Jones, M.F.H., Ombersley, Droitwich.
G	9	Mr. John Forsyth Rees	Slowburn	29	—	29	Rev. J. R. Armitstead, The Vicarage, Sandbach, Cheshire. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Chester B. Davies, Eardswick Hall, Middlewich. Mr. Hubert M. Wilson, M.F.H., The Hermitage, Holmes Chapel.
		Mr. Thomas James Hillman	Thalaba -	36	—	36	Mr. W. Denson, Picton Hall, near Chester. Mr. R. Johnson Houghton, Newbold, Saighton, Chester. Mr. R. Parker, Gt. Stanney, Sutton, Chester. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Edward Charles Winter	Thurles -	74	4	78	Mr. J. Kerr Calderwood, Clitheroe, Lancs. Mr. F. Parmeter, Middle Lees, Clitheroe, Lancs. Mr. Rowland Robinson, Park Gate, Gisburne, Clitheroe, Lancs. (*Corresponding Member.*)
H	2	The Buccleuch Hunters' Society	The Dale	65	—	65	Mr. J. Hastie Brydon, Haddon, Kelso. Mr. R. Grieve, Branxholme Braes, Hawick. Mr. Robert Henderson, Mount Hooly, Jedburgh. (*Corresponding Member.*)
I	4	Mr. Albert Octavius Haslewood	Harvest Money	65	—	65	Mr. Charles H. Beveridge, Crombie, Dunfermline. Mr. W. Blackie, The Stables, Montrave, Leven, Fife. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. T. Webster, Nisbetfield, Collessie, Fife.
J	3	Mr. John Hutchison -	George IV.	52	—	52	Mr. George Barclay, M.F.H., Thornhill, Johnstone, Renfrewshire. Mr. Hugh Neilson, Chapeltoun, Stewarton, N.B. Mr. David W. Shaw, 5, Wellington Square, Ayr. Mr. J. Harling Turner, Portland Estate Office, Kilmarnock. (*Corresponding Member.*)
K	3	Mr. John Hutchison -	Akbar -	46	—	46	Mr. W. Banks, Invergowrie, Dundee. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. James Carmichael, Arthurstone, Meigle, N.B. Mr. Herbert K. Ogilvy, Auchterhouse, Forfarshire. Mr. Gavin Ralston, Glamis, N.B.
L	3	Mr. William Wilson -	Chibiabos	37	—	37	Mr. C. J. Ness, Calrossie Mains, Nigg Station. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. William Ross, Kinnahaird, Strathpeffer. Mr. David W. Simpson, Arcan Mains, Muir of Ord.
	101		Total -	1,364	49	1,413	

APPENDIX D.

RETURN of the NUMBER of STALLIONS exhibited in each DISTRICT CLASS at the LONDON SHOW in the Year 1908. NAMES of OWNERS and winning STALLIONS, together with NAMES and ADDRESSES of the DISTRICT COMMITTEE.

District Class.	Number of Stallions Exhibited.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	District Committee.
A	13	Mr. Stephen Mumford	Curio	Mr. W. L. Hirons, Grange Farm, Chacombe, Banbury. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. H. C. Jagger, Kilglass House, Bicester. Mr. B. W. Millington, Deddington, Oxford.
		Miss Hester Bancroft	Drummond's Pride	Mr. P. Ashburnham, Estate Office, West Wretham, Thetford, Norfolk. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. John Beck, 16, Bank Street, Norwich. Mr. D. W. Taylor, The Grange, Bury St. Edmunds.
		Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.	Flambeau	Mr. George Baynes, Broxted Hall, Dunmow, Essex. Mr. W. Smith, The Links, Bishop's Stortford. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Arthur Waters, Coopersale Lodge, Epping, Essex.
B	7	Mr. Edward Charles Winter	President Roosevelt	Mr. W. Davidson, East Learmouth, Cornhill-on-Tweed. Mr. G. G. Rea, Middleton, Wooler, R.S.O., Northumberland. Mr. W. W. Rhoades, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Northumberland. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Eustace Barlow	Stamford	Mr. Charles H. Backhouse, Bank, Darlington. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. C. E. Faber, Stockton-on-Tees. Mr. W. H. Ralston, Streatlam Castle, Darlington.
		Mr. Frances Rickaby	Time Table	Mr. Fred Armstrong, George Hotel, Penrith. Mr. George John Bell, 1, Lonsdale Street, Carlisle. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. John Sewell Rigg, Elm Bank, Appleby, Westmoreland.
C	13	Mr. John Drage	Ethelbruce	Mr. James Brown, Earls Barton House, Northampton. Mr. E. Messinger, Chapel Brampton, Northampton. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. H. R. Roe, Cranoe, Market Harborough.
		Southwold Hunt Sire Association	Frobisher	Mr. H. D. Addey, Claythorpe Manor, Alford, Lincolnshire. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Richard H. Barker, Martin Manor, Horncastle, Lincolnshire. Mr. W. B. Swallow, Wootton Lawn, Ulceby, Lincolnshire.
		Mr. Richard Louis Fenwick	Whistling Crow	Mr. J. Frederic Cartmell, Manor House, Kirby Bellars, Melton Mowbray. Mr. R. C. Cooper, Waltham, Melton Mowbray. Mr. Guy Fenwick, North Luffenham Hall, Stamford. (*Corresponding Member.*)
D	13	The Earl Cowley	Akbar	Mr. James Hibbard, 46, Clarendon Road, Redlands, Bristol. Mr. Arthur Rich, Oaksey, near Malmesbury. Mr. John E. Taylor, Elm Lodge, Biddestone, Chippenham. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		The Gosford Stud	Cheery Cove	Mr. C. I. L. Allix, Port Eliot Estate Office, St. Germans, R.S.O., Cornwall. Mr. Edward L. Marsack, Haye, near Callington, Cornwall. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. W. C. Peel, Trenant Park, Duloe, R.S.O., Cornwall.
		Mr. William Wilson	Rightful	Mr. W. Worsley Ashcroft, 83, High Street, Croydon. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. W. A. Calvert, Broomells, Holmwood, R.S.O., Dorking. Mr. Hubert F. Sturdy, M.F.H., Felcourt, East Grinstead.
		Mr. Thomas Kinsman Bickell	Rockaway	Mr. Reginald W. Fox, Grimstone, Horrabridge, S. Devon. Mr. Charles L. Hancock, The Manor House, Cothelstone, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton. Mr. E. P. Northey, Higher Bowden, Okehampton. (*Corresponding Member.*)

District Class.	Number of Stallions Exhibited.	Owners of Stallions.	Stallions.	District Committee.
E	8	Messrs. Walton Bros.	Burnock Water-	Colonel R. G. W. Chaloner, Gisboro' Hall, Guisborough, Yorks. Mr. Hubert Godman, Guisborough, Yorks. (*Corresponding Member.*) Major R. B. Turton, Kildale Hall, Grosmont, Yorks.
		Mr. Thomas L. Wickham-Boynton	Denis Richard	Mr. G. W. Brigham, The Grange, Burton Agnes, Yorks. Mr. Frederick Reynard, Sunderlandwick, Driffield, Yorks. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. John J. Ridley, Osborne House, Beverley, Yorks.
		The Lord Middleton	Scotch Sign	Mr. Edward Parsons, Birdsall, York. Mr. Frederick Reynard, Sunderlandwick, Driffield, Yorks. (*Corresponding Member.*) Hon. Tatton Willoughby, Hildenley Home Farm, Malton, Yorks.
F	14	Mr. Herbert Clifford Walton	Bird of Paradise	Mr. W. S. Carless, M.R.C.V.S., Worcester. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. G. H. Green, Wigmore Grange, Leintwardine, R.S.O. Mr. Colin MacIver, Blaisdon Hall, Longhope, S.O., Glos.
		Mr. Albert Octavius Haslewood	Landsman-	Mr. J. H. James-Moore, High Ercall Hall, Wellington, Salop. Vet'y. Capt. T. Mayor Parker, Whitchurch, Salop. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Edward A. Saxton, M.R.C.V.S., Beam Street, Nantwich. Mr. John Anthony, Cilveithy, Kidwelly.
		Mr. John Forsyth Rees	Red Hat	Mr. Grismond Philipps, Cwmgwilly, Bronwydd Arms, R.S.O., South Wales. Mr. G. E. S. Prothero-Beynon, Trewern, Whitland, R.S.O., South Wales. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Stephen Mumford	Sundorne	Mr. Philip S. Danby, Church Farm, Offchurch, Leamington. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Charles L. Kendall, Mount Pleasant, Walton, Warwick. Mr. G. Wilson, Bull Hotel, Rugby.
G	8	Mr. David Davies, M.P.	Likely Bird	Mr. T. Green, The Bank, Pool Quay, Welshpool, N. Wales. Mr. Ernest C. Morgan, 22, High Street, Newtown, N. Wales. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. Richard Morgan, Snowfield, Kerry, Montgomeryshire. Mr. W. Scott Owen, Cefngwifed, Newtown, N. Wales.
		Mr. Thomas James Hillman	Thalaba	Mr. W. Denson, Picton Hall, near Chester. Mr. R. Johnson Houghton, Newbold, Saighton, Chester. Mr. R. Parker, Gt. Stanney, Sutton, Chester. (*Corresponding Member.*)
		Mr. Edward Charles Winter	Thurles	Mr. J. Kerr Calderwood, Clitheroe, Lancs. Mr. W. Garnett, Linton Croft, near Clitheroe, Lancs. Mr. Rowland Robinson, Estate Office, Gisburne, Clitheroe, Lancs. (*Corresponding Member.*)
H	4	Mr. Charles William Dixon-Johnson	Palaver	Mr. J. Hastie Brydon, Haddon, Kelso. Mr. R. Grieve, Branxholme Braes, Hawick. Mr. Robert Henderson, Mount Hooley, Jedburgh. (*Corresponding Member.*)
I	2	Mr. William Wilson ...	Chibiabos	Mr. Charles H. Beveridge, Crombie, Cairneyhill, Dunfermline. Mr. W. Blackie, The Stables, Montrave, Leven, Fife. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. T. Webster, Nisbetfield, Collessie, Fife.
J	2	Mr. William Leng	Haakon	Mr. George Barclay, M.F.H., Thornhill, Johnstone, Renfrewshire. Mr. Hugh Neilson, Chapeltoun, Stewarton, N.B. Mr. David W. Shaw, 5, Wellington Square, Ayr. Mr. J. Harling Turner, Portland Estate Office, Kilmarnock. (*Corresponding Member.*)
K	2	Mr. Eustace Barlow	Dealaway	Mr. W. Banks, Invergowrie, Dundee. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. James Carmichael, Arthurstone, Meigle, N.B. Mr. Herbert K. Ogilvy, Auchterhouse, Forfarshire. Mr. Gavin Ralston, Glamis, N.B.
L	2	Mr. Thomas James Hillman	Christmas Greeting	Mr. C. J. Ness, Calrossie Mains, Nigg Station. (*Corresponding Member.*) Mr. William Ross, Kinnahaird, Strathpeffer. Mr. David W. Simpson, Arcan Mains, Muir of Ord.
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APPENDIX E.

THE following Table shows the number of Stallions entered at the Shows in the Spring of the years 1901 to 1908 inclusive:—

1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
113	119	108	94	94	107	101	88

The following gives the number of Stallions sent by the Judges for veterinary examination, and the Number passed as sound by the Veterinary Inspectors.

	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Stallions sent for veterinary inspection	55	61	55	56	56	66	51	51
Stallions passed as sound after veterinary inspection.	43	50	48	47	51	47	43	44

The Number of Stallions rejected by the Veterinary Inspectors, and the reason and cause thereof:—

Cause of Disqualification.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Roaring	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Whistling	5	4	1	—	1	3	—	2
Ringbone	1	2	—	2	1	2	3	1
Unsound feet	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Navicular disease	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spavin	3	—	—	2	2	9*	1	1
Cataract	2	5	6	4	1	5	3	2
TOTAL rejected in each year	12	11	7	9	5	19	8	7

APPENDIX F.

The following show the List of Honours awarded to the produce of Premium Stallions at the different Summer Meetings at which Medals are awarded by the Hunters' Improvement Society, for the years 1902 to 1907 inclusive:—

1902.		1903.	
Challenge Cups	1	Challenge Cups	1
Champion Prizes	2	Champion Prizes	3
Special Prizes	3	Special Prizes	5
Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	5	Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	7
Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	18	Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	32
First Prizes	126	First Prizes	135
Premium „	13	Premium „	15
Second „	111	Second „	134
Third „	72	Third „	66
Fourth „	4	Fourth „	5
		Fifth „	1
TOTAL number of Awards	355	TOTAL number of Awards	404

1904.		1905.	
Challenge Cups	1	Challenge Cups	3
Champion Prizes	3	Champion Prizes	2
Special Prizes	4	Special Prizes	2
Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	4	Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	5
Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	33	Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	35
First Prizes	146	First Prizes	146
Premium „	11	Premium „	15
Second „	160	Second „	162
Third „	88	Third „	72
Fourth „	5	Fourth „	3
		Fifth „	1
TOTAL number of Awards	455	TOTAL number of Awards	446

1906.		1907.	
Champion Prizes	1	Challenge Cups	5
Special Prizes	7	Champion Prizes	3
Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	5	Special Prizes	4
Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	28	Hunters' Improvement Society's Gold Medals	7
First Prizes	131	Hunters' Improvement Society's Silver Medals	17
Premium „	15	First Prizes	162
Second „	154	Premium „	14
Third „	83	Second „	157
Fourth „	5	Third „	103
		Fourth „	16
		Fifth „	1
TOTAL number of Awards	429	TOTAL number of Awards	489

* Spavin has now been scheduled as "Bone Spavin."

APPENDIX G.

NUMBER of MARES and Average number served together with the Average Percentage of FOALS left by the PREMIUM STALLIONS for the following years.

Year.	Total Number of Mares.	Number of Stallions.	Average Number of Mares.	Average Percentage of Foals.
1900	1,546	29	53	52
1901	1,568	29	54	53
1902	1,396	28	50	56
1903	1,604	28	57	59
1904	1,589	28	57	56
1905	1,527	28	55	59
1906	1,535	28	55	58
1907	1,413	28	50	—

AVERAGE NUMBER of MARES served by each STALLION in the DISTRICTS for the following years, together with the AVERAGE PERCENTAGE of FOALS.

Year.	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.	H.	I.	J.	K.	L.	Average Percentage of Foals.
1900	49	60	66	52	59	50	36	38	62	54	42	69	52
1901	26	58	50	69	74	54	48	51	61	34	23	83	53
1902	34	45	45	64	50	54	56	24	72	71	12	52	56
1903	40	55	53	62	81	65	40	69	67	27	72	57	59
1904	50	47	43	82	77	70	33	41	67	29	53	41	56
1905	57	54	35	61	87	57	31	42	82	67	40	30	59
1906	42	69	47	60	82	74	29	44	63	14	55	34	58
1907	27	48	42	68	71	42	48	65	65	52	46	37	—

APPENDIX H.

PARTICULARS of THOROUGHBRED STALLIONS entered for KING'S PREMIUMS at the SPRING SHOWS for the following Years.

Year.	Former Premium Winners.	Exhibited before.	New Entries.	Number been in Training.	Number not been in Training.	Total Number Exhibited.
1904	38	62	32	76	18	94
1905	34	48	42	74	20	94
1906	32	55	52	94	13	107
1907	32	57	44	86	15	101
1908	32	53	35	80	8	88

APPENDIX I.

	Number of Mares in foal, foaled, or slipped foal.	Returns incomplete, from any cause.	Percentage of Foals.
1888	815	104	60 per cent.
1889	778	103	56 „
1890	837	127	59 „
1891	770	223	59 „
1892	668	149	60 „
1893	856	145	61 „
1894	685	136	58 „
1895	673	105	61 „
1896	693	115	55 „
1897	634	49	58 „
1898	702	92	58 „
1899	762	122	56 „
1900	700	106	52 „
1901	689	164	53 „
1902	670	130	56 „
1903	845	143	59 „
1904	809	152	56 „
1905	834	124	59 „
1906	834	144	58 „
	14,254	2,433	
	or average of 58 per cent. of mares served are left in foal.		

1907 figures not known until end of August, 1908.

APPENDIX J.

Report of the Brood Mare Society for 1907.

Preface.

This Society was established in 1903 for the purpose of obtaining suitable mares by gift or purchase and lending them to farmers and others on certain conditions, the object being to keep good brood mares in the country and restrict their wholesale exportation, and the consequent deterioration in the breed of horses in the United Kingdom.

Great stress is laid on the necessity of obtaining a good stamp of mare, free from hereditary disease, and able to earn her living on a farm. Some fine specimens of strong hunter-built mares have been acquired, and, by retaining a lien on the first two fillies (see paragraph 7, Appendix A, page 12) of such mares, the Society hope gradually, but surely to raise the standard of excellence, diminish the proportion of misfits, and thus enhance the value of the young stock. In some instances stallion owners have granted a preferential rate for service fees for the Society's mares, reducing the charge by 40 and even 60 per cent. Other facilities have also been granted, all tending to a reduction in the initial cost of the article produced.

It is in the power of the War Office, masters of hounds and others to do much to aid the objects of the Society by purchasing the filly produce of the Society's mares, and by restoring such to the Society at a later period of the careers of such animals.

Report.

We have the honour to lay before our subscribers the third Report of this Society.

The efforts of your Committee in the past year have been concentrated on the attempt to bring prominently before Parliament and the nation the urgent necessity of at once taking action with a view to increase and improve our national horse supply. This question has been under discussion over 30 years, and little, very little, in the direction of an organized system has been achieved.

It may be advantageous to review the various stages through which the question has passed in recent years.

A discussion initiated by the Council of the Hunters' Improvement Society led to the birth, in 1903, of the Brood Mare Society, and the issue of a valuable report by the Council.

In 1905 the Brood Mare Society brought about the important meeting at Bridgewater House, under the presidency of the Earl of Minto, when its plan of action was unanimously approved. The Society put that plan into operation in order to test the machinery, and received sufficient encouragement to proceed with it.

The experience gained shows that an efficient system can be organized, but the resources at the disposal of the Society are too limited to enable it to move with the desired celerity.

In July, 1906, the Society, through its President, the Earl of Donoughmore, brought forward a motion in the House of Lords, which led to an interesting and instructive debate, in the course of which Lord Carrington, on behalf of the Government, expressed great sympathy with the movement, accepted the motion, and promised consideration.

In October last, his Lordship summoned an important conference at Whitehall, when a discussion was opened by the Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, in which many members of the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding and other influential persons took part.

Lord Carrington then observed, that if he could get something tangible, definite, and practical, backed by the noblemen and gentlemen present, he would be in a stronger position to approach the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In expressing himself as entirely at the orders of the agricultural interest, one of the most important portions of which he declared to be the great horse-breeding industry of the United Kingdom, he said that he was not at all without hopes of being able to get some measure of assistance towards carrying out a scheme to remedy what "is at present a thoroughly unsafe and unsatisfactory position."

The outcome of that conference, and of these encouraging remarks, was a carefully prepared outline of a scheme which, before being presented to the Government, received the unanimous approval of the Council of the Hunters' Improvement Society and of your Committee.

Copies of that document and the letters above referred to are printed on pages 10 and 11.

The Society, together with all those who are interested, anxiously await the decision of H.M. Government on this important paper.

The Committee are impressed with the fact that organization, and organization alone, can overcome the difficulty. The experience and the best services of the Breed Societies are unreservedly placed at the disposal of the President of the Board of Agriculture, and it is for that Minister to construct the instrument which will accomplish the end.

Your Committee can do but little more at this stage. They feel that precious time is slipping away, that the appropriate season for action is passing, and that there is a fear that another year will be lost.

A small effort and a moderate sum now provided by the Government would set the machinery in motion and be the means of gathering the knowledge so essential to success, and your Committee express the hope that this appeal may not be in vain.

The stud of mares now belonging to the Society numbers 53, and the young stock number 24. A different system of selecting the mares must be adopted, and more care taken to secure younger animals. A proper system can only be devised by the light born of experience, and experience cannot be acquired till more funds are supplied.

The Committee intend to inaugurate a system of compiling records relating to all known stallions, which promises to be of great service to breeders. This record will show the information collected as to the public performances of sires, the characteristics of the families from which they spring, the stamp which they impress on their stock, and other details, which will not only help the breeder to resort to blood which may counteract defects in his own strain but will become an important guide in the selection of sires.

The Committee wish to strongly support a suggestion, made by the Leicestershire Branch, that a register be kept at the office of some local newspaper, or other place in the market town, recording the names and addresses of owners of animals within the district which are for sale, so as to aid in bringing buyer and seller together.

The appendices to this Report show the mares belonging to the Society, the names of the custodians, and the localities where they are maintained, and give the following aggregate results:—

Blackmore Vale Branch	16
Hereford Branch	15
Leicestershire Branch	5
Liskeard Branch	18
Grand Total ...	54

The first mare, "Czarina," was presented to the Society Christmas, 1903, since which date the stud has increased, up to April, 1907, to 54 mares. 24 foals have been bred alive and one died. The record of the foals dropped this season is not yet complete.

Your Committee consider that increased care should be exercised in the purchase of all mares, and every endeavour should be made to secure, by competent purchasers, only those who give reasonable hope of being prolific. Even with gift mares great caution should be exercised before they are accepted, as it is not remunerative to keep old, or barren mares, because their retention is not encouraging to their custodians.

The want of some regular provision for the temporary reception of newly purchased or gift mares is felt, as it is often necessary to have a place of this kind where the mares could be sent previous to distribution. It is hoped that such arrangements may be made in each branch, as this would do much to further the objects the Society has in view.

The rules and conditions under which mares are placed in the custody of farmers and others for breeding purposes, as well as those for the formation of local committees, are attached. These rules have been found to work fairly well up to date, and should be observed in future. If alterations are necessary they can be effected by resolutions of the Central Committee, after due consideration of the proposals, to be submitted in the usual manner. The Committee quite recognise that it is almost impossible to devise hard-and-fast rules on the subject of breeding, and, therefore, changes may from time to time be necessary, but these changes should only be effected after careful consideration of the reasons to be placed before the Central Committee.

Your Committee have seen it stated that there is no necessity for the existence of a Society called The Brood Mare Society, on the ground of the scarcity of mares; that catalogues at auction marts prove that there are mares in abundance, in fact, more than could be used for breeding purposes; that suitable mares are within the reach of the farmer; and that the quality of horses generally is higher than it was thirty years ago.

Your Committee quite believe that catalogues at auction marts disclose the existence of a considerable number of animals of the female sex, but frequent attendance at those marts convinces them of the difficulty of securing the very few high-class suitable mares which come to the hammer, and which usually realise prices far beyond the pocket of the farmer. No one would deny that the quality of mares belonging to a comparatively few distinguished breeders is very high, but what is wanted is to improve the quality amongst the undistinguished, and re-stock the districts which have been denuded for many years. No one is weak enough to suggest that farmers should be started to breed £40 military horses. Their ambition should be to produce the more valuable animal which commands a remunerative figure.

This Society does not want, and would not take, worthless third-rate remount mares. But there is no reason why the Government should not eventually get hold of a much larger proportion of first-rate mares, such as can now be found amongst the officers' chargers, and even in the ranks.

The whole question resolves itself into organisation and the construction of a proper system, but is too large an undertaking to come within the unaided power of any voluntary society; and it is evident that nothing short of the resources of a Government, utilising the Societies, can meet the case.

The attraction of a substantial premium to the breeder in addition to the fixed price for every filly taken as an officer's charger with the probability of its ultimate return to the breeder, when its good record has been established, would be not only an inducement worth having, but would establish a continuity of good blood.

The characteristics of the breed, carefully recorded, constitute a vital point, and a proper method of obtaining these would be of the utmost value. This is one of the main objects of your Society, and a more useful one can scarcely be conceived.

Horse breeding amongst the generality of farmers does not pay. Because, without system, they cannot conduct it on the right lines.

Gradually to bring about a change in suitable districts amongst those who do not fully understand the art or who have not sufficient opportunity to travel in the right direction, is a purpose which few will be found to condemn.

Amongst the successes of the Society's mares, the Committee notice with satisfaction that "Czarina" still does well in the Blackmore Vale Branch, having won annually three premiums at the Compton Show, besides being reserve for the Championship on two occasions. Her foal by a King's premium stallion also took a prize. The success of the mare "Lady o'Leary" at the same branch is also noticeable, as she took two premiums in three years, her foal being also awarded a prize. As many of the mares about to foal this season have been served by stallions of distinction, it is anticipated that the produce of this year will be generally satisfactory.

Great assistance can be given the Society by the presentation to it of suitable gift mares, of which there must be numbers available throughout the country, and it is hoped that all concerned in the advancement of horse breeding will aid the object the Society has in view by informing the Hon. Secretary whenever such mares may be available. The proposals made by the members of the Committee who submitted the Paper on National Horse Breeding to the Government for consideration, will, if undertaken in the manner set forth, result in certain districts being restocked with suitable registered mares; but, meanwhile, reliance must be placed on public support to achieve the desirable objects sought.

Gentlemen can become members by subscribing annually one guinea or upwards, cheques being sent to 24, Martin's Lane, Cannon Street, E.C., and made payable to G. B. Manley, Esq., or order, or by sending enclosed order form to their bankers.

The gift of a suitable brood mare constitutes a Life Member, and the Society has had great pleasure in conferring such membership on the following ladies and gentlemen for their valuable gifts:—

The Right Hon. Viscount Portman ...	2
The Hon. Mrs. Tremayne	1
The Hon. A. H. Mills	1
Mr. W. Astor, Jun.	1
Mr. James Buchanan	1
Major J. Bennett-Stanford	1
Mrs. F. M. Carlton	1
Mr. H. H. Gordon Clark	1
Mr. H. J. Eyre	1
Mr. Evans	1
Mr. Foster	1
Mr. Stewart Freeman	1
H.M. Government	1
Colonel Henry	1
Major Jackson	1
Mr. Lloyd Edwards	1
Mr. J. King	4
Mr. Lascelles	1
Mr. Cecil Martin	1
Mr. Metcalfe	1
Captain Phipps-Hornby	2
Colonel J. Scott-Plummer	1
Mr. M. Scrimgeour	3
Mr. Albert Spencer	1
Mr. Trafford	1
Mr. Edward Tilling	1
Mr. Turner	1
Mr. James Webb, F.R.C.V.S.	1
	35

Copy. *4th December*, 1906.

To the President of the Board of Agriculture,
4, Whitehall, S.W.

My Lord,

I have the honour, on behalf of the Committee of the Brood Mare Society, to enclose for your consideration a copy of a memorandum drawn up by certain gentlemen who were present at the Conference on Horse Breeding, held at your office on the 31st October, representing the conclusions to which they came after carefully considering the speeches to which they listened on that occasion.

This memorandum has been carefully considered by the Committee of the Brood Mare Society, who have passed a unanimous resolution supporting the scheme therein set forth, and I am to urge on your lordship the desirability of taking steps to press this scheme, or one founded on a similar basis, on the attention of the Treasury.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,
ALGERNON TURNOR,
Chairman.

Copy.

Hunters' Improvement Society,
12, Hanover Square, London.
27th December, 1906.

Dear Sir,

I beg to inform you that the Council at their meeting yesterday considered the memorandum enclosed in your letter of December 4th, when the following resolution, moved by Sir Merrik R. Burrell, Bt., seconded by Colonel Victor Van de Weyer, was unanimously adopted:—

"This Council is in entire concurrence with the views expressed in the memorandum on National Horse Breeding, and think it advisable to forward this memorandum to the Minister for Agriculture, signed by the President of this Society, together with

a covering letter, expressing the opinion of this Council as to the great and urgent need of a substantial addition being made to the grant already made to the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding."

Yours faithfully,
A. B. CHARLTON.

Colonel T. Deane, C.B.,
Newlands,
Surbiton.

NATIONAL HORSE BREEDING.

1. In connection with the debate on horse breeding, which took place in the House of Lords on the 16th July, 1906, and which resulted in a conference summoned by Lord Carrington, on the 31st October, at the Board of Agriculture, and at which the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding, and the various societies concerned in a subject so important to the nation, were represented, we, the undersigned, desire to record our conclusions in view to their being placed before the authorities who will have the final settlement of the question, and for whom definite proposals are required.

2. We are convinced that many parts of the United Kingdom, which are suitable for horse breeding, require to be re-stocked with brood mares of the right stamp to produce the general utility horse, and particularly the class required for military purposes. To obtain this object it is preferable that many persons should keep one or more mares each, and not exceeding, say, three, rather than that one person should keep a large number of mares, on account of the risk and expense which are inseparable from the industry.

3. We are satisfied that many districts proved to be in every way suitable for horse breeding are almost denuded of the class of mare required, the old strains of blood having been lost, chiefly in consequence of the exportation of the best mares. We recognise, however, that there are still, here and there, wealthy breeders who keep good strains.

4. We consider that by good organisation and by acting in concert, the Board of Agriculture, the War Office, the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding, the Hunters' Improvement Society, and the Brood Mare Society, can greatly improve the standard of excellence, possibly diminish the cost of production, and make the industry more profitable.

5. We think that the twenty-eight King's Premium stallions which are allowed for Great Britain are wholly insufficient for the wants of the country. We note the great use made in some districts, not only of unsound weedy thoroughbred stallions, seldom if ever exhibited, but also of inferior mongrel half-bred stallions, of bad quality. We regret the continual purchase by foreign Governments of many of our best stallions, and we think that measures should be taken to counteract this evil which has been so appropriately referred to by the Royal Commission of 1887 in the following terms:—

"There is no record, unfortunately, contained in any of the official statistics of the number of stallions which have been annually exported from the country, but it is a matter of common notoriety that year after year the United Kingdom has been swept by the agents of foreign Governments for the stallions and mares best suited to their purpose, and they have been bought with public money, and taken from the country, frequently at prices with which it is impossible for private enterprise successfully to compete.

"The consequence of this has been that, with the exception of the highest class of stallions and of mares, for the breeding of race horses, this country has been left, for the most part, with the inferior and often unsound animals, which the foreign agent has rejected, and the result has been the gradual but marked deterioration in the general breed, for which England at one time was famous."

6. The deterioration has steadily increased since this representation was made, and improvement is unlikely with the growth of the motor and tramway systems. We think that the Irish plan* of providing funds to associations or individuals for the purchase of stallions in certain districts, with a provision for repayment by instalments, ought to be developed in Great Britain as supplementary to the system of King's premiums. Stallions should, as has been the case in Ireland, be eligible for prizes varying from £5 to £25, for the points gained by their stock exhibited at shows approved by the Department of Agriculture.*

7. We do not think, however, that the Irish plan will be sufficient in itself, or that it would prevent foreign Governments from continuing to get the best of our thoroughbred stallions, adapted for country purposes.

8. Something more than that is needed when, as in this case, we have to compete with the resources of foreign Governments for their possession.

9. We consider it essential, for the real and permanent improvement of the breeds, that the majority of these horses which now go abroad, should be secured for use in the United Kingdom.

10. But if they are to remain in the country it can only be by the aid and the resources of the Government at home, in view of the competition for their possession by various Governments abroad, and we think that arrangements for their purchase and care, should be made with the assistance of the Government; and that these arrangements should be under the control of some central authority, either the Royal Commission, or some other body appointed by the Government for that purpose.

11. Horses of the class we speak of are by no means numerous, very few, comparatively, are bred in a single year, and we are of opinion that the cost of their acquisition could not be great, while the best possible material would be retained for the service of the country.

12. Arrangements should be made by which all Government stallions should travel under a more extended system than they do at present, visiting as far as possible all registered mares. These mares should, as in Ireland, be eligible for Government stallion service, under the nomination system, and for prizes for themselves and stock, under the Irish premium system.

13. In order to re-stock the country with suitable registered mares, we recommend the adoption of the system initiated by the Brood Mare Society which is described in their report, and that the machinery of that Society be made available by constituting it the agent of the Royal Commission. The rules proposed by that Society for the purchase, custody, and distribution of mares and their stock, if appointed agents, are attached (*see page* 12).

14. We recommend that the Royal Commission be invited to appoint a Central Committee in London to consider in detail the question of the purchase and maintenance of a proportion of Government stallions and the applicability of the Irish, nomination, premium, stallion registration, and purchase system* to registered mares in this country. Several of these rules may prove of much supplementary value to the King's premium system. This committee might also consider the compilation by degrees of a record showing the family characteristics of stallions in use.

15. We strongly support the proposal advocated† by the Brood Mare Society that the War Office should have the refusal of the first two or more fillies bred under the system with a view to accepting them as officers' chargers, and that the higher price thus obtained may be made available to enable that Society to award a substantial additional premium to the breeder for every filly bought for that purpose. Such fillies, after a certain period of service with the army, to be returned, if good enough, to the Society at its option, in order to be restored to the breeder.

16. In order to give effect to the above proposals we recommend that an additional grant of £25,000 per annum be made to the Royal Commission, which has repeatedly urged the necessity for having its grant increased, the small sum at present allowed being totally inadequate for its needs. The additional grant to be expended by it in such manner as may

* See Appendix B, Loans for the purchase of Stallions, attached.

* See Appendix B, Prizes for registered Stallions and Mares.

† See Appendix A.

appear best calculated to give effect to the proposals here set forth.

17. We are authorized to express the entire concurrence of Mr. Henry Chaplin with this memorandum.

DONOUGHMORE.
ALGERNON TURNOR.
T. DEANE.

See Royal Dublin Society Rules attached to the Register of Thoroughbred Stallions, for 1900, also rules of Department of Agriculture, and technical instruction for Ireland, 1906.

[*Appendix A.*]

BROOD MARE SOCIETY.

PROPOSED RULES FOR THE PURCHASE, CUSTODY, AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BROOD MARES AND THEIR STOCK, should the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding make use of the Society in connexion with the Grant for King's Premium Stallions, or any other source from which funds may be hereafter available.

1. Brood mares to be purchased only by such individuals or agencies as may be appointed for the purpose by the Central Committee of the Brood Mare Society.

2. It must be regarded as essential that those who purchase have had practical knowledge and experience of horse breeding, so that hereditary characteristics may be studied, and only good strains of blood secured.

3. All such mares must obtain a certificate of soundness from hereditary disease signed by a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Their age must be between three and ten years, and preference will be given to those which have foaled, or are in foal to the class of stallion detailed.

4. All mares purchased from Government grants must be insured in an approved live stock insurance office for the full amount of their purchase price, and the annual premium on this insurance shall be a charge against the funds of the Society.

5. The causes of disqualification of brood mares for hereditary unsoundness shall be the same as those laid down for Premium stallions—viz., roaring, whistling, ringbone, unsound feet, navicular disease, spavin, and cataract.

6. The average price for brood mares shall not exceed £50, except in exceptional cases at the discretion of the Society, such sum to include all charges, including stabling, food, attendance, etc., from date of purchase to that of issue to the farmer or custodian taking over the brood mare, as referred to in the Society's rules and conditions under which mares are placed out for breeding purposes.

7. As the main object of the Society is the improvement in the breed of horses and the inducement of farmers to retain their best young mares for breeding purposes, it shall be optional with the custodian to retain for breeding purposes all fillies bred, or to offer the refusal of the first two from each mare to the Society at a certain price to be placed elsewhere, at three and a-half years old.

8. The prices at which these fillies shall be taken by the Society shall, if accepted, be £35, but if purchased for over that price from the Society by the Remount Department, on an agreement that they shall be subsequently made available for breeding purposes, a higher price by way of premium may be awarded to the breeder at the discretion of the Society.

9. All colts will be the property of the custodian, who may sell them at any time. But if retained to three and a-half years of age and offered to the Society, it will endeavour to secure a sale for them to the Remount Department at remount prices, which vary according to class, being about £35 for troopers, to £60 or £70 for chargers.

10. The Society or its local agents will advise the breeders in regard to the disposal of misfits and the rearing of young stock, and it will give all help possible in effecting sales. A register will be kept of all stock produced, and all the Society's brood mares will be branded with the broad arrow on the near shoulder, their fillies being similarly branded at one year of age.

11. As considerable sums of money are annually collected for local horse shows to encourage horse breeding, the Society's various branches should endeavour to act in co-operation with them in view to securing if possible prizes for its brood mares, yearlings, two, three, and four year old colts and fillies. The detail of such awards can only be worked out by the local horse show and branch Society's committees, but as the objects both have in view are identical, co-operation in this matter is likely to result in public benefit.

12. Any grants of money which the Royal Commissioners may assign for the improvement of horse breeding by the purchase of brood mares shall (if the Brood Mare Society be made agents for that purpose) be duly accounted for, according to such rules and regulations as the Commissioners may approve, a schedule of the various selected districts in which the mares are to be distributed being submitted for the confirmation of the Commissioners, so that if possible those districts in which mares are comparatively few may be strengthened by more.

[*Appendix B.*]

LOANS FOR THE PURCHASE OF STALLIONS IN IRELAND, 1905.

1. No applications for a loan for the purchase of a stallion will be considered if coming from a locality in which, in the opinion of the Department, there is already a sufficient number of registered stallions for the purpose of their scheme.

2. The individual or association applying for a loan must be approved of by the Department.

3. No loans will be made save for the purchase of stallions passed by the Department as eligible for registration.

4. The purchase price of the stallion must be approved by the Department.

5. Before the loan is granted the stallion must be insured in the name of the Department by the purchaser in an approved live stock insurance office for the full amount of his purchase price, and the payment to the Department of the annual premiums on this insurance must be secured under conditions similar to those provided for the repayment of principal interest. (See 7 and 8.)

6. Approved applicants for a loan must lodge with the Department the policy of the insurance, together with one-third of the purchase price of the stallion.

7. As soon thereafter as possible the individual or association to whom the loan is granted shall enter into a bond to repay the Department the amount which will be advanced by them—viz., two-thirds of the purchase money—in five equal annual instalments, at the end of one, two, three, four, and five years respectively, from the date of payment of the full purchase price to the vendor by the Department, together with interest at the rate of 2½ per cent. on the outstanding balance.

8. In the case of an individual, two or more solvent sureties approved by the Department, in addition to the purchaser, must guarantee repayment. In the case of an association, repayment must be guaranteed by the committee of the association, or in such other manner as the Department may require.

9. On receipt by the Department of (1) the policy of insurance, (2) one-third of the agreed-on purchase money, (3) the bond duly completed, and (4) the necessary stamp duty, the Department will pay to the vendor the full amount of the agreed-on purchase price, and intimate to him that the stallion may be given up to the borrower.

10. If the vendor, before being paid by the Department, gives up the possession of the stallion, the Department will hold themselves free of any liability to the vendor.

11. The individual or association must offer the stallion each year for registration, must undertake to conform at all times to the regulations of the Department's schemes for encouraging improvement in the breeds of horses, and during the continuance of

the loan must allow the stallion to serve nominated mares at a fee to be fixed by the Department.

Such fee, however, in no case to exceed £3 per mare.

12. Nominated mares, the property of the members of an association purchasing a stallion under this scheme, shall not take priority of service over nominated mares owned by non-members.

As soon, however, as the number of nominated mares required by the scheme may have been served, the service of the stallion may be retained exclusively for the use of the members of such association.

13. The individual or association in whose favour the loan is being granted must, at his or their own expense, provide suitable accommodation for the stallion, procure all necessary veterinary attendance, and care for the animal in a proper manner, to the satisfaction of the Department.

14. The Department shall have the right to inspect the stallion at any time, and to remove him at any time, if it is found, in the opinion of the Department, that he is not being properly cared for, or if an instalment of the principal and interest is in arrear for more than four weeks.

15. The stallion shall remain the property of the Department until all instalments and arrears of principal and interest are paid off, and shall not be disposed of, without the consent of the Department, for five years.

16. Should the stallion be awarded a premium, such premium shall not be paid to the individual or association in possession of the stallion, but shall be credited, after the close of the season, towards the payment of the loan.

17. The Department reserves the right to refuse any application for a loan without assigning any reason for such refusal.

18. The decision of the Department in all matters relating to these loans shall be final.

Forms of application can be had from the Department.

Registered Stallions.

The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland makes it a condition that a stallion, to be entitled to a prize, a subsidy in the form of nominations, or a premium, must be entered in the Departmental Published Register of Stallions for the current year, or accepted for registration.

The following prizes were offered to the owners of thoroughbred stallions which had been registered with the Royal Dublin Society for service under the horse-breeding scheme, 1900, whose stock win most points in prizes at the Horse Show, a cup to count eight points, a first prize seven points, a second prize six points, third prize five points, a fourth prize four points, reserved, very highly commended and reserved, highly commended and reserved, commended and reserved, three points, very highly commended three points, highly commended two points, and commended one point:—

First Prize, for not less than	8	points	-	£25
Second Prize,	„	„	6	„	- £15
Third Prize,	„	„	4	„	- £10
Fourth Prize	„	„	2	„	- £5

It was not necessary that the registered stallions should be exhibited at the Horse Show. In the event of an animal winning both a cup and a prize, or more than one cup or prize, only one cup, or one prize (the highest) should count.

Registered Mares.

Nominated or registered mares. These have to be approved by the Department of Agriculture in Ireland. If they comply with the regulations laid down on the subject, their owners receive nominations for a registered stallion, preference being given to the best young mares under six years of age. The mares are selected by judges of the Department. The owner of the mare must select one of the registered stallions, in Ireland, of any breed sanctioned for the county, provided the service list of the stallion selected is not already full.

The value of the nomination or service fee may vary with the breed of stallion selected, but shall not be less than £2, or more than £3, exclusive of groom's fee of 2s. 6d. When the service fee exceeds the value of the nomination, the excess is paid by the owner of the mare. The nomination fee of £2 is paid by the Department to the owner of the stallion. Thus, if a stallion is registered to serve farmers' mares at £5 the Department pays £2, and the owner of the nominated mares £3 2s. 6d. (including groom's fee). As soon as the Department is satisfied that the conditions of service have been met, its share of the nomination fee is notified to the Treasurer of the County Council Committee of Agriculture, for payment to the stallion owners.

Under certain conditions premiums or prizes are awarded to the owners of mares, and their stock, viz., 10 per cent. to prizes for yearlings, 30 per cent. to mares between two and six years of age, stinted to, or with foal at foot by a registered stallion. The sum to be provided for the purpose by the Department of Agriculture depends on the amount provided in aid of the scheme, by local authorities or sources. If aid is not given by the latter, the Departmental grant may be withheld. The schemes for the encouragement of horse breeding in Ireland are, however, very elastic, and constantly changing, as may be seen from the rules of the Department of Agriculture in Ireland, and those of the Royal Dublin Society during the past ten years.

Rules and Conditions under which Mares are placed in the custody of Farmers and Others for Breeding purposes.

In the following conditions the expression "the Society" shall mean the Brood Mare Society, the "custodian" the person receiving the mare and signing the receipt, and the "local committee" the committee representing the Society in the district, and the "district" the area assigned to a local committee.

1. The mare shall remain the property of the Society, and shall be returnable to the Society on demand.

2. The custodian shall be solely responsible for any damage done or injury caused by the mare while lent to him.

3. The mare may be used for such work as she may be capable of performing, having due regard to the foal and period of foaling.

4. The mare must at all times be properly cared for.

5. Any change of the address at which the mare is kept must be notified to the local committee, but no mare may be removed out of the district.

6. The mare must be served only by a sire selected and approved by the local committee, but all serving fees are to be paid by the custodian.

7. Within one month after foaling the Society's Form "B" must be filled up and forwarded to the secretary of the local committee.

8. All foals shall belong to the custodian absolutely except as provided in the condition following.

9. The first and second fillies foaled of any mare shall on or before the 30th October in the year in which they respectively attain three and a-half years of age be offered to the local committee for purchase by them, and the local committee shall have the option until the 31st December next following of purchasing such filly at such price, not exceeding £35, as may be agreed upon.

The operation of Rule 9 is suspended by resolution of 11th June, 1906, which reads as follows:—

> "That in respect of the first four branches, which are the pioneers of the movement, and in respect of such others as the Committee by resolution may decide, the operation of Rule 9 be suspended for the present, in order to enable the Committee to judge with greater accuracy as to the characteristics of the breed emanating from mares whose genealogies are practically unknown."

10. Should the custodian, through removal out of the district or for any other reason, wish to surrender the mare, he may do so on giving one month's previous notice in writing of such intention to the secretary of the local committee, and he shall accordingly deliver the mare to such person as may be authorised by the local committee to receive it.

11. A custodian shall subscribe not less than £2 a year to the Society in respect of each mare in his custody, and he shall thereby become a member of the Society during the currency of the subscription. The

first subscription shall be payable on receipt of a mare and shall be for the period ending 1st June in the year following, at which date the next subscription shall become due, and so on in each succeeding year.

12. No mare shall be shown at any horse show without its being stated in the entry form that she is the property of the Society, so that she may be so described in the catalogue, but all entry fees shall be paid by the custodian, and any prize awarded shall belong to him.

13. The custodian shall not oftener than once in any year on receiving not less than one month's previous notice from the local committee, produce the mare and her produce, if any, for inspection at a time and place, within the district, to be specified in such notice. The mare to be sent and taken back by and at the expense of the custodian.

LASTLY. If the local committee and the custodian cannot agree in respect of any question, the same shall be referred to the Central Committee of the Society, in London, whose decision shall be final.

Formation and Functions of Local Committees.

It is suggested that any members of the Society who consider that a branch could be usefully formed in their district should call a meeting of gentlemen interested in horse breeding, and lay the objects of this Society before them, and obtain the names of those willing to join the Society and form a local committee. Assistance in this direction would readily be given, if desired, by the honorary manager, W. Phillpotts-Williams, Esq., 7, Carwinion Terrace, Liskeard, Cornwall. The names, when selected, and the boundaries of the proposed district to be then forwarded to the Central Committee for approval.

Copies of the Society's annual Report, conditions on which mares are lent, and all other information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, 24 Martin's Lane, Cannon Street, London, E.C.

The functions of a local committee shall be:—

1. To obtain gifts of brood mares to the Society, with a view to their being located in their district.

2. To obtain donations to supplement the funds at the disposal of the Society for the purchase of brood mares.

3. To obtain donations and subscriptions to meet the current expenses of the local committee, it is to be distinctly understood that the Society will not be responsible for any liabilities of a local committee except such as shall have been incurred with the written sanction of the Central Committee.

4. To collect the annual subscriptions due from custodians of mares located in their district, and forward same to the Society's honorary treasurer.

5. To advise the Central Committee as to the class of mare best suited to the district, and, if possible, arrange for a member of the local committee to act in conjunction with a member of the Central Committee in the purchase of mares for loan in that district.

6. To see that the conditions on which mares are lent are in all respects properly observed by the custodians in their district, and in particular Conditions 7 and 9.

7. Each local committee may make regulations for its own management.

8. To furnish annually lists and descriptions of all suitable stallions available in the district, and to obtain special terms from stallion owners for the Society's mares.

Generally, to suggest measures for the advancement and efficient working of the Society, and to assist the Central Committee in carrying into effect the objects of the Society in their district.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHT RAILWAYS.

SECOND REPORT

OF

THE COMMISSIONERS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

DUBLIN:

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VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHT RAILWAYS.

WARRANT APPOINTING THE COMMISSION.

DUBLIN CASTLE,
July 19, 1906.

The Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to issue a Commission to the following effect :—

BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

ABERDEEN.

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient that a Commission should issue to inquire into the present working of Railways in Ireland, including Light Railways, and to report how far they afford, separately or in conjunction with other means of transit, adequate facilities for the cheap and rapid transport of goods and passengers within the island and to Great Britain; what causes have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines and their full utilisation for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country; and, generally, by what methods the economical, efficient, and harmonious working of the Irish Railways can best be secured :

Now We, John Campbell, Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, do hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint you, Sir Charles Scotter, Chairman of the London and South-Western Railway (Chairman); the Right Honourable William James Pirrie, Chairman of Harland and Wolff, Limited, Shipbuilders and Engineers; Sir Herbert Jekyll, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, an Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade; Lieutenant-Colonel William Hutcheson Poë, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath; Thomas Sexton, Esquire; William Mitchell Acworth, Esquire; and John Audley Frederick Aspinall, Esquire, General Manager of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, to be Commissioners for the purpose aforesaid.

And for the better effecting the purpose of this Our Commission, We do by these presents authorise and empower you, or any two or more of you to be named by you, to call before you or any two or more of you, to be so named, such persons as you may think fit to examine, and by whom you may be the better informed of the matter hereby submitted for your consideration and everything connected therewith, and generally to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever. And also to call for and examine such books, papers, documents, writings, or records, as you or any two or more of you as aforesaid shall think useful for the purpose of the inquiry.

And We also by these presents authorise and empower you, or any two or more of you as aforesaid, to visit and personally inspect such places as you, or any two or more of you, may deem expedient for the purpose aforesaid. And Our pleasure is that you, or any two or more of you as aforesaid, do from time to time and with all convenient speed report to Us what you shall find touching and concerning the premises.

And We further by these presents ordain that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our Commissioners, do from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, although the same not be continued from time to time by adjournment.

And We do hereby appoint George E. Shanahan, Esquire, the Assistant Secretary to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission.

Given at His Majesty's Castle at Dublin, this 18th day of July, 1906.

By His Excellency's Command.

J. B. DOUGHERTY.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHT RAILWAYS.

SECOND REPORT.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, the Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency, on 18th July, 1906,

> "To inquire into the present working of Railways in Ireland, including Light Railways, and to report how far they afford, separately, or in conjunction with other means of transit, adequate facilities for the cheap and rapid transport of goods and passengers within the island, and to Great Britain; what causes have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines and their full utilisation for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country; and, generally, by what methods the economical, efficient, and harmonious working of the Irish Railways can best be secured,"

Availing ourselves of Your Excellency's permission to report our proceedings from time to time, consider it desirable to submit to Your Excellency, as an Appendix to this Second Preliminary Report, minutes of the evidence taken in Dublin and in London from the 12th March to the 9th July last, inclusive; and statements and returns that have been furnished to us in connection therewith, together with certain tables, and an index.

We think the immediate publication of these documents is desirable.

All of which we humbly submit for Your Excellency's most gracious consideration.

CHAS. SCOTTER, *Chairman.*
PIRRIE.
HERBERT JEKYLL.
W. HUTCHESON POË.
THOMAS SEXTON.
W. M. ACWORTH.
JOHN A. F. ASPINALL.

GEO. E. SHANAHAN,
Secretary.

DUBLIN. Dated this 13th day of January, 1908.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHT RAILWAYS.

APPENDIX

TO THE

SECOND REPORT.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

(Taken in Dublin and in London, 12th March to 9th July, 1907, inclusive)

AND

DOCUMENTS RELATING THERETO.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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Map of the Irish Railways.

Map of Great Britain and Ireland (forwarded by Mr. William Field, M.P.)

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

Sir Charles Scotter, Bart. (Chairman).

The Right Hon. Lord Pirrie, P.C.

Sir Herbert Jekyll, K.C.M.G.

Colonel W. Hutcheson Poë, C.B.

Thomas Sexton, Esq.

William Mitchell Acworth, Esq.

John Audley Frederick Aspinall, Esq.

Secretary—

George Edmund Shanahan, Esq.

TERMS OF REFERENCE.

"To inquire into the present working of Railways in Ireland, including Light Railways, and to report how far they afford, separately or in conjunction with other means of transit, adequate facilities for the cheap and rapid transport of goods and passengers within the Island and to Great Britain; what causes have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines and their full utilisation for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country; and, generally, by what methods the economical, efficient and harmonious working of the Irish Railways can be best secured."

A.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS.

DRAFT HEADS OF EVIDENCE FOR TRADERS, INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS, COMMERCIAL AND PUBLIC BODIES, &c., ISSUED BY THE COMMISSION IN OCTOBER, 1906.

I.—BROAD GAUGE RAILWAYS.

1. The trade or industry represented.

2. The districts affected and the railways, and the other means of transit concerned.

3. Nature of complaints as to existing facilities:—

(*a.*) Local goods, mineral, and live stock rates, and their effect, generally, on trade and the development of industries;

(*b.*) Through rates for goods and live stock, and their effect, generally, on trade and agriculture in Ireland.

(*c.*) Passenger fares, ordinary, special, and excursion; whether reasonable or excessive.

(*d.*) Whether reductions in the existing rates and fares would be likely to produce eventually a remunerative growth of traffic.

(*e.*) Train service—(1) Passenger; locally on the lines serving the district, and through trains connecting with the systems of other companies; whether the service is efficient in respect of speed; whether the accommodation is satisfactory; the number of trains sufficient for the traffic, and if the through connections are convenient and suitable. (2) Goods and cattle: whether the service is sufficient and suitable and worked with reasonable expedition.

(*f.*) Combined services, *e.g.*, train and car, train and steamer: whether such services have been worked in the district and with what results, or if not, whether services of this nature, if introduced, would be beneficial.

(*g.*) Canals and waterways: whether any existing waterway in the district is worked in conjunction with a railway system so as to give the full benefit of the double means of communication to the public, or whether, in effect, it is worked to the disadvantage of traders from a competitive point of view; if the latter, what quantity of agricultural and other produce and general goods (approximately) at present conveyed by rail could be advantageously carried by water.

(*h.*) Whether there is any evidence of undue preference in respect of rates or facilities.

4. The management of Irish railways: whether this is regarded as satisfactory or otherwise; if unsatisfactory, in what respects has it adversely affected the development of the resources of the country, agricultural and industrial, and to what extent has it retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines.

5. What suggestions are offered that would be conducive to better management and more effective service, with a view to the proper development of the resources of the country:—

(*a.*) By way of reduced rates and fares, and the payment of a subsidy to the Companies for a period.

(*b.*) By increasing the number of trains in such districts as at present suffer from an insufficient service, and the recoupment to the Companies concerned of the whole, or a portion, of the extra cost.

(*c.*) By the establishment of goods and passenger motor services in districts at present without railway communication, to be worked in conjunction with the Irish Railways, subject to satisfactory arrangements as to the extra cost of maintenance of roads.

(*d.*) By the voluntary or compulsory amalgamation of the Irish railways, and the formation of two or three important systems.

(*e.*) By the nationalisation of all the Irish railways, by way of State purchase or otherwise.

6. Whether the right of appeal to the Board of Trade on certain questions, and the appeal to the Railway and Canal Commissioners as to excessive rates, and, generally, as to unsuitable or improper traffic conditions or arrangements at present open to traders is regarded as satisfactory.

7. Whether the powers given to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction by Sections 17 and 30 of the Act of 1899 (62 and 63 Vic., cap. 50) have been to any extent beneficial to traders and others having complaints against the Irish Railway Companies—particularly as regards Section 17, which enables the Department to take steps for complaining on behalf of any person aggrieved by undue preference, unfair rates, or any matter which the Railway and Canal Commissioners have jurisdiction to determine.

8. Whether there is any other question that might be usefully considered in determining the causes that have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines, and their full utilization for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country.

B.

II.—LIGHT RAILWAYS.

1. The trade or industry represented.

2. The districts affected and the railways, and the other means of transit concerned.

3. Nature of complaints as to existing transit facilities:—

(*a.*) Local goods, mineral, and live stock rates, and their effect, generally, on trade and the development of industries;

(*b.*) Through rates for goods and live stock, and their effect, generally, on trade and agriculture in Ireland.

(*c.*) Passenger fares, ordinary, special, and excursion; whether reasonable or excessive.

(*d.*) Whether reductions in the existing rates and fares would be likely to produce eventually a remunerative growth of traffic.

(*e.*) Train service—(1) Passenger; locally on the lines serving the district, and through trains connecting with the systems of other companies; whether the service is efficient in respect of speed; whether the accommodation is satisfactory; the number of trains sufficient for the traffic, and if the through connections are convenient and suitable. (2) Goods and cattle: whether the service is sufficient and suitable and worked with reasonable expedition.

(*f.*) Combined services, *e.g.*, train and car, train and steamer: whether such services have been worked in the district and with what results, or if not, whether services of this nature, if introduced, would be beneficial.

(*g.*) Canals and waterways; whether any existing waterway in the district is worked in conjunction with a railway system so as to give the full benefit of the double means of communication to the public, or whether, in effect, it is worked to the disadvantage of traders from a competitive point of view; if the latter, what quantity of agricultural and other produce and general goods (approximately) at present conveyed by rail could be advantageously carried by water.

(*h.*) Whether there is any evidence of undue preference in respect of rates or facilities.

4. The management of Irish Light Railways; whether this is regarded as satisfactory or otherwise; if unsatisfactory, in what respects has it adversely affected the development of the resources, agricultural and industrial, of the districts served by those lines, and to what extent has it retarded the expansion of traffic.

5. What suggestions are offered that would be conducive to better management and more effective service, with a view to the proper development of the resources of those districts, and having regard to the object for which the lines were constructed:—

(*a.*) By way of reduced rates and fares, and, in the case of non-guaranteed lines of the payment of a subsidy to the Companies for a period.

(*b.*) By increasing the number of trains in such districts as at present suffer from an insufficient service, and the recoupment to the Companies concerned of the whole, or a portion, of the extra cost.

(*c.*) By the establishment of goods and passenger motor services in districts adjacent to, but not directly served by, these lines, to be worked in conjunction with the light railways, subject to satisfactory arrangements as to the extra cost of maintenance of roads.

(*d.*) By amalgamation with other light railways, where possible.

6. Whether the right of appeal to the Board of Trade on certain questions, and the appeal to the Railway and Canal Commissioners as to excessive rates, and, generally, as to unsuitable or improper traffic conditions or arrangements at present open to traders is regarded as satisfactory.

7. Whether the powers given to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction by Sections 17 and 30 of the Act of 1899 (62 and 63 Vic., cap. 50) have been to any extent beneficial to traders and others having complaints against the Irish Railway Companies—particularly as regards Section 17, which enables the Department to take steps for complaining on behalf of any person aggrieved by undue preference, unfair rates, or any matter which the Railway and Canal Commissioners have jurisdiction to determine.

8. Whether there is any other question that might be usefully considered in determining the causes that have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines, and their full utilization for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.—Volume II.

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Boyd, Mr. R. N., ..	Belfast Provision Curers' Association,	Forty-first, ..	4th July, 1907, ..	24141–24264	388–391	—	—
Burke, Mr. J. M., J.P.,	Chairman, Skibbereen Urban District Council, and Baltimore and Skibbereen Harbour Board.	Forty-first, ..	4th July, 1907, ..	24015–24140	385–388	—	—
Carvill, Mr. J., ..	Newry Urban District Council, and Chamber of Commerce.	Thirty-sixth, ..	7th June, 1907, ..	20749–20918	285–291	—	—
Clarke, Mr. J., ..	Secretary, Mayo County Council, ..	Thirty-eighth,	11th June, 1907, ..	22012–22153	325–328	—	—
Collery, Alderman B. (since deceased).	Sligo County Council, ...	Twenty-eighth,	24th April, 1907, ..	16687–16795	146–150	—	—
Corscadden, Mr. T., J.P.,	Cattle Trader, Manorhamilton, co. Leitrim.	Thirty-sixth, ..	7th June, 1907, ..	20585–20748	282–285	—	—
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Cox, Mr. J. M., ..	Seed Merchant, Dundalk, co. Louth,	Twenty-fifth,	15th March, 1907,	14676–14807	86– 89	13 and 31	577 & 599
Craven, Mr. F. J., ..	Messrs. Ransomes, Sims, & Jefferies, Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers, Ipswich.	Thirty-fifth, ..	6th June, 1907, ..	19552–19692	251–255	—	—
Currie, Mr. W. A., ..	Secretary, Belfast Harbour Commissioners.	Twenty-fourth,	14th March, 1907, ..	13601–13882	50– 58	—	—
Dale, Alderman H., J.P.,	Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping.	Thirty-ninth,	12th June, 1907, ..	22154–22271	329–333	—	—
Davies, Mr. J., ..	General Manager, Midland and South Western Junction Railway, Swindon.	Thirty-seventh,	10th June, 1907, ..	20919–21317	292–302	28	594
Dolan, Mr. J., ..	Ardee Town Commissioners, ..	Twenty-third,	13th March, 1907,	13424–13512	45– 47	—	—
Donovan, Mr. St. John H., J.P.	Representative of the Kerry County Council; Tralee Urban District Council; Tralee Harbour Board, and Irish County Councils' General Council.	Fortieth, ..	3rd July, 1907, ..	22732–22969	347–352	39-vii	608
Dooley, Mr. J. G., ..	Kilkenny County Council, ..	Twenty-seventh,	23rd April, 1907, ..	16215–16263	129–130	—	—
Ennis, Mr. M. A., J.P.,	Vice-Chairman, Wexford County Council; Member Irish County Councils' General Council.	Twenty-second,	12th March, 1907,	12458–12568	1– 6	—	—
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Field, Mr. William, M.P.,	President Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association; Member Dublin County Council, and Blackrock Urban District Council.	Twenty-third,	13th March, 1907,	13067–13423	28– 45	15 and 25	577 & 592
Forde, Mr. Henry J., J.P.	Waterford Chamber of Commerce, and Waterford Harbour Board.	Thirty-ninth,	12th June, 1907, ..	22569–22731	341–346	—	—
Geoghegan, Mr. Hanbury Clements.	Barrister-at-Law, Dublin, ..	Forty-third, ..	8th July, 1907, ..	24965–25314	415–425	—	—
Gibson, Mr. R., ..	South of Ireland Butter Merchants' Association.	Forty-fourth,	9th July, 1907, ..	25989–26272	445–454	—	—
Green, Mr. W. T., ..	Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping.	Twenty-eighth,	24th April, 1907, ..	16575–16686	141–146	—	—
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Harper, Mr. James, ..	Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.	Twenty-second,	12th March, 1907,	12949 13066	23– 27	—	—
Higgins, Dr. T. F., F.R.C.S.I.	Queen's County County Council, ..	Forty-third, ..	8th July, 1907, ..	25537–25633	432–434	—	—
Jordan, Mr. Jeremiah, M.P.	Fermanagh County Council, ..	Forty-third, ..	8th July, 1907, ..	25315–25421	425–428	—	—
Kennedy, Mr. P. J., B.A.,	Kilkenny Corporation, ...	Twenty-eighth,	24th April, 1907, ..	16337–16501	133–139	—	—
Kettle, Mr. P. J., ..	Balrothery Rural District Council, ..	Forty-fourth,	9th July, 1907, ..	26273–26328	454–455	—	—
Larminie, Mr. A. C., ..	Castlebar Urban District Council, ..	Thirty-seventh,	10th June, 1907, ..	21318–21447A	302–306	—	—
Lawder, Mr. J. Ormsby, M.Inst.C.E.	Leitrim Ratepayers' Protection Association.	Forty-second,	5th July, 1907, ..	24265–24645	392–406	—	—
Lindsay, Mr. W. A., ..	Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and Royal Ulster Agricultural Society.	Forty-first, ..	4th July, 1907, ..	23750–24014	375–384	—	—
Long, Mr. E. J., ..	City High Sheriff, Limerick, ..	Thirty-ninth,	12th June, 1907, ..	22272–22568	333–341	39-i	607
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M'Cowen, Mr. W. H.,	Tralee Urban District Council and Harbour Board.	Twenty-ninth,	25th April, 1907, ..	17361–17473A	168–170	—	—
M'Donnell, Mr. J., ..	Chairman Tuam Town Commissioners and Member Galway County Council.	Forty-second,	5th July, 1907, ..	24874–24964	411–414	—	—
M'Farland, Mr. John, J.P.,	Chairman, Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Co.	Thirty-third, ..	15th May, 1907, ..	19229–19506	236–246	—	—
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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TWENTY-SECOND PUBLIC SITTING—TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; and Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Chairman.—Our colleagues, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Acworth, and Mr. Aspinall are unable to be present to-day.

Mr. M. A. ENNIS, J.P., examined by The CHAIRMAN.

Mar. 12, 1907.

Mr. M. A. Ennis, J.P., Vice-Chairman Wexford County Council, and Representative of the General Council of County Councils.

12458. Mr. Ennis, the last time we met here, I think, I went through your proof, but I think you have something to add?—Just one or two small matters, with your permission. On the last occasion I handed in a copy of the opinion of Mr. Ronan, K.C., with regard to enabling the General Council of County Councils or the Irish County Councils individually to appear before this Commission, represented by counsel. On that occasion I stated that we were aware that the Local Government Board for Ireland seemed to hold a somewhat different opinion on the subject. And since the last sitting of the Commission I have been in consultation with the Local Government Board and they very kindly, at my request, consented to take the opinion of their legal adviser on the question, and I have received within the last couple of days a letter from the Local Government Board on the subject, which, with your permission, I will read and hand in a copy.

12459. I do not see what is the object of bringing it before our notice. It has nothing to do with our inquiry?—This is our object. You very kindly gave permission to the General Council of County Councils to be represented by counsel, and I am anxious to make it clear that it is from no lack of desire to avail ourselves of your kindness that we are not here so represented.

12460. We are quite aware of that?—The Local Government Board——

12461. I do not want to encumber the notes with anything that is not pertinent to our inquiry. You have mentioned the fact, and that is quite sufficient without reading the letter. We know that if the County Council could have used their funds for instructing counsel they would have been represented here?—The Local Government Board say that they referred the question for the opinion of their legal adviser, who says that he agrees with Mr. Ronan as to the inability of the County Councils. I have their letter, and I will hand in a copy.

12462. Your statement is quite sufficient. What is your other point?—There is a small inaccuracy—I do not think it is material, but for the sake of accuracy I would wish to correct it. You asked me on the last occasion, question 12436, when was the last application we made to the Great Southern and Western Company with regard to stopping their mail train at Wellington Bridge, and my reply was, "On the 6th of the present month, the last meeting of our County Council." On returning home I referred to the minutes, and I found it was not at the last meeting, but at the prior meeting, on the 25th of January, that the resolution was passed. You asked for a copy of the letters of the Great Southern and Western Railway, and of the resolution of the County Council, and I have these with me, and I would like to say also that with regard to the letters of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company that you asked if they gave any reason, and I said I did not recollect any reason, but in their first letter there is given as a reason that they considered the present arrangement sufficient. They state "With regard to the present arrangements we consider them sufficient." With that I altogether disagree. I have prepared a table of the times of arrival and departure of the mail trains and the local trains on the Kingstown and Holyhead service, and on the Larne and Stranraer service, and on other services, and I hold that in no similar case is a district so badly served as the south of the county of Wexford is served. I pointed out on the last occasion that a man desiring to travel by a cross-Channel steamer fifteen to twenty miles from his residence would have to leave home nearly five hours before the sailing time, and a glance at the map will show that the south of Wexford is practically a pocket, and that the estuary of Waterford Harbour runs so far inland that though portion may be comparatively near Waterford, yet to get to it by road would be a forty to fifty miles journey, so that the inefficient train service is a great drawback to the locality.

12463. It will be on the notes, and we shall, no doubt, hear from the railway companies in regard to the complaint. Is there any other point?—Following the evidence that I gave on the last occasion, I think the next point is the complaints of traders on inequitable rates and insufficient facilities—statements lodged on that point.

Inequitable rates, and insufficient facilities complained of by traders.

12464. But are you speaking on matters that have been brought under your own knowledge, or are you giving us something secondhand?—I inquired before sending in my evidence if I would be limited to absolutely legal evidence—that is, what comes within my personal knowledge—or whether I would be permitted to hand in certain statements by traders and others in the district in reference to the complaints that they made, and I was informed that I could hand in statements in writing.

12465. For us to look at?—And to refer to.

12466. If we consider it necessary, but we will not begin again with your evidence. I thought I had finished on the last occasion?—No, I had gone as far as that point. "Motor transit" is the last thing.

12467. The last thing is, you finished in this way, that on the 11th of July, 1906, the Wexford County Council passed a resolution, and you read the resolution?—That is so, but my note of evidence contains later than that complaints of traders *re* inequitable rates. I sent these documents to Mr. Shanahan. I have not a very large number of these complaints, but there are one or two that are striking instances of what we complain of as injuriously affecting Irish industries.

12468. Will you let me look at one of your complaints and I will see if they are such complaints as we can deal with. I have got in my hand a letter addressed to you from a firm at Enniscorthy. How did you get that letter?—I was informed that a firm at Enniscorthy made this complaint.

12469. Did you issue any circulars?—I did not, but I told the principal of the firm that if he wished to put the complaint in writing I would put it before you.

12470. How many firms did you ask?—I asked this gentleman.

12471. This one. How did you elicit the information that this letter contains?—By speaking to the principal of the firm.

Mar. 12, 1907

Mr. M. A. Ennis, J.P., Vice-Chairman Wexford County Council, and Representative of the General Council of County Councils.

12472. He says here "in reply to your inquiry," and I want to know whether it was verbal or written?—It was verbal. I was speaking to the principal.

12473. Now, then, I will read it. I think this is a case that you might mention, but I want you to be as brief as possible. Tell me what is the rate for bacon from Liverpool to Enniscorthy?—From Liverpool to Enniscorthy *via* Dublin, 10*s.* a ton.

Bacon rates Liverpool and Enniscorthy inwards and outwards.

12474. What is it from Enniscorthy to Liverpool *via* Dublin?—20*s.* a ton *via* Dublin.

12475. They are both *via* Dublin?—Yes.

12476. In one direction it is 10*s.*?—Yes, and in the other 20*s.*

12477. Irish bacon going to Liverpool *via* Dublin is double the rate of Liverpool bacon *via* Dublin to Enniscorthy?—Quite so.

12478. Do you know is there any traffic or is it a book rate. Is there any traffic from Liverpool to Enniscorthy?—There is.

12479. And from Enniscorthy?—Perhaps I might explain. I do not want to be unfair to the railway company. The incoming rate from Liverpool to Enniscorthy *via* Dublin is 10*s.*, but the rate is in competition with the steamer service at Wexford; there is a steamer service to Wexford from Liverpool, and this rate is given by the railway company in order to compete with the steamer service to Wexford, but though the steamer service exists it is a weekly service, and it does not suit the deliveries that are required of the Enniscorthy bacon to Liverpool, and consequently they must send it by rail, and they are charged 20*s.* a ton.

Potato and corn rates Bridgetown and Wexford.

12480. Very well. What is your next point?—The next thing is a case by a member of the Wexford County Council with regard to the rate for potatoes from the station of Bridgetown to the North station at Wexford.

12481. What is the distance from Bridgetown station to Wexford?—Eleven miles.

12482. What railway?—The Great Southern and Western Railway (the Fishguard and Rosslare). The rate that we complain of in this case is made up of the direct rate from Bridgetown to South Wexford station and a terminal charge, or what you may call it, from South Wexford to North Wexford, a distance of three-quarters of a mile only.

12483. *Lord Pirrie.*—What is the rate?—The rate for one ton of potatoes from Bridgetown station to South Wexford is 3*s.* 2*d.*, and the terminal charge is 2*s.* 4*d.*, making a total cost of 5*s.* 6*d.* for one ton of potatoes for eleven miles.

12484. *Chairman.*—One ton of potatoes—that is all right?—This is another letter from the same County Councillor complaining of the rate for barley and corn from Bridgetown.

12485. Yes, mention it, Bridgetown to Wexford. "Barley, oats, and other corn": do you remember the rate?—2*s.* 8*d.* a ton.

12486. That is for six ton lots?—Yes, wagon loads.

12487. What comment do you make upon that?—That the rate for agricultural produce is a high rate. I have also a letter from Surgeon-Colonel Gibbon complaining of similar rates for similar goods for the carriage of corn, and I have a complaint from the ex-Mayor of Wexford with regard to passenger facilities between Wexford and Killybegs, Co. Donegal.

12488. That is right across the country?—Right across the country. Here is a letter complaining that people who are paying considerable sums, second-class passengers, were kept at the station in the snow at night without a fire or other convenience. This is a complaint as to passenger facilities not rates.

Waiting-room at Strabane not heated for night passengers.

12489. That is a cross-country service with a lot of junctions and changes of trains—there is no through train?—That is so. The complaint practically amounts to this, that the passengers were left in the middle of the night, at a wayside station, without any fire in the waiting room, and the snow was lying heavy on the ground.

12490. What is the station?—It is Strabane.

12491. There are waiting rooms at Strabane, but no fire?—No fire, and there was six inches of snow on the ground.

Delay to the public road traffic at level crossings. South Wexford Railway Stn. complained of.

12492. What is the next?—I have also "Complaints of the public *re* unreasonable delays at level crossings at South Wexford." Written statements have been lodged. There were very great public complaints about a number of level crossings—that they were not sufficiently attended, and that people could not get across, and I sent to the secretary a report of proceedings at the Quarter Sessions, where the Chairman of one District Council was proceeded against for his servant breaking the locks one night that he could not get through. The judge expressed a pretty strong opinion on the subject, and though he held there was a technical offence, he only fined the defendant 1*s.* I do not wish to labour that, because if you will permit me to read this note, received by Mr. Peter Ffrench, it practically amounts to an undertaking on the part of the railway company to remedy this evil and have the matter righted.

12493. Why mention it any further?—I have sent it in my notes of evidence, and I wished to say that the railway company having admitted their error, and having practically undertaken to mend it, that I do not wish to press the point any further.

Chairman.—We will leave it there.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

12494. With regard to the last point, the rate for bacon from Liverpool to Enniscorthy and from Enniscorthy to Liverpool, you explained that in the one case sea competition enters into the question, and you are aware that Parliament, when this question of rates came before them, always recognised that where sea competition enters into the question the railways are entitled to and are justified in making a competitive rate?—I am aware, but my point is that though that is so, the net result to an Irish industry, which would be a great advantage to the county of Wexford—this bacon factory, is that it is penalised by a double rate in getting its products into the market.

12495. I quite see, but I want to know how you propose, under the existing state of the law, to remedy it?—Our proposal is that the railways should be unified and under State control.

12496. In your opinion that is the only solution. Then, with regard to the potato rate between Bridgetown and North Station, Wexford, are the North and South stations both on the same system? The North station is on the Dublin and South Eastern, but the line connecting them is on the Fishguard and Rosslare.

12497. That is worked by the Great Southern and Western?—It is worked by the Great Southern and Western, and as a matter of fact it runs from the one side of the town of Wexford to the other, and along the quays of the port of Wexford. The railway charge for hauling a ton is 2*s.*4*d.*, and I may say that the ordinary cartage rate at which any individual may get a ton of goods carted is a shilling.

12498. Have you represented the very high cartage rate between the two stations to the railway company—have you brought it to their notice?—No.

12499. Until it has been put before them they are not in a position to deal with it?—I have the correspondence on the subject here, and that speaks for itself. Mr. Browne, the gentleman who sent these potatoes, explained that he could get no satisfaction with regard to this charge.

12500. Will you read it?—"January 23, I consigned one ton of potatoes from Bridgetown Station to Wexford for the Rev. J. Furlong. I wished to have them sent to the North Station, but the stationmaster said he could only book to the South Station. I paid the rate to the South Station, 3*s.* 2*d.*, and told him to have them sent on to the North Station. They were forwarded by the 7.7 p.m. train to Wexford, 23rd inst., and reached the North Station, Wexford, a distance of 11 miles, some time on the evening of the 24th, and a rate of 2*s.* 4*d.* was charged to the Rev. J. Furlong for bringing a ton of potatoes from the South to the North Station." This is the letter from the Rev. Mr. Furlong:—"Dear Mr. Brown—I enclose cheque for £2 13*s.* 0*d.* and also receipt for the cartage from South to North Station, Wexford. I would have written you sooner but thought there was a mistake about this 2*s.* 4*d.*, as I have often sent potatoes to Dublin for something like 8*s.* per ton, and could not believe there would be such a charge for that small distance. I wrote to the clerk in the goods store and found it was quite correct. I would have sent my man to South Station, but was sending half a ton up the line and thought I might as well have them brought up together. They did not reach the North Station till some time on Thursday evening. Of course that made no matter, but it only shows how these companies get on."

12501. According to that correspondence, and according to the stationmaster's statement, there was no through rate to the South Station, Wexford?—That appears to be so, but they are on the same line.

12502. I thought you said the South Station was on the G. S. and W. Railway and the North Station on the Dublin and South Eastern?—The buildings at the North Station are Dublin and South Eastern, but the line connecting the two stations belongs to the Fishguard and Rosslare Company.

12503. Of course there are through rates from stations on the G.S. and W. Railway from the South of Wexford to Dublin, and stations on the Dublin and South Eastern line. I presume there are through rates?—I have no information on the point, but I rather doubt it. My complaint here is that the G. S. and W. Railway do not wish in any way to give their traffic to the Dublin and South Eastern.

12504. You are not in a position to say of your own knowledge that through rates are not given between the two systems?—I am not in the position of my own knowledge, but I call attention to the fact that this system has only been open a few months and matters have not yet had time to settle down.

12505. Then with regard to rates for corn?—Might I say also with regard to this terminal charge (I take it it is a terminal charge), that we make a strong point for the unification of Irish railways that one of the great evils at present is that a man sending goods across any considerable section of Ireland has not alone the rates to deal with but terminal charges as well, which run up the total cost, and the unification of the railways of the country would largely cure that evil.

12506. Still I presume that even with the amalgamation of all the railways some charges would have to be made for terminal service?—Undoubtedly, but a much smaller charge than at present exists.

12507. With regard to the rate for corn from Bridgetown to Wexford, that, I presume, was to the South Station?—Yes.

12508. That was 2*s.* 8*d.* a ton for 11 miles?—11 miles.

12509. In other words, 3*d.* a mile for a ton?—Yes.

12510. That seems a very excessive charge. To refer to the evidence which you gave a week or ten days ago, you spoke of the disadvantage which in your opinion had accrued to the South of Ireland owing to the buying up, so to speak, of the Waterford and Wexford, and of the Waterford, Dungarvan and Lismore Railway by the G. S. and W. Railway and the G. W. Railway of England?—Yes.

12511. Without going into the terms on which these lines were bought, the point you wish to emphasise is that the combination between the large English companies and the principal companies of this country is not to the advantage of Ireland, whatever it may be to that of England?—That is so.

12512. That is the point you wish to emphasise?—If I may be permitted to state with regard to a question asked at the Commission of another witness,—whilst we hold that this control by the English companies of Irish lines is not desirable, if it were not a fact that at the time of the transfer of the Fishguard and Rosslare undertaking to the G.S. and W. Railway and the G.W. of England, the Irish people did not claim that the majority of the Board of the joint company should be controlled by the G.W. of England. That is perfectly true, that we did make that claim, and we strongly made it. I wish to explain our reason, and it was this. We have always held that the railway companies endeavour to obtain the longest haulage possible for their traffic, and our fear was that the G.S. and W. Railway, which was at the time, running its service from Cork to Dublin, and working in conjunction with the L. and N. W. Railway by Kingstown and Holyhead route, would not serve the interests of the districts in the South of Ireland as efficiently as we would desire. We were afraid of their monopoly, and therefore we preferred a dominant control by the G.W. Railway of England.

12513. Considerable losses, I think, were incurred in respect of these systems that were bought up by the G. S. and W. Railway and the G. W. of England?—I think that is so.

12514. Large sums were remitted by the Board of Works?—That is so. The Waterford and Wexford had only been constructed from Wexford to Rosslare Harbour, and the line across South Wexford has been constructed by the two great companies since their control of that undertaking.

12515. As a matter of fact, I think something like £38,000 was written off the Board of Works loan of £53,000, on the transfer of that line to the Fishguard and Rosslare Line Harbour Company, 1905?—I am sure that must be correct. Sir Richard Sankey told me about 1892 that the total expenditure of public money on the line amounted to £170,000.

Large portion of loan from Board of Works to Rosslare and Wexford Rly. written off.

12516. And also with regard to the Waterford, Dungarvan and Lismore line?—That £170,000 included the harbour at Rosslare.

12517. With regard to the Waterford, Dungarvan and Lismore line the Board of Works lost something like £55,000 over it?—I am not conversant with the figures, but I have no doubt it is substantially correct.

12518. Still, I suppose it was more to the advantage of the districts you represent that these small lines should be taken over by some one, rather than that they should have an independent existence?—Yes, but the scheme which originally came before Parliament contemplated their being taken by an independent company.

Question of the possibility of political or religious view influencing an Irish authority in the matter of appointments discussed.

12519. You have given your evidence so very fully and clearly as to the importance, in the opinion of the General Council of County Councils which you represent, and also of your own County Council, of the railways being amalgamated and taken over by some national authority, that I do not propose to ask you any question on that point, with this exception. At the last sitting you were at some pains, I think, to impress the Commission with the view of the General Council that in the event of some central national authority being created, to which amongst other things, would be entrusted the control of the Irish railways, you were anxious, I say, to impress upon us that in such an event political and religious views would have no consideration?—That is so. I believe that political and religious opinions would not adversely affect important appointments by that body. I believe the members of that body would feel too keenly the responsibility placed upon them, and I am under absolutely no illusion as to the difficulty and magnitude of the work which the central Irish authority will be called upon to undertake; but I think the men who compose the authority, if they are wise men, will realise that they must put forth their best energies and, with time and patience, work out a successful result.

12520. I quite agree with you. On the last occasion you also tried to impress upon us your belief that in such a central authority place would be found for representatives of every shade of political and religious opinion?—It is my earnest hope that that will be the case, and I may say, sir, that I read with very great pleasure the evidence given by the Rev. Mr. Stack before this Commission, in which he said that for the sake of the country, though he was a Protestant and a Unionist, that he would like to see the control of the railways of the country put in the hands even of a Home Rule government. I think that is a very commendable spirit. I think it shows that our fellow-countrymen will, when this scheme that the Government have in incubation, takes shape, I have every hope that they will come together, and that fears of anything like religious intolerance that might exist may be dissipated by the actual trend of events.

12521. I quite share those hopes, but do you not know that one of the principal objections, perhaps the only real and substantial one which—I won't speak of them as Protestants or Unionists—but which the minority in this country have to any further extension of local government is the fear—amounting almost to a certainty—that in the administration of such extended powers they would be given neither hand nor voice?—I am aware—at least I gather from the public press that such a fear does exist—but I believe it to be a fear without any foundation, and I instance the action of my own County Council of Wexford on the first election they had power to co-opt two members to their body and they co-opted two Unionist gentlemen. They co-opted His Majesty's Lieutenant for the county and they co-opted another Unionist gentleman at the same time. When the second election came they co-opted His Majesty's Lieutenant, a Unionist gentleman, the second time. He succeeded the first.

12522. *Chairman.*—What is the composition of the Council?—The Council consists of nineteen elected, four *ex-officio*, and two co-opted members. The population is in round figures 100,000.

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Mr. M. A. Ennis, J.P., Vice-Chairman Wexford County Council, and Representative of the General Council of County Councils.

12523. What is the composition of the Council?—The composition of the Council is largely Catholic and Nationalist.

12524. Largely Catholic and Nationalist, and yet they co-opted a Protestant and a Unionist?—They co-opted two. They filled up the vacancy caused by the death of the first gentleman by co-opting his successor. There is only one elected Unionist on the Wexford County Council. The gentleman is not a strong politician in any way, but I take it he may be counted as a Unionist, and he is not alone elected a member, but he is Chairman of the County Committee of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and the representative of County Wexford on the Council of Agriculture.

Question of present majority and minority representation on County Councils.

12525. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Your experience, as far as your own Council is concerned, is very satisfactory, but, of course, you are aware that in the light of past experience, and judging by the working of the Local Government Act during the past eight or nine years, such an experience as you speak of is not prevalent throughout the country. I think you cannot be surprised at the feeling of suspicion, not to say hostility, with which the minority look upon any further development of self-governing powers?—The feeling may be a natural one—I grant that it is a natural one—but my earnest hope is that that feeling will be dissipated when the central body that it is proposed to establish, takes shape, because I cannot suppose that any political body will go so far as to hold aloof and not share in the government of the country, in the event of such a body being created.

12526. I do not think there is any disposition on the part of the minority, whose political views are not coincident with those you express, to hold aloof from any share in the government. They are simply, by the force of circumstances at present, deprived from taking such a part. On the last occasion you referred to a letter which had recently appeared in the English *Times* from Mr. Arbuthnot, and you took exception to the conclusion which that gentleman drew from the facts which he brought forward?—I did, and I may say that my chief reason for taking exception was that he gave a statistical table showing the proportion of representatives of the minority on the first Councils after the passing of the Local Government Act, and he gave tables for comparison with it containing statistics of the proportion of Unionists and Nationalists on the existing Councils. I hold that that was an utterly fallacious method of dealing with the question for this reason—that the Local Government Act provided that there should be as members of the first Councils in each county three members nominated by the existing Grand Jury. These were, of course, members of the first Councils, and no matter how efficiently or admirably these gentlemen performed their duties during their term of office, it goes without saying that when the second elections came on, the power of appointment by the Grand Jury ceased, and even if their fellow-members on the Council were desirous, they could only elect them by ejecting from their office some other member who had probably fulfilled his duties well also.

12527. I take it that was not quite the view of Mr. Arbuthnot's letter. As I read it, I think the conclusion he drew—it is one with which I do not at all agree was that the presuppositions which had been made on the introduction of the Local Government Act by the minority or Unionists, if you like to call them so, viz., that the majority would use their powers to the detriment of the minority—to perpetrate jobs, to oppress the minority, and to raise the taxes had been amply justified?—I think those were the conclusions he tried to draw, and I do not think anything he brought forward, or the experience or the testimony which the Local Government Board itself has borne to the working of the administration of the County Councils of Ireland, in any way warrants such a conclusion. I quite admit that, but allowing all that, and allowing that the Councils have performed their work with credit to themselves, and with advantage to the country, as I think they have done, with few exceptions; still it cannot be denied that the facts which Mr. Arbuthnot brought forward are absolutely true, and that they admit of perfectly easy verification. With the exception of the province of Ulster, where the minority, to use an Irishism, are in the majority, with this exception, as you are aware, in the remaining three provinces you can count the representation of the minority on your fingers. Munster has not a single representative of the minority. Connaught has two, I believe, and in Leinster there are some ten or a dozen. For all practical purposes, in three provinces out of four at the present moment, the minority are absolutely prohibited and deprived from taking any part in the conduct of the local government of the district in which they reside. I put it to you is not that a fair statement?—I disapprove of Mr. Arbuthnot's statement, because he brings into it figures which I hold should not appear.

12528. Do you dispute the figures?—No, but the conclusion.

12529. I said I did not agree with the conclusion. He tried to prove that these figures show that the County Councils had exercised their powers to oppress the minority, and he writes to this English paper that if they got further powers they would use them in the same way. I can say that they have done nothing of the kind, but at the same time I wish to make it perfectly clear that I do consider that the minority at the present moment are absolutely unrepresented on these Councils, and I shall be very glad if you dispute that assertion?—I do not dispute it, but in the case of my own Council—I am not competent, though I represent the General Council of County Councils, to speak of individual Councils except my own—but with regard to my own, I wish to point out that it is quite true that at the present time two Unionist gentlemen who were co-opted as members of that Council do not retain their seats, but the fault has been their own. They did not appreciate the compliment paid to them by the members of the County Council in electing them to the office which they placed in their charge, and they attended so few meetings of the Council that it was manifest that they did not care themselves to occupy the position, and they were not an advantage—though men of great ability—they were not an advantage to the body by reason of their failure to fulfil the duties efficiently.

12530. That is a perfectly fair argument for excluding them from the Council, but you must be well aware that in the great majority of cases the only reason that prevents members of the minority coming forward for election is that they know perfectly well that they have not the smallest chance. I speak of my own experience. I have been a member of the District Council, the only member of my class, ever since it came into office, but I went up for the County Council, and I took as much interest in the affairs of my own county as any other gentleman, but I had not the ghost of a chance, and I know I should not have the ghost of a chance again. There is no good hitting your head against a stone wall. One must face the inevitable, and recognise facts, and I think the facts are as stated. I presume you do not claim a monopoly of all the talents or of all the virtues for the party you represent—and that you will allow that there are amongst the minority a certain number of men fitted by education, by position, by experience, by their own past records, who are in every respect well qualified to take an active and useful part in local administration?—I willingly admit it, as I have expressed my own personal opinion, and I think my colleagues of the General Council of County Councils will not disagree with me, that it is our earnest wish to see such men represented in the new central body which may be created to administer the affairs of Ireland.

12531. Then you recognise that it is not in the interests of this country that any class such as I refer to, who contribute very largely to the taxation of the country, and who give employment, that these classes should be absolutely excluded from public life?—I think it would be very undesirable and very much to be regretted that any class should be excluded from a fair and equal share, but not from the predominant position which the minority have, in the past, occupied.

12532. There is very little fear, as you, I think, will admit, of their ever occupying that position again, and I think quite rightly so, but I claim that they should be given their fair representation on public bodies?—I am in thorough accord.

12533. I am much obliged, and I hope, as far as you are concerned, you will endeavour to impress those views not only on your own Council, but on the members of the General Council of County Councils, and I hope the result may be as you anticipate.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

12534. I presume that in giving information as to certain rates, and complaints about the excessive rates charged, it is with the object of showing that the railway companies, as managed to-day, are not managed in the interests of the traders and the industries of the country, or for the benefit of the people living in these districts?—That is so.

12535. I did not understand your answer to Colonel Poë, or even to the Chairman, when you gave the explanation about the rate for bacon from Liverpool by Wexford to Enniscorthy being 10*s.* a ton, but from Enniscorthy by Wexford to Liverpool 20*s.*?—It was by Dublin.

12536. Oh, by Dublin. That is quite the same, 10*s.* a ton in the one case from Liverpool, and back 20*s.* a ton, and you said that the reason that rate was so low from Liverpool was because of the competition by steamers?—Yes, to Wexford.

12537. Surely the competition exists both ways equally—going from Enniscorthy as well as going to Enniscorthy. I thought your answer was rather misleading?—The principal of the firm in Enniscorthy. Messrs. Buttle, who gave the information, said that he believed the reason of the difference was that whilst the steamer service suited him to bring in bacon—anyone in a large business like him has to bring in bacon in quantities from Liverpool—his customers for the Irish bacon on the other side demanded deliveries which could not be successfully made by the Wexford steamer, which has only a weekly sailing.

12538. Is bacon not unlike butter in that if it is delivered on a Wednesday, say, it suits just as well as if it is delivered on Tuesday?—His customers would not have weekly deliveries. He says he is obliged to send it by Dublin to meet the requirements of his customers on the other side.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—They could get it in by steamer, but could not get it out.

12539. *Lord Pirrie.*—I do not understand it yet. That does not meet the question that Mr. Ennis wanted to make. If a steamer competition lowers the rate inward to the same port, surely it must lower it outwards from the same port. I want to be perfectly clear—if the rate from Liverpool to Enniscorthy by Dublin is 10*s.* a ton, why should the rate, by the same route, from the same town not be the same, and the place exactly the same?—You say you could get it daily if you bring it by Dublin, and you cannot send it back the same way?—I hold the rate should be the same.

12540. Have your County Council made any complaints to the railway companies?—It is a matter between the private trader and the railway.

12541. Did not you hear Mr. Knox, on behalf of the railway companies, say that there was no case in Ireland of a rate from a town by a certain way not being also applied backwards?—I have given the written statement of Messrs. Buttle.

Mr. Tatlow.—Mr. Knox was quite correct. The rates are applicable in both directions. Of course the traffic may go according to the way in which sent, but the rates apply between the stations in either directions.

Lord Pirrie.—I think it is a very serious question. If Mr. Ennis's statement is correct, for Mr. Knox's statement was clearly—and I believe the Chairman said the same—that by Act of Parliament you must charge the same to and from a place. If this information is correct it is a very serious matter, this 20*s.* rate, must hamper the Irish farmer or trader, It is a complaint that I have no doubt the railway company will explain.

Mr. Tatlow.—Will you allow me to say one word? I have got information from the Wicklow Company, which Mr. Reid gave, distinctly showing that the rate is 13*s.* a ton. That is applicable to Irish bacon or any bacon, from Enniscorthy to Liverpool by Dublin, not 20*s.*

Lord Pirrie.—That is against what Mr. Ennis says is 20*s.*

Mr. Tatlow.—Of course the Wicklow Company will deal with it in the evidence, but I thought it right to mention it.

Lord Pirrie.—It is 10*s.* inwards?

Mr. Tatlow.—It is for bacon in boxes. If the Irish bacon was sent in boxes instead of in bales it would be the same.

Lord Pirrie.—May I ask is there any greater risk with bacon in bales than in boxes?

Mr. Tatlow.—Certainly. It packs better, and the company gets paid for the boxes also.

Chairman.—Just look at that to clear it up. Lord Pirrie got on the right tack.

Lord Pirrie.—I want to get the facts.

Mr. Tatlow.—There must be something inaccurate about this. It is a quotation on the paper. Mr. Reid gave me distinctly these rates the other day. It can be cleared up further in the evidence of the Dublin and Wicklow Company.

Chairman.—All right.

Mr. M. A. Ennis, J.P., Vice-Chairman Wexford County Council, and Representative of the General Council of County Councils.

Potato and corn rate, Bridgetown and Wexford, discussed.

12542. *Lord Pirrie.*—We have got yours and theirs. To me a much more serious complaint is the one you speak about of potatoes from Bridgetown Station to Wexford, a distance of eleven miles, 5*s.* 6*d.* Now, is that a wagon load, per ton, or merely a single ton?—One single ton.

12543. Do you happen to know what the rate of a wagon load would be?—I can't say for potatoes what the rate per wagon load would be. We have the rate for corn.

12544. I know. I am coming to that in a moment. As a County Councillor and Chairman of the County Council, have you any rates before you to enable you to advise and assist the farmers as to sending their potatoes: because it must be a very large industry in Wexford?—This system has been opened very recently.

12545. The system of what?—The system—the Southern line.

12546. But surely the farmers have been exporting potatoes for generations?—Yes. These are some of the very first lots sent over the line. It is only open for traffic a few months.

12547. You can give us no assistance in the way of saying if you sent a large quantity—I mean per wagon load—what the rate would be?—No; I am not in a position to say that.

12548. As regards corn, which I presume includes oats, barley, and wheat?—Barley especially.

12549. 2*s.* 8*d.* per ton?—Yes, 2*s.* 8*d.* per ton.

12550. Eleven miles?—May I just read this passage referring to that.

12551. I want to get this cleared up?—"The line passes through South Wexford county, which is a tillage country, and farmers had great hopes that their condition would have been greatly improved by the opening of this line. These hopes have been disappointed owing to the excessive rates charged for local traffic. As an illustration, take the rate from Bridgetown to Wexford, a distance of ten to eleven miles. Barley, oats, and other corn are charged 2*s.* 8*d.* a ton for six ton lots and over. Corn is carried on the Dublin and Wicklow line from Wexford to Dublin, a distance of over ninety miles, for 4*s.* 6*d.* Manure is charged at the same rate, 2*s.* 8*d.*, from Wexford to Bridgetown. The rate on the Dublin and Wicklow line from Wicklow to Wexford, a distance of about fifty-five miles, is 4*s.* 9*d.* Proportionately high rates are charged from all the stations in South Wexford to Wexford town, so that the advantages of the new line to South Wexford farmers are practically nil. South Wexford is a great horse-breeding county, and Enniscorthy is the great horse fair for the district. A South Wexford farmer cannot use the Rosslare line passing through his district as a means of conveyance to or from Enniscorthy or any Dublin and Wicklow stations beyond Wexford. If he travels by the earlier train to Wexford he finds himself a few minutes too late to catch the 9.35 train from Wexford up the line."

12552. That doesn't affect it. I take it, the gentleman made complaint that the rate for potatoes and general farming commodities is much too high compared to the grain rates, which you also think are high for the short distance, compared with sending it to Dublin?—Yes.

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Mr. M. A. Ennis, J.P., Vice-Chairman Wexford County Council, and Representative of the General Council of County Councils.

12553. And compared to the low rate that we have in the North of Ireland between Belfast and Derry, ninety-five miles, 3*s.* per ton?—Yes.

12554. You would like in the South of Ireland such low rates as you have got in the North?—Yes.

12555. And you think the railways in the North, at least the Midland, has assisted the farmers by giving the low rate of 3*s.* per ton?—Certainly. We think the railway companies are acting neither in their own interest nor in the interests of the agricultural community by imposing such high rates.

12556. I take it in your answer to the Chairman—Question 12410—you object to the railway companies managing the lines for the benefit of the shareholders, that they have a monopoly granted by Parliament for the benefit of the district—am I right?—Yes.

Suggestion that any surplus beyond a certain dividend earned by railway companies should be devoted to the increase of accommodation or the reduction of rates.

12557. Have you ever, as a County Councillor, urged before any Parliamentary Committee that they should put in a clause that no railway company should exceed a certain dividend, and when they get a certain surplus that it should go for the benefit of either increasing the accommodation or reducing the rates?—In a similar manner to that in the Gas Companies at present.

12558. Certainly. Have you ever as a Vice-Chairman brought it forward?—I have not.

12559. Is it not the duty of the thinking men, whether the minority—as Colonel Poë says—or the majority, where you give a monopoly to impose such restrictions?—We have. In the suggestion we have made we cover the entire ground.

12560. To whom, to us?—To this Commission.

12561. To this Commission?—Yes.

12562. You as a County Council are relying on the information and evidence you are giving here rather than anything you have given previously?—Quite so. We have given nothing previously.

Desirability of the provision of industries for female workers.

12563. No?—As a County Council. Might I say as referring to industries, might I say this that we hold that the railway companies of Ireland might do a great deal to assist struggling Irish industries, that a heavy responsibility rests upon them in that regard. I don't like to associate myself with the view expressed a few days ago by Mr. Sweetman with regard to female industries. On the contrary, I regard female industry as being of enormous advantage to Ireland. We in Wexford have been fortunate in having successful engineering works giving employment to a considerable number of men—a large number of men for such a small place, and some years since some of our leading citizens took into consideration the necessity of establishing an industry for female labour, because we realised that in order to stop emigration from Ireland we should endeavour to raise the standard of comfort of the people. We felt that any attempt to raise wages on a large scale would be disastrous to the struggling industries, and that our only chance to accomplish the object of providing greater individual comfort for the people would be in endeavouring to make the family, and not the individual, the unit of population in Ireland, to make every member of the family contribute something towards the general good, and with that object in view we, with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, started an industry in Wexford for the manufacture of straw hats. I wish to say with regard to the Department of Agriculture as expressing the view of the County Council's General Council, I don't associate myself with anything that may be said holding that the Department is useless. I gave evidence on behalf of the General Council before the Commission of inquiry into the Department, and our position is that we hold that the Department has been of very great benefit to Ireland, has done a very great work in Ireland. We object to its constitution, no doubt. We say they have made many grave mistakes, but they are breaking new ground, and we don't wish to criticise too severely work which is work more or less of an experimental character. We hold, on the whole, the Department has done good work and in connection with this industry——

12564. *Chairman.*—Which?—This industry, in conjunction with the engineering industry in Wexford, a hat factory for the manufacture of straw hats, for women workers. I happen to be one of the directors of that little undertaking. We are making an effort to provide employment for the women of our town, and we have met with a certain measure of success. Now, I mention that industry for this reason. A traveller going round to endeavour to sell these hats through Ireland has to carry large skips.

12565. Call them baskets?—Baskets. Yes; and low rates, passenger rates, given by the railway companies to travellers in industries of that kind would be an enormous advantage, and would help to develop and foster industries. It would be a great help to the country.

12566. We heard that from the representatives of the Commercial Travellers' Association?—I wish to associate the General Councils with that view.

12567. *Lord Pirrie.*—You would like to add that the travellers connected with Irish industry should travel practically free?—As nearly as possible.

12568. *Chairman.*—At the expense of the railway companies?—No, as low rates as could be reasonably granted.

Is there any other question?

Mr. Barrington (Solicitor).—No. We will have his questions checked, and give evidence.

Mr. Thomas Mayne examined by the Chairman.

Mr. Thomas Mayne, Photographic Optician, Dublin.

High railway charges for goods complained of generally.

12569. Mr. Thomas Mayne, I think you are in business in Dublin?—I am. I am a photographic optician—a photographic dealer generally—in Lord Edward-street. My object in coming before the Commission is to help in pressing before this Commission, in the minds of this Commission, the disadvantage that Irish traders are subjected to by reason of the high charges made by Irish railway companies for transit of goods between one town and another in Ireland, and again the advantage that the foreign trader has in low rates by means of through rates.

12570. Well, we will go by steps: allow me?—Very well.

Specific complaint of excessive charge for conveyance of a lantern screen Kingsbridge to Roscrea and back.

12571. Now, take first of all your own particular business. Have you any particular complaint in connection with that?—I have, sir. My parcels are usually optical goods, light in weight, and small in bulk, although costly, so I usually make use of the parcels post—it suits my business better—but in December last I had a most extraordinary experience in relation to goods. I sent in December last to Roscrea a magic lantern screen for showing magic lantern pictures at an entertainment. I sent it to Roscrea to the order of a customer. The customer was charged 16*s.* 11*d.* for transit from Dublin—Kingsbridge to Roscrea, 77 miles. That screen had been made in London, and was carried from London to Dublin by the Midland Railway Company of England for 4*s.* 10*d.*

12572. Have you got the note of that?—Yes.

12573. Let me look at that?—(*Note handed in*)—And it was delivered.

12574. Wait a minute, Mr. Mayne, please? This is a parcel?—It is a screen. A lantern screen. There is the invoice of it. (*Invoice handed in.*) They charged——

12575. One minute. Oh! I see. It is a parcel of woodwork. It is a frame like the frame of a picture?—No, sir. It is a coarse canvas, a piece of coarse canvas nailed to a heavy wooden roller somewhat like the scene of a very small theatre.

12576. Rolled up?—Rolled up.

12577. *Lord Pirrie.*—Eighteen feet long?—Yes. The roller is twenty feet long. They charged at first 7*s.*

12578. *Chairman.*—Stop?—I paid——

12579. One minute. First of all, according to this, it came from St. Pancras to Dublin by the Midland Railway?—Yes.

12580. Weight, 84 lbs.?—Yes; just under 84 lbs.

12581. They charged 7*s.* There is the word Refund 2*s.* 2*d.*?—Yes.

12582. Reducing to 4*s.* 10*d.* What was the explanation of that?—I objected to the charge of 7*s.*, and I paid it, but sent word for one of the clerks from the Dublin office of the railway company to call on me. When he called on me I put before him that 7*s.* for

¾ cwt. from London to Dublin was very high. It meant a rate of £9 6*s*. 8*d*. a ton, and that it was not a risky piece of goods—nearly all the weight was wood —a wooden pole, a beam. He took the bill away, but he called in a week or a little more afterwards and gave me back 2*s*. 2*d*. He said it had been charged in a wrong class.

12583. That is all right. In order to make it very short. It costs you 4*s*. 10*d*. to come from London to Dublin?—Yes.

12584. Delivered at your place in Dublin?—Delivered at my warehouse. I sent it to Roscrea.

12585. What distance is it from Dublin to Roscrea?—77 miles. From London to Dublin is 334 miles. That is the maker's invoice of the screen.

12586. The maker's invoice is, Opaque, 18 feet. Opaque?—If it was not opaque we could make it ourselves.

12587. It is an 18 feet opaque?—Yes. I need not mention the price.

12588. No?—All right.

12589. Well, you sent it. The same thing?—The very same thing. I have only one of them.

12590. You sent it from Dublin to Roscrea in Tipperary?—Yes.

12591. The railway company charges you 16*s*. 11*d*. for carriage to Roscrea Station. That is what they charged you?—Yes. That is what they charged him.

12592. Him?—Yes. That was sufficiently startling, but when they sent the screen back to me, there is their charge for transit between Roscrea and Dublin.

12593. Then the screen is used for an entertainment, and it comes back to you?—A series of entertainments —three or four.

12594. Then it came back to you from Roscrea to you in Lord Edward street?—Yes.

12595. A screen weight one ton?—Yes.

12596. And carriage £2 4*s*. 4*d*.?—Yes.

12597. Now, then, £2 4*s*. 4*d*. from Roscrea?—Yes, to Dublin.

12598. What did you do?—I wrote them the day after—the company—calling their attention——

12599. You paid the money?—Yes. I could not get the screen out unless I did, and what is more they refused to deliver it for the £2 4*s*. 4*d*. They insisted on getting 2*s*. for delivery. So that I had to pay the £2 4*s*. 4*d*. and send for the screen—for what cost me 4*s*. 10*d*. from London.

12600 Did you communicate with the railway company?—I did.

12601. What is the first letter you wrote?—I wrote calling attention to the fact that there was an enormous over-charge and to please refund it. They made no answer; they did not even acknowledge the receipt of my letter. I waited then until the 23rd of January.

12602. You wrote again?—I wrote again calling attention to the fact that they had put down here a ton, that it only weighed ¾ cwt., and I think I mentioned that I felt sore at not receiving some reply to my former letter—I allude to my letter of the 5th January. I received no communication in reply from them to that letter either—not even an acknowledgment of its receipt.

12603. Then when did you write again?—11th February, demanding the difference between 4*s*. 10*d*., the rate from London to Dublin, and the £2 4*s*. 4*d*. which they charged me. I demanded payment for £1 19*s*. 6*d*., and somewhat peremptorily, I think.

12604. Did you get it?—No. I didn't even get an answer to that letter. They took no notice of it; they treated me most discourteously. They didn't even acknowledge my letters.

12605. I have got the letters here—copies of the letters. The letters seem to be all right—one dated 5th January, next 23rd January, next 11th February, and you got no reply to any of them?—No reply to any of them.

12606. How did you address the letters?—To the Great Southern and Western Railway Co., Kingsbridge.

12607. Oh, yes. Generally to the company?—Yes.

12608. *Lord Pirrie.*—You didn't say general manager or secretary?—No. Great Southern and Western Railway Company, Kingsbridge, Dublin.

12609. *Chairman.*—Well, now?—I then communicated with the secretary of this Commission, and he wrote to me asking for an abstract of evidence that I proposed to give. I suppose it is your practice to communicate with a railway company that is complained of. Then, for the first time, I got, two days or three after writing, giving the abstract, sending it to Mr. Shanahan, I received then for the first time a notification that they recognised me at all as having any business with them. A clerk from their office called at my office and offered to reduce the charge to £1 7*s*. 5*d*. from £2 4*s*. 4*d*. Well, as my demand was for £1 19*s*. 6*d*. my book-keeper refused to accept it unless he paid the £1 19*s*. 6*d*. He called again to try and see me, but I was again out. I was not in my office, and he didn't call since, but his offer was to charge instead—to reduce the charge of £2 4*s*. 4*d*. to £1 7*s*. 5*d*. Well, that was still so enormous that I didn't consent to it. I would rather take legal proceedings for the recovery of the £1 19*s*. 6*d*.

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Complaint of excessive charge for conveyance of a lantern screen between Kingsbridge and Roscrea.

12610. I suppose the explanation of the railway company would be that this was too long for a truck?—That is the explanation that I saw here with Mr. Shanahan. The explanation came from the traffic manager, I think, saying that they had——

12611. What is the length of a truck in Ireland here?—I don't know, sir; but the screen is exactly the same length and thickness and the same weight as it was when the Midland Railway Company brought it from England and carried it from London for 4*s*. 10*d*.

12612. *Lord Pirrie.*—Ireland?—England.

Chairman.—From St. Pancras to Dublin.

12613. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And the same size as when it went down to Roscrea—the same size coming back as when it went down?—The very same size and weight.

12614. *Lord Pirrie.*—What port did it come from—from the Midland?—The Midland. It came from Liverpool. If it came from the London and North Western it would have come by Holyhead. It is 334 miles by Holyhead, and by Liverpool it would be more. What I complain of is that we are mulcted in Ireland, we traders. It has been given in evidence before you by several witnesses that the rates are against us. I am conversant with commerce in Germany. I do a business with Germany, and I know the rates there are not against the local trader. The rates are against the foreign producer. On goods manufactured in Germany if they are for transit to a port for export the rates are low; for transit from a port into Germany the railway rates are higher. It seems to be here totally opposite, because from the coast, I mean Dublin, as the coast, from the coast to Roscrea they charge 16*s*. 11*d*.; from Roscrea to the coast, to Dublin £2 4*s*. 4*d*. There is no trade, no commerce, could stand up against that.

12615. The probability is that there is some mistake you know?—Then they correct it by demanding £1 7*s*. 5*d*.—still enormous.

12616. You don't object to my saying this——

Mr. Croker Barrington (*Solicitor*).—I believe it is some mistake. We will get it cleared up afterwards.

12617. *Chairman.*—It seems perfectly *bona fide* though. Well, now, of course you know Germany has State railways?—I can't say I am conversant with the rates. The goods to me from Germany always come carriage paid, but I am aware from my conversation with German manufacturers and traders in Germany that that is the rule, and it has helped the trade of Germany enormously.

12618. This particular case, which, of course, requires some explanation, the one you have explained, has imbued your mind with the idea that this is not an exceptional thing, that it is going on generally?—I have read a good deal of the evidence given before this Commission, and I find it is the general tenor of the evidence that Irish traders and manufacturers feel a very serious grievance.

12619. Then have you formed any opinion yourself as to what in your judgment would be the best remedy for this state of things?—Yes.

12620. In your own words?—It is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the railways of Ireland are worked not in the interests of Ireland but in the interests of people outside of Ireland.

Irish railways worked in the interests of people outside of Ireland.

12621. Shareholders?—No. I don't mean the shareholders. I am speaking as a commercial man, and I say that the railways are worked not in the interests of the commercial men of Ireland, the producers or the manufacturers of Ireland, but in the interests of foreign manufacturers and foreign producers by giving them low rates and charging the local producers high rates. No country could prosper commercially subject to that state of things.

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12622. What you are telling us now is gathered, I suppose, from what you read of the proceedings at this Commission?—Largely.

12623. But within your own knowledge you consider that for the country itself the rates, in your judgment, are too high to properly develop the industries of the country?—I hold that opinion. I hold the opinion that the rates for Ireland in Ireland, between one town and another, should not be higher to Irishmen than foreigners.

Nationalisation of the Irish railways necessary to secure just treatment for Irish industries advocated.

12624. *Pro rata?—Pro rata.* Ireland ought to get a chance. We all know many country towns in Ireland where labour is abundant and very cheap, and suitable to establish factories such as I have seen springing up in Germany; every visit I make there, I see new factories. We could have that state of things in Ireland if we had a railway system, a management that would give the manufacturers in Ireland a proper chance. He doesn't get it at present. The man that would start a factory, say, in Roscrea—would do a very foolish thing if he sunk his money in manufacturing goods in a town where he would be mulcted in all directions, when he would send his goods out by rail. The whole thing should be put an end to. One of the witnesses here advocated, I was in the room when he was giving his evidence, he advocated nationalisation of the railways in Ireland. I advocate that also.

12625. You concur?—I do. That is the system in Germany; every State manages its own railways. There is only one Board in each State except Prussia. There are three, I think, there the country is so straggled—it extends now from the Baltic to Alsace, which is now Prussia, and there they have a railway management at Strasburg.

12626. You think the real remedy, according to your judgment, would be for the railways to become the property of the State?—The property of the State, and be managed by a Board composed of men who would consider first the interests of Ireland.

12627. Oh, yes. I follow you?—That is absolutely necessary. Our people are leaving, people that are idle are leaving the country for America and elsewhere solely to get employment; here they would work for one-tenth of the terms they get in the United States, if they could only get employment.

12628. You think the remedy is the nationalisation of the railways?—I do.

12629. Am I right in assuming you were once a Member of Parliament?—I was, for over seven years, until my eldest son unfortunately died. He managed my business, and then I had to resign, and I was very sorry, for I had become almost fond of the House of Commons.

12630. And of course this is a subject you have given considerable attention to?—I have.

12631. Not only now but previously?—Now and previously.

12632. In past years?—Yes.

12633. That is your deliberate opinion?—Yes. It is my confirmed opinion.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

12634. I see even the charge of 7*s.* from London to Dublin you thought too much, and you got a refund of 2*s.* 2*d.*?—Yes, and it was too much.

12635. I don't say it was not. You got a refund from the Midland without difficulty?—No difficulty whatever.

12636. They gave you that money back?—And they contrast very favourably with the treatment I received at the hands of an Irish railway.

12637. You say that distance was?—334 miles the shortest way.

12638. London to Liverpool?—London to Dublin, *via* Holyhead.

12639. This came by Liverpool, therefore it is longer?—That would be twenty to thirty miles longer. It would go farther north.

12460. When you got the account from the railway company in Ireland to take it from Dublin to Roscrea the first time they charged you 16*s.* 11*d.*?—Yes.

12641. Did you pay?—Mr. Jackson paid.

12642. And made no complaint?—Oh, he did, he complained.

12643. Did he?—Well, he complained that he thought it was too much.

Chairman.—He said so in his letter.

Lord Pirrie.—I only wanted to get it in evidence clearly, because I think there must be some mistake.

Witness.—He will not hire my screen again, because he can get a screen from Bradford, Birmingham or London at the same rate of hire as I charge, and he will get it carried at a low through rate. I am shoved out. I have my expensive screen on my hands, and anyone that knows what they will have to pay for carriage up and down won't deal with me.

12644. I think your evidence is some of the most important that came before this Commission while I have been present. You speak not only from your own knowledge, but you have put in papers to prove further it is not an imaginary phantom statement we are following?—Oh no.

12645. It was the same railway company that charged Mr. Jackson 16*s.* 11*d.* that sent you the account for £2 2*s.* 4*d.* and asked you to pay 2*s.* additional?—For delivery; yes, the very same railway.

12646. Do you mean to convey that the railway companies of Ireland do not abide by the Act of Parliament, that the rates are, as you know, put in the list, and that they charge when they can an exorbitant rate to the local people?—It is quite clear in my case, because in their explanation they say they put it into class 3, which is intended for goods traffic awkward to handle, or something like that, and that Parliament gave them a discretion. Well, I know enough of Parliament to know that Parliament does not intend a discretionary power of that kind which they give to be used for fleecing customers of the railway.

12647. And I take it, if you had not been a clever business man, but an innocent Irishman, you would have to pay it?—He would have to; he would not get the goods if he did not.

12648. He would not be able to make the claim?—No.

12649. Can you explain why the English line, the Midland Railway Company, called it a parcel and charged you only 4*s.* 10*d.*, and that the Great Southern and Western put in a ton when you yourself said it is 84 lbs.?—It is under 84 lbs.

12650. Have you not got a very serious claim for damages against the railway company for your waste of time over the false charge?—I will certainly go to recover the £1 19*s.* 6*d.* which they have taken from me that they should not have demanded at all. But see the treatment I received at their hands. They place me in that position and when I wrote complaining they didn't have the courtesy to even acknowledge my letter or explain whether they have a reason for doing it or not. The English Railway Company not only treat me with courtesy, but they actually give me a refund.

12651. Then you don't agree with the witness a few days ago when he said he didn't want any more English railways in Ireland. Your experience is the English railway has the right and business-like method?—The railway system in England seems to me to be very much fairer towards——

12652. I am not going to ask you on your answer—but this is the result, English railways are more obliging to their customers and traders—in your experience than the Irish railway management of to-day?—Unquestionably.

12653. I am much obliged to you: you have given your evidence very clearly.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

12654. Have you had any previous instances of overcharges like this?—We got complaints from customers as to excessive charges on cylinders of oxygen. But I have usually found that there is some little omission on their part—that they do not take the railway company in the way they ought. We send cylinders of oxygen—compressed oxygen. They use the oxygen for medical purposes and other purposes, and they send the cylinders back empty. These cylinders are very often charged not as empty, but as being full. We receive these complaints, but I have always found in most cases the fault lay with the customers in not declaring that they are sent as empties, so in that case they are charged as full cylinders of oxygen. That is the fault of the customers in not having declared them to be empties. I have had to suggest to customers that they should pay the carriage; that empties as a rule are sent carriage paid, and that therefore they act to their own disadvantage by not paying the carriage beforehand and declaring them to be empties. But I

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do not make any case out of that, because the customers we deal with for that class of goods are not commercial men; they are medical men that use compressed oxygen for medical purposes, and know very little about matters of business, or else they are show people giving entertainments, who are very nearly as bad managers commercially.

12655. I take it, then, that in your experience you have not had any serious ground for complaint?—I do not say that.

12656. With this exception?—Yes; my goods are small parcels, as a rule.

12657. When you speak of the nationalisation of Irish railways, by that I presume you mean their being taken over not by a State department, but by some Irish National authority?—What I mean by the nationalisation of Irish railways is to make their management as like the German system as possible. The system there has made Germany one of the greatest manufacturing countries in the world. When I went to Germany first, nearly forty years ago, goods trains were just as scarce as they are in Ireland to-day. Now any railway going down to an important port like Hamburg or Rotterdam—why I have counted five goods trains, long goods trains, trains a quarter of a mile long, going down within an hour carrying goods to the port of transit. That is what has built up the present industrial prosperity of Germany.

12658. When you speak of the favourable terms that goods in Germany receive are you aware of the time that goods take in transit, that from one station in Germany to another it often takes five or six days, while in this country it would not take one?—Yes, but Germany is a very much larger country than this.

12659. I am speaking of a distance of 200 miles?—That may be due to the use of their waterways. I know that a certain class of goods comes down from Dresden and Bohemia by the River Elbe to Hamburg.

12660. Are you not aware that in Germany if you consign goods from any station the railway company is not bound to handle these goods until twenty-four hours after you land them in the station?—That is one German regulation. In some cases they need not handle them for two days. A very interesting book I would recommend to your notice is a little book by Mr. Pratt, that on German railways as compared with English railways. He goes into that point very clearly. Goods that have to go a distance of 200 miles seldom arrive at their destination in less than four, five, or six days?—That may be explained by the enormous goods traffic in that country.

12661. I don't want you to run away with the idea that everything there is *couleur de rose*. Most of the traders in this country would not be satisfied with such slow transit?—We would put up even with that for the sake of a low rate.

12662. I think you will find that a good many traders would grumble if their goods were four, five, or six days in delivery. But reverting to the question I asked at first. You say you want Irish railways managed as the German railways are?—Yes. German railways are managed in the interests of Germany not in other interests. Their motto translated is, "Germany over everything." I want the Irish railways managed solely in the interests of Irish manufacturers and Irish producers.

12663. The only question I wish to ask you is, whether you think such management can be obtained by a State Department or alternatively by an Irish Board?—I would have more confidence in the Irish Department and in the way it would work.

12664. You think the Irish Department would be more responsible to public opinion?—I do unquestionably. If a wrong man were appointed Irish public opinion would soon see and have it corrected, and have a right man appointed.

12665. Have you considered at all the actual body which should be placed in control of the actual working of the railways?—I have not. I don't mind very much what body it would be if it managed them in the interests of Ireland.

Cross-examined by Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.

12666. I think most of your traffic is by parcel post?—Yes; we don't handle bulky goods.

12667. We have the date when that screen was sent from London. What was the date?—It was in October, 1898.

12668. That is eight years ago?—Yes.

12669. Can you remember had this screen this 18-foot pole attached at that time?—It had. The screen is 18 feet wide, and the pole is 20 feet long.

12670. As far as we understand the matter it took two trucks, but how it came for 4*s.* in two trucks is another matter. But we will inquire into it. Have you any complaints of a similar character?—No; I have no traffic of that kind. I would explain if the Commission wished why I got it in 1898.

12671. *Chairman.*—We don't want a note of that.

12672. *Lord Pirrie.*—Won't the railway company take that up?

12673. *Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).*—We will have to inquire into it.

12674. *Chairman.*—The great point is that the railway carried it from London here for 4*s.* 10*d.*, and that the short distance to its destination cost 16*s.* 11*d.*?

Witness.—From Dublin to Roscrea cost 16*s.* 11*d.*

12675. *Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).*—It seems to me that the explanation is this. The charge is the minimum per ton per wagon going down to Roscrea. Probably there was a free wagon coming from London, which they used as a runner, and the company might not have charged for it. The charge between Dublin and Roscrea would be for two wagons.

Lord Pirrie.—But two wagons would not make £2 4*s.* 4*d.*

Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).—They say they would be charged the same charge as in England. I believe it came without the pole eight years ago.

Witness.—It could not come without the pole; the screen would then be useless.

Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).—It came apparently as a parcel.

Chairman.—Was this identical parcel just as you received it sent forward?

Witness.—Exactly as I received it.

Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).—But eight years afterwards. There are eight years between the two invoices.

Chairman.—But the classification is the same.

Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).—It is extraordinary.

Lord Pirrie.—Your argument is that the Irish railway companies charged more excess for a small parcel, whereas the English companies——

Mr. Dent (General Manager, G.S. and W. Railway).—No, it is an isolated case.

Lord Pirrie.—I think you would do more business—suppose if you had a thousand parcels of that sort would not you put them on two wagons?

Mr. Croker Barrington (Solicitor).—If you had them.

Chairman.—It evidently wants some explanation. There is the fact that it came from London to Dublin for 4*s.* 10*d.* There is no question about that, and the same identical parcel in the same condition costs so much more going from Dublin to Roscrea.

Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector of the Department of Agriculture, re-examined by the Chairman.

Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

12676. You were asked to come up again on some question you were asked by Mr. Sexton?—Yes. Mr. Sexton asked me to hand in a return or statement as to rates which have been reduced on the representation of the Department.

12677. Have you got that statement?—Yes. (*Statement handed to Chairman.*)

12678. First let us take the local rates in Ireland. You have not got a summary of the local rates?—No, I did not quite understand what Mr. Sexton actually meant. In my evidence in chief—I refer to the passage——

12679. *Chairman.*—I got the impression that I asked you some question as to what had been the result of your applications to the railway companies so far as the trade of this country is concerned?—Yes.

12680. And you considered that in many cases applications had resulted in reduced rates being put into operation?—Yes.

12681. Then I think Mr. Sexton suggested that we

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List of rates reduced on the representations of the Department to the railway companies concerned.

would like to see such of these rates as were reduced to ascertain if there was anything tangible in them or not?—Yes.

12682. Well, as Mr. Sexton is not here, I will look at the figures. You take yeast—Dublin to Cork. There is a traffic in that from Dublin?—Yes. This case refers to the traffic from different parts of Ireland to Cork.

12683. What was the point about that?—A complaint was received that yeast could be sent cheaper from Belfast to Cork than from Dublin to Cork. The trader asked my Department to intervene, and the result was that the Dublin rate was reduced to the same rate as from Belfast to Cork.

12684. *Lord Pirrie.*—The original rate was dear?—Yes, comparatively.

12685. *Chairman.*—The original rate for 56 lbs. was 2*s.* 10*d.*?—Yes.

12686. The new rate put into operation on your application or on your complaint was 2*s.* 3*d.*?—Yes.

12687. At the companies' risk?—Yes.

12688. And 1*s.* 9*d.* at the owners' risk?—Yes.

12689. Now, take Indian corn?—In that case a complaint was put forward to the Department that a rate of 11*s.* 6*d.* per ton was charged for corn from Dublin to Castlerea. The complaint was from a miller in Castlerea. The Department represented the matter to the railway company concerned, and they reduced the rate to 9*s.* 4*d.*

12690. There is no date on these figures?—No, they cover about six years.

12691. What I propose to do is this. I propose to have these all printed in the minutes of to-day so that they can be seen and they will be accompanied also by your statement that you have just made that these alterations have been the result of applications made by you to the railway companies during the last six years?—Yes.

12692. That will cover the whole thing?—Yes.

Chairman.—The railway company are entitled to a copy of these, and they shall have it.

12693. *Mr. Croker Barrington* (*Solicitor*).—They will do when they are printed.

12694. *Chairman.*—First there will be the list of local rates reduced; then there will be the list of through rates.

Witness.—There are through rates between places in Ireland to places in Great Britain.

12695. What is the other list?—They are matters of refunds where traders made representations to the Department that the traffic cost them more than they though it ought, and in a large number of instances the railway companies, on having the cases represented to them gave refunds.

Chairman.—Well, I think that will cover the whole thing.

The lists were as follows:—

RATES REDUCED.

Nature of Traffic and Produce concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
YEAST (56-lb. baskets).	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	
Dublin to Cork, ..	2 10 per basket. C.R.	2 3 per basket. C.R.	A rate of 2*s.* 3*d.* per basket was in force from Belfast to Cork which was also made to apply from Dublin to Cork, and a special O.R. rate of 1*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. was issued.
		1 9 per basket, O.R.	
INDIAN CORN.			
Dublin to Castlerea, ..	11 6 per ton, 6-ton lots, O.R. S. to S.	9 4 per ton, 6-ton lots. O.R. S. to S.	Company reduced rates to those in force for Indian Meal between all stations on their line.
FRUIT.			
From Annaghmore to Derry:—			
Apples and Pears, ..	15 0 per ton.	13 4 per ton. Goods train. delvd.	—
To Belfast:—			
Damsons and other Plums.	—	10 0 per ton, delvd.	—
Strawberries in kegs,	12 6 per ton.	11 2 per ton, Goods train, delvd.	—
Currants and Raspberries in kegs.	—	Do.	

RATES REDUCED—*continued.*

Nature of Traffic and Produce concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
CATTLE over Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway,	C.R. Half wagon-rate charged for single animals.	C.R. Head rates as on other lines.	Company adopted scale of head rates in operation on other Irish lines.
EMPTY BARRELS (used for conveyance of early potatoes from Clonakilty to Liverpool) between Cork and Clonakilty.	13 6 per ton, Class 3, S. to S. C.R.	8 4 per ton, Class 1, S. to S. C.R.	Railway Company refunded difference on the consignment complained of, and put reduced rate in force.
CULM and LIME over Cork and Macroom Direct Railway:—			
CULM:— Cork to Crookstown,	2 9 per ton, S. to S.	2 3 per ton, S. to S.	Charge for weighing Culm also reduced from 2*d.* to 1*d.* per ton.
LIME:— Crookstown to Cork,	8 6 per truck.	8 0 per truck. in trucks of 40 barrels.	
Crookstown to Macroom.	7 6 per truck.	7 0 per truck, in trucks of 40 barrels.	
SHELLFISH:— From Ballybunion to Listowel.	4 6 per ton, S. to S.	3 3 per ton, S. to S. one ton and upwards; 3 9 per ton, less quantities O.R	
BACON:— Enniskillen to Glasgow *via* Derry.	24 2 per ton.	21 8 per ton, S. to S.	
HORSES:— Patrickswell to Dublin:			
Four Horses, ..	88 4	70 3	Company reduced rates to 1*s.* less in each case than the total of the locals—Patrickswell to Limerick, and Limerick to Dublin.
Five Horses, ..	110 2	86 6	
Six Horses, ..	132 0	104 10	
Seven Horses, ..	153 10	114 1	
Eight Horses, ..	175 8 O.R.	123 5 O.R.	
WOOLLEN GOODS:— Foxford to London, ..	95 0 per ton, Class 4, C.R. Carted in London.	85 0 per ton, Ex. C.R. Carted in London.	Reduced on application to Company.
INDIAN MEAL:— Letterkenny to Burtonport.	5 6 per ton, S. to S.	5 0 per ton, S. to S. (in lots of 2 tons and upwards).	The Company further agreed that if, at any future time, it was found advisable to reduce the rate for the conveyance of Indian Meal from Londonderry to Burtonport—5*s.* per ton in lots of 5 tons—the rate from Letterkenny to Burtonport would be reduced by the same amount.
BUTTER:— Wexford to Liverpool,	40 0 per ton,	20 0 per ton (minimum charge of 6*d.*)	Reduced rate granted by John Bacon, Ltd., and Dublin and South Eastern Railway.
WOOLLEN GOODS:— Foxford to Cork, ..	39 10 per ton, S. to S. Class 3, C.R.	35 0 per ton, S. to S. C.R.	Arranged on application
Foxford to Dublin, ..	36 9 per ton, S. to S. Class 3, C.R.	32 0 per ton, S. to S. Ex. C.R.	Arranged on application.

RATES REDUCED—*continued.*

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintende Travelling Inspector, Department Agriculture.

List of rates reduced on representatic of the Depa ment to the railway companies concerned.

Nature of Traffic and Produce concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
BARLEY (250 tons) :— Birr to Galway, ..	10 9 per ton, S. to S. O.R.	10 0 per ton, S. to S. O.R.	Special temporary rate.
WOOLLEN GOODS :— Cork to Clones *via* Dublin.	54 11 per ton, Class 3, S. to S. C.R.	49 2 per ton, Ex. S. to S. C.R.	A charge of 6*s.* 1*d.* was made for conveyance of 1 cwt. 3 qrs. 14 lbs.— 5*s.* 11*d.* as at 54*s.* 11*d.* per ton, and 2*d.* for delivery.
OYSTERS (about 2½ tons) : Falmouth to Oranmore : Charged £18 19*s.* 2*d.* Reduced to £13.	—	—	No through rate existed, but a special figure of £5 per ton was arranged.
POTATOES :— Rush to Dublin, ..	7 6 per ton, Class 1, Carted in Dublin. C.R.	4 0 per ton, S. to S. O.R.	The rate of 7*s.* 6*d.* in 2-ton lots was charged during months of April, May, and June, and rate of 4*s.* during rest of year. Company agreed to rate of 4*s.* per ton on early potatoes in 10-cwt. lots and upwards. S. to S.
DRIED MILK :— Limerick to London, ..	47 6 per ton, C. & D. C.R.	38 4 per ton, C. & D. C.R.	——

The following were the rates quoted by the M.G.W. Railway Company :—

——	Under 2 tons.	Between 2 and 4 tons.	Not less than 4 tons.	Six-ton loads, O.R., Owner to load and unload.	
	per ton. *s. d.*	per ton. *s. d.*	per ton. *s. d.*	per ton. *s. d.*	
PEAT MOSS LITTER :—					
Inny Junction to—					
North Wall (M.G.W.)	8 9	8 2	6 10	5 7	Station to Station. Owner to load and unload.
Mullingar, ..	3 4	2 9	2 0	1 10	
Longford, ..	4 0	3 5	2 7	2 4	
Sligo, ..	9 9	9 2	7 7	6 2	
Galway, ..	11 0	10 5	8 6	7 0	
Athlone, ..	6 5	5 10	4 11	4 1	
Float, ..	2 5	1 10	1 1	1 1	
Ballywillan, ..	3 2	2 7	1 10	1 9	
Crossdoney, ..	4 8	4 1	3 3	2 10	
Arva Road, ..	4 11	4 4	3 6	3 1	
Killeshandra, ..	5 4	4 9	3 11	3 4	
Cavan, ..	5 0	4 5	3 7	3 2	

After correspondence the following rates were fixed :—

—	—	20-ton lots.*	50-ton lots.*	
North Wall, ..	5 7	5 1	4 11	* To be forwarded within a period of eight days. Minimum—4 tons per truck, siding to station, O.R. Owner to load and unload. On 3rd March, 1906 the Company agreed to make the rates for 20 and 50-lots applicable for five years.
Mullingar, ..	1 10	1 8	1 7	
Longford, ..	2 4	2 1	2 0	
Sligo, ..	6 2	5 7	5 6	
Galway, ..	7 0	6 4	6 2	
Athlone, ..	4 1	3 9	3 7	
Float, ..	1 1	1 0	1 0	
Pallywillan, ..	1 9	1 7	1 7	
Crossdoney, ..	2 10	2 7	2 6	
Arva Road, ..	3 1	2 10	2 9	
Killeshandra, ..	3 4	3 0	2 11	
Cavan, ..	3 2	2 10	2 9	

Nature of Traffic and Produce concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
	per ton.	Not less than 18 tons. per ton.	Wagon loads of not less than 4½ tons. per ton.
PEAT FUEL :—	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
From Inny Junction :—			
For 10 miles, ..	1 4	1 2	1 4
For 15 miles, ..	1 10	1 6	1 8
For 20 miles, ..	2 8	1 10	2 0
For 25 miles, ..	2 7	2 1	2 3
For 30 miles, ..	2 9	2 2	2 5
For 40 miles, ..	3 4	2 8	2 11
For 50 miles, ..	3 9	2 11	3 3
Intermediate distances at proportionate rates.			

Nature of Traffic and Produce concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
PEAT FUEL—*continued.*	—	*s. d.* 50-ton lots.	
For 10 miles, ..	—	1 0	
For 15 miles, ..	—	1 3	
For 20 miles, ..	—	1 6	
For 25 miles, ..	—	1 9	
For 30 miles, ..	—	2 0	
For 40 miles, ..	—	2 5	
For 50 miles, ..	—	2 9	
Minimum in each case 4½ tons per truck.			
CIDER :—			
Dungarvan to Dublin,	26 8 per ton, Class 1. S. to S. C.R.	15 3 per ton, S. to S. O.R.	Reduced to the exceptional Porter Rate.
MILK POWDER :—	per ton, C. & D.	per ton, C. & D.	
Limerick to :—			
Blackburn, ..	48 4	40 10	
London, ..	47 6	38 4	
Manchester, ..	45 0	40 10	
Nuneaton, ..	52 6	45 0	
Preston, ..	45 0	43 4	
Rochdale, ..	46 8	45 0	
Birmingham, ..	45 0	43 4	
	S. to S.	S. to S.	
Liverpool (*via* Waterford).	33 4	—	
Liverpool (*via* Cork or Waterford).	—	27 11	
Liverpool (*via* Holyhead).	36 8	—	
Liverpool (*via* Dublin),	—	30 10	
EGGS :—			
Rathkeale to Leicester,	78 4 per ton, Class 3, Carted in England.	67 6 per ton, Ex. O.R.	
BULL :—			
Liverpool to Ferns. Liverpool to Dublin,	18 0	10 0 special reduction.	City of Dublin Steam Packet Company states the 18*s.* was for special pen accommodation, but agreed to refund 8*s.* £1 13*s.* 11*d.* was the ordinary part truck rate on D.W. & W.R. plus 33½ for conveyance by passenger train. D.W. & W.R. agreed to adopt scale of head rates in force generally on railways in Ireland and refunded 17*s.* 2*d.*
Dublin to Ferns, ..	33 11	16 9	
HORSE :—			
Wicklow to Dublin (Amiens-street).	29 6	10 6	The horse was consigned at O.R., and according to the Company's scale of rates for horses in wagons the minimum charge for conveyance at O.R. was as for four horses by goods train (£1 1*s.* 4*d.*), but this animal was carried by passenger train, and one-third additional to goods train rate charged in consequence. The charge for the conveyance of a single horse in a wagon at C.R. would be 9*s.* 6*d.* The Company arranged that one, two, or three horses would be conveyed over their line in wagons at O.R. at charges 25 per cent. less than the scale charges for the like number of horses sent at C.R. This rate was made applicable to the horse and charges reduced to 10*s* 6*d.*
FISH :—			
Athlone to Leicester, ..	5 10 per cwt. O.R.	5 0 per cwt O.R.	The rate 5*s.* 10*d.* was for the conveyance of salmon and trout. A special rate of 5*s.* was arranged.

Mar. 12, 1907.

Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

List of rates reduced on the representations of the Department to the railway companies concerned.

Rates Reduced—*continued.*

Nature of Traffic and Produce Concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
Eggs :—			
Recess to Birmingham,	84 2 per ton, C.R. 65 0 per ton, O.R.	81 3 per ton, C.R. 62 6 per ton, O.R.	Department in communication with Company as to a further reduction in C.R. rate.
Lime :—	per ton, S. to S. O.R.	Per ton, S. to S. O.R.	
Clones to—			
Newbliss, ..	1 0	1 0	The wagons to be released without delay, and the total quantity sent to the stations specified to be not less than 470 tons in the year.
Smithboro', ..	1 4	1 0	
Monaghan Road, ..	1 6	1 0	
Monaghan, ..	2 0	1 3	
Premium Bulls :—			
Ballydehob to Skibbereen and back.	6 0 per head. each way	2 0 per head each way	This complaint was about premium bulls sent for inspection.
Poultry for Breeding Purposes :—			
Example.	Full parcels rates.		
50 miles, ½*d.* per lb.			
56 lbs., C.R., ..	2 4	0 10	The Companies agreed to carry live poultry for breeding—over Irish lines—at same rates as for consumption.
56 lbs., O.R., ..	—	0 8	
112 lbs., C.R., ..	4 8	1 3	
112 lbs., O.R., ..	—	1 0	
100 miles, ½*d.* per lb.			
56 lbs., C.R., ..	3 6	1 2	
56 lbs., O.R., ..	—	0 11	
112 lbs., C.R., ..	7 0	1 11	
112 lbs., O.R., ..	—	1 6	
Grapes :—			
Dublin to Ballina, ..	38 4 per ton, Class 3, S. to S. C.R.	25 10 per ton, S. to S. C.R.	Special rate fixed on account of low through rate from Liverpool.
Furniture :—			
Richhill to Balla, ..	52 6 per ton, Class 5. S. to S. C.R.	43 4 per ton, Class 4. S. to S. C.R.	G.N.R. and M.G.W.R. Companies agreed to Class 4 rates over their respective systems generally.
Dead Poultry :—			
Wexford, New Ross, and Enniscorthy to London.	5 0 per cwt. O.R.	4 6 per cwt. O.R.	
Strawberries :—			
To Belfast from :—		Per cwt.	
Fiddown, ..	—	3 0	Special rates fixed for conveyance by passenger train.
Clonakilty, ..	—	3 9	
Ballycar, ..	—	3 0	
Wexford, ..	—	2 9	
		S. to S. O.R. Min. 1 cwt.	

Nature of Traffic and Produce Concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
Fruit (Currants and Raspberries).			
From Rosslare to :—		Per cwt.	
Cork, ...	½*d.* per lb.	2 3	Special rates for the season, 1904.
Dublin, ..	Do.,	2 9 S. to S. O.R. Min. 1 cwt.	

Delivery Charges.

Potatoes :—			
Delivery Charges. North Wall to Lansdowne Road.		Not exceeding 1 cwt.	
Within city boundary,	0 2 per cwt. Min. 4*d.*	0 3	
		1-2 cwts. 0 4	
		2-3 cwts. 0 5	
		3-4 cwts. 0 6	
		Not exceeding 1 cwt.	
Within ½-mile of boundary.	0 3 per cwt.	0 4	
		1-2cwts. 0 5	
		2-3 cwts. 0 6	
		3-4 cwts. 0 8	
		Not exceeding 1 cwt.	
Over ½-mile outside boundary.	0 4 per cwt.	0 5	
		1-2 cwts. 0 6	
		2-3 cwts. 0 8	
		3-4 cwts. 0 10	
Limestone, ...	Had been transferred from Class C. (or Class 1 for less than 2 tons) to Class 3z or Class 4y.		
In blocks, cases or slabs, polished or dressed. O.R. Class C.	—	Class C.	The Irish Railway Managers agreed to revert to the 1903 Classification which it had been proposed to change in 1904.
In less than 2 tons lots	—	Class 1	
Polished or dressed, ..	—	Class 3	
Limestone slabs if not not properly protected by packing to be only accepted at ..	—	O.R.	
	Per cwt.	Per gal.	
Cream for manufacturing purposes, by passenger trains.			
1-30 miles, ..	0 9	—	Minimum, 16 gallons S. to S. at O.R. Empties returned free at O.R.
31-50 miles, ..	1 0	—	
51-100 miles, ..	1 6	—	
101-150 miles, ..	2 0	—	
151-200 miles, ..	2 6	—	
201-250 miles, ..	2 9	—	
251 and over ..	3 0	—	
Up to 20 miles, ..	—	0 ¾	
21 to 30 miles, ..	—	0 1¼	
31 to 40 miles, ..	—	0 1	
41 to 50 miles, ..	—	0 1¼	

RATES REDUCED—*continued.*

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

List of rates reduced on the representations of the Department to the railway companies concerned.

THROUGH RATES.

Nature of Traffic and Places Concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
BUTTER :—			
Fiddown to Belfast, ..	40 5 per ton. Cl. 2 C.R. S. to S.	35 0 per ton. Ex C.R. S. to S.	Company issued an exceptional rate though the traffic is small.
BUTTER :—			
Rathduff to Glasgow, ..	—	32 6 per ton. S. to S. Cl. II. C.R.	Company could not arrange a through rate to Aberdeen, but fixed 32*s.* 6*d.* to Glasgow.
EARTHENWARE CROCKS :			
Coalisland to Balla *via* Cavan, S. to S. Owner to load and unload.	31 2 per ton. Cl. 1 C.R. S. to S.	16 0 per ton for earthenware (loose) 5 ton loads.	Company applied the reduced rate to the consignment complained of and refunded the difference 75*s.* 10*d.* As there was a rate of 16*s.* 6*d.* in 5 ton loads to Castlebar, a station further than Balla, 16*s.* was arranged for the latter.
BUTTER :—			
Ennistymon and Miltown Malbay *via* Holyhead to certain towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire.	—	—	Through rates were fixed in each case equivalent to the sum of the local bookings. No previous through rates.
BUTTER :—			
Killeshandra to Crewkerne *via* Dublin and Holyhead or Heysham. Carted in England.	—	92 6 per ton C.R.	No through rate existed, but 92*s.* 6*d.* per ton was arranged by the routes mentioned.
EGGS :—			
Limavady to Glasgow, &c., *via* Londonderry.	—	Not given.	No through rates from Limavady *via* Londonderry existed, but were, after correspondence, arranged to Glasgow, Govan, Greenock, Renfrew, Paisley, Linwood. Johnstone, North Johnstone, Cardonald, and Shieldhall.
CATTLE :—			
Cashel to Liverpool, Holyhead and Heysham.	—	92 6 per truck O.R.	Through rates did not exist, but was arranged on application.
OATS :—			
Glasgow to Gibbstown,	25 0 per ton, Cl. 1, S. to S. C.R.	13 4 per ton Cl. C. X. S. to S. O.R.	Reduced rate specially arranged.
BUTTER :—			
Ardfert to Belfast, .. Booked locally.	About 51 8 per ton, C.R.	40 0 per ton S. to S. O.R.	*Via* Limerick Junction and North Wall.
BUTTER :—			
Ardfert to Blackburn, *via* Waterford.	7 6 charged for two 112 lb. casks, or equal to 66 8 per ton, C.R.	41 8 per ton, Carted in England. C.R.	Consignment was entered locally to Waterford at 23*s.* 8*d.* per ton (2nd class), and rebooked thence.

Nature of Traffic and Places Concerned.	Rates. Old.	Rates. New.	Observations.
EGGS :—			
Castlerock to Glasgow, *via* Londonderry.	—	33 4 per ton, C.R. 29 2 per ton, O.R. S. to S. for eggs in boxes, cases, or crates.	No through rate existed previous to the figures now given.
EARLY POTATOES :—			
Rush and Lusk to :— Glasgow, ...	—	14 6 S. to S., C.R., inclusive of all Port Dues.	No through rates were in existence previous to the figures now given as to Glasgow, Liverpool, or Manchester.
Liverpool, ...	—	11 8 S. to S., C.R.	
Manchester, ...	—	23 9 (lots of not less than 2 tons).	This is still in correspondence for further reduction.
BLACKBERRIES :—			
Strabane to :—			
Carluke, ...	—	20 0 per ton.	Messrs. G. & J. Burns stated that they had no through rates from interior Irish stations to interior Scotch stations.
Edinburgh, ...	—	20 0 per ton.	
Dundee, ... (Carted in Scotland).	—	25 0 per ton.	
BUTTER :—			
Killeshandra to Norwich,	Charges amounting to 4*s.* per cwt.	55 0 per ton (including cartage at Norwich.) Ex. C.R.	Specially arranged.
FRESH HERRINGS :—			
Donegal Fishing Stations to Glasgow *via* Londonderry and rail from Greenock.	per ton 35 0 by steamer, direct to Glasgow	—	No through rates heretofore existed to Glasgow *via* Greenock.
Donegal, ...	—	40 0 per ton O.R.	
Dunkineely, ...			
Fintown, ...			
Glenties, ...			
Inver, ...			
Killybegs, ...			
Mountcharles, ..			
Buncrana, ...	—	1 9	*Via* Londonderry and Passenger train from Greenock to Glasgow.
Creeslough, ...	—	1 10	
Dunfanaghy, ...	—	1 10½	
Falcarragh, ...	—	1 10½	
Cashelnagore, ...	—	2 0	
Gweedore, ...	—	2 0	
Burtonport, ...	—	2 0 per cwt. O.R.	

REFUNDS AND REDUCTIONS IN RATES.

Nature of Traffic and Places concerned.	Amount. Demanded	Amount. Reduced to.	Observations.
CARRIAGE of a BULL from Dumfries to Londonderry.	C.R. 10 6	C.R. 7 7	Charge made was 10*s.* 6*d.* Incorrectly calculated; should have been 7*s.* 7*d* Refund of 2*s.* 11*d.* made.

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

List of rates reduced on representations of the Department to the railway companies concerned.

RATES REDUCED—*continued.*

Nature of Traffic and Places Concerned.	Amount. Demanded.	Amount. Reduced to	Observations.
CARRIAGE of 6 tons of SULPHATE of COPPER from Dublin to Virginia Road Station.	Per ton. C. & D. 14 4 Cl. 1. C.R.	Per ton. S. to S. 12 3 Cl. 1. C.R.	G.N.R. Company charged 14*s.* 4*d.* per ton, but admitted that as the consignment was not carted by them consignors were entitled to a refund of 12*s.* 6*d.*
BUTTER:—			
Limerick to Southend-on-Sea.	4 6	2 8	A consignment of butter, invoiced *via* Milford and Great Eastern Railway, was sent *via* Holyhead instead, and Company were claiming 4*s.* 6*d.* A re-entry was made, and claim was reduced by 1*s.* 10*d.*
BULL.			
Liverpool to Ferns:—			
Liverpool to Dublin,	C.R. 18 0	C.R. 10 0 Special case.	The City of Dublin Steam Packet Company stated the 18*s.* was for special pen accommodation, but agreed to refund 8*s.*
Dublin to Ferns, ..	33 11	16 9	£1 13*s.* 11*d.* was the ordinary part truck rate on D.W. and W. Railway, plus 33⅓ per cent. for carriage by Passenger train. Railway Company agreed to adopt scale of Head Rates in force generally on Railways in Ireland, and refunded 17*s.* 2*d.*
EMPTY POTATO BARRELS:—	Cl. 3.	Cl. 1.	
From Cork to Clonakilty.	13 6 per ton. S. to S. C.R.	8 4 per ton. S. to S. C.R.	Cork, Bandon, and South Coast Railway reduced rate and refunded difference between 8*s.* 4*d.* and 13*s.* 6*d* per ton, on consignment complained of.
POULTRY:—			
From Carrick-on-Suir to Reading.	5 10 per cwt. O.R.	4 9 per cwt. O.R.	Consignment of 4 cwt. 0 qrs. 24 lbs., incorrectly charged at 5*s.* 10*d.* per cwt.—should have been 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. The overcharge—5*s.*—was to be refunded.
BUTTER:—			
Limerick to Darlington,	64 2 per ton.	50 7 per ton.	A consignment of butter was forwarded to Leeds and there rebooked to Darlington — sum of rates being 64*s.* 2*d.* per ton; had it been booked to Liverpool and there re-booked, the sum of rates would have been 50*s.* 7*d.* per ton. Company made a re-entry of consignment and reduced charges.
TWO COWS from Hazlehatch to Newmarket.	Claimant alleged 275 0 was demanded. Railway Company stated claim was 187 3	103 7	Two cows conveyed by passenger train were booked from Dublin to Newmarket at rate applicable to horses. After correspondence Company applied the part truck rate and reduced the charges.
EMPTY DOG CRATE:—			
Cork to Dublin, ...	2 2	1 9	Overcharge of 5*d.* made — Company arranged to refund.
SALTED SKINS:—			
Mullingar to Liverpool, *via* Holyhead.	30 0 per ton, Cl. 2, S. to S. C.R.	24 2 per ton, Cl. 1, S. to S. C.R.	The rate of 30*s.* was charged in error. L. & N. W. R. Co. applied the correct rate and refunded difference—10*s.* 9*d.*—on consignment.
SIX BULLS:—			
Birmingham to Dublin,	292 6 C.R.	254 6	Bulls bought for Department (Glasnevin) at Birmingham — were sent in separate vehicles in lots of 1, 2, and 3 and charged accordingly. Company reduced charges to the collective rate of 1*s.* 1*d.* per mile, *i.e.*, as if all six bulls were in one lot.
TWO 28LB. BOXES BUTTER:—			
Ardagh to Liverpool, ..	Charged 5*s.* 4*d.* being Parcels rate 1*d.* per lb. at C.R.	O.R. Rate of ½*d.* per lb.	Charge made was correct, but Company reduced it to the O.R. rate and agreed to refund the difference.
BOX OF BUTTER, 56 lbs.:—			
Pallas to Dublin, ..	5 0	1 4	An error was made in invoicing consignments charged at parcels rate instead of reduced rate in force for butter traffic. Instructions to refund 3*s.* 8*d.* to consignors were given.
EARTHENWARE CROCKS:			
Coalisland to Balla, *via* Cavan.	155 10 at 31 2 per ton, Class 1 rate, S. to S. C.R.	16 0 per ton, Earthenware (loose) in 5 ton loads, S. to S. Owner load and unload. O.R.	Company applied the reduced rate to the consignment complained of, and refunded the difference 75*s.* 10*d.* As there was a rate of 16*s.* 6*d.* in 5 ton loads to Castlebar, a station further than Balla, 16*s.* was arranged for the latter.
POULTRY:—			
Rathkeale to Glasgow,	13 0	10 10	The case of poultry weighed 208 lbs. and was charged passenger train rate of ¾*d.* per lb., but through an error in calculation there was an overcharge of 2*s.* 2*d.*, which was refunded.
POTATOES:—			
Rush to Dublin, ..	11 9 C.R.	6 3 C.R.	Charge on the consignment, which weighed 1 ton 11 cwt. 2 qrs., was based on Class 1 rate (7*s.* 6*d.* per ton) instead of on Class C rate (4*s.* per ton) and Company ordered a refund of overcharge to the consignee.
A CALF:—			
Cloughjordan to Newcastle, Co. Wicklow.	13 8	13 6	The calf was booked from Cloughjordan to Kingsbridge and thence to North Wall, the charges amounting to 11*s.* 6*d.* If booked direct to North Wall charges would be 8*s.* 1*d.*, in consequence 3*s.* 5*d.* was refunded to the Consignor. An overcharge of 1*s.* 9*d.* was made for conveyance from Dublin to Newcastle. This amount was refunded by D.W.W. Railway.

RATES REDUCED—*continued.*

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

List of rates reduced on representations of the Department to the railway companies concerned.

Nature of Traffic and Place Concerned.	Amount. Demanded.	Amount. Reduced to	Observations.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
BOOTS :— Carlow to Cork, ..	34 5 per ton, Cl. 3, S. to S. C.R.	27 6 per ton Ex. S. to S. C.R.	Consignment of 6 cwt. 0 qrs. 11 lbs. was charged in error at rate of 34*s.* 5*d.* per ton, instead of correct rate of 27*s.* 6*d.* Company refunded difference.
OATS :— Glasgow to Gibbstown,	25 0 per ton, Cl. 1, S. to S. C.R.	13 4 per ton Ex. S. to S. C.R.	Rate was reduced from 25*s.* to 13*s.* 4*d.* per ton, and a refund of 17*s.* 5*d.* was made on the consignments complained of.
BRUSHES :— Dublin to Ballina, ..	2 2	1 1	The sum of 1*s.* 1*d.* was charged on 4 lbs. brushes, which were forwarded with 161 lbs. of hardware, on which a charge of 1*s.* 2*d.* was made—1*s.* 1*d.* refunded.
POTATOES :— 3 ton 18 cwt. 2 qrs. Perth to Cavan, ..	125 11	116 2	Charges per ton :—Perth to Dublin, 17*s.* 1*d.* S. to S., including port dues at Dublin. Dublin to Cavan, 11*s.*, cartage at Dublin 1*s.* 6*d.*, total 116*s.* 2*d.* Overcharge of 9*s.* 9*d.* arranged to be refunded by Company.
BASIC SLAG :— Dublin to Ballintogher,	15 11 per ton.	12 0 per ton.	The consignment weighed one ton and the Company reduced the charge to 12*s.* as a special case.
HORSE :— Wicklow to Dublin, .. (Amiens-street).	29 6	10 6	See rates list for explanation.
BOX OF EGGS :— Adare to Rathkeale, ..	2 0	0 8	Charges reduced from 2*s.* to 8*d.* Box was marked "fragile" and contents not described. Accordingly charged at 50 per cent. over parcels rate (1*s.* 4*d.*).

Nature of Traffic and Place Concerned.	Amount. Demanded.	Amount. Reduced to	Observations.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
POTATOES (1 ton) :— Cullybackey to Ballywillan.	46 6	12 6 or 13 0	Charges reduced from 46*s.* 6*d.* to about 12*s.* 6*d.* or 13*s.*, owing to an error in carrying to Ballywilliam, Co. Wexford.
A BOX OF OYSTERS (90 lbs.) :— Clifden to Liverpool, ..	4 10	3 6	An overcharge of 1*s.* 4*d.* had been made The Company ordered the amount to be refunded.
EIGHT BOXES OF BUTTER (4 cwt. 2 qrs. 24 lbs.):— Abbeyfeale to London,	13 1	9 6	An overcharge of 3*s.* 7*d.* had been made. The Company ordered the amount to be refunded.
A COW :— Navan to Lingfield, ..	84 10 part truck rate from Dublin to Willesden Junction.	18 1	There was no provision to meet the case of a single animal sent from Dublin to Willesden by Goods train, and the part truck rate was charged. The L. & N.W. R. Co. reduced the charge to 18*s.* 1*d.*, notwithstanding that 18*s.* 1*d.* is only applicable to a minimum of five beasts.
PEAT MOSS LITTER :— Tullamore to Ballsbridge.	Sum of Locals 11 3 per ton.	7 6 per ton.	A consignment of 4 tons was charged at 11*s* 3*d* per ton, but a reduction of 2*s.* 6*d.* per ton was given.
FURNITURE :— Richhill to Balla, ..	52 6	43 4	Refund of 2*s.* 1*d.* ordered. See Rates Return for cause of reduction.
CREAM :— Omagh to Lowrow, ..	5 10 per cwt. O.R.	4 8 per cwt. O.R.	A refund of 1*s.* 2*d.* per cwt. ordered on all items charged at 5*s.* 10*d.* rate. See Rates Return for explanation of reduction.
OYSTERS (about 2½ tons):— Falmouth to Oranmore,	379 2	260 0	£5 19*s.* 2*d.* allowed. No through rate existed, but a special figure of £5 per ton was arranged and charges reduced.

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

Examined by COLONEL HUTCHESON POË.

12696. In consequence of your representations did you succeed in inducing the railway companies to make appreciable reductions in these different rates?—In some cases, yes.

12697. Did they in some cases refuse to make any reductions?—Yes. There have been instances where the companies would not make reductions, and they put forward reasons that we could not surmount.

12698. Such reasons as were satisfactory to the Department, and they did not wish to pursue the matter any further?—Yes.

12699. And the same applies to the through rates?—Quite so.

Recommendations of the Departmental Committee in 1897, and action taken thereon.

12700. I wish to refer you to the recommendations which were made by the Departmental Committee in 1897. Under Sub-Section 1, Section 2, it was recommended that power shall be given to the local authorities to enable them to acquire fair grounds, collect tolls, remove fairs from the sites of towns and villages, etc. Has any action been taken with regard to these recommendations?—No. That is a matter that would require fresh legislation.

12701. Then with regard to providing better accommodation at railway stations?—That has largely been acted on.

12702. No action was taken with regard to that recommendation?—There was.

12703. There is a recommendation that your Inspectors should have the power to prevent the shipment of animals which in their opinion are unfit to ship. Has that resulted in the improvement of the condition of the animals?—I think that was one of the recommendations of the Committee, but the Department were legally advised that they had no power to enforce it. What however is done in cases of the kind is this—the Veterinary Inspector—when he notices an animal which he considers is unfit—informs the owner that in his opinion the animal is unfit for shipment. The Order of the Department throws the onus on the owner if he ships an unfit animal.

12704. And is the result of that order, when such a request is made by the Inspector, that the owner probably withdraws the animals?—Very frequently they are withdrawn. But in some cases they were not, and the shippers have been prosecuted.

12705. With regard to Sub-section 6, which refers to the speed of cattle trains, what is the speed of these trains?—On the principal railways, in the case of what are known as shipping cattle specials, that is to say, trains which are specially run to catch the steamers, they run at 25 or 30 miles an hour.

12706. And that, in the opinion of the Department, is a sufficiently high rate of speed to ensure that the cattle should not suffer in transit?—Yes.

12707. On page 7 of your evidence you say the request of the Department that attention should be paid to these reports was not complied with in the case of some recommendations. In what instances were your recommendations not complied with?—I will take the carriage of unfit animals. It was one of the recommendations of the Committee that animals should not be carried near their calving time and matters of that kind, but we found that that was still continued, and therefore a provision was put in the Department's order to prevent it.

12708. So that complaint has been remedied?—Yes. Securing of bulls by the heads in railway trucks is another recommendation which to some extent the railway companies voluntarily carried out, but it was found that it was not being carried out with regularity, and a provision dealing with the subject was put into an order.

12709. *Lord Pirrie.*—They have to tie them now?—Yes, to secure them by the head in order that they may not damage other animals.

12710. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—We may take it that in your opinion the conditions under which cattle are now sent across the Channel are very much more favourable than they were a few years ago?—Yes, very much more favourable.

12711. At page 12 you speak of transit of produce and of different matters to which your attention was directed in going round the country—has anything been done by the Department in the shape of offering inducements or assistance to producers—dairy or farm producers—to centralise and localise, so to speak, traffic on certain days of the week in order to get it at lower rates for large consignments?—I don't think anything has been done directly by the Department to do so, and, if I may say it, I think it would be difficult to get it done, because, take the case of butter—the trader seems to have an idea that he ought to send to his customer without the knowledge of his fellow-trader, and very often even with the object of preventing that knowledge, goods are sent under a mark, so that if I or any other person went to look at packages of butter I could not know where they were going—there would be simply a mark on those packages.

12712. *Lord Pirrie.*—London or somewhere?—Yes, I might know they were going in some particular direction, but as to the trader they were going to I would have no means of knowing. One of the reasons for such procedure, no doubt, is that traders don't wish their fellow-traders to know where their custom lies. I am afraid that even this circumstance would to a large extent prevent co-operation between traders in preparing larger consignments.

12713. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—So long as that disinclination exists?—Yes; I think it is dying out, but there is no question that it exists.

12714. So long as it does there is very little hope of getting large consignments at the specially low rates that the railway companies would be glad to give?—Yes; and I might say that another reason is the different channels consignors have for sending to different places, and the number of different routes and frequent occasions by and on which shipments can take place. There are in Ireland about 140 steamers trading between Ireland and Great Britain; there are about twenty ports; a great number of steamers go on the same day; there is never a day that steamers are not going. It is so unlike the Continental system; they have opportunities of forwarding the produce from this country much in excess of those, say, from Denmark.

12715. So that competition is rather a disadvantage than otherwise?—Well, taking that view, yes.

12716. At page 15 of your evidence you refer to visits made by inspectors to different stations; in your opinion is sufficient care exercised by the railway and shipping companies, or rather by their employees in the handling of agricultural and dairy produce consigned to them?—We think there is much improvement in this respect, but we come across instances where the servants of the railway companies have not observed the instructions they have got from their employers.

12717. I think you said, with reference to that, that when you made representation to the railway company they took severe notice?—Yes; in some cases they dismissed those servants.

12718. At page 17 you speak of refrigerator wagons, and state that two Irish railway companies are provided now with such?—If I might be allowed to amend that, I would say that I believe three of the companies have these vehicles.

12719. I think we had evidence of the fact that butter-makers would not take advantage of these wagons in many instances?—Yes; the company which have most refrigerators is the company whose line runs through the principal butter district. The Great Southern and Western—they have a number of refrigerators; the Department were pressed by traders to urge on the carrying companies the propriety of putting on those refrigerators, and they did so. Circulars were issued to all the railway and steamship companies drawing attention to what was represented to the Department by butter-makers and traders, and to some extent I may say the result has been that three of the companies now possess more or less in number refrigerator vans. The Great Southern and Western Railway probably have the most, and at a comparatively small rate for a special icing, would allow those vans to be used. I understand they have left them, with the ice practically near by, to be used when the trader applied. I have made inquiries, and I understand that at Limerick, where those vans lay (it is the centre, it might be said, of the butter district) during 1904, I am told by one of the officials of the Company that during that year, 1904, only on five occasions were those wagons applied for or used; during 1905 they were used on two occasions, and in 1906 they were not used at all.

12720. How do you account for that?—Well, to some extent it may be that the season concerned was not as warm as the traders thought would warrant them in even going to the small expense of paying for the ice; that is the only manner in which I can account for it; or perhaps they were not prepared to pay at the rate of 1s. 6d. a ton for this additional service of having traffic carried in an iced wagon.

12721. And these were the people at whose instance the Department made representations to the company, and put them to the expense of providing wagons?—That is so.

12722. It is rather disappointing to find that. Have your Department made representations to the butter manufacturers as to the false economy they are exercising?—Well, one or two were spoken individually to, but the answer they made was that the season was not sufficiently warm; therefore, they do not use them.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

12723. I take the evidence about ice; they use refrigerator cars always for their butter, but they don't pay the additional cost to the company for putting ice into the car?—Insulated vans, and refrigerator vans without ice are used.

12724. Therefore, the refrigerator cars have increased, and are largely used by butter manufacturers?—Yes, they are used by butter manufacturers. Perhaps I may be allowed to explain that the railway companies, in addition to what they call refrigerator vans, have also a number of what are described as insulated vans, the special feature of which is an arrangement to prevent the sun's direct rays of heat coming through so strongly to the contents of the van.

12725. The insulated van is used by butter manufacturers without paying any increased rate for the carriage of the butter?—That I believe to be so.

12726. The railway companies in the same insulated car have arrangements by which they carry ice?—They have insulated cars without ice chambers, and they have insulated cars with iced chambers.

12727. Then all insulated cars are not made with a place for putting in ice?—No.

12728. There is then only a limited number?—Yes, a limited number.

12729. Three of the companies in Ireland have got arrangements for putting ice into the insulated cars?—Yes. I believe that is so; the Great Southern and Western have them, the Great Northern have some, and I understand—I have not seen them, but I believe it to be correct—the Midland Great Western have some.

12730. Have your Board considered the question of getting the railway companies to put up refrigerating chambers at some of the larger stations where a large amount of butter is sent, so that when butter or pork comes to a station it may be separated from the other goods and kept in this cold chamber?—Well, while the Department may not have considered it with the railway companies, the subject has not escaped them.

12731. It has not escaped them: can you tell me any place where you have got it?—No, but I can tell where it exists privately.

12732. Privately?—Yes. In Cork I believe that the carrying companies allow butter, for instance, which arrives late by railway and cannot catch the steamer, notwithstanding the through rate, to be taken to a cold storage and kept there, and subsequently conveyed forward as if the route never was broken.

12733. That cold storage belongs to the Corporation or to a private individual?—Yes, not to the railway company.

12734. Have you, as a Department, never considered it desirable to urge the railway companies at certain main stations to put a cold chamber up, so that the butter could be put in?—The Department have never urged it, and I am not sure it would be used to any extent if provided the object is rapid transit.

12735. Yes, but immediately the farmer's or trader's donkey cart, with a consignment of butter arrives at a station, is the train always ready to start?—Very often we get complaints that the train has not started soon enough.

12736. The butter is not put into the ordinary store in the railway; the wagon is waiting and it goes direct in?—Very often that is so.

12737. Have you any instructions in your Department to see that the butter is not thrown down in the ordinary store?—We have instructions to see that butter is not put where it will be unnecessarily exposed to a warm temperature or to bad treatment.

12738. If you have not a refrigerator car or an insulated car, and the store is not cold, how will you on, say, the 12th August, or any warm day, put it any where except where nature has given you a green field?—It is put in shelter generally though it does not go into cold storage.

12739. Do you not allow any commodity in the store except butter?—I am afraid there are no such regulations as that.

12740. The Department have no regulations that when butter arrives at a station it is not to be allowed to be laid down or to go wherever it happens that a stationmaster or the man in charge places it?—No. The Department's Inspectors, however, have frequently drawn attention to butter and other produce when found at stations exposed to rain or to the heat of the sun.

12741. I am not objecting to that. A station is not arranged specially with a place for butter at all?—I think not. I don't think stations are generally arranged to have a special butter store.

12742. Do the Department urge the railway companies to keep a supply of wagons—would that not meet the case, insulated wagons where butter does come in, so that it will go direct from the car to that insulated wagon?—We have corresponded with the companies on the complaints of people that they had not sufficient wagon accommodation.

12743. You have not taken up the principle of meeting that requirement by urging the railway companies to have wagons?—I think not.

12744. And therefore practically you do allow the farmer to put his butter down anywhere. If you once allow the farmer and traders to put down their butter, and they have got private marks on them, how are you to know whether it lies there for one hour or sixty hours, and how can the other competitor find out where it has to go. It has to go quickly, because they are afraid another trader may find out where it is going. Suppose there is a private mark, how will it be found out whether it lies for an hour or for sixty hours?—Traders know the hour at which trains go, and they take their butter in time to be carried away by a particular train. If one trader came and saw the label showing the destination of a consignment of butter belonging to some one else, he would know where it was going, but as long as it has a mark he would not.

12745. You don't think that the scheme Colonel Poë suggested of a particular day for sending butter would meet the case, because you are afraid traders would be able to see the addresses. I took it from that that the moment a cart arrived with butter it was put into the wagon and closed so that other traders could not see it, but you say it is open to traders to see it, but to avoid that they put a private mark—there is no objection to the suggestion that Colonel Poë makes?—No, I would imagine it would be a useful thing to the traders if they could be got to adopt that view.

12746. I thought you meant that. It would be a great benefit to the traders and to the district generally?—If they could be got to come away from their old customs, but the old customs have lasted longer than I can recollect, and I think it would be a difficult matter to change these ideas.

12747. We all have to change with the times, and I suppose Irishmen would like to get freight cheaper if they could get it?—Certainly.

12748. You spoke about Belfast as the only place, as I took it, that you had no inspection cattle station close to the quay—"At Belfast the inspection yard and cattle station should be in closer proximity to the quay." You say you cannot get it for certain traders, but if you cannot get it, have the cattle to suffer because you cannot get it?—So far as the Department is concerned, it is not their doing. It is not the Department that supply those yards. All through the country at the cattle-exporting ports the yards belong to different parties, sometimes to the Harbour Commissioners and sometimes to shipowners, and in Belfast, although that is more or less an isolated case, the railways own those yards, and provide them.

12749. Yes, but the railways are in some cases a mile or even a mile and a half from the places where you ship cattle?—The Department has had correspondence

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

Supervision of the handling and transport of butter traffic by the Department's Inspectors.

Necessity for cattle inspection yards at Belfast quay urged.

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Mr. David S. Prentice, Superintendent Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

for years with the Belfast Harbour Board and with the railway companies and shipping companies to endeavour to get them to provide a yard nearer to the quays.

12750. In the meantime are the cattle suffering?—I don't say they are suffering, but I do say that there would be less opportunity for them to suffer and there would be less inconvenience to everybody, if the yards were nearer to the quays.

Necessity for cattle inspection yards at Belfast quay urged.

12751. I am only speaking in this way, now: supposing cattle left the Great Northern Railway Station, which is furthest away from the quay, I take it as an illustration, have those cattle not to be fed or watered before they go on board the steamer?—Not necessarily.

12752. They can stand for hours on the quay and then go on board the steamer. There is no rule on board the steamer, nor any necessity ever to water then there?—There is, provided they are on for a certain period.

12753. But supposing they are four or five hours on the quay and they then go on board the steamer and go across for ten hours or twelve hours to Liverpool, is not it hard on the cattle?—It is hard on them to be standing about.

12754. I thought Belfast was most up-to-date for shipping cattle out of Ireland, but apparently from your statement, and I am sure it is correct, that is not so, from your inspection of the places where cattle have to go. It is most extraordinary that you don't say that if cattle are to be shipped they must have a place to get watered before going on board?—Those recommendations were not so much on the question of want of food, as on the absence of slow driving of the cattle from the inspection yards to the quays.

12755. Slow driving?—Yes, they were driven too quickly. It was a case of galloping.

12756. Yes, that's so. I was nearly run over last night by cattle?—I am sorry to hear it, sir.

12757. They were going in a canter?—The Department were obliged in the case of Belfast to do what they have done in no other port, to require that cattle be in the inspection yard one hour before the advertised time of the vessel's sailing to give them time to be walked properly and slowly towards the quays.

12758. They have to be in it for one hour?—Yes, one hour before the advertised time of sailing. For instance, supposing cattle were going to Fleetwood—the hour for the Fleetwood steamer, I think, is eight o'clock—then they would have to be in the inspection yards at seven, so that when inspected they would have practically an hour to be driven from the Great Northern Station to the quay at Belfast.

12759. You would give them an hour to be driven down?—Yes.

12760. Supposing you take only ten minutes and rush up and get another herd, then the same people could drive ten or twelve different sets down?—Yes, but the cattle are there the hour; they have that time.

12761. If you made it a rule that cattle were to take three-quarters of an hour to walk from the station to the boat; but you allow them to be driven down, we will say at a gallop, they stand at the quay alongside the steamer for an hour, or half an hour: is not that injuring the cattle just as much?—How could you supervise cattle going along the road for a mile and a half; the police certainly have instructions to prevent any cruelty——

12762. From your Department?—Yes, from my Department they have instructions with regard to those special yards, to prevent cattle from being overdriven.

12763. I think it is a matter of great importance?—It is a difficult matter to deal with.

12764. It seems to me extremely sad that Belfast, which is so enlightened, should be the only city or town in Ireland you have to make special regulations for?—That is so.

12765. It is extraordinary, when the Commissioners bought ground many years ago for the very purpose of having a place for the cattle, and I believe that there is a part of the ground yet unoccupied?—I believe they could not come to terms with the owners of the ships and railways, if that ground did exist.

12766. It was opposite the Fleetwood steamer, and one of the companies probably bought portion of it?—It may not have been large enough.

12767. Perhaps. I only wanted to get this about the cattle: they have to make special arrangements for Belfast. Every other town in Ireland is entitled to that same regulation if they want it?—If such were required.

12768. Could not they compel you to give the same regulation; take Dublin, for example; could not they compel you to walk cattle from, say, Broadstone?—They are not inspected there. In Belfast they are inspected in the yards belonging to the railway companies, but in Dublin they are inspected in the yards belonging to the shipping companies, which are adjacent to the quays.

Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture, examined by the Chairman.

Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

12769. What are you, Mr. Wilson?—I am the Chief Inspector in connection with dairying to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and I am responsible for the technical advice in dairy matters afforded by the Department to creameries, condensed milk factories, and butter factories, and so on.

12770. Have you a staff under you?—There is the clerical staff in the office, and I have a staff of four instructors travelling about the country.

12771. Four of what you call dairy instructors?—Yes.

12772. We are only dealing now, I suppose, with the particular traffic, butter, milk, and cream?—Yes.

12773. And I will confine my questions entirely to these particular articles. Of course they are important articles of export from this country?—They are very important.

Action taken by the Department in connection with the export of dairy produce.

12774. Now, can you explain to the Commission the action taken by your Department in connection with the export of these articles?—Since the formation of the Department, when my work was taken over from the Commissioners of National Education——

12795. Give us the date?—1900. I have been employed under the Department in visiting, and my assistants have also been employed in visiting creameries, examining their methods of work, methods of packing, pointing out defects and suggesting remedies for these defects, whether they advise during manufacturing processes, packing, or from any other source whatever.

Scheme for improvement of creameries.

12776. Are those boxes that I see at the end of the room sample boxes of what your Department have made?—Before I go to the boxes I would just like to say that in 1903 the Department brought out a scheme for the improvement of creameries, and in 1904 they made it a condition of registration under the scheme that all creameries in the country should use packages conforming with a certain standard, or up to a certain standard, in order that their produce might arrive in good condition at the other side. I have a copy of this scheme here (*copy handed to Chairman*), and you will see that the butter packages in general use are to be satisfactory. Under this scheme, in 1903 there were 102 creameries, and in 1906 we had altogether under the two separate portions of the scheme 359 creameries; in 1903, twenty-seven were registered, and in 1906 105 were registered.

12777. *Lord Pirrie.*—Creameries?—Yes, registered under this scheme. That is the return (*handed in*). In connection with this scheme we had a series of "Surprise" butter competitions.

12778. *Chairman.*—Tell us what that is, for I do not know what a surprise competition is?—It is a competition where the butter exhibits are called up by telegram, without any previous notice of the date of the competition being given.

12779. A telegram sent from your Department?—Sent from our Department to the creamery. The object is to defeat special preparation for the competition. We wanted to secure at these competitions that the packages of butter sent should be commercial butter, not butter specially prepared, as it usually is for all shows where long notice is given. At the surprise competitions the butter is examined— —

12780. Stop. Let us go by steps. This is quite new to us, and is not in your proof. You, representing the Department, telegraph to the creamery to send up a sample of butter?—Yes.

12781. Where is it sent to?—To a place appointed by us in Dublin. At present to Ballsbridge.

12782. Is the quantity limited?—It must be either a 112 lb. kiel or a 56 lb. box or keg.

12783. That telegram goes out simultaneously to all creameries which are under your inspection?—Yes.

12784. Is the butter sent up at the expense of the creameries?—It is sent up, carriage paid, by passenger train to Dublin to us.

12785. At the expense of the creameries?—Yes, they pay the carriage.

12786. Do they supply the butter free?—No, they do not.

12787. Tell us how that is done?—The butter is valued at the end of the competition by the judges.

12788. Let us assume a sample of butter coming from the creamery and arriving in Dublin, what is the *modus operandi* then?—The samples are staged by the Department and numbered. At the end of a week, or ten days it may be, they are judged by four judges, who are selected by the Department, from different butter markets in England. We keep the butter for about a week.

12789. Markets in England. You bring the men over?—Yes; three of the four judges are from England, and one is representative of the butter merchants on this side. Three are representatives of the markets on the other side of the Channel.

12790. Your Department arranges for the judges from England?—Yes.

12791. And you pay their expenses?—Yes, there are no fees.

12792. We have got the four judges now inspecting the samples after having arrived in Dublin?—Yes. Each judge examines each sample independently.

12793. Is there anything on the packages to indicate where they come from?—Nothing but a number, the key to which is in the possession of someone in the Department. I don't know it as a matter of fact.

12794. Go on?—Each judge is supplied with a card for each exhibit, similar to this one (*card handed to Chairman*), and he scores the butter for flavour, texture, colour, and packing and finish, according to the scale.

(The following is a copy of the card handed in by the witness):—

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION FOR IRELAND.

SURPRISE BUTTER COMPETITIONS—1906.

Competition No.———

Sample No.———

	Maximum.	Marks Awarded.	REMARKS.
Flavour.	60		
Texture.	25		
Colour.	5		
Packing and Finish.	10		

Signed———

Date———

OBSERVATIONS.

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Witness continuing.—The judges score the butter according to a commercial valuation. That is, they are asked to deduct marks under the various headings whenever they find that the butter would suffer commercially in the market. For instance, we will say that the price of the choicest butter was 112s. If on examining the exhibit he would say the flavour is such that I can only give 108s. for that butter, he would reduce the score for flavour accordingly.

12795. The maximum marks being printed on the card, and he deducts for faults?—Yes.

12796. There is a column provided for that?—Yes, there is a column provided in which he puts down his marks.

12797. What is the next process?—A number of the creamery managers who are exhibitors are usually invited to meet the judges after the judging is over, and to hear what they have got to say in general about the exhibits, about their flavour, about their texture, about the colour, and about the packing and finish. Next day the same managers, whose expenses are paid by the Department, are taken round the exhibits by one of the Department inspectors, and the faults in connection with their own exhibits, and perhaps the faults in connection with other exhibits, are pointed out to them, and the remedies explained, as far as is possible at the competition. If it is not possible to fully explain the remedy at the competition we advise them to secure the services of one of the dairy instructors, and get him to go into the matter at the creamery.

12798. I want to get at the senders of this butter. How do they get paid for this butter?—At the close of the judging the judges are requested to state what they consider was a fair price for the butter on the day on which it was sent to Dublin, and to take into consideration the fact that it was landed carriage paid into Dublin. The judges fix the price. The Department having nothing whatever to do with the fixing of this price.

12799. Therefore the senders are reimbursed according to the value of the judges?—Yes.

12800. How often does this competition take place?—Up to this year there were not less than five and not more than eight during the year.

12801. Eight during the year 1906?—There were, I think, seven in 1906. I have the results here. That is a summary of the results of six of the competitions (*handed in*).

12802. *Lord Pirrie.*—I see you have taken them in a very busy season?—Yes, we take them over the busy part of the year, and try to take them under different conditions as regards weather and so on.

12803. *Chairman.*—Is any prize given?—Prizes of £2 are awarded to first class butters, and prizes of £1 to second class butters.

12804. On 5th October, 1906, the telegrams were issued for what you call a Surprise Butter Competition?—Yes.

12805. The number of entries there were 109?—Yes.

12806. And out of that 109 four were awarded first class prizes of £2?—Yes.

12807. And thirteen second class prizes of £1?—Yes.

12808. And the remainder had their faults pointed out by the judges?—Yes, and by the Department's staff. The judges, you can quite understand, being very busy men, cannot afford to give more than a day or two to this work, and a good deal of it has to be left over to us. And in some cases judges of butter are not always judges of the causes of bad butter.

12809. When was this system originated?—In 1903.

12810. That was the first?—That was the first.

12811. And of course the object was to improve the quality of the butter exported from this country?—Yes, the quality and the method of packing and marketing.

12812. Quality would cover everything—that is to say, that the butter should find better markets and better prices?—Yes.

12813. Have you told me how many creameries there are altogether?—In Ireland there are about 800 creameries, and under the inspection of the Department's officers there are at present 359. That was under this scheme for last year. There will probably be more entering this year.

12814. You said it commenced in 1903. Now, as an expert, has the condition of the butter improved under this system that has been established?—It has improved in nearly every respect, and in the fear that I should be considered prejudiced in saying so, we have here the reports of the various judges—a summary of the reports of the various judges—from 1903, and in these reports they say there has been a

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Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

"Surprise" butter competitions conducted by the Department described.

Improvement observable in the packing and finish of the butter exhibits.

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Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

marked improvement. For instance, in the summary of the reports for 1906 the judges say: "The packing and finish of the exhibits generally were considered a marked advance on those of former years." They direct attention to serious faults and recommend such practices as the paraffin waxing of the insides of the boxes, a thing which the Department had been advocating for some time. If I may put in a return here—in 1903, out of 639 samples received at these competitions, 65 of the packages were burst, completely burst.

Improvement in the packing and handling of butter packages in transit.

12815. *Lord Pirrie.*—When you received them?—Yes, in 1903.

12816. *Chairman.*—Have you got the figures for 1906?—I have 1905.

12817. Take last year. Never mind going through each year?—I was going to take 1903 and 1905. In 1903, ninety-four packages showed signs of giving way, that is, the nails had started, or some other portion of the box had shown signs of bursting.

12818. You are speaking of the condition in which they arrived in Dublin?—Yes. In 1905, 559 samples were received from five competitions. Twenty-six packages were burst and thirty-nine showed signs of coming away. To give them in percentages, it works out at 9·86 in 1903, and 4·65 in 1905.

12819. Less than half?—Less than half.

12820. To what do you attribute that?—I attribute it to two things, mainly to one thing, and that is, improved packages and better handling through complaints having been lodged. I have illustrations of some of these broken packages here (*photographs exhibited*).

12821. Now then, first of all, the butter itself has improved; secondly, the packages have improved, and thirdly, the railway transit has improved?—Yes. I think the railway transit has improved, but I still think there is room for improvement in every direction. For instance, in the first year I should think that in the majority of cases broken packages and damaged packages were due to faults of construction as well as to treatment in transit, while last year I should say that the railway company was at fault for the greater number of bad bursts, as the packages had improved so much. The judges, in addition to marking the exhibits at these competitions generally add a number of remarks. I may perhaps read two or three typical remarks: "End and sides too thin."

12822. The railway company have nothing to do with that?—These are what the judges say. These are rather excuses for the railway company. "In this box, nails too short or too few in number or unsuitable, lid projecting over the sides." Then with regard to kiels they say, "hoops too thin or too few in number, staves too thin," and so on—remarks of that kind.

12823. There is no record to show the usage of the railway company?—No. The judges, in examining the packages, made a point of examining a broken package very closely. If they thought it was a badly constructed package they blamed the maker partially and the railway company. If they considered the package was a well-made package, then they blamed the railway company. They do not put that on the score card.

12824. Where do they put it?—In judging, the judge goes round and looks at that package, and sees that it is obviously badly handled.

Leaflet on the subject of packing issued to makers of butter by the Department.

12825. Is it a verbal remark?—He may not say anything. He may simply score the package. In order to further improve packing and finish, the Department issued this leaflet on packing (*handed in*).

12826. The Department issued the leaflet which I have got in my hand giving instructions to the makers of butter as to the packing, and as to the care and materials used in the packing, and shows what kind of package to use, and so on?—Yes.

12827. And they give illustrations of the packages upon which they comment. The casks, firkins, and boxes are all illustrated, I see?—Yes.

12828. Can you say when this was issued?—It was issued in May, 1905.

Foreign sample packages shown exhibitors.

12829. Lord Pirrie asked some questions about this. Do you send your inspectors with sample packages or merely with illustrations?—We had sample packages at these competitions, which were shown to the various managers, and we had not only samples of packages for our own use, as it were, but we had samples of packages used in nearly every other country, some of which we have here. For instance, I have in this room three kiels—one Irish, one Swedish, and one Danish, and I think on examination you will find very little difference between them.

12830. These are made under the instructions of your Department?—If I may go a step further. We called a conference of package manufacturers in December, 1905, in order to have a standard laid down for boxes and kiels.

12831. That was after you issued this circular?—Yes, but the reason we called that conference together was that a number of the creamery managers complained to us that package manufacturers would not supply them with boxes made to the standard we laid down.

12832. The managers of the creameries? Yes, and I may say that the Department ordered boxes and kiels from these various package manufacturers, and in a great many cases we found that they did not comply with the standard, that apparently no notice was paid to some of the details—some of them did comply, but some of them did not. Then we called a conference and asked them why it was they could not comply with the standard, what objection they had to it. I may say the standard was laid down after consulting with a number of makers of boxes and packages and examining packages from all over the world, and seeing how the packages of various types stood the transit in this country. At that conference, in December, 1905, the greater part of a specification was agreed on, and it was practically the same as that embodied in this leaflet. The Department were asked, however, to carry out some experiments as regards the capacity of butter boxes and kiels, and we did that during 1906. As a result a standard specification has been drawn up and agreed to by all the large manufacturers and importers of butter packages in Ireland.

12833. Exporters?—No, importers of packages. There are the conference minutes, and here is the leaflet on the packages.

12834. Are they all Irish firms that make them?—I may say that we published an advertisement in the papers asking all manufacturers or suppliers of butter packages who were willing to make packages complying with the specification to send in their names to the Department, and in the scheme for 1907, which is just now in the press a list is published of all package manufacturers and suppliers in Ireland who have undertaken the supply of standard packages.

12835. I have got it here?—Those were the members of the conference. The list we are publishing now contains a great many more names.

12836. They are all Irish firms?—All in Ireland.

12837. *Lord Pirrie.*—Didn't you get a good many of the butter packages manufactured in other parts?—A good deal of the material may be imported.

12838. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—But the packages are made up here?—They are made up in Ireland.

12839. There are no wholly manufactured boxes imported?—No, I do not know of any boxes imported. The box timber is imported, sawn, and put up in shooks.

12840. *Chairman.*—Are you acquainted with packages made for the export of butter from France and Denmark?—Yes.

12841. Are you satisfied now as far as your Department is concerned, and the steps you have taken, that there is no reason why butter should not be packed in precisely the same manner in Ireland as those countries pack it?—I do not want to see Irish butter packed exactly like foreign butter. I should like something distinct, so that a buyer could know whether it was Irish or other butter, but we are satisfied that the packages complying with the specification laid down are quite as strong as the packages used in any other country.

12842. And quite as easily handled by the railway company?—Yes.

12843. And, therefore, so far as the rates are concerned, the rates should be as favourable for Irish-packed butter as for Danish-packed butter?—Yes.

12844. The service performed by the railway company would be the same in both cases?—It would. It is simply to carry butter in both cases. If the packages comply with our specification they will be equally as strong as those of any other country.

12845. And the same quantity could be loaded in a truck as Danish butter?—There is no reason to the contrary. There are three different packages in this

room. In the hall downstairs you will find packages used in Argentine, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and so on.

12846. *Lord Pirrie.*—These are the ones downstairs?—Yes.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

12847. You speak of the "Surprise" competitions—are the judges allowed to know, actually, where the butter comes from—I mean the districts from which it comes, or are the different consignments numbered, say, 1, 2, 3, and 4?—If any butter is sent in with any mark on the package other than the label issued by the Department it is disqualified.

12848. Yes, that is what I wanted to know—you put a label on it?—Oh, yes, we do.

12849. Therefore, your Department know whether that butter comes from the North, the South, the East, or the West?—Yes; when it comes in, however, that label is taken off by a clerk, and a number put on instead, so that only the clerk knows where it comes from.

12850. Are the judges assisted by a certain number of creamery inspectors?—No, the judges are not assisted at all.

12851. But the creamery inspectors are there?—One of the Department's inspectors is always in charge of the competition, but he does not go round with the judges.

12852. He himself does not go round?—No; I have acted in that capacity myself.

12853. I want to make this matter clear, because your evidence left it in doubt whether the creamery inspector who was present with the judges went round, or whether or not, whether he is aware of where the butter comes from?—No.

12854. I wanted to have it clear. The judges, as I presume from the way you gave your evidence, have nothing whatever to aid them except the card you have given to the Chairman, and that flavour, texture and colour are the only things they judge from?—They also judge packing and finish.

12855. Supposing that butter has come from a very filthy creamery, or a very objectionable district, or has been carried up, as a previous witness said, probably you heard him give his evidence?—No.

12856. Well, have been carried up, or some of it, in wagons that manure has been carried in, do the judges ever go round and inspect these various dairies before they give their award?—No.

12857. Therefore, it is judged exactly like Danish butter coming to the London market?—Just exactly like butter on the market.

12858. As far as your Department goes, you test exactly the way that the English market tests the Danish butter, whether it is made in Russia, in Servia, or in Siberia?—We ask the judges to judge commercially.

12859. You actually treat it, and your object is to treat the Irish butter exactly as the Danish butter is treated in the English market, that is to say, they have nothing to do with where it comes from; it is supposed to come from Denmark, but it may come from Siberia or anywhere else, the judges decide on it according as it tastes like Danish?—We want our butter to be regarded as Irish.

12860. You don't give the judges any information other than that the butter arrives in Dublin; the judges do not know where it comes from?—They know that it is Irish.

12861. But you said that he does not know where it comes from?—There has been a misunderstanding. I understood you had gathered from the scheme I have put in that these competitions were confined to creameries in Ireland. The judges know that perfectly well, but they are not at all aware of what part of Ireland the butter comes from.

12862. They have got that advantage over the English judges, the English judges in judging Danish butter know that it comes from Denmark, but it may be Siberian or Russian butter really: you are aware of that?—I would like to know where that occurs.

12863. It occurs everywhere?—In the markets every cask of Danish butter is labelled as Danish.

12864. But it does not follow that it is Danish because it comes from Denmark?—Butter coming into Denmark from Siberia or Russia is not labelled with the Lur Brand.

12865. How do you prevent that?—We don't prevent it, but the Danish Government do. They take great care to prevent any butter coming from Siberia or Russia being sold as Danish.

Precautions taken by the Danish Government as to sale of Danish butter.

12866. On the London market?—Yes.

12867. Well, I gave Sir Horace Plunkett the papers a few years ago showing him the large number of tons of butter, I forget how many, that went into Denmark, and that butter, I think I might almost say, amounted to about 2,000 tons more than Denmark could produce, leaving nothing at all for the Danes themselves to use. Where did that butter go to?—I have not the figures before me, but, speaking personally from what I have seen of Danish dairies and of the Danish method of working, I don't think that they knowingly allow a pennyworth of butter outside the country to be sold, that is anything but Danish.

12868. Well, let me say that I am delighted to hear that?—And we want on our part to prevent any Irish butter being sold as anything except Irish.

12869. You mentioned Limerick as being a centre in connection with butter?—I think most of the butter goes through Waterford.

12870. But did not you mention Limerick as having a large supply of creameries?—There are a large number of them around Limerick.

Precautions taken by the Department as to the export Irish butter properly so called.

12780a. Do your Department keep any record of the amount of butter that is imported into Ireland?—The Department have great difficulty in obtaining these figures from the authorities at the port of entry.

12871. But does your Department keep a record of all the butter that is imported into Ireland?—It endeavours to get it.

12872. But it does not keep any record?—It cannot keep any record, so far as I know.

12873. Are you not aware that every port has to keep a record of the kind?—I think if you ask Mr. Prentice, of the transit section, who will give evidence, it is more in his line.

12874. But the Butter Department has no clerk or no person to watch these imports?—Mr. Prentice will answer that question.

12875. You don't know it?—I do not know it personally.

12876. Have you any inspector in your Department to see that the butter that does come into the country does not go into a creamery, and come out as Irish butter on the other side?—No, all the creameries are not under our inspection, but we certainly watch to see that no foreign butter goes in and comes out as Irish from the creameries entered under the scheme.

12877. Have you got the circular instructing your inspectors on that point?—No, we have no circular instructing them in that way.

12878. Have you got a copy of the Department's letter to the inspectors drawing attention to that particular matter?—No, because it was not a point that I thought was necessary to send instruction about in that way. The instructions to our inspectors were given verbally at our office.

Output and prices of butter at different seasons of the year.

12879. Then I will come at the same question in another way. What is the best time of the year for the farmer or the creamery to sell butter: what month of the year does he get the best price?—During the autumn and winter months.

12880. December, January, and February?—You might say November and December.

12881. What is the production of your dairies in December, compared with June?—I can give you that, I think, pretty closely. I have here the table giving the percentage reduction of butter for each month during the year.

12882. June to December?—In December it would—

12883. This is the total for Ireland?—I have taken the total as 100, and I am giving the percentage production for each month.

12884. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Is this from the creameries registered under your scheme?—This is the average of a large number of creameries where I could get the particulars each month.

12885. It includes more than you gave us?—No, it does not include all under the scheme.

12886. Would it give us a fair notion of the amount?—It would give you a fair idea of the amount of butter, and of the proportion of butter produced each month.

12887. From a certain number of creameries?—Yes, but if you take the number of creameries over the country and average and then multiply you are likely to get at the truth.

12888. *Lord Pirrie.*—What figure will you give me?—The percentage production.

Mar. 12, 1907.

Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

12889. Is June the largest month?—Yes; assuming that the output of butter is 100 tons for the year——

12890. Just give me the percentage for June?—15·4 per cent.

12891. 15 per cent. is made in June?—Yes.

12892. And what in December?—3·4.

12893. And yet you told me a minute ago that the price of butter was very much dearer, and that the farmer could sell his butter at a very much higher price, in December than in June?—Yes, that is quite true.

12894. Is that because the people eat less butter in December than in June?—No; it is because less butter is produced in December and more in June.

12895. What steps have you taken, or what regulations have you got to show to the farmers how they can produce more butter in December than they are doing; what have you done in connection with that?—In my own particular line, that is in connection with the creameries and dairy work generally——

Output and prices of butter at different seasons of the year.

12896. Well, but that includes butter?—Yes, we have drawn the attention of the managers of creameries to the necessity for urging on the suppliers to produce more milk, and hence more butter, in the winter season to enable them to produce an equal amount of butter each month the year round, so that we may retain our customers the year round instead of having them dropping off in November and December, and getting them back again in April or March.

12897. You have given us some interesting instructions about packing butter. Can you give us your circulars to the farmer telling him how to feed his cattle and keep his grains?—In dealing with the farmers the work is done through the County Committee of Agriculture and their instructors.

12898. But is not that the same Department?—Yes, but this is work that is performed through the County Committees of Agriculture.

12899. But does not it come under the Department?—I am not directly concerned with it.

12900. Is not that your Department?—Not directly. It is done through the County Instructors in agriculture, and through the County Committees of Agriculture, and they try to encourage tillage and winter dairying in every way.

12901. Of course I am asking if you give instructions or issue publications. You give instructions and issue circulars, and send people around to show how to grow flax, and you occasionally tell them how to sow potatoes; in the same Department don't you show the farmer how practically to produce fifteen per cent. in quantity in the month of December when he gets probably twenty per cent. more for it?—The price is coming down very much now owing to the large winter supply of butter.

12902. I know it is?—I believe leaflets on tillage and on the production of crops for winter feeding are issued.

12903. You have not got them?—I have not got them here.

12904. I suppose we can get them officially?—Yes.

12905. From Sir Horace Plunkett?—Yes. I am sure on application to the Secretary or Sir Horace Plunkett that either will be willing to give them.

12906. When he gives his evidence he will answer these questions?—Yes.

12907. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The way the matter stands is this. Our attention is drawn to the importance of winter dairying by the Department, and they leave us in the different counties to take such steps as we think best in order to encourage winter dairying. Is not that so?—Yes.

12908. *Lord Pirrie.*—You answered the question as I expected you would with regard to the butter. We were told by one of your colleagues who gave evidence some time ago that a large amount of butter was being imported into Limerick in winter, in December and in January and February: where does that butter go to? Do your inspectors endeavour to trace what becomes of it after arrival?—I think you will have to ask Mr. Prentice.

12909. Perhaps I am unfortunate in my questions. You say you have charge, that you are the inspector of dairying: surely butter belongs to dairying?—Yes. But the Department have not compulsory powers.

12910. I cannot understand why the inspector who has charge of a dairy, and the butter that comes out of the dairy, has not also charge of seeing what becomes of the imported butter. I want to see if this imported butter is sent from Limerick to Belfast or elsewhere. Is not the County Clare one of the best butter making counties you have?—I should say Limerick.

12911. More than Clare?—Limerick and Cork.

12912. Well, take Clare and Limerick; they cannot at times make sufficient butter to supply the inhabitants, and I want to know where does the butter come from to supply Dublin and Belfast?—A great deal of it is imported, as you will see, if you go round the stores; but I have no power to enter into a wholesale merchant's store, and I have no power to enter into a creamery; unless the creamery makes application under the scheme we have no power of entering it.

12913. I thought the Agricultural Board had a right to see that cream and butter were properly made?—Oh, no. We have no statutory powers.

12914. Have you not, for instance, power to see that a cow is not hurt in transit?—I believe Mr. Prentice has certain powers.

12915. Do you think there would be an increased production of butter if your Department had power to see that cleanliness was observed in the dairies?—I think it would do a good deal for the reputation of the Irish creamery butter if the Department had compulsory power to inspect all creameries.

12916. That is the point. You agree with me in saying that it would be a very important advantage if power were given to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction to enable their Inspectors to exercise right of inspecting dairies and creameries?—Yes, all places where butter is produced, manipulated or worked.

12917. You think it would increase the production of butter considerably?—We would be better able to advise, and so on, and to assist in improving the butter that is produced.

12918. You have, I think, proved that there was great reason for the complaints made as to the transit of the packages in 1903, when sixty-five were actually burst and ninety-four otherwise damaged out of 639 altogether. The figures for 1905 showing twenty-six burst and thirty-nine otherwise damaged: you agree with me that the Department has done a great deal of good in that direction, and that the practical information given to the packers has been of advantage to the industry in Ireland?—I certainly do think that.

12919. And the next point is that the Agricultural Board and their Inspectors having done so much, you would strongly urge the railway companies to facilitate and assist the Irish farmer by being more careful how they carry and handle it?—Yes, as to how they carry and handle it.

12920. If we could get the railway companies to see the importance, when the butter arrives at the station, of putting it into a cool chamber so that it might go, say, the next day, with other consignments and be carried at a cheaper rate; do you think that would be an advantage?—I don't know that it would be an advantage to store the butter for a day or two.

12921. In a cool chamber?—One of the assets, one of the important assets of Ireland, is its closeness to England, and one of the important factors of our butter trade is that we are so close to the English market that butter produced to-day can be put on the counter for sale to-morrow.

12922. Well, in that case New Zealand and Australia are at a great disadvantage?—I don't want Irish butter to compete with Australian or New Zealand butter.

12923. But Irish butter, then, has a great advantage?—If we cold-stored Irish butter we would lose some of our advantages.

12924. Would it go down in price if it was cold-stored?—We would lose in price, and our connection would suffer with a high class of trade. A grocer will very often wire over for his butter to the creamery in Ireland, and he wants his butter perhaps next morning, and it is a question of which route to send it by in order that it may arrive in the town early in the morning, and if we cold-stored our butter we might lose that advantage.

12925. Do you think that cold-storing for six hours would do it any harm compared with lying for six hours in an ordinary shed with grain, manure, timber, cement, and coal, probably within ten yards—do you think in such circumstances the cold-storage would do it harm?—No, I do not.

12926. Why do you think that it would lower the

price of the butter?—I think it should be arranged to keep the butter this way while it was shipped.

12927. That is all that I suggested?—I thought you were suggesting that it should be kept in this way for two or three days.

12928. Oh no, for six or twelve hours waiting for the load, so that it could be all loaded together?—I understood you to mean two or three days.

12929. No?—I think, then, if the butter could be put into a cool store or could be protected from heat or dirt it would have a very good effect.

12930. You think it would be very desirable that the butter trade of Ireland should be cold-stored in such a case as I have mentioned?—Yes, that there should be an insulated store.

12931. Separated from the ordinary store?—Yes, I don't mean a cold store with a chilling plant, but I mean an insulated store.

12932. You agree with that?—Yes. I think it would be a good thing.

12933. Have you ever, as one of the heads of the Department recommended that that should be suggested to the railway companies?—No.

12934. After your evidence to-day, I presume you will?—I will think over the matter, and see what can be done.

12935. You say that it is desirable?—Yes.

12936. Don't you think, then, it is your duty to suggest it?—Yes, if possible.

12937. You think it would be an important thing to have an insulation store at each main station—I don't mean at every station—where a large amount of butter could be collected, and sent off, and that the farmers' interests should be looked after in this way—you agree with that?—Yes, I do, but I do not consider it would be an advantage to the Irish butter industry to delay butter in a cool store at a railway station for six or seven hours, as suggested, for the purpose of accumulating sufficient butter to fill a wagon. With regard to the question that insulated stores should be provided by the railway company, what I wish to convey is, that it would be desirable that a suitable place, cool, clean, and well-ventilated should be provided at a railway station for the storage of consignments of milk, cream and butter, that could not be at once forwarded to its destination.

12938. *Lord Pirrie.*—I am much obliged to you for giving your evidence so clearly.

12939. *Chairman.*—Have you any statistics as to the value of butter exported before 1903 and the last year?—I have the figures, I think, for 1905. I think the estimated production of butter in Ireland in 1905 was something like five and a half million pounds sterling in value.

12940. Have you got the figures for 1903?—I have not, unfortunately.

12941. Is the production an increasing quantity?—I think it is increasing.

Mar. 12, 1907.

Mr. A. Poole Wilson, Chief Dairying Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

12942. Surely with all these regulations you can tell us that?—Of course I take the statistics from our statistical branch more or less now, and it is a very difficult matter to get figures from those creameries. We have no compulsory powers.

12943. But surely there is no difficulty in getting the value of the butter exported?

Lord Pirrie.—Or imported either.

12944. *Chairman.*—But of the butter exported from Ireland?—I believe there is. We have the figures for 1904, and I think you will find that in the statistics of exports and imports, the statistician says that there was difficulty in getting these returns from some of the ports, and that some of the ports are actually omitted. I have asked the statistician himself and he has explained it to me.

12945. *Lord Pirrie.*—But we have published them, and we are bound to act on the figures of the goods that come in—I mean into Belfast and Dublin and Cork?—I believe there is a difficulty in getting them.

Mr. Tatlow.—It is quite true that this statistician has had great difficulty.

Lord Pirrie.—But are you not bound to do it?

Mr. Tatlow.—That I cannot tell you.

Lord Pirrie.—Can you bring anything from England to Ireland without passing it through the Custom House?

Mr. Tatlow.—That I could not tell you.

12946. *Chairman.*—I want just this one figure on the notes, namely, that the estimated value of the exports of butter in 1904 was £3,195,115.

Witness.—If you like, I will look through it.

Lord Pirrie.—But what is the figure now?

12947. *Chairman.*—Is that the last issued?—Yes.

Mr. Tatlow.—What I was referring to was this, in the publication of the Department:—

Difficulty of obtaining accurate statistics of Irish imports and exports.

"It was an object of the late Dr. Coyne to ascertain, as far as possible, what was the state of the trade of Ireland, and the foundations of the work of which this is the first report, were laid by him. The carrying out of the inquiry, however, presented great difficulties which have delayed the publication of this report. It was found that in the case of a large number of ports no returns as to imports and exports were available. Even at present there remain gaps which can be only partially filled. But as particulars have now been obtained from forty-six ports, including in all probability over 97 per cent. of the export and import trade of Ireland, the information may in this respect be considered to be representative."

Witness.—There are some further notes qualifying that on the next page.

12948. *Chairman.*—Is that the last report issued?—that is for 1904.

Mr. James Harper, Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture, examined by the Chairman.

12949. Now, we have been dealing with butter, and I want to ask you with reference to eggs, fruit and poultry. Those are very important articles of production in this country?—The egg exports in 1904 were £2,188,104; and in 1905 they were £2,422,112.

12950. That is a large increase?—Yes, and we believe it was still greater in 1906. Then poultry in 1904 was £625,870, and in 1905 it was £677,435.

12951. Still showing an increase?—Yes. And fruit, I am quoting this from memory, fruit and fruit pulps and jams and preserved fruits totalled over £80,000 in 1904. That includes fruits, jams, and jellies.

12952. Now you are well acquainted with the steps taken by the Department to ensure this particular traffic being packed properly and carried properly in this country for export? I can speak for the period since the commencement of 1906.

12953. And what is your particular occupation?—My occupation is to visit the English markets, to interview buyers, to see the way in which the produce arrives, to find out what is wrong with the packing and handling, to find out new packages which it might be desirable to recommend, to find out what is the cause of the loss of markets; to endeavour to get back the trade to Ireland by getting these people put into contact with reliable shippers, and by then seeing the shippers on this side and imparting the information obtained from the buyers on the other side, and putting one in connection with the other where in both cases it is deemed advisable.

Mr. James Harper, Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

12954. In fact you are——?—A commercial traveller, practically. The first report that I made as a result of this is given in the "Marketing of Irish Products" in the Department's publication of last year. I sell nothing and I buy nothing. I have nothing to do with the prices of the article. I have to see that, if possible, what can be done shall be done to improve the handling, grading, and presentment of the whole thing. I have nothing to do with the railway rates or transit.

12955. Now, you say that part of your business is attending the British markets from time to time and getting information from the buyers. Now, how do you impart that information to the senders?—By letters.

Inspectors' duties.

12956 But eggs and fruit and poultry are produced by thousands of people?—But the exports are done by, comparatively speaking, few. It is the shipper that I have to do with, not the producer.

12957. How is the export trade conducted generally—in eggs, for instance?—By shippers.

12958. Where?—The big egg centres, and at the ports.

Mar. 12, 1907.

Mr. James Harper, Travelling Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

Improvement in egg packages. Method of packing and handling of the traffic.

12959. Then a man will collect, say, at Limerick from the neighbouring district, and send them in large quantities for export?—Yes.

12960. And it is that class of people that you have to do with?—Yes, chiefly. But, if a small man desires information, of course I do not limit it to the big ones.

12961. That is the mode of doing it?—Yes.

12962. Then is your attention given to the question of packing as well?—That is one of the main things that I do. The first point in the article I wrote was to point out the question of packing, which I look upon as my particular work—the presentment, the presenting of the thing properly.

12963. Have you noticed an improvement in packing?—In this article I took the view more or less of the people I called upon, 26 of them saying that they had noticed a distinct improvement in recent years. I keep myself in touch with these buyers subsequently, and find out what they think of each year's work.

12964. *Lord Pirrie.*—What year are you referring to?—I am speaking of 1906.

12965. *Chairman.*—I suppose in the course of your inquiries you ascertain and get information with reference to the other countries supplying the English markets?—Yes, the various countries. I examine their packages and take measurements where I think it advisable. For instance, if I am in the south, I take the French packages; on the east the Continental and in the west the Canadian and other packages.

12966. From your general knowledge can you say that Ireland is now in an equally good position as regards packages as these other countries?—It is not.

12967. Are they approaching that position?—Very fast. I have never had any work which I found improving so rapidly as I find the home shippers are improving the packages. But it is not only a question of the packages, but of packing and handling as well.

12968. You heard the evidence given by the previous witness as to butter?—Yes.

12969. And I suppose the same remarks apply with regard to eggs?—I think so; but of course I have not had the means of coming into contact with the shippers so long as he has. I have had only the last year or so, whereas he has had it for a number of years.

12970. With regard to the eggs, from what I saw of the egg case downstairs, they seem identical with the French?—No, the French are narrower or slightly longer.

12971. But they are the same type of case?—Yes. One of the difficulties I find almost insurmountable in some places is that the proper package means, perhaps, a little extra cost; and it is deemed good business on the part of a lot of the shippers to cut the price of the package in the way of the thickness of the timber or the character of the wood. That is one of the difficulties we have to overcome, to show that the saving of a penny or two may mean the loss of a shilling in the end.

Samples of improved egg packages distributed to shippers, and instructions issued at the expense of the Department.

12972. Have you ever in 1906 had occasion to send sample packages to shippers?—Yes.

12973. And these are the samples we see here?—Yes. But we do not send them broadcast indiscriminately, only to where there is shown an intelligent desire to improve. We have sent them to some people who have not removed them from the station. To continue that would be a waste of time and labour.

12974. That is done at the expense of the Department?—Yes.

12975. So that any shipper of any of these three articles—eggs, poultry, and fruit—any sender of these articles can, if he chooses, get excellent packages for sending the goods equal to anything that is imported into England from other countries?—Exactly. And he can go further. If he writes, he can have instruction, and either I or someone else would go from the office and instruct him how to pack on exactly the same lines as the countries with whom he has to compete.

12976. In eggs, for instance?—And fruit and everything else.

12977. And without expense to him?—Absolutely without any.

12978. All done at the expense of the Department?—At the expense of the Department. In addition to that, in order to promote interest in the work we have taken to exhibit at shows approved methods of packing; and I would like to show you here some pictures showing the foreign style of packing which we recommend (*pictures exhibited*).

12979. Do you find in the course of your inquiries in the English markets that the Irish eggs packed in this way arrive in as good condition as the Danish or French?—Well, broadly speaking, yes, but there are specific cases where they are not.

12980. Broadly speaking, they are?—Generally speaking.

12981. The transit in this country and across the Channel and in England does not cause any more breakages than is found in the case of eggs imported from Denmark?—I would say that would be broadly the case.

12982. What do you mean by "specific cases"?—Specific cases where—although I cannot prove it—the eggs are handled too roughly on passenger boats, and may not be treated so carefully then as when sent by cargo boats.

12983. With ordinary care, and these packages that you recommend in Ireland, and the mode of packing you suggest—would that ensure the eggs arriving in good condition?—Yes.

12984. Without any breakages?—Yes.

12985. And generally speaking that is so now?—Yes.

12986. But there are a few cases, I suppose exceptional, where eggs have been roughly treated and a percentage broken?—I would say, too, that I think when the egg case is seen to be a rough case and not turned out creditably, perhaps the railway companies do not take the same pains with that case as if it was turned out well. I think that carelessness in the packing perhaps brings a little more carelessness in the handling.

12987. I don't know that that would make any difference with a railway company?—I don't think that it should, but I believe it does.

12988. Now, what do you mean by "non-returnable cases"?—All the packages that I and the Department recommend in connection with this work are non-returnable.

12989. Broken up?—I don't know that, but they are not returned. They are non-returnable cases.

12990. Not like a beer cask?—No. That ensures a clean case being used every time, a more presentable case; and it saves a lot of trouble to the buyer on the other side in sending back the cases.

12991. How many eggs are packed into a case like that?—Twelve long hundred eggs—being 1440; or six long hundred, being 720; or three long hundred, being 360. The hundred in the egg trade means 120. You get 120 eggs for a hundred. Another point with regard to packing is:—The grading of eggs—which I consider to be of very great importance.

12992. *Lord Pirrie.*—They sell them in Ireland by weight?—Yes, but the Britisher buys them by grade. The man who supplies you would deal in them at 15*s.* or 16*s.*, 17*s.* or 18*s.* per 120. It is very important thing that the large eggs should not be packed with the small ones. That saves breakage. That is why I mention the thing. The Continental, and the French eggs especially, are graded very finely and evenly. Now, as to poultry——

12993. *Chairman.*—I don't think you need refer to that. We want simply your evidence as to the eggs. You pack poultry in non-returnable cases just the same?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

12994. I understand you to say that your transactions were between the middleman, so to speak, and the purchaser?—Yes.

12995. Of course, I suppose there are very large quantities of eggs, poultry, and fruit shipped by individuals?—Where that is done we meet them.

12996. You don't deal with them?—Oh, yes, if I am asked to.

12997. Your principal concern is between the middleman who collects from the surrounding districts and the purchaser?—That is in the case of eggs, but in the case of fruit we deal with a single person if required.

12998. Confining yourself to eggs, you deal with the shippers and they are responsible for the packing of the eggs?—Yes. They receive them in small quantities from the surrounding producers and pack them themselves.

12999. You say that twenty-six buyers gave it as their experience that there has been a great improvement in the packing in recent years?—Yes.

13000. Was that buyers from shippers?—Yes; buyers from shippers.

13001. Roughly speaking, what percentage does that represent?—There would be probably thirty or forty buyers out of 250 called on, in respect of eggs.

13002. Out of that forty or fifty twenty-six said there was a great improvement?—Yes.

13003. As a result of your inspection of Continental and other packages are you of opinion that the different packages in which the eggs are now sent from this country are in every respect of as good quality as those of the Continent?—I should say they are not. The eggs generally are not as well packed.

13004. The cases are not of equally good quality?—No; the eggs are not packed in this country as well as in other countries. The quality of the egg is high.

13005. Is that the fault of the packer or of the case?—Of both.

13006. Is it as a result of your reports that these conferences which Mr. Wilson referred to have been held, and specifications entered into with Irish manufacturers as to boxes conforming to a certain standard?—He has to do with butter. I am speaking o eggs. We are now arranging; we are going into the question of trying to get standard boxes for eggs; we are narrowing it down. We cannot move in advance of the trading circle; we must get them to agree, and the great point we have to consider is the question of dimensions and the thickness and quality of the timber.

13007. Are you going into the matter of egg boxes in the same way as has been done by the Department in respect of butter?—The matter is in train; we have boxes made and they will be tested and we will go into the details and the matter of the thickness of the wood. Boxes have been ordered and they are being tested to see how they will turn out.

13008. It is your experience that when damage and loss occurs in the transit of eggs it is partly attributable to bad packing and partly to the bad cases in which the eggs are packed?—Unquestionably.

13009. You agree with the evidence given by Mr. Cantrell—I think that was the pith of his evidence—that a great deal of the fault was due to bad packing?—Undoubtedly, but it is improving.

13010. The railway could hardly be held responsible for packages that are not satisfactory. You would hardly hold them accountable?—That is a matter I do not refer to.

13011. You spoke of grading; is there not a system in France of passing eggs through a mesh?—Yes; but in my opinion there is no better grading system than the human eye and hand when they are trained.

13012 You think the Irish farming man's eye is sufficiently trained to be able to grade eggs of two or three classes?—I have a good deal of experience of these matters and I unhesitatingly say that he is good and quick to learn and can do it as well as anyone I ever saw. All these other things mean an increase of expense. If you can show how to do it by the use of the eye and hand only you can get more done.

13013. The shippers to England have acquired a considerable facility in grading eggs?—Yes, they are taking it up; they find it pays; it must be shown to pay or they won't do it.

13014. As regards poultry, have you anything to say in regard to the cases?—The present system of sending out poultry from Ireland is in what is called a railway skip which is returnable; it is a basket; the Department recommended poultry to be shipped in a flat box holding one dozen ducks or fowl. I have a photograph here which I should like to put in. These photographs were taken and they show the mode of packing fowl.

(*Witness handed photographs to the members of the Commission.*)

13015. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the cost of the box?—The box runs to about a halfpenny per bird, and in the case of turkeys from a penny to three-halfpence.

13016. That is the only cost involved in the purchase of the box?—Yes.

13017. *Lord Pirrie.*—How many birds are there in the box?—In fowl boxes twelve; in turkey crates twelve cock birds, or eighteen hen birds.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That would be sixpence or ninepence.

Witness.—A thousand were used last Christmas for turkeys for the first time, and the shippers were more than recompensed for the cost of the case by the extra price obtained for the birds.

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13018. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—How do the poultry cases compare with those from the Continent?—The crate is a facsimile of the French crate. The box of the American fowl case.

13019. It is satisfactory?—Absolutely.

13020. There is not much to report in the way of suggested improvement as regards the cases?—These cases have not been adopted until last year; they are, however, being adopted; they are found more profitable.

Use of non-returnable standard boxes for fruit traffic for English markets advocated.

13021. Have you anything to say as to fruit?—We issued a pamphlet at the commencement of 1903, and instituted non-returnable packages and also flat boxes for packing the highest class fruit. I should like to mention that the flat box is only used for the very best fruit, and not for inferior fruit. The standard box is to try and arrange that the purchaser shall always be able to know exactly what he is buying. That is one of the failings of the fruit trade. You buy a package containing fruit, and until you see it you don't know what you are getting. We tried to institute a standard. To show what can be done with Irish fruit we have some special apples grown in Ireland, and there was a good crop this year. The leading English fruit paper, referring to the fruit said—"Irish grown Cox's Orange Pippins in single layer non-returnable boxes of two dozen fruits were disposed of at the rate of 4*s.* per dozen fruits in Covent Garden." And it adds that if Irish growers could not put fruit of this character on the English market at this time they would eclipse the finest growers in England.

13022. From what district were those apples?—From the South of Ireland, and the traffic is increasing. The very highest quality of fruit only pays to send to England in this kind of box. There is an increasing demand, and some of the biggest salesmen in Covent Garden can sell an unlimited quantity of the best fruit.

Ireland a good fruit growing country.

13023. But is there an unlimited quantity of ground suitable for the production?—Well, I may say that I have opportunities of knowing as much about the matter as anyone, and I say that no country offers the advantages for fruit-growing that Ireland does. She can grow apples of the best quality.

13024. Is the small fruit from the North of Ireland?—Not necessarily; it is largely cooking fruit from the North.

13025. I refer chiefly to strawberries?—Yes, the bulk comes from the North, but there are some very fine strawberries coming from the South of Ireland.

13025A. Is there a large export trade?—The demand for jam purchased at home is increasing, and there is more demand in the country than for all that will probably be produced for some years.

Value of the fruit crop in year 1904.

13026. In 1904 you say the value of the fruit was £80,000?—Yes, fruit, and what is made from fruit; that is the first year I have seen the return.

13027. Fruit is a very delicate article to handle, and would afford a criterion as to the care exercised by the railway companies?—Yes.

Very little damage to fruit in transit when properly packed.

13027A. What has been your experience of the manner in which it is packed?—Packed in the way we recommend, I have never heard of breakage or anything that way. These are photographs showing the manner of packing fruit that we recommend. (*Photographs shown to the members of the Commission.*)

13028. It reached its destination in a satisfactory condition?—Yes. I would say that although we recommend our packages and send them to the people that we think would be likely to adopt them with advantage, the rate of adoption has not been as rapid as I could wish.

13029. I am referring more to the railway companies?—I believe that properly packed fruit is properly cared for by the railway companies. I should like to say that we are instituting a new chip basket for blackberries, and I think—with only two exceptions—these very slight baskets were carried successfully to different parts of England and Scotland, from Derry to Edinburgh, and from the South to Cardiff, and the blackberries obtained very fine prices.

13030. I saw some boxes in the hall, last time we were here, with handles?—Those are the ones I refer to.

13031. There are no objections raised by the railway

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companies?—No. Of course they have always been sent by passenger train, for they would have been smashed if they had been sent by goods train. Strawberries come here from the South and West of England in the same baskets and why should we not send them from Ireland.

13032. Then your experience of the handling of them by the railway companies is satisfactory?—Satisfactory.

Examined by LORD PIRRIE.

13033. I am very pleased with nearly everything you have stated. You have done very much since October?—Since January twelve months.

13034. Well, even since October you have done a great deal. Your work, I take it, is purely in connection with eggs, and no other produce?—Eggs, poultry and fruit.

Inspector's duties discussed.

13055. Is your object and duty to see how the trade can be increased all the time, and to give such assistance to the producer as will facilitate him in doubling his supply next year?—Yes, but I have nothing to do with production, only with markets, and with such things as packing, the instruction of the shipper and so on.

13036. It is not the shipper that does the growing?

The Chairman.—Oh, no.

Lord Pirrie.—But I want to know where the line is drawn.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—He says the shipper collects them.

Lord Pirrie.—That is all right, but I can't see why the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction are responsible to the shipper. As to one point in Mr. Harper's evidence that he should make clear—he said he only called on shippers and agents—

Witness.—Shippers; I don't think I said agents.

13037. All right; but the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction is to teach and show how things are to be cultivated or produced?—That is being done.

13038. Are you paid by the Agricultural Department?—Certainly, but I cannot do all. I only see to the marketing; I have to find information about marketing, packing, and handling.

13039. You don't find out who is to buy?—Not necessarily.

13040. I don't yet realise what your duty is. If there is a market in China or America, or only in England or Scotland, is it your duty to tell them to what extent they are to deal with the shipper?—The shipper writes to me asking where he can sell certain produce.

13041. In what sense are you using the word "shipper"; do you mean the ship-owner?—No, I am talking of the seller. It would, perhaps, be a better word.

13042. Your evidence to Colonel Poë was that you deal with the shipper?—I said the middleman who collects from the farmers all round.

13043. Then you are not able to show to us how the farmer wanting to produce more may do so—you don't show him that?—No; but if you will allow me to say this, I think my work is quite as important—namely, showing how to present the produce, and put it on the market.

13044. Oh, I am not saying it is not—your evidence was remarkably good and clear. I only want to ascertain what is your position.

13045. You deal with the shipper, or the "middleman"?—Yes, or the "sender."

13045A. Yes, the sender; and if he complains to you that a case of eggs is broken, is it your duty to go and see whether it was on the railway or by the steampacket company, or from a bad box?—My duty is to hand the complaint to the transit department.

13046. You don't see it for yourself?—No.

13046A. In that case, as you only go to the middleman, you don't go to any English customers, large consumers of eggs and poultry, and find out what their complaint is?—Yes, I do that. My duty also is to find out from the retail shopkeepers wherever I go what they think of the eggs and the packing from Ireland.

13047. If a complaint comes from a consumer—a hotel suppose—it is your duty to go and find out exactly what it is, to trace the complaint to its source, and how the mischief is to be avoided?—No. We would not get that information from them. We would get the complaint from the wholesale man. It would be the consumer's complaint.

13048. Leave out the wholesale man for the moment—I suppose there are some people who buy eggs and poultry direct?—Very few.

13049. Taking poultry, five or six hundred turkeys a week?—That would be a big buyer, a wholesale man. In the case of the man who buys a single turkey my duty would not be to interfere with him.

13050. You dont' go to the retail customer?—Unless I find a complaint in the town I go to.

13051. What I am trying to find out is this—in the cases of the large steamship companies, who have had to give up using Irish eggs—you have never gone to them to find out why they have done so?—It is the first time I have ever heard of it. If you give me the name I will see to it at once.

13052. You will find out where the fault was?—I will, certainly.

13053. In this report you have handed me you say some of the largest buyers in Great Britain have been unable to get their eggs packed in a proper manner. That shows it is largely the fault of not having proper cases. In fact, you have stated that that was the fault of not having proper cases, but that in that respect there has been a great improvement last year. If you do as much next year as you have done in the past you won't leave much to complain of?—I hope it will be so.

13054. I think if the same progress goes on it will be most satisfactory, but I want to ask you how many eggs do you give to the pound?—That's hardly the way to put it. It is so many pounds' weight to 120 eggs.

13055. If I offered you twenty eggs to the pound they would be very small?—I should like to see twenty to the pound.

13056. Seven to the pound weight?—That would be a very good average.

13057. A good buyer in England buying Irish eggs always likes to get from seven to seven and a half eggs to the pound. I never saw any Irish contract or any offer of Irish eggs that did not offer to give from seven or seven and a half to nine or nine and a half eggs to the pound?—In the contracts that I am acquainted with it worked out at from fifteen to eighteen lbs. weight of 120 eggs.

13058. Does your Department urge the farmers to cultivate a smaller or a larger egg; which is of the most commercial value to the farmer; have you any standard in your Department showing that the farmer will make £100 a year more out of hens that give nine and a half eggs to the pound or out of hens that will give seven to the pound, for which there is a much better price; have you any information in your Department showing which is the best for the farmer?—Certainly.

13059. What is the result?—The result of all that is that the Department encourage what they call "poultry schemes" in nearly every county in Ireland. These schemes have, as part of their arrangement, poultry instructresses who go round and try to get a better kind of bird produced that produces a larger-sized egg.

13060. Then the larger the egg is you consider it the better for the farmer?—As a rule, yes—other things being equal.

13061. Supposing that he gets £100 for eggs of nine to the pound, how much more would he make with eggs of seven to the pound?—You are putting a series of questions to me that I would have to work out. I cannot answer for everything in the Department; but individually, a bigger price is paid for the larger-sized than for the smaller-sized egg; and instruction is given through the poultry instructresses, through the length and breadth of Ireland to go for the larger egg.

13062. But does your Department keep statistics on the subject?—You can over-do a thing by statistics.

The best thing to show is that they can get a better price for the bigger egg than for the smaller one.

13063. But the better price does not show the nett return. Would you be surprised to know that a poultry firm that produces none or very few save the smaller egg makes a very handsome profit, whilst a high-class poultry firm that produces hardly anything but the larger egg will not make the two ends meet, the reason being that more small eggs are laid, and the hotels and the big consuming companies buy the smaller egg. I think that is one of the most important things your Department could have before it, as it would mean assisting the railway companies by thousands and millions of tons. I am only suggesting to you as I did to the last witness; don't you think it is a matter worth looking into by the Department?—Certainly; but allow me to say that in other countries they are producing the larger eggs, and these are selling better than the smaller eggs, and we have to produce the larger egg in order to compete with them. It may be good policy sometimes to produce the smaller egg.

13064. The object of the Department is to give commercial assistance to Ireland; and apparently that end has not been looked into?—As to matters of policy I cannot speak. As to matters of work I will answer anything I can. I know nothing about policy.

13065. In a private house, for one's own table, the large egg is bought; but if you go round the various hotels you will find that you don't get the large egg, because they have to put two eggs on the table for you, and the smaller eggs are cheaper than the large ones—isn't it their interest to do so?—Certainly, if they are cheaper.

13066. I only suggest that the matter is one that it would pay the Department to look into and advise about. I have no doubt that some one in your Department will have figures of that sort. I am only asking the question in order to give your Vice-President an opportunity of answering it when he comes before us.

Witness.—I can only repeat that the large egg is the one in demand, and that it sells best, and that it is the object of all countries to produce it.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

TWENTY-THIRD PUBLIC SITTING—WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13TH, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER (Chairman); Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; and Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P., examined by THE CHAIRMAN.

Mar. 13, 1907.

Mr. William Field, M.P., Member of Dublin County Council, Blackrock Urban District Council, and President Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

13067. I am sorry to say that Lord Pirrie has been called away on some important business to London, and unfortunately he will not be able to be here to-day. Now, Mr. Field, we all know perfectly well that you are member of Parliament for a division of Dublin?—Yes, sir.

13068. And you appear before us in a representative capacity?—Yes.

13069. Would you tell us in what capacity you appear?—I am a member of the Dublin County Council and of the Blackrock Urban District Council, and I am President, and have been for the last fifteen years, of the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association, and I have been deputed by these three bodies to give evidence on their behalf. I am also a member of the Dublin Port and Docks Board, and the Vice-President of the National Federation of Meat Traders, and I am Chairman also of the Transit Committee of the Irish Industrial Development Association, and a member of the Agricultural Council of the Department of Agriculture, which on my motion twice passed resolutions in favour of the amendment of the existing railway conditions in Ireland, and I am a member of the General Council of County Councils, which passed a resolution at their last meeting on this subject.

13070. Formerly you were chairman of what is called the Irish Railway Reform Association?—Yes. This association was the first body that publicly demanded a Viceregal Commission, long before it was passed by any other public body, and without being egotistical, I claim to be the primary author of this inquiry.

13071. And we are really here on your suggestion?—I think practically so, sir. The agitation against excessive railway rates and monopoly seems like an epidemic that breaks out at intervals, and after lapsing into a state of coma gradually becomes exhausted. This is what occurred to the Irish Railway Reform Association. I may say that when we held a public meeting the railway men there rather tried to break it up—when we held a meeting at the Mansion House the railway men or some of their agents tried to break up the meeting. I was a member of the Recess Committee.

13072. What is that Recess Committee?—It was a committee that sat in Dublin here just before the Department of Agriculture was formed—in fact the Department of Agriculture was formed as a result of the deliberations of that committee, and it took the subject of transit very seriously into consideration amongst other matters.

13073. Well, now, I gather from what you say that you are a very influential member of this association, but have you had any special knowledge in connection with the railway rates and charges, say before the Railway Reform Association?—I was a member of the Select Committee on Railway and Canal Rates and Charges which sat in the House of Commons when Mr. Mundella was President of the Board of Trade.

13074. Do you remember when that was?—It was a long time ago, just after I entered Parliament.

13075. Do you know about the date?—I think it was twelve or thirteen years ago. Mr. Jackson was chairman of that committee subsequently—first Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and then Mr. Jackson, now Lord Allerton.

13076. You were a member?—The reason why I do not propose to give any evidence respecting what you may call rates and charges is that my experience on that committee was that no matter what statement was put forward by traders it was always contradicted by the railway company, and the railway company had the best of it at the end of the committee—in fact it was six months lost because the railway interest in the house overruled that of the committee.

13077. Now, you were also a member of the Departmental Committee to inquire into the Cross-Channel and land transit of live stock?—I was, and I am at the present moment a member of the London and Mansion House Railway Association—I am a member of the committee, and I attend regularly the committee meetings.

13078. Well, now, you have given a good deal of attention to the subject—I think you read a paper on it?—I wrote a pamphlet in 1898 on "Irish Railway compared with State-owned Lines," a copy of which I sent to you.

13079. I have read it?—I have read several papers at Cork and Limerick Industrial Conferences, and also at Trinity College, and the Town Tenants' Association and the Mansion House; in fact I have been always reading papers and discussing the subject.

13080. Therefore it is not new to you?—Not at all, it is one of my fads—so they call it.

13081. One of your fads—at any rate you seem to have a good deal of knowledge on the subject. Have you taken any action in the House of Commons?—Yes, sir. In 1899 I moved in the House of Commons an amendment to the Queen's Speech.

13082. Would you kindly read that?—"And we humbly represent to your Majesty that the present railway rates and charges in Ireland constitute an intolerable grievance to the Irish people, and that measures should be adopted this session" (mark, that was in 1899), "for the remedy thereof, either by the amalgamation of the management under State control, or by the State purchase of Irish railways so as to reduce the tariffs, and further to increase facility of transit by utilising and developing the waterways and canalising certain rivers in Ireland."

13083. Now, you moved that resolution in the House of Commons as an amendment to the Address. How was the amendment dealt with?—It was accepted without a division after a practical debate, so that the House of Commons eight years ago unanimously endorsed my statement, and the British and Irish press commented on my proposals. Subsequently I published a pamphlet containing my speech and also newspaper articles all favourable to my contention, in the *Times* (wonderful to relate), the *Manchester Guardian*——

13084. I do not think you need read all of them. I will put it in this way, that the public newspaper articles from some of the most influential papers both in England and Ireland approved of the resolution?—I do not want to keep you too long; I have them in the pamphlet.

13085. Now, with regard to the complaints of the Irish management of railways—what have you got to say about that?—I think the policy of the Irish railway director is all wrong. And I will just briefly quote from an article published in the *New Ireland Review* in 1901, after I had attended as a delegate the International Agricultural Congress at Buda Pesth, where representatives from nearly every nation in the world were present.

13086. Now, I think it would be advisable if you would read that resolution?—"All means are to be employed to prevent the home markets being flooded with foreign produce, and to aid the export of all native produce without interfering with the free intercourse of agricultural products, the co-operation of the State would be applicable to the creation of low freights on water and railways."

13087. That was the resolution?—Yes.

13088. How was it received?—It was passed unanimously by that enormous congregation of delegates from every part of the world. My complaint against the railways in Ireland, and the United Kingdom generally, is that the policy is exactly the opposite, but more especially in Ireland the policy is exactly the opposite. The main canals have been grabbed by the railway companies to secure their monopoly.

13089. There are independently-owned canals in Ireland?—They are few, and the ones that are owned by independent companies are practically bossed by the railway companies by agreeing to pool rates, so as to enable the traffic to be carried at what they call a profit.

13090. Just give some further explanation of that resolution. What do you mean by preferential rates?—What I mean is this, "Preferential rates are freely accorded to the foreign importer and high rates are exacted from the native manufacturer and producer."

13091. This is the inland rates in Ireland?—Yes, sir, but I think it is the same thing in England. England is well able to take care of herself, the natives, "who pay rent, rates, taxes, and give employment." In that way I hold that the railway companies of Ireland have been to a certain extent responsible for emigration from this country. I do not put them as the main factor, but they are certainly one of the chief factors.

13092. We will go by steps, if you please, Mr. Field, so as to get sequence. You say that there is no proper tribunal for dealing with a complaint of that kind. That is to say, supposing Irish people wanted to complain of preferential rates from England to Ireland, as compared with rates in Ireland, you say that there is no tribunal at present that can deal properly with that complaint?—Quite so, the Railway Commission is far too expensive.

13093. In that you agree with most of the witnesses that have been before us?—If I might be permitted to say so, I think that the exhibition that has been given in connection with the Railway Commission that has been sitting lately, where we have had an army of highly paid counsel, shows that it is absolutely impossible for an ordinary trader to go to such a tribunal.

13094. On account of the expense?—On account of the expense, certainly.

13095. And a trader not appearing by counsel has no chance?—Has no chance.

13096. Has no chance against the array of counsel that the railway companies have?—Yes, and it is said that they have a fund to meet this expense.

13097. Well, now, of course you are aware that complaints can be made by letter to the Board of Trade in England?—The Board of Trade in England takes very little interest in Irish commerce. I have written to the Board of Trade in England, but until Mr. Lloyd George came in, apparently they were more in favour of the railways, except with regard to the safety of human life, than they were of the trader. That was my experience.

13098. There is no separate department of the Board of Trade in Ireland?—No, sir; the Department of Agriculture has been charged to take a certain portion of its duties.

Department of Agriculture charged with certain portion of duties of Board of Trade.

13099. Yes, we have it in evidence?—They have something to do with regard to Irish imports and exports. Still there is no special railway department of the Board of Trade in Ireland. I believe what Captain Tyler said about the railways in Ireland—"If the State does not manage the railways, the railways will soon manage the State."

13100. That is Sir Henry Tyler?—Yes.

13101. How long is it since he said that?—It is a long time now, but time has only proved the truth of his prophecy.

13102. Of course the Department of Agriculture—you are a member of that body?—I am.

13103. And, therefore, you know exactly with what power they are charged?—I cannot say I know exactly. They have certain functions of inquiry, but they have no mandatory powers, and my experience as President of the Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association is that the Department has been totally unable to control the railway ring. I will prove this by a number of complaints if you like. I can give them now if you like. Here is a volume of complaints—about seventy.

13104. How many?—About seventy. I think I will leave it until we come to that portion in my evidence.

13105. Very well. According to what you believe the companies in this country are not doing all that they can to promote the industries of the country?—On the contrary, I hold that the great carrying corporations are paralysing the productive capacity of agriculture, handicapping industry and penalising the passenger in Ireland.

Present system of Irish railway management and the Companies' policy as regards rates condemned.

13106. That is your view?—Quite so.

13107. Of course it is not much use for agricultural districts to produce various articles for export unless there are proper facilities for getting them away?—No, sir; I will come to that later on. If you cannot get to the market at the same rate as your competitor there is no use in producing at all.

13108. The next point—I suppose everybody will agree that high rates are an impediment for the transit of even agricultural produce in this country, but when you talk about high rates, with what do you compare them?—With preferential through rates. High rates are bad enough, but preferential through rates are more malignant.

13109. Preferential through rates from where?—From outside, from England, Russia, or anywhere else, because they enable the home producer to be displaced and undersold by articles manufactured in England, on the Continent, and even in America. Some of these articles are producible at home. This constitutes a direct obstruction to native manufactures.

13110. Of course a great number of things that are imported at low through rates into this country are a necessity for the country?—Not always; I do not hold that view. I think we could produce nearly everything we want in this country.

13111. They do not now?—I think if we got fair play and a fair field we could produce a great deal of these things ourselves. We could produce woollen manufactures, and leather, and nearly everything that we eat except, perhaps, tea and sugar, and the sugar could be produced if beet-growing was properly conducted. I hold, and hold strongly, that the system of free imports and preferential through rates has made it almost impossible that Ireland could exist as a commercial nation.

13112. That is your view, clearly expressed. Your next point is that the English railway companies exercise an undue amount of control over the Irish railways. That is a mere opinion of yours?—Of course I am not a railway magnate, nor a railway director, and I cannot say from my own personal knowledge, but I know what happens. The English railway companies, of course, can absolutely control the smaller Irish company, and through rates have been arranged by the English companies so as to be lower than the internal rates, so that the Irish manufactures and products are handicapped in the distant markets of their own country. In fact the foreign importer is bounty-fed by means of preferential rates. Instead of protecting inland trade we are protecting the foreigner.

Suggested predominating influence of English Railway Companies over Irish Companies at Rates Conferences.

13113. What do you mean by the English railway companies having control of small Irish railways?—

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Well, the small Irish railways have to fall in with them. This is all settled in the conference, and the Irish railway companies, as I take it, are precisely in the same position as the Nationalist Party are in the House of Commons—there is always a majority against them, and, of course, the majority rules, and the minority has to suffer.

13114. I am afraid you are not fully acquainted with the *modus operandi* adopted in these conferences?—I think it would be the duty of the railway gentlemen, when they come to give evidence, to disprove what public opinion in this country believes. I have been told by merchants in Galway and in distant parts of Ireland that goods are sent there from Birmingham and Manchester at rates almost as cheaply as they can get them from Dublin, with the result that Dublin is, to a certain extent, cut out. I am not prepared to give the figures. May I point out, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of this Commission, that it is not fair to expect an ordinary commercialist like myself to be able to handle millions of rates that are being prepared by experts on the railways. I do not pretend to be a railway expert.

Preferential cross channel through rates complained of.

13115. I quite understand that. I am very glad you made the statement, because, having made the statement, the railway companies will be in a position to answer it if they can?—I think it will be for them to meet the assertions—I won't call them facts—that I have made.

13116. That is fair?—I have no idea of going into the rates, for it would mean an eternity.

System of private railway ownership condemned.

13117. Of course Irish railways themselves, you are aware, have a good deal of struggle to make ends meet in some cases?—I will come to that immediately, I have it here. I quite recognise the difficult position the railway companies of Ireland occupy, with a decreasing population and diminishing products, and few important manufactures except in one corner of the island. I quite recognise that. I quite recognise that they were obliged to charge to capital, expenses that would never have occurred in any country where the system of private railway ownership did not exist. Being trustees of private property, which in my opinion should be a public utility, the railway directors are bound to earn a dividend for the shareholders, and in fixing their scale of charges they have to contend with the over-capitalisation of their lines, mainly owing to extravagant expenditure at their inception, and also when seeking further powers for amalgamations or extensions, such as Parliamentary House and counsels' fees, expenses of witnesses, retention of leading Parliamentary counsel at enormous fees, land owners' opposition, and extravagant prices for land and residential charges.

Allegation that Irish railway policy is tending to extinguish industries and promote emigration.

13118. You recognise that is the case?—Quite so, but I take this opportunity of saying that, in my view, if the Irish railway companies are not able to change their system they will soon have little to do. They won't be able to provide any dividend, because if the present system goes on, undoubtedly, in my opinion, there will be a further diminution in the population, and consequently a diminished produce, and Irish railways will have very little to do. In fact, I hold the view that Ireland would be better without a railway in it. I think we would have been more prosperous if there never had been a railway in it.

13119. I purposely omitted that?—That is my view, and the reason I make that statement is that I have been in nearly every principal town in Ireland, and all the local manufacturers have been disestablished, and I look upon a system of preferential through rates and free imports as reason for the disestablishment of the industries of Ireland.

13120. What do you mean by free imports?—I would put a tax on all manufactured articles in the three Kingdoms. That is outside this Commission. It is too big a question.

13121. When you talked about free imports I did not follow you?—I did not mean that the railways carry free. That is a thing they could not think of doing.

Improvement in means of communication for passengers between the different Dublin railway termini and steamers necessary.

13122. What have you got to say with reference to cross-city communication?—It is rather curious that there is no sort of regular communication between the steamers and the different termini.

13123. Is there railway communication now?—There is the Loop Line, but it does not connect all the stations, and the North Wall is without any public conveyance save that by rail to the London and North-Western Railway. And this compares very badly with the facilities in other cities. For instance, as my friend Mr. Tatlow knows, from the Dublin and South-Eastern there is no direct communication. There ought to be omnibuses, or some sort of communication.

13124. Not railway communication necessarily?—Not necessarily. It would be difficult, and cost too much money, I think, but we want some kind of passenger communication between the termini.

13125. Do you think the railway companies here are doing justice to the passenger traffic, more especially the third-class?—No. I see Mr. Tatlow here, and I think the Midland Great Western have a great many sins to answer for in regard to the third-class passenger, and in fact on all the railway companies the third-class accommodation is very inferior to what it is in England and Scotland.

13126. One minute. Can you tell me what is the difference between the accommodation in Ireland and in England. What is the difference?—Did you ever travel in a third-class carriage in Ireland?

13127. No?—Well, then, go and do it and you will find for yourself. Go on the Midland Great Western Railway down to Ballinasloe or Galway and you will find it out yourself. There is frequently a want of cleanliness and ventilation. There are very few corridor cars, I doubt if there are any on some lines. There are scarcely any cushions in the third-class except on the Great Northern. In the third-class in England there is hardly any difference between them and second——

13128. I only ask information?—I wish you to take a trip round Ireland. It would be a liberal education if you would. There is nothing like actual experience. The Great Northern Railway do not allow third-class passengers on the express mail.

13129. We have it in evidence?—I do not want to repeat it.

13130. Of course, the third-class traffic in Ireland is like the third-class in England, it is the great bulk of the traffic?—Yes, sir. The English and Scotch have discovered long since that it is the third-class passenger who pays the dividend and is worth encouraging. In Ireland the directors apparently seem to cling to the played-out policy of trying to force passengers to pay higher fares.

13131. Their poverty compels them?—To pay the higher fares? I think it is a reason why they should get cheaper travelling.

13132. With regard to fares generally, what have you got to say?—If my information is correct (although some of the gentlemen laughed at my pamphlet, I understand), I made certain statements in that pamphlet which I gathered from official sources, and I circulated it pretty freely, and as far as I am aware none of the railway companies ever tackled me on the question. If I was wrong I think it was their duty to defend themselves and show me up, but apparently they are not able to contradict them. I do not regard laughing at all as an argument.

13133. Mr. Field, I was sitting in the chair, and I saw the statement in the paper, but I saw nobody langhing and heard nobody laughing?—I do not mind it.

13134. I did not notice it?—As far as I am concerned I do not take it seriously, but if the gentlemen thought there was anything to laugh at in my position I think, in their own defence, they ought to be able to contradict me. They never did, as a matter of fact.

13135. Let us go on to the passenger fares. What do you say about the third-class passenger fares. Do you say they are higher than in England?—I understand they are higher, in proportion, than in England or Scotland. The accommodation is worse and the trains fewer, but I do not make a point of that, because we have not so many travelling people. I do not want to give any evidence that has been given.

13136. Am I right in saying that the fare is a penny a mile third-class in Ireland, and it is the same in England?—They give better accommodation in England—the accommodation is very different.

13137. I am on the question of fares?—I think they are much cheaper than ours.

13138. There may be cheaper return tickets?—They are vastly cheaper. I have travelled a great deal in England, and I think they are hardly comparable. I

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was reading in Mr. Cunningham's "Railway Nationalization," and he states—I do not know whether it is a fact, but Mr. Acworth will be able to say—"that Mr. Acworth admits that the British fares are the highest in Europe, and goods double the price of the Continent, while the Irish fares, as far as I can learn, are higher than in Great Britain."

13139. I am sorry Mr. Acworth is not here?—I am sorry, too. I always like to face a man. He will be able to take it up.

13140. I do not agree with the statement?—He will be able to take it up. He has written a good many books in the railway interest.

13141. You have quoted Mr. Cunningham, and what Mr. Acworth admits. Do you want to quote any other thing?—Yes. I quote also what Mr. Balfour Browne says, I happen to be acquainted with Mr. Balfour Browne. He stated that the present railway rates do more harm to the trade of the country than all the foreign competition of which so much is heard, and he was speaking of Great Britain, where the rates, on the whole, are lower than in Ireland.

13142. One minute. Do you know where Mr. Balfour Browne made the statement?—Yes, sir. Before a Railway Committee.

13143. Before a Railway Committee?—He will be able to deal with that. He is a tough man to tackle, I know. I know him. Here is a matter that cannot be contradicted, Mr. Balfour Browne, in a paper read before the London Chamber of Commerce on 10th February, 1897, that is ten years ago, said:—"I am not exaggerating when I say that the agricultural question, which is being attempted to be met with an Agricultural Rating Bill, is nothing less than a question of railway rates." That is an extraordinary statement coming from Mr. Balfour Browne. I think I was at that meeting, because I was a member of the Chamber of Commerce in London, I am not quite certain, but I think I was.

13144. That is Mr. Balfour Browne's opinion. You agree with it?—I do.

13145. And you think it is really the crux of the whole question?—To a certain extent. I would not go as far as that. I would agree up to a point. It is applicable just now, for I maintain that unless this railway question is satisfactorily dealt with in Ireland (and when I say satisfactorily I mean by lessening rates), the recent Land Purchase Bill will be useless, for although it enables the ground-owners to sell at exhorbitant prices to the tenants, transportation is a necessary adjunct of production. I will assume some trader has traffic in, I think the majority do not understand what importance cheap transit is. It is one of the phases of production. A supply of the article must be brought to the place of sale, and this carriage to the market constitutes part of the exchange value—that is the value of the farmer's produce with the manufacturer's goods consists not only of the cost of growing the one or making the other, but also of the expense of carrying it to the place of sale. Transport is, therefore, a productive agency, not of the thing carried to the market, but of its exchange value, and when competition exists exchange value determines sale. I think that makes it clear.

13146. That is perfectly plain, and I do not suppose anybody will disagree with it. I think it is very fairly put. Of course, you know the railway companies here, owned by private individuals, shareholders, cannot make any great sacrifice?—No. I do not ask them to do it. I do not come here—I want it to be understood, and I want to make it clear—I do not come here with the idea of asking either the railway companies (and when I say the railway companies I mean the shareholders), the railway servants, the officers, or the directors to suffer in any way.

13147. Exactly?—But I contend that in the existing circumstances they ought to be bought out and the railways should be utilized for the benefit of the nation.

13148. We will come to that in a minute. The more the country develops the more necessary becomes transit?—Yes, sir. The limits of markets are frequently determined by the cost of transit. In fact, the whole history of commerce proves this. Therefore facilities of transit are of equal value with value of production, and products and manufactures are useless, practically useless, unless they can be carried on equal terms with our competitors.

13149. You know, I suppose, from experience and inquiries you have made, that where the railways are owned by the State in other countries, a different system is in operation to what you have been explaining as in operation in Ireland?—Yes, sir, I do.

Policy of State-owned railways in other countries as regards rates for "Imports" and "Export."

13150. Then I believe (we had it in evidence) the State railway encourages the export and penalises the import?—Yes.

13151. Is not that so?—Penalises only to a certain extent.

13152. I withdraw the word "penalises," but have higher rates for imports than for exports?—Certainly.

13153. I think you refer to me here?—Yes, sir. Let me say this first. Our nominal Free Trade is a policy of partial free imports which kills trade, in Ireland, in a double-barrelled fashion, while the country is used, in the guise of free imports, as a market for all kinds of foreign produce and manufactured goods. It is an extraordinary thing that there is no such thing as free trade on railways, although this is a free trade country. We cannot do, as they do in America, build a railway without getting a grant of monopoly.

13154. What would be the price of these goods if there were no imports into Ireland: would not it be double?—Not necessarily at all. We could produce, as I said before, a lot of these things, and even if the price was more it would give employment to the people. We are getting into the Protection business now. Germany has gone ahead under the protection system, so has the United States. The prices of these things may be more, but the people are more prosperous.

13155. Are they better off?—They have not an army of unemployed like what you have in London and we have here, and the land is cultivated, which is not the case in these countries.

Statements by Mr. Cunningham in his book on Railway Nationalisation.

13156. What is this you say about me?—I merely took up Mr. Cunningham's statement, sir. If Mr. Cunningham's statement on "Railway Nationalisation" be correct, the Chairman of the Commission, when goods manager of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, said, in answer to this question before the Committee of the House of Commons:—"You hold you would not be showing an undue preference if two traders in Liverpool are consigning the one English cheese, and the other American, both lots for London, if you charged a much higher rate for the English than the American? Answer—Certainly not. I say there is nothing to prevent the railway company giving a preference, but it is not an undue preference."

13157. "But it must not be an undue preference"—I suppose that was my answer?—Yes, sir. I know, as a matter of fact, that the London and North Western used to carry foreign or American meat from Liverpool to London for 25*s.* a ton.

13158. They do now?—And they used to charge home meat, that is Irish or Scotch or English meat, 50*s.* a ton for the same journey. I challenge contradiction of that, because I know it. They have changed that now, but the railway companies manage things so dexteriously that they always gain their own end, and now it is for what they call "three ton lots." The difference is that the ordinary English or Irish or Scotch trader has not three tons, so that the foreigner gets the advantage.

13159. Who is Mr. Cunningham?—He is a gentleman from Dunfermline who has studied the question. I will send you a copy of the book.

13160. I have never seen it?—I will give it to you when I have done with it. I think I need not go into the next paragraph, sir. I do not want to detain you.

13161. Your evidence is very interesting, but I will have to pass over some things?—I do not mind that. I do not want to go over the ground that has been travelled before. I think the next paragraph would be interesting, because it deals with us in Ireland.

13162. Tell us what it is?—It is difficult to understand why the rates generally should be higher in Ireland unless it is to secure higher dividends for the shareholders in Ireland than satisfies the English shareholders, for the average dividend companies in Ireland——

Irish dividend paying companies have paid higher dividends than the average of British railways.

13163. Dividend paying companies?—Yes. There should be the word "paying." The dividend paying companies in Ireland have paid a higher dividend than the average dividend paying companies in Great Britain. Even allowing for the fact that the amount of goods and passengers carried are much less in volume, because the cost of construction in England

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Cheaper cost of construction of, and lower rates of wages on, Irish railways as compared with Great Britain.

has been variously computed, on an average, from £47,000 to £70,000 a mile, in Scotland from £30,000 to £45,000 a mile, whilst in Ireland the cost has been put at £13,000 to £15,000 a mile. In addition to the lower cost of construction, about one-third of the English or one-half of the Scotch cost, the amount of capital in rolling stock is comparatively much smaller and the rates of wages are lower than in Great Britain, according to the Amalgamated Railway Servants Society. I think that puts a question to the railway companies that they find difficult to answer.

13164. I do not think so?—I hope not.

13165. I think they will be able to answer that?—One-third of cost, cheaper wages. I agree that we have less volume of passenger and goods traffic.

13166. Now, there is something here that I was not aware of, but you will be able to explain it to us, and we will have it on the notes. You say that the Irish railways have received large amounts of free grants?—And loans.

13167. Can you give particulars?—Oh, yes. I will give you the document. I wrote to Mr. Runciman about this (*reads*).

Government grants to Irish railways quoted from return furnished by Financial Secretary of the Treasury.

"Irish Railways.—Statement showing the total amount of Free Grants made by the Government for Railways in Ireland.

"1. For the construction of 16 Railways in pursuance of Railway Acts, 1889, 1893, and 1896	£1,560,042
"2. In relief of the charge thrown on the guaranteeing area in consequence of the Camp accident on the Tralee and Dingle Railway	2,500
"3. Out of Vote for Relief of Distress (Ireland), 1891-2, for preliminary works in connection with new railways under the Act of 1889 ...	38,000
"4. Towards the cost of improvement and repair of the Tralee and Dingle Railway out of the Inland Development Fund	23,500
"5. By way of remissions of principal debt in respect of Loans advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners (England)	37,116
"6. By way of remissions of principal debt in respect of Loans advanced by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland)	102,536
	£1,763,694."

That is the official document, but in a covering letter from Mr. Runciman he points out that no sum is shown in this statement to represent the capitalized value of the Treasury liability under the Tramways and Public Companies' Act, 1883, in aid of the cost of construction of 22 light railways, estimated at £1,024,066.

13168. That is under the recent Acts of Parliament. I thought you referred to grants of money to some of the older railways. Have you got particulars of that?—Yes. Here is another letter from Mr. Runciman (*reads*):—

"Treasury Chambers,
"Whitehall, S.W.,
"9th March, 1907.

"Dear Mr. Field—

"I sent your letter of the 5th instant to the Board of Works, who have replied that they are not aware of any *grant* having been made to Irish railways beyond those of which I have already informed you.

"Your former letter made reference only to grants, but now you speak also of *advances*, which is a term applying to loans. As to the latter, the following figures will show you the total amount advanced up to date by the Board of Works and the Public Works Loan Commissioners:—

"I. By Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland).—	
"(*a*) Under 1 and 2 Wm. IV., c. 33 ...	£1,265,127
"(*b*) Under 9 and 10 Vic., c. 107	13,508
	£1,278,635
"II. By Public Works Loan Commissioners, England	£3,010,910
"Grand total for loans ...	£4,289,545

"Yours very truly,
"WALTER RUNCIMAN."

13169. "A" is the light railways?—Yes.

13170. You have not got particulars of which company got the £13,508?—No, sir.

13171. I should think, Mr. Field, that the £1,763,000 on the first return that you handed in is included in this £3,000,000?—I do not think so.

13172. Is it separate?—I think it is.

13173 Very well. We will print both documents?—It was for you I got them.

13174. Well, now, I come to something on which you are probably the best expert, and that is in reference to the live stock business and live stock traffic in this country. Now, what have you got to say about the management of the live stock?—Well, we compain—may I say that you will have witnesses who will give you their own actual experience? I am not a live stock dealer, but I have gone through the country a good deal and been to a good many fairs, and I will not say anything but what I know myself. The dealers and feeders complain that the local rates are higher than they are in Great Britain. They also complain of the want of proper loading banks, in many places, and the absence of help, although terminal charges are imposed.

13175. Now, stop a minute. Do you know that?—Yes.

13176. On cattle?—Yes, on cattle and sheep and pigs, and many of these men say that they get no help, or very little help, and they complain of the loads and unloads.

13177. Is not that the regulation in Ireland, that the cattle should be loaded and unloaded? Why are they charged terminal charges. What is it for?

13178. I suppose for the station accommodation. However, you make that statement, and you will find it proved afterwards?—I will give some complaints in regard to delay and damage in transit, and how the recommendatioins of the Departmental Committees have not been fully carried out, of which I was a member. I may say that the Departmental Committee was appointed on account of a question I asked in the House.

13179. We have evidence from that Departmental Committee, of which you were a member, that the railway companies generally faithfully carry out the suggestions that have been made from that Department?—There has been a certain amount of improvement, but there is a great deal to be done yet. I will just give two or three complaints. I do not want to keep the Commission all day. I know that one gentleman who gave evidence—I forget whether it was Mr. Prentice or not—said that there was more row now about a cattle train than if the limited mail was delayed. I quite agree, but the reason I do agree is that the Cattle Traders and Stockowner's Association would immediately tackle the railway company, and of course there would be a row. That is what we are there for.

13180. But, generally speaking, his evidence was to the effect, if I remember rightly, that many complaints were made, they were communicated to the railway companies, and as a rule the railway companies fairly met them?—The railway companies will promise you anything.

13181. And provided the accommodation?—Undoubtedly there has been an improvement. I quite agree, not only in the loading bank accommodation, but in the provision of trucks and in the transit undoubtedly there has been an improvement, but at the same time there is room for more improvement. I don't think I ought to give the complaints. I have 75 of them here. I will leave you these complaints, and you can look into them. The complaints are, generally speaking, of delays, want of sufficient help in the loading of trains, and sometimes cattle being bruised; very often that happens. Now, there are a number of these. I will read one or two.

13182. If you please, typical cases?—Yes, very well. So long ago as 1903 complaint as to conditions of loading bank at Birr. Complaints that a stationmaster——

13183. Give us a more recent one?—I will give you the last one.

13184. Do; the last one?—Yes. I will give you one that occurred the other day. You can get the 70 to look them over. 2nd March. I suppose that is late enough. "Cattle Traders' Association. The Committee had under consideration the complaint of Mr. J. R. Rogerson, from which it appeared that on the 1st of November last cattle bought at Nenagh were loaded at 12.30 and were booked there to Navan for

unloading at Bective, but the stock did not arrive there until 8.20 the following day."

13185. A.M.?—P.M. Arising out of this extraordinary delay the cattle were in bad condition and a claim was made for compensation. The Great Southern and Western Company refused to meet the reasonable demand made. The Committee were strongly of opinion that this was a case for fair treatment, but could not advise legal proceedings as a consignment note had been signed, which held the company free from liability.

13186. That is the old note?—Yes. I will come to that now. Perhaps it won't detain you too long to give you more. A prominent member complained that on the 27th inst., that is last month, cattle left at Greystones at 12 noon did not reach Harcourt-street until after 4 o'clock. Greystones is only just the other side of Bray. You know where Bray is, sir?

13187. Yes?—If you don't, I hope you will go to it on a visit. Although men were waiting for the stock from 3 o'clock, they were not delivered until seven. Similar complaints as to cattle loading at Kerry and Fermoy were received. There is the kind of thing that goes on.

13188. These are typical complaints?—Yes.

13189. You have a note here. You complain of the want of proper connections at junctions between various companies?—Yes.

13190. For the transit of cattle traffic?—Yes, sir.

13191. May I look at that 70 list?—Certainly; you have it, but I will give it to you; I sent a copy of it.

13192. I think that these are probably covered by your general remarks as to your general complaints?—Yes. I think if you will allow me, if it won't take too long, I think I ought to read some portion of this consignment note.

13193. We have not got to that yet?—Yes, it comes immediately after that, sir; it is only here we can touch it.

13194. Very well?—It is nearly too long to read, but as I take it this consignment note practically absolves the railway companies from any liability of any kind whatever. Now, let me read the first owner's condition:—In respect of any animals booked and brought by them or their agents for conveyance partly by rail and partly by sea, or partly by canal or partly by sea. That is, may I explain just as I think of it, that the through rate goes in Ireland according to the maximum rates that are charged in the railway companies as liability. Why I bring it in here is that, because I think dealing with this cattle business, which is 14 per cent. of the total receipts of the Irish railways, they ought to do what they can to mind the transit of live stock.

13195. Quite right?—And the railway companies, of course, are partially in this transaction, because they have to arrange with the shipping companies, if it is a shipping company to such places—Partly by sea or partly by canal or partly by sea the company shall be exempt from liability for any loss, damage, or delay which may arise during the carriage of any such animals by sea from the act of God, the Queen's enemies, fire, accidents from machinery, boilers and steam, and all and every other danger and accident to the seas, rivers, and navigation of whatever nature and kind soever in the same manner as if the company had signed and delivered to the consignor a bill of lading containing such conditions. Now, I have one word more and I have done. No claim in respect of live stock for injury or delay for which the company may be made liable will be allowed unless the same be made in writing in the case of injury or delay within three days after the delivery of the live stock in respect of which the claim is made. Now, I don't want to detain the Commission, but our experience is that wherever a man has signed this consignment note he has no case at law, sir. We had a very remarkable trial by a man named Devitt, and Mr. Justice Johnston tried it very carefully, and he was obliged in face of this consignment note, although the damage was admitted, he was obliged to give the case against us.

13196. Of course you know as a member of the House that a Bill has been introduced?—Yes, sir. That is the point I want to come to. There is an Owner's Risk Rate Bill introduced by——

13197. *Chairman.*—Mr. Hooper?—Yes, Mr. Hooper, that is the man. I was at the meeting at which it was adopted at the London Mansion House Committee in the Westminster Palace Hotel. We had a meeting, we adopted that Bill. Well, now, may I say on that point, because I have taken a great deal of trouble about it and I don't wish to detain you at all, I sent you a copy of the Blue Book of ours—the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association—so long ago as 1899, just after the Railway Reform Association, and if you have no objection, sir, I will read just a few paragraphs—not many. It is calculated that live stock to the value of about 20 millions sterling are annually exported from Ireland to Great Britain. It has been estimated that half-a-million pounds would almost purchase the fleet engaged in carrying the live stock, and several witnesses deposed that an equal or greater amount was lost annually through the depreciation in value caused by imperfect transit, so that if this contention be accurate one year's loss would nearly buy out—I am speaking of the shipping—the carrying companies' interest. Now, sir, in the summary of recommendations about inland transit, I am not going to take anything except what is due to the railways. No. 2 is "Better control and accommodation at railway stations in Ireland (*a*) That a responsible railway official and sufficient staff should attend at the railway station at all large fairs; (b) That the loading accommodation generally should be improved." No. 4. I will take 4 because the other has not much to do with the railways. "Pens and Loading Banks in Great Britain and Ireland—(*a*) That pens or guides should be generally used where cattle are loaded in trains; (*b*) That loading banks should be constructed level with the truck floors." No. 5, "Cattle Trucks (Great Britain and Ireland)—(*a*) That all trucks should admit of inspection and ventilation at floor level." Well, I don't think I need go into that. I don't want to detain you. There is a number of details in regard to that. "That the number of cattle trucks fitted with pipes or vacuum brakes should be increased so that the passenger service may be more generally made use of when goods connections are inferior." May I point out in explanation of that that it might be the greatest possible advantage with regard to live stock where it would catch the fast train—the passenger train.

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Recommendations of the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association as to improvements in live stock transit arrangements.

13198. We thoroughly understand it?—You know it, sir. No. 6. "That if practicable the recommendation of the Committee of 1870 as to a minimum rate of speed should be acted upon; that cattle should have precedence as perishable goods." I think they obtain that now. No. 7. "That the Irish railway companies should adopt rules and regulations with regard to cattle traffic similar to those agreed upon by the companies parties to the English Railway Clearing System." There are some other details there with regard to the treatment of cattle on the journey, that I won't go into, there is no necessity. Then a supplementary recommendation comes which will bring me into the question of nationalisation. That I want to get to. "Whilst agreeing with the report personally——"

13199. Is this your own?—This is my own. "I am strongly of opinion that under the existing conditions of Irish railways it will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to radically improve the general transit of live stock in Ireland up to the present day requirements. The multiplicity of companies and the poverty of some companies and their rolling stock; the refusal of connecting lines to time co-operation for public convenience; the frequent delays at junctions and sidings; the lack of proper facilities, as pens, V-guides, and even loading banks at many important places; the unwillingness to provide screw couplings, vacuum brakes and pipe wagons, which have been in use on the London and North-Western for the past fifteen years, the large number of various sized and unsuitable trucks; the general refusal (until recently at some important centres) of help to preserve discipline and load stock, although paid for by terminal charges; the arbitrary through consignment note, which practically absolves the carrying companies from almost any liability, and the entire absence of competition constituting a huge monopoly. This combination of circumstances together with my experience as a member of the Select Committee on Railway Rates and Charges, lead me to the inevitable

State ownership and management in witness's opinion the only remedy for existing defects in Irish railway management.

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conclusion that the remedy required in Ireland is State ownership and management." That shows my opinion is not one of recent date.

13200. That is ten years ago?—Very nearly.

13201. All these suggestions contained in the report, in your own report, are embodied in a circular issued by the Department of Agriculture here?—Yes, but the Agricultural Department have not the power to compel the railway company to do these things.

13202. But the evidence before us is that the railway companies as a rule do it?—I am sorry that I can't entirely agree with that evidence. I see Mr. Prentice here. I have the utmost reliance on anything Mr. Prentice says, but I think he takes the promise for the deed sometimes. That is not our experience. May I just read a letter with regard to the railway companies giving the desires of the cattle traders in regard to providing loading banks, because this is just the point that comes in?

Action of the Gt. N. Ry. (I.) in the matter of Balbriggan cattle siding referred to.

13203. A recent letter?—Only the other day, sir:—"8th March, Balbriggan."—I will give you the names and all.—"Dear Mr. Field—I see you are giving evidence before the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways. Please don't forget the action of the G.N. Company at Balbriggan in making the cattle loading bank at the extreme northern end, and doing this in defiance of the protest of the Irish Cattle Traders' Association and of the Balbriggan Town Council and of the cattle traders attending our fairs. The fair green is at the southern end of the town, one mile from the railway bank. Ground was available adjoining the fair green, but the company would not have it, because by grabbing a siding serving our brick yard"—this man is a brick manufacturer—"it saved them £100 in construction." Now, if what Mr. Prentice says is correct, and I don't wish at all to contradict Mr. Prentice, that shows the attitude of the railway companies in Ireland in regard to the cattle trade. I blocked that Bill in Parliament and did my best about it, but the Great Northern Company simply defied us. My experience of the railway companies in Ireland is that unless they are compelled to do anything they won't do it.

13204. Is there a large cattle trade at this station?—Not a very large cattle traffic.

13205. A traffic that would justify the outlay of this particular man, say, £100?—I think it would, if that were to be borne for their own people, the Balbriggan cattle dealers. A petition was signed by the dealers and sellers of cattle at that particular place. I think it was the duty of the railway company to fall in with the idea of these people, who were their customers.

General views of witness on unification or nationalisation of Irish railways.

13206. All right; this will be on the notes. Now, Mr. Field, you have just come to your general views upon the unification or nationalisation of Irish railways?—I think I need not read all these particulars; it is too long.

13207. You are very explicit in your evidence. Could you tell us in a few words?—I would like, if you please, just to refer to the names of the gentlemen who agree with me. I quote, but it would take up too long. Let me say first, one of the first men, I think, who recommended the nationalisation of railways; the reason I do this, I don't want to make a speech.

Drummond Commission report, year 1838 quoted.

13208. I want particularly to have this in the notes?—Well, I want to make my position quite plain. You know it seems we are a peculiar people here in Ireland, and what happens in the rest of the world, and what is common in the rest of the world, if a man makes that proposition in Ireland here he is called a revolutionist. The reason I make that remark is because this treatment has been applied to myself. I know that railway shareholders and the railway companies themselves say this man is a faddist and a fanatic about railways, and as a matter of fact the extraordinary thing is that we are the exception to the world. The railways are nationalised and partly in every other country in the world except Great Britain and America and a portion of the Continent. However, I will come to that after. The first man I will quote is Mr. John Stuart Mill. I am not going to read it. I think there is no necessity to read it all. Well, now, this proposition about buying out the Irish railways is not a new proposition. I think I may read this paragraph, sir. The first Irish railway was opened in 1836. In the same year a Commission, under the presidency of Henry Drummond, sat, which reported in 1838 in favour of the construction of all further lines by the State. Resolutions adopting the report were passed in Parliament in 1839. In 1846 Lord George Bentick proposed that £14,000,000 should be devoted to the purchase of Irish railways. In 1867 a Commission, taking for granted the policy of nationalisation, recommended a reduction of rates by 42 per cent., intimating that the Irish railways would bring in a profit to the State after 11 years.

13209. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Evelyn Ashley's Committee?—I think so.

13210. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The Duke of Devonshire's?—The Duke of Devonshire's. Yes.

13211. It is 1868?—It should be 1868. You will have 1838 after. In 1888 the Allport Railway Commission in Ireland recommended the purchase of the Irish railways by the State. In 1888 a Committee on Irish Public Works recommended the centralisation of all railways under one company subject to a controlling external authority, to be called the Irish Railway Committee. I find you have had that extract from Mr. Pim before from one of the witnesses. I won't trouble you with that. The Report of the Royal Commission of 1888 on Irish Public Works, presided over by Sir James Allport, Chairman of the Midland Railway Company of England.

13212. *Chairman.*—He was not chairman: he never was chairman?—Was he not; I thought he was.

13213. No. Make it a director?—He was one of them, anyhow. A director.

13214. He was not chairman, that is all?—No sir. Here is the point. They arrived at the following conclusion:—1. Absence of co-operation; 2. want of facilities; 3. high fares and rates, prohibitive of trade; 4. multiplicity of managers; 5. resources undeveloped; 6. traffic driven off the railway, carried by carts—that is done to-day; 7. stock taken by road instead of by rail.

13215. Live stock?—Yes, live stock; done to-day, sir, still. 8. stations too few; 9. termini too many; 10. want of extensions. Now, sir, I am prepared to admit that some improvements have been made, but the great bulk of these complaints still exist. Now, may I briefly quote Lord Kelvin, because he is a great authority, and he is, moreover, Lord Kelvin, ex-President of the Royal Society. At a meeting in Blackpool connected with the electric lighting he said: "The Government ought to take up the whole business of telegraphs and telephones, and that it would not be an improper thing for the Government to take up the whole system of railways connecting different towns as they already existed, and he thought the time would come when the railways would be run by electricity all over the country, and when they could be run for the benefit of the many"—mark this—"when they could be run for the benefit of the many and not for that of the few with conflicting interests."

13216. That is entirely your view?—That is entirely my view. Of course, Lord Kelvin's opinion would have much more weight with the Commission than mine; he is one of the most eminent men.

13217. His point was the electrical view?—Yes; but he agrees with me all the same.

13218. I see?—The evidence of Mr. Challoner Smith, President of the Institute of Civil Engineers in Ireland, I think, that was quoted before. Was it?

13219. I think so?—Well, briefly Mr. Smith stated in 1894 that he believed that a change ought to be made, and that the Government ought to help the railways.

13220. In 1894?—Yes, sir.

13221. That is his opinion, at any rate?—Yes. May I state just one word with regard to that? The question of the State purchase of railways has been always shelved by the Government as involving too great a responsibility.

13222. That is a matter of opinion?—Yes, sir.

13223. There is the fact though. They have always been shelved by the Government?—Yes. I want to point out that when it is compared with the enormous possession of India, thousands of miles distant, where the Army and Civil Service Departments are governed and their pay distributed to the remotest parts of the Dominion, this inability and objection sink into insignificance. Surely of the Government can manage railways in India, on the other side of the Globe, they ought to be able to manage, or someone deputed by them, to manage them in Ireland?

13224. Of course, you know in Australia the railways are?—Certainly, all the Colonies. I will come to that presently. Now, sir, I will come to something

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late. On the 30th April, 1901, Mr. Hayden moved, and Mr. Murphy seconded, "that the present railway rates and charges in Ireland constitute an intolerable grievance to the Irish people, and that measures should be adopted this session for the remedy thereof, either by amalgamation of the management or by the State purchase of Irish railways so as to reduce the tariffs and further to increase facility of transit by utilising and developing the waterways and canalising certain rivers in Ireland."

13225. That is tantamount, or practically similar, to the amendment you moved, you proposed?—With this difference, that it came two years later, and then there is a couple of things I want very briefly to bring forward in connection with that. That was supported by the late Mr. M'Cann, who was an authority on this subject, Mr. Mooney, and others, and this point I want to bring before you. Mr. Wyndham, in reply, said—"In 1874—that is a long time ago—the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, then Chief Secretary of Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach"—now Lord St. Aldwyn—"speaking, as I am doing to-night, on a very similar motion"—mark that was before the House thirty-three years ago—"said, Parliament might beneficially lend assistance to promote amalgamation of Irish railways, and possibly facilities might be given by the Government by which it would be rendered easier and cheaper than at present." This is what Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said, so that there we have the fact that our present contention, my present contention, was considered to be feasible and necessary so long ago as thirty-three years. Amongst other remarks, Mr. Wyndham said in 1901—"I am very glad we have had this debate. The subject deserves the consideration of all parties in the House, but I cannot disguise the fact that it is interlocked with other economic questions for Ireland—the land question." Well, now, sir, the land question has been partially settled. Then he alluded to the education question. We are not going to get into that; it is too contentious, but it is under consideration.

13226. Yes, it is under consideration now?—He finished by saying that "although it is not necessary to enter into any argument as to the financial relations of the two countries"—I agree—"in considering this question it still remains that any economic question brought forward such as this deserves, and will obtain, careful and sympathetic consideration from any Unionist Government." Well, they would not think of voting it. We wanted them to do something practical. We numbered ninety, and they 152. The Government voted against it.

13227. 152?—Yes. It appears to me almost childish that such objections should be seriously put forward by sensible men unless they are financially interested in the continuation of the present expensive and inefficient system in Ireland.

13228. Yes, well that gives, at any rate, the views of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. George Wyndham upon the particular subject?—The subject they were discussing. I hope you think it is germane to the point.

13229. It is germane to the point?—I don't want to get off the line.

13230. I will try to keep you on it?—I know you will. The nationalisation of the railways is not more socialistic than the post office, parcel post, telegraphs, telephones, tramways, gas, water, or the railway combine itself in the shareholder's interest.

13231. Well, but who said it was. It is the first I have heard about it being socialistic?—Well, I have been called a socialistic man—I don't mind what I am called.

13232. Oh, I mean we have plenty of precedents before us?—Plenty. Well, we have some caustic critics here in Ireland. They are more critical perhaps than they are in England.

13233. I have found that out?—I am glad you have.

13234. Just for information, do you remember or can you tell us what the Government paid for the telegraphs when they took them over?—I could not tell you. I know they paid too much.

13235. You can't tell the figures?—I can't remember just now.

13236. Never mind: they took them all over?—They will take the telephones and will pay too much. The English Government never do anything in time. They are always late with these things.

13237. You think so?—That is my opinion, and they are beginning to think so themselves, too. Well, while they have to pay too much for them.

13238. Yes, quite right?—I just want to say that the three kingdoms are an exception to the world. All the colonies except those in North America, which have lately acquired more control over the iron lines of their own railways. The exceptions are Great Britain, Canada (partially), Spain, Turkey and the United States.

13239. With that exception, practically all the railways of the world are State owned, or State managed?—State managed, or State controlled in some way.

State ownership of railways practically the system in all countries except Great Britain and Ireland and the United States.

13240. State owned, State controlled, and State managed?—Yes, sir, and in America, I need not tell you, there is great trouble about the railways at the present moment. You are on the *qui vive* about all these things. There is to be a meeting of the railway managers to try to get into some system to prevent the fooling and the evils that have arisen from private ownership in America. If my information is correct, 94,000 persons were injured in America in 1905—more than the people injured in the Battle of Mukden—that to a large extent owing to the private management of the railways in America.

Movement in the direction of State ownership in the United States.

13241. Is there a movement to nationalise the railways?—No, I don't think there is. Yes. There is. I will just read you some short note I have got here with regard to America. The British people quite justly criticise the Trusts in the United States of America, but they ignore the fact that the greatest Trust in existence is in their own country possessing £1,200,000,000, of capital with a power of taxing every individual more or less in Great Britain and Ireland. That is the Railway Combine. With regard to America, the trend of events is travelling towards railway nationalisation, and a distinguished writer—James Essis Thompson—recently gave expression to this opinion.

13242. I don't know that it is worth reading the opinion: but a distinguished writer expressed that opinion?—There is only one paragraph.

13243. Then read it?—"The time cannot be far distant when the Government of the States and the nation will take over the property of the railroads."

13244. Go on?—The railroads are public servants. They are not simply private business affairs on a level with cotton factories or iron factories. They have been given a practical monopoly within their own fields of activity, and the State has exercised its sovereignty in securing them the right of way. Corporations thus favoured must keep the public interest in view as well as the interests of their stockholders. They must give such a direction to their business as will protect the community from grave injuries to the extent of their ability. The last point I want to make is that Ireland is peculiarly favourably situated for the nationalisation of her railways. There are only five main lines connecting the principal cities and towns. We have no duplicate stations or parallel opposition lines, and certain extensions and junctions are required, but it cannot be said that Ireland is over-built with railways. I think that Ireland offers the most favourable opportunity at the present time for nationalising the railways.

Ireland favourably situated for the nationalisation of her railways.

13245. Well, now?—Now I think we come to what I think is the most important part of it.

13246. I am going to cut you down there a bit, but still I will just see how far we can go. What is, in your judgment, the best remedy for the state of things that you have been expounding?—We want a unified management created and controlled outside the railways, private railways, necessary in the interests of public utility. My view is that the Government should give a free grant sufficient to purchase out the Irish railway preference, debenture, and ordinary shares. I say a free grant, and I say it advisedly, because I don't want to get into financial subjects, but I maintain, and it has been proved that we have paid hundreds of millions of money in over-taxation, and this would be only the beginning of restitution, they ought to give us the money for nothing. I quite agree that we are not likely to get it, but we should try to get it. The money is more than due to us.

The purchase of Irish railways by a grant from the British Exchequer advocated.

13247. The Financial Relations?—That forty millions is due to us from over-taxation since that Financial Relations Commission sat.

13248. I think we can shorten this. You made a kind of rough estimate as to what it will cost to take over all the Irish railways?—Yes.

Estimated cost of the Irish railways.

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13249. We will only deal with the big figures. Am I right in suggesting that you estimate that it will be 40 to 45 millions?—Hardly so much as 45. That is a very liberal estimate.

13250. A rough estimate you formed?—Yes.

13251. We know what the invested capital is; we need not go into that?—All right.

13252. Taking your estimate of the value, we will say 45 millions upon that; having considered the subject you have come to the conclusion that the State, if they took the railways at anything like that figure, would be able to work them at a profit and still be in a position to largely reduce the rates?—That is my view, sir.

13253. All this detail of figures, I don't think it is necessary to go into?—All right. Will you allow me to take the economies.

Various heads under which economies might be effected under State ownership indicated.

13254. I am coming to that. I will be glad if you mention in your own words what you consider—the economies you consider—might be effected. Supposing the State owned the railways, and you may take it under different heads if you like?—Economies. The five principal heads of railway expenditure are: 1st.—I hope the railway men are listening to this—1st. Permanent way. 2nd. Locomotive charges. 3rd. Repairs and renewals of carriages, etc. 4th. Traffic expenses. 5th. General charges. The contention of the railway companies is that economy the result of amalgamation can be made only under the head of general charges.

13255. Now, I have not heard the statement that that was the railway companies' contention I have not heard that from the railway companies?—I think you are likely to hear it, sir. We will put it in another way. Put it—it is stated.

13256. Yes. This is the first I have heard of it. Don't blame the railway companies unnecessarily?—I don't want to do it.

13257. Say it has been said or I heard?—Yes, please put it that way—economy can be made only under the head of general charges, in cutting down directors' fees, etc. An example of these returns shows that economies can be effected under each of these heads, which are very much more than the economies under the head of general charges. Now, sir, I have gone into this in Blue Books. I am not going to frighten you with Blue Books. These are the returns for 1905, and I think if you have time and appetite for going into them—I suppose you have them yourself. 1st. Permanent way. This is a separate department, and they have charged under one head office expenditure, superintendence, wages, materials for the permanent way, signalling bridges, stores, etc. If the 26 railway systems were amalgamated the saving would be considerable by the abolition of so many separate departments, separately managed, and the contracts for the supplies, where one system would order the whole quantity, instead of it being divided, would be at least 10 per cent. less than under the existing system, where the supplies are got in dribs and drabs. This won't take a minute. I have got a return from the President of the Board of Trade. I won't take more than a minute to read:—"Railway Companies in Ireland.—It will be seen from the accompanying copy of the railway returns for 1905, pages 82-5, that at the end of that year the number of working railway companies (exclusive of companies working only light railways authorised under the Tramways (Ireland) Acts, etc.) was 16. Of these 10 work lines entirely on the 5.3 gauge." I need not go into that. Since 1905 one of the 16 companies, as referred to above, the Donegal Company, has been dissolved, and its undertaking has been partially vested in the Midland Railway Company and partially in a joint committee of that company and the Great Northern of Ireland. This is the point I want to get in. "On pages 38-45 of the railway returns particulars are given of the capital of 47 railway companies, including 17"—so we have 47 railway companies in Ireland—"including 17 companies given on pages 44-5 as owning light railways. The lines owned by certain of the 47 companies referred to are, as stated in the return, in some cases leased to or worked by other companies, and in other cases are not at present open for traffic. There are also the Midland and the Fishguard and Rosslare Companies, who own railways in Ireland, but whose capital is shown in the English portion of the returns. The Board of Trade have no official statement of the number of directors of Irish railway companies, but the total number shown on the accounts of 34 such companies, some of which are companies owning light railways, furnished to the Board of Trade amounts to 249, including Baronial directors, members of committees of management, etc."

13258. Well, now, you dealt with the permanent way department. The next is the locomotive charges?—They include salaries of officials, the office superintendents, staff, etc., and the cost of the running of engines, including coal and other requisites, and stores, in all of which there would be a considerable saving, and if the supplies were ordered by one contract there would be a considerable reduction.

13259. *Chairman.*—Would not the same remark apply to renewals of carriages and wagons?—Yes, there is more than that important point. One large establishment could repair and carry out renewals of carriages and wagons, one large establishment could do the work more effectively and economically than a number; I would say one or two could do it more effectively and economically than a number of workshops, and a great deal of locomotive power could be saved. This is the point I want to impress. Amalgamation would lead to a great increase of home-made engines, wagons, and carriages, and a really great industry could be built up. A small company is unable to provide for itself sometimes and it must import carriages and wagons because it is not able to build them, and the big companies are not allowed to supply any other work, and consequently most of the vehicles are imported. Under the new system there would be no importations; they would be all made in Ireland and under the most economical conditions.

13260. What about traffic expenses?—In regard to that, the Trades Council discussed it, and I think they ought to have a voice in the matter. "In connection with the resolution proposed by the Coachmakers' representative, Mr. Milner, condemning the action of the Midland Railway Company in importing wagons across the Channel which could be equally well made in their works at Broadstone, and that of the Great Southern Company in importing bogey corridor carriages at a cost of £20,000, a warm discussion arose in consequence of Mr. Richardson's suggested addendum that the only remedy for this complaint is to be found in the nationalisation of the railways of Ireland. In doing so he advanced excellent reasons, one being that whilst as the matter stands no one railway company can work for another, and the different companies throughout the country import this class of rolling stock. If the railways were nationalised or placed under one management all the different workshops could be modernised, developed, and extended in such a way that the Inchicore Works could make all of the engines, and the Broadstone and Great Northern Works could make other parts of the rolling stock for the whole of the railways of Ireland, and in this way he maintained they could keep all the work in Ireland." I don't want to detain you any further. There is a good deal more, but my opinion is that not alone would it give employment here but that the work could be done cheaper here. The very cost of transit from England over here would be saved to begin with, and unless I am wrongly informed engines could be made cheaper at Inchicore than they could be turned out in England. That is a most important point, and undoubtedly there would be great economy in having that labour given at home.

13261. Will you now deal with the traffic expenses?—If they had one big office for the regulation of traffic and the carriages it would be much cheaper. The present system is most wasteful. A single company is now often unable to cope with the necessities of traffic. At a big fair or a great reunion—I suppose they mean a demonstration—I know what that is; I have been at some demonstrations in my time and also big fairs. With one central office arranging the thing, having control of wagons and carriages, there would never be a shortage on any one point, while all the needs of the other traffic could be amply provided for. And now each company sends its carriages or wagons through, and if the carriage is not promptly returned there is a demurrage, and the Railway Clearing House is kept up with a staff of clerks sorting and settling the accounts between all the companies. If there was only one system all that would be done away with; there would be a sufficient supply of carriages and wagons for all emergencies; charges and counter-charges would be avoided, and services would be much more efficient and the expenditure would be considerably less. Saving

and efficiency would be the result. I think there can be no question about that paragraph at all.

Chairman.—No.

Witness.—General charges. The railway companies assert that there would be no reduction except—well, we won't take it in that way.

Chairman.—No, leave that out.

Witness.—General charges. There would be a reduction of directors and clerks' fees although it is said that the whole amounts to only £135,000, or 5 per cent.

13262. *Chairman.*—I don't know where you get that figure. It has been stated in evidence, not by the railway companies, but by the public, that the reduction would be £35,000, not £135,000?—I think the railway companies ought to be able to show that themselves.

13263. Yes, we can easily get that?—Yes. An example of the possibilities under the five heads mentioned show that at least 10 per cent. reduction could be effected all round by amalgamation, or from a quarter of a million to half a million sterling of the £2,500,000.

Chairman.—There is some mistake there.

Witness.—The total expenditure.

Chairman (after referring to documents).—Yes. I think you are right, Mr. Field. I only want to have it right.

Witness.—The present system is incurably wasteful, or rather the absence of system—£2,500,000, which is the total expenditure of the 26 Irish railways in the return—the present system is incurably wasteful, or rather the absence of system. Cattle traffic, slowness and high rates, contrasted with the efficiency and cheapness of systems over which foreign supplies are brought in.

13264. *Chairman.*—Have we not done sufficiently with the cattle traffic?—That is all I want to say.

13265. You have dealt sufficiently with the large savings that could be effected: there are other things you have not mentioned?—There is one other portion. The working expenditure, as I understand it, is 54 per cent.

13266. In Ireland?—Yes.

13267. I thought it was more?—It is a proof of wasteful management.

13268. It is 60 per cent. in England?—They pay better wages in England than here. Coal, it might be said, is cheaper in Scotland, but labour is cheaper in Ireland, and you make the balance in favour of Irish railways.

13269. I don't think you wan't to charge the Irish railway companies with wastefully spending money unnecessarily?—No one will if they can help it; it is more their misfortune than a fault for them.

13270. The intelligent men who are managing railways in Ireland, I am sure they do the best they can?—If they have to go to England to pay high prices for wagons and carriages.

13271. We didn't know that: you say there is a disadvantage there?—One other saving. An enormous saving could be effected in agents, offices, and the abolition of certain staffs of drummers and this kind of thing.

13272. A greater saving there than anywhere else?—I want to make that point.

13273. Yes, you had better make that point—read that paragraph?—A large saving could be effected by the abolition of agents or drummers, canvassers, numerous offices in different centres, various parts of different centres, of duplicate stations and staffs—there are not many duplicate stations in Ireland; there are in England, but not in Ireland—where competition for traffic exists; lower rates increased facilities; there would be an increase of passenger and goods traffic.

13274. I think you have dealt with that point?—One thing more; if a government under popular control obtained the railways, the stations could be utilised as public telegraph and telephone offices, subpost offices, and subsidies for postal services would be saved.

13275. Are they not used now?—Only to a certain extent.

13276. You say for general use?—Yes.

13277. You have formed an opinion as to the policy of English railway companies acquiring property in this country?—I am unalterably opposed to British railway companies having any share or control whatever, direct or indirect, in Irish railway management, as in my view the country would in future be operated as it has been and is at the present time in the interest of the foreign and British importer instead of for the development of home manufacture and the encouragement of native produce. I contend that if the English companies have chosen to spend money in Ireland they should not have been allowed to hinder the development of this country's resources or business.

Unqualified disapproval of British railway companies having any share or control in Irish railway management expressed.

13278. Do you think they do?—Yes. I will point it out.

13279. All right, point it out?—In my opinion, as well as dealing in a broad-minded way with the rates question, the Government should sweep all these combinations away and put the Irish producers, manufacturers, traders, merchants and passengers in a position to get the best possible services and facilities, not only in Ireland, but between Ireland and England, Scotland and Wales, because not only are the rates too high—and I want you to take notice of this yourself as a skilful railway man—but sufficient importance has never been attached to the quick and convenient transit, especially of perishable goods, by the different boards of railway directors. It would probably have paid the Irish and British railway companies better had they adopted a liberal policy and reduced all their charges. Such a course would result in the development of Irish produce generally, possibly by 100 per cent., enabling our products to be moved about from interior places to the large towns and cities of Ireland, also to the English, Scotch, and Welsh markets—I draw attention to this point—all of which are largely supplied from the Continent of Europe, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, etc. Any observer can see the large supplies of foreign produce that come into the English, Scotch, and Welsh markets, and, generally speaking, Ireland is the best adapted country probably in the world—that is a large order, but I believe it is true—for producing live stock of all descriptions, butter, eggs, poultry, bacon, fruit, vegetables, etc. There is surely something wrong when we are not able to send a larger output to the different markets

13280. How could this be corrected if that is your view?—To correct this, cheaper export rates should be given to the exporters of manufactures and produce and somewhat higher rates charged to importers. I hope this Commission will arrive at a speedy solution of this problem. I want to point this out, if markets had to be made for our produce, there might be a difficulty, but across the Channel the markets already exist, and Ireland only wants to be put on an equal footing to compete for the millions, or for some of the millions, of money that are going to foreign countries; and this would help to give employment and keep the people at home.

Cheaper export and higher import rates advocated.

13281. Of course, you say that could be done if the railways were owned by the State?—Yes I will come to that; it could be helped: I don't think it could be all done. Without an efficient railway service this is impossible, and whatever the result of this inquiry may be the Irish railways should be under popular control, when, with proper management, the trade of the country would be enormously increased. Moreover, the Government need not recognise the combinations which exist between Irish and English railway companies, sometimes to the ruination of the trade of this country. Those combinations provide for high rates—I want you to note this; you will take it in better than most people—and what is worse, the sending of traffic by circuitous routes. Take, for instance, the combination of the Midland of England with the Belfast and Northern Counties line. This forces all the traffic possible by Belfast and Heysham route, whether such route can give the proper service or not. The same system operates between the Great Southern and Western of Ireland and the Great Western Railway of England since the Fishguard and Rosslare route opened.

The forcing of traffic by routes other than its natural channels deprecated.

13282. What you mean is that with a unification of the railways the best and surest route would always be adopted?—Yes; and I think the phrase is, amongst railway men, that the railways "within their sphere of influence"——

13283. That may be in Ireland: I have not heard of that?—It was from an Englishman I had it. The railways within their sphere of influence; they naturally take all their own traffic.

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Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—That is the very thing the Railway Commission inquired into during last month, That is what they were appointed for. They are investigating this paragraph now about the Fishguard and Great Western. The court of the Railway and Canal Commission were inquiring into this matter that Mr. Field refers to.

Witness.—I have not said anything except what I believe, and I have not given definite evidence; I am within my rights in doing it.

Chairman.—You are quite right.

Quotations from an article published in the "Financial News" as to the adverse effect of the present railway freights on Ireland's prosperity.

Witness.—I always have the courage of my opinions. In this connection may I quote from the *Financial News'* leader written as a comment on my amendment to the Queen's Speech; especially now as Sir Antony MacDonnell holds a most responsible position under the Irish Government. Before reading it I wish to reverse the position in its financial aspect, because I hold that England is our debtor to the extent of hundreds of millions of money wrung from us by over-taxation. I claim some of this as a measure of restitution for the destruction of our industries through legislation and preferential rates, and the emigration of our people, which was the natural result of a natural cause, arising from felonious landlordism, over-taxation, and railway management in the interests of aliens. Sir Antony did not say that: I am saying that. "It is at least worth while to consider whether and how far the case of Ireland"—this is the comment of the *Financial News* on what Sir Antony said—"whether and how far the case of Ireland is on all fours with that of India. India, as Sir Antony MacDonnell points out, is a great debtor nation, and if the interest on her loans made by England is to continue to be paid, everything possible must be done to foster a favourable balance of exports over imports"—that is not our case. "If, said Sir Antony, the balance of our foreign trade is to remain in our favour, if order is to be maintained and famine mitigated"—we have distress in Ireland periodically—"it is on increased railway construction, on cheap fares and cheap freights, that the Indian Government must chiefly rely." Now the *Financial News* said: "We are in complete agreement with the views of Sir Antony MacDonnell. We have no doubt whatever that the general financial prosperity of India during the past quarter of a century"—I don't agree with that statement. There is no financial prosperity in India—"that poverty has been to a certain extent mitigated, owing largely to the extraordinary cheapness of Indian railway rates than to any other single cause, so that while India enjoys probably the cheapest rates in the world, the rates in Ireland, a great debtor nation"——

13284. *Chairman.*—You don't agree with that?—No, Ireland is not indebted to England: it is the other way—"virtually concerned to bring her produce to her ports in order to maintain a favourable balance of trade, are probably, if we except the Transvaal, the very highest in the world."—that is the *Financial News*—Seeing that in spite of repeated warnings from"—not from Mr. Field, but from—"Royal Commissions and Select Committees, the Irish companies, and I may add the English Companies now, by preferential rates, continue to pile fresh burdens upon the luckless Irish producer, we believe the time is ripe for a root and branch reform at the hands of the Legislature." Then he goes on to say: "The extraordinary lethargy of the Irish landed interest in this matter is surprising. The landlords have sold their property because it was held, whether rightly or wrongly, by Parliament that their demands upon their tenants were excessive and were incompatible with the general prosperity. But if we are not mistaken, the rates charged by Irish railways have been raised with every fresh reduction in the rents, and thus the railway companies have been imperceptibly made a buffer for that unpopular class, the Irish landlords, in order to distract attention from their own preposterous tribute—a tribute levied with unctuous impartiality on every form of Irish industry."

13285. *Chairman.*—Is that the *Financial News* of Ireland?

Witness.—No, sir, it is the *Financial News* of England. These are not my remarks; they are those of an English newspaper.

13286. The last paragraph says that the railway rates have been increased?—I do not say whether it is true or false; I am only quoting what they said.

13287. Do you make any comment?—Well, I say that the development of Irish produce, such as live stock, butter, eggs, poultry, bacon, fish, fruit, vegetables, &c., has been greatly retarded by the methods adopted by Irish railways and British railways in Ireland; and I think we ought to have an Irish Council here to look after Irish trade. You want something late, and so I will give you the following paragraph from the *Evening Telegraph* of last Saturday. It is headed "Railways Again," and is as follows:—"Mr. Robert Gibson has just shown up another case in which the Irish butter industry is being completely and conscientiously killed by the railway companies. The Taff Vale Railway Company does not want to be bothered with 'small lots' of 70 lbs., but has no objection to taking big freights on them. But the Great Southern and Western here in Ireland is even a greater sinner. Butter which was sent from Limerick on November the 6th reached Mallow on the 17th—it would have reached Chicago in the same time—and this interval of eleven days is flippantly referred to as an 'alleged delay.' This, as Mr. Gibson says, is adding insult to injury. These cases have cropped up most opportunely just now, when public indignation has been raised to fever heat by the revelations at the sittings of the Railway Commission." Now, sir, I want to say briefly with regard to that, that I have no desire to anticipate a matter which is *sub judice*; but I think I am entitled to point out that the revelations brought forward before the Railway Commission clearly prove that the English railway companies, as a rule, which have obtained control of Irish railways, have endeavoured to obtain traffic and to carry it round any distance on their own lines, and in some instances refuse through rates by a route outside their own, and, as far as they are able, persuade consigners to adopt this route even though it may be inconvenient and unsuitable. They have absolutely killed some trades, as has been proved by the evidence before the Railway Commission. In my view the passenger and the consignor should be at liberty to choose the route from one point to another with equal rates. I don't want to favour any railway, but the passenger has a right to choose his route.

13288. Tell us what your idea is of a new management?—As a feasible remedy all the Irish railways should be bought at their market value. The Irish railway companies should be dissolved, compensating those officials and individuals whose employment would cease, either by annuity or commutation. As to the directors, although I would be inclined personally to give them some compensation, yet when the shareholders' interest in the railways ended the directors would cease to have any functions. They had this advantage, that they were well paid when in employment, and, generally speaking, are in a better financial position than the officials, because frequently the main qualification of a director is the possession of a certain number of shares; (1) a transit master-general over railways and canals should be appointed, with powers similar to those exercised in the Colonies and on the Continent by a Railway Minister. This appointment to be vested in the National Council or other body which is to take charge wholly or partially, of Irish Government. There is a lot of looking before us in this; (2) a National Directory Board to consist of four Commissioners, one from each province, to be elected by the County Councils of Leinster, Ulster, Munster, and Connaught; (3) a provisional Consultative Committee, say of nine gentlemen, three to be elected by the General Council of County Councils, three by the National Council or other body about to be appointed to carry on the Government, wholly or partially, of Ireland, and three to be elected by the Irish Parliamentary Party; (4) one expert railway manager. When the comparative capital, mileage, goods and passenger traffic of Ireland is contrasted with those of the great English lines, one manager ought to be able to do the work easily. The evidence of Sir George Findlay, late general manager of the London and North-Western Railway, who was examined in August, 1895, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons upon Irish Industries, and who suggested a union or amalgamation of the Irish railways under the control of the Government, which he considered would be an advantage, and would effect a reduction of the rates, was, that he could

manage all the railways in Ireland with a couple of clerks, and have two days' fishing every week as a relaxation. But, in addition to the railways, the canals should be nationalised, otherwise the work would be incomplete.

13289. *Chairman.*—I think we had better stop here.

Witness.—Possibly a subsidiary expert manager might be required for the canals. If an up-to-date model is required, it is furnished by a British colony. Mr. Lloyd in his "Wealth against Commonwealth," states the New Zealand system to be as follows:—"The management of railroads is changed from Boards of Commissioners independent of the people to a Minister and Parliament dependent upon the people, and responsive to public needs and public opinion. The railroad policy is changed from the use of the highways as money-makers for the Treasury, relieving the general taxpayer at the expense of the producer to their use as public utilities supplying that necessity of life—transportation—at cost. The new policy is to lower rates, never to raise them, and to keep lowering them as profits increase. New lines are built for the people, not for the great landowners. The methods of construction are changed from private contract to co-operative work, largely by groups of unemployed, with special reference to the settlement of them and other landless people on the land.

13290. *Chairman.*—That's Mr. Lloyd's opinion about the New Zealand railways?

Witness.—Yes. This is my last paragraph, and it is my own opinion:—In Ireland the carrying companies are not simply carriers but monopolists and legislators. The Irish railway companies hold a mortgage on the community, and Government monopoly is their title deed; and the fact is ignored that grants of monopoly by the Crown impose corresponding obligations to the public. But general utility imperatively demands that the means of intercommunication and transportation in Ireland should be used and operated in the interest of the Irish people, to develop the natural, artificial, and potential resources of the country. For public utilities should be owned and controlled by the people. Trade and transit travel together.

On resuming after the luncheon interval,

Mr. Field handed to the Chairman a map showing, he explained, where dining cars have been shut off in some places and put on in others.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

13291. At the conference at Buda Pesth, I suppose the resolution to which you refer was discussed at some length?—It was.

13292. Were any actual suggestions made by any of the delegates as to the direction which State assistance or co-operation might take for giving effect to the objects which you wished to see accomplished, or were any actual steps taken afterwards by bringing the resolution to the notice of different Governments?—Not that I am aware of, but in the main the countries about Buda Pesth, such as Hungary, Servia, Roumania, Germany, that rule exists to a large extent.

13293. As to State assistance?—And as to a lower rate for exports and a comparatively higher rate for imports. They are all Protectionist countries, as you know.

13294. Were delegates present from France, Italy, and Belgium?—Yes—in fact every country was represented there. I think I was the only representative from England, except a couple of gentlemen who were there in the interests of horse-breeding, but they took no part in the discussion.

13295. Naturally such delegates were not very much concerned about British or Irish interests?—No. It was practically passed unanimously.

13296. I suppose the resolution was forwarded by the different representatives to the different Governments?—It was sent to all Governments.

13297. With regard to the preferential rates which you spoke of, do you mean by that that lower rates and increased facilities are given to British or foreign manufactures, or produce, than are accorded under similar conditions to the same class of goods in this country?—My opinion is to that effect, but I could not give you the exact rates or the specific instances, but I do know that men in various country towns have complained to me to that effect.

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13298. You are aware that so far as England is concerned, at least with regard to agriculture, the Departmental Committee found there was no such proof of preference given in England. Of course, it does not follow there was no such preference in Ireland?—I do not agree with that finding. I have read "The Ruin of Agriculture in England," a work that was written by—I forget the name of the author—and he pointed out a great many cases, but the railway men on the Committee proved with a certain degree of justice that there was not a sufficient amount of co-operation amongst the men sending produce. If my information is correct, you can get hops cheaper across the Continent than you can from Kent, and you can get fruit cheaper

13299. Isn't that largely owing to the different conditions under which the hops are sent?—That may be, but it constitutes a preference.

Mr. Field's parliamentary question of 11th March as to the apportionment of through rates.

13300. Some of the traders went so far as to say that it was absolutely wrong for the railway company to give foreign imported produce any preference, that they were not entitled to give it, even though it was sent in train loads. Would you go so far as that?—I would not go so far as that, but I think facilities ought to be given to the home trader. May I bring under your notice this question in Parliament:—"Mr Field—To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made through the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, asking the principal railway and shipping companies to furnish detailed information respecting import through rates, and likewise furnish the inland railway charges allowed on those through rates, and at the same time to obtain definite information respecting the charges made to Home traders for the inland carriage of goods the same distance to centres of population." Here is the answer of Mr. Lloyd-George—"I am taking steps to obtain information from railway companies and traders with regard to railway rates and other matters which I hope will throw light on the points referred to in the question." That was on the 11th of March, and it illustrates the fact that it is impossible for an individual like me to be able to get the information. I think the Board of Trade official on that Committee did not quite agree with that, if I read the evidence right.

Sir H. Jekyll.—I signed the Report.

Mr. Field.—But you made some reference to points as to which you did not quite agree.

Sir H. Jekyll.—You are probably referring to the representative of the Board of Agriculture, who made a separate report.

Witness.—I think the reply to that question of mine brings out the facts in a much clearer way than a non-expert like myself could do. I do not wish to make a statement here which I could not verify, which I am not in a position to verify. A witness has no right to occupy that position.

A cheaper tribunal than the Railway and Canal Commission recommended.

13301-2. With regard to the Railway and Canal Commission, if, assuming that the result of this Commission is not to sweep away the whole of the Irish railway companies, and that the present state of things, or something analogous to it, is allowed to continue, have you considered what tribunal you would substitute for the present Railway and Canal Commission?—I think some cheaper tribunal—I think the County Court Judge, or some of the present available legal machinery ought to be utilised for the purpose.

13303. You referred to the Allport Commission several times in your evidence, and probably you are familiar with the recommendations they made?—I am.

A tribunal such as the Allport Commission recommended, approved of.

13304. A witness we had before us the other day said if he could get a tribunal such as the Allport Commission recommended he would be satisfied with it?—I hope there will not be any necessity for it.

13305. Would you be satisfied with that?—Yes. I think there would be mutual advantages both to the carrying companies and the public. So far as I am individually concerned, I do not wish to be at war with the carrying companies. They should try to please their customers as far as they could, and the more facilities they give it is the better for themselves.

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13306. You alluded to the want of facilities and bad accommodation for the third-class passenger traffic?—I did.

13307. You stated that they formed 55 per cent. of the travelling public, and I daresay you are aware that they contribute two-thirds of the total passenger receipts in money—they did last year— a fact which in your opinion justifies the railway companies in catering more liberally for their wants?—Certainly.

Two classes of passenger fares only recommended.

13308. We have had some evidence here as to the desirability of trying to cater for the wants of the second-class passengers by lowering the fares to a scale more nearly approaching the third-class, and thus to attract a good many people who are now obliged to travel third-class on account of the high second-class fares, into the superior class. Have you anything to say to that?—The social customs of Ireland are perhaps different to what they are in England. My own individual opinion is it would be better to have only third and first class, the same as on some of the principal lines in England, but if the second-class is to be continued, a policy which I think is of very doubtful expediency, the second-class fares ought to be lowered.

Reduction in second class fares if retained urged.

13309. If they were lowered to 10 or 15 per cent. above the third-class, would you favour their retention?—Yes, I would do so, but I think we would be better without a second-class. I would like to have the democratic American system; make them all travel together.

13310. No one will dispute the soundness of the argument you adduce as to the cost of transit being necessarily a part of the value of the manufactured or of the agricultural product, but later on in connection with the matter you speak of railway and transit facilities generally developing in proportion as the agricultural and industrial resources of the country develop—in other words, you rather seem to argue that the agricultural and industrial resources ought to be first developed and that then as a matter of course the railway and other carrying bodies would afford increased facilities?—I do not know that that would necessarily follow. It has not been my experience. I think they should co-operate from the beginning. Take, for instance, small parcels—a sack of potatoes from a distant part in Ireland costs as much for transit as the value of the article. Only the other day I had a customer who told me she got a bag of potatoes from Galway, and it cost the whole value of the potatoes to bring them to Monkstown.

13311. That is one individual sack?—Yes, but that is the trouble. Of course, I know it has to come across the city and on by the South Eastern line. That is where the difficulty comes in, of the railways not having connection by a loop line.

Vital necessity for effecting economies and cheapening transit pointed out.

13312. In the condition in which the agricultural industry and limited manufacturing industries at present are, isn't it impossible for any much greater volume of traffic of one sort or the other to be sent forward for export or otherwise?—I rather agree with that view. but I would like to add this, that in my opinion, unless some radical change is made in connection with the transit of manufactured goods and agricultural produce, that really the railways will have less to do by and by than they have to do at the present, and unless some economies are effected that will enable a cheaper transit, a very dangerous state of affairs will arise in the country.

Difficulty of obtaining reductions in rates under present system of ownership of railways indicated.

13313. If you agree with that argument which I put before you, it follows that the railway companies cannot possibly make any appreciable reduction in their present rates without incurring a serious loss?—They cannot make any very serious reductions unless there are economies in the management, and these economies cannot be carried out unless under some kind of unification and control.

13314. They could not be carried out under the present system?—No. The shareholders in England have been obliged to be satisfied with a lesser dividend.

13315. I will come to that in a minute. I only wanted to see if you agreed with me that under the existing conditions of trade in this country it is impossible for the railways to make the reductions which we all think are necessary without incurring a loss which, in the interests of the shareholders, they could not be expected to incur?—To a large extent I agree with that. The expense of management is so great and the volume of traffic is so small that under existing circumstances it would be very difficult.

13316. In connection with that, may I call your attention to a very important case as to imported meat, which was taken before the Railway and Canal Commissioners in England in 1895. A complaint was made on behalf of Salisbury and other towns against the London and South-Western Railway Company, in which it was shown that while the distance between Southampton and London and Salisbury and London was approximately the same, some 75 miles as against 84 miles in the two cases, the South-Western Company, in the one case, for the imported meat coming in through Southampton charged 17*s.*, and in the other case something like 36*s.* When the Railway and Canal Commissioners come to inquire into the question they eliminated the cartage charges at London and the terminal points, which brought the actual rates down to 12*s.* 6*d.* and 25*s.*—in other words the Railway Company were carrying imported meat at 100 per cent. lower rate than they were carrying the home product. That seemed an extraordinary difference?—Well, that was an exceptional case, I think.

13317. And yet it was proved when the Commissioners went into it that the conditions under which the two classes of goods were carried—in the one case in train loads of 37 tons from Southampton, and in the other case in consignments of five and six and seven cwts. from Salisbury—were so different that the Commissioners considered a very slight readjustment of the rates would meet the necessities of the case. My point is that unless you can bring the conditions under which the agricultural products of this country are consigned across the water, into somewhat closer conformity with those under which foreign produce comes into the country, I do not see how you are ever to get anything like the rates which you are advocating?—I would point out there is a very big question depending upon that. The State has advanced money for the purchase of land. The farmers are to pay instalments, and these instalments have to be provided by the produce of the land. If the produce of the land cannot be brought to market cheaply the farmers cannot pay their instalments, and I hold strongly that unless a radical change is made in the whole system of Irish railway rates, charges, and facilities there is no alternative, in my opinion, but absolute ruin both agriculturally and commercially. It is a very strong view, I know, but it is my absolute opinion, after studying this question for the last twenty-five years.

13318. Unless there is an enormous development in the agricultural industry of this country, how do you ever expect that individual farmers, and in most cases small farmers can ever send large consignments? Don't you agree that the only means by which they can compete with the foreigner is by a system of co-operation?—Yes, I agree, but when a man becomes the owner of his own land he will produce a great deal more than if he was a tenant. You are acquainted, I suppose, with the farmers in Belgium, France, and Germany, where land ownership has been the rule, and you will find these men are able to live. They have cheaper rates, they find a market for their produce in their own country, and the result is general prosperity. In my view, owing to the majority of the tenants becoming owners of the land, there will be increased industry and increased produce, and with some small measure of co-operation I look forward to some increase in the produce of the land and greater improvement.

13319. And any steps that may be taken to promote this co-operation and combination amongst the farmers is very much to be encouraged?—I am entirely with you in that. I know that in my own trade men sometimes join together to fill a wagon at a fair so that they may get the wagon rate, and also sometimes to get a special run if they have a certain number of wagons. That is an instance of co-operation that could be very usefully followed in regard to potatoes or other produce.

13320. I think that is the direction towards which all efforts should be concentrated?—I agree.

13321. You refer to railway companies in Ireland paying a higher dividend than in England or Scotland. I think there is a good deal of misconception on that point, and it arises in consequence of this that English and Scotch railways have a very large amount of nominal additions to capital. Since the last sitting of this Commission I took the trouble of deducting the nominal additions to capital in the case of England and Scotland, and also

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in Ireland, from the total capital value, and if you look at these figures you will see how they come out. (*Return handed to witness.*) Referring to the Board of Trade returns, which, of course, include the nominal additions to capital you will see the dividend for 1905 works out in England at 4·02; in Scotland, 4·24; and in Ireland, 3·78. That is including all classes of capital, after deducting the nominal additions. Then with regard to the ordinary stock, if you deduct from the total English capital the nominal additions, instead of the dividend being 3·46, you will find that the dividend actually paid on the ordinary capital, less the nominal additions, is 4 per cent. for England. In Scotland, in the Board of Trade returns, the dividend shown as being paid on ordinary stock is 2·17, but when you deduct the nominal additions you will find that the dividend works out at 3·98. In Ireland the nominal additions are so small as compared with the capital that they practically make no difference, and it works out at 3·98, whether you include the nominal additions or not. In other words, the actual dividend paid in Ireland is 3·98; in Scotland, 3·98; and in England 4 per cent., showing that England is paying slightly more, and that Scotland and Ireland are paying exactly the same?—They are all practically the same.

13322. It has been argued here that Ireland is earning larger dividends. As a matter of fact she is not. It is a misconception owing to the very large nominal additions in the cases of England and Scotland?—It shows the difficulty of working out these things.

13323. Now with regard to the 70 complaints which have been preferred in respect of live stock traffic, you have given us two or three instances, one of cattle from Nenagh to Navan, another from Fermoy, and another from Greystones. With the exception of these two or three complaints, do the bulk of the complaints which you have mentioned have reference to the last year or two, or do they go further back?—From 1903 to 1906, but these are only special complaints. I may point out the fact that in the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association the principal business we have there is looking after complaints about the railway companies. There is hardly a week goes by that we have not complaints.

13324. Have you ever brought them to the notice of the Agricultural Department?—We have in a great many instances. They have done what they could, but they have no power.

13325. Your experience is rather at variance with the evidence which was given by Mr. Prentice?—I am not contradicting Mr. Prentice. The Department do the best they can, I admit. I have been on a deputation to Sir Horace Plunkett about this matter. The railway companies make promises, but they do not carry them out. As long as the consignment note is in existence they can practically do what they like with the stock.

13326. With reference to the consignment sent from Nenagh to Navan, was the reason assigned by the Great Southern and Western when they refused to consider the charge, that they sheltered themselves under the owner's risk rate?—Our secretary will tell you that.

13327. With regard to the other two complaints, one of the 9th February and the other of the 28th?—We received a reply to the 28th, and the other they refused to consider. They said they were not liable.

13328. On what ground did they base their refusal?—I think on the ground of the consignment note.

13329. You quoted the Allport Commission on several occasions, and you say that in 1888 the Allport Commission recommended the purchase of the Irish railways by the State, and you go on to speak of the Commission on Irish Public Works—these Commissions were practically one and the same?—Practically the same. I took the trouble of reading the Commission through in the House of Commons, where I got the Blue Book that contains it.

13330. But you made a slight error in saying they recommended purchase by the State. That is exactly what they did not do. They recommended amalgamation and unification, but they considered it was not in the interest of the country that the railways should be purchased?—I think unification and amalgamation practically leads to the same thing.

13331. Later on you have referred to the answer given by Mr. Wyndham, who refers to the reply given by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in 1874. At that time the question of State purchase was brought up in the House of Commons, and the Irish representatives, at any rate 90 of them, signed a memorial undertaking on behalf of this country to make good any loss. I do not know whether you are aware that was the case?—I heard of it. It was before my time.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's statement in the House of Commons in 1874 on the subject of State purchase of Irish railways, and Mr. Field's (1899) and Mr. Hayden's (1901) motions referred to.

13332. And it was in reference to that proposal when it came before the Government that the reply of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was made?—I think we would be in the same position to-day. We would make good any loss; we would be able to make good any loss—provided the management was given to us.

13333. At any rate, in 1871 or 1873 when the proposition was made for State purchase the Government expressed their readiness to contribute financially towards the amalgamation of the then existing system, so that practically, I think, the result of all these different Commissions has been in the direction, if not of State purchase, at any rate of unification and amalgamation. I think that is quite clear?—Yes—unification.

13334. In the amendment which you moved to the Address in 1899, and in the motion made by Mr. Hayden in 1901, in both these resolutions you considered the alternative either of State purchase or amalgamation of the management of the railways?—Yes, that is so, sir.

13335. Am I to understand that, so far as you and the bodies that you represent are concerned, that they would be still prepared to accept one of these alternatives?—Well, I could not say that now; public opinion has ripened in that direction now, but, as far as I am able to judge, I may say that I have not any direct mandate from any of those bodies on that particular point, but as far as I can understand they favour nationalisation; certainly the cattle dealers do, and certainly the Dublin County Council does; but I am not sure as to the attitude of the Urban District Council.

13336. Would they favour State purchase rather than amalgamation?—Nationalisation; public opinion has ripened since then.

Nationalisation of the railways stated to be now the desired object of Irish public opinion.

13337. I agree with you, but I only wish to make it clear as to what views you advance?—Yes.

13338. You referred to the parcel post and telegraphs and other matters to show that the results of management under Government lead you to believe that railways would also benefit in the same way?—Certainly.

The analogy of State working of parcels post, telegraphs, etc.

13339. But as to the parcel post, the post office and telegraphs, you cannot fairly compare them with railway management. You will admit that railway management requires men of great commercial ability and experience to keep in touch with the fluctuating conditions of trade, and in addition that a great deal of the difficult work of railways arises from the constant requirement of an adjustment of rates?—Yes, and that would not interfere with the railways at all. You could have that as a Department to itself, as it is managed in foreign countries, and the unification of railways under popular control would enable things to be done much better and more economically, and, in my opinion, would suit the general public convenience more than at present.

13340. You seem to argue that because the post office and telegraphs were managed economically and efficiently under State control it would therefore follow that the railways could be managed in the same way?—I think they could be managed under our own control; why not?

13341. But it does not follow because the post office lends itself to State control that the railways should?—Does not all the experience of the world show that it is done more cheaply in that way. Take the Prussian railways, for instance, and take what is paid to the managers of the great English railways and compare their salaries with the salaries paid to the Prussian officials, and take the Australian railways, the New Zealand railways, or the railways of Natal, or anywhere you like. Our system is exceptional in the world.

13342. Now, on the point of finance, of course I don't wish to dispute your finance, but at the same time I don't quite accept it, a good deal must be only a matter of conjecture?—Well, I don't put these forward as what may be called positive statements, because it takes a financial expert to go into these things and to actually and definitely determine them. I put that forward as a kind of tentative suggestion

Financial aspect of State purchase discussed.

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that might be tested by returns by the gentlemen whose business it is to go into these matters, but I think I may say that in a rough way I am near the mark.

13343. Oh, the figures will have to be gone into carefully. I want to know have you considered the possibility in the event of the State purchasing, or even a national authority purchasing, the railways of Ireland, that it might be necessary and it might be fair that they should also purchase at the same time the subsidiary undertakings in connection with railways?—That is hotels, I suppose.

Question of the purchase of the subsidiary undertakings of the Irish railways by the State

13344. Yes, docks and canals, and, in some cases, steamship companies, which belong to the railway companies?—Yes, that has crossed my mind, and I don't think there would be much difficulty about it, except in the case of the hotels. I don't think the State should purchase hotels, although I am a Progressive; but if these hotels were running at a profit it would be easy to get a purchaser for them.

13345. In my opinion if the State took over the railways and hotels, the hotels would probably be one of the most paying parts of the concern, but this only adds to the financial burden that would have to be undertaken by somebody or other, if you agree that a good many of the subsidiary undertakings would have to be purchased?—Some would have to be purchased, and that would add to the money, but not much. There are not a great many of these hotels, some, perhaps, in the West, in Galway and such places, and there are some of the Great Southern hotels, but there is nothing like the same amount of money involved in them as in England, in places like Euston and Lime-street; the cost would not be much.

13346. Not perhaps in the hotels themselves, but in some cases canals and docks, and things of that sort are mixed up with the railways?—In that case I think the purchase should include the canals. I think it is a most extraordinary state of things that the canals should be allowed to be purchased by the railways. I think the railways should not be allowed to grab the canals and shut them up so as to increase the transit rates.

13347. Did you give evidence before the Canal Commission?—Yes.

Working of Irish canals: practically free transit for course traffic not able to bear present transit charges suggested.

13348. It is hardly relevant to ask you, except, indeed, that the two things are so closely bound up, but what was the general effect of your evidence?—That all the canals in Ireland should be bought up by the Government and be worked by the State or by the Irish Government in the future, practically free.

13349. Did your evidence go to show that in your opinion there was sufficient traffic in the country to work the two things side by side?—Certainly, because I think the canals would relieve the railways of a good deal of the heavy traffic, take timber, for instance. In an Irish town—in Athlone some time ago—in fact in two or three inland towns, I am sorry to say, there is very little timber, but in Athlone they told me that the timber did not pay on account of the high rates, and it is the same way with grain, and the same way with granite and marble, and all those heavy articles—they don't want them carried owing to the rates. I think the canals should be utilised for this sort of traffic.

13350. Yes, I agree with you, if they are developed largely, but at the present time this industry as to marble, and stone and quarrying is practically in its infancy?—The reason is that they cannot get them carried on fair terms.

13351. Most of them are in the West of Ireland, and there is no canal communication?—Well, we would have to open or build a canal if necessary; look at the amount of money spent on canals in France.

13352. But in France there are enormous distances to be covered and great quantities of traffic to be carried?—We in Ireland are going backward instead of forward in the matter of transit.

13353. Well, we will leave the canal question now, and I am sorry that I touched on it. On the point of economies, as in the case of finance, it is largely a matter of conjecture, and I don't propose to ask you any question on that point, but I invite your attention to the findings of these different Commissions which sat at various intervals and in whose opinion very little economy could be effected in any of the directions you speak of except in working expenditure, and in the direction of getting more work out of the rolling stock. On the first point if you look at the Board of Trade return again, it gives you the working expenditure for the different Irish railways, and, by the way, there is a slight error, probably a printer's error, in your abstract; you allude to the working expenses as being 54 per cent. of the gross receipts, but that is for Scotland?—Yes, and it was Scotland I think I said.

13354. It is 60 per cent. for Ireland, and 54 per cent. for Scotland?—Yes.

13355. If you look at the expenditure, and the proportion of expenditure, working expenditure to receipts in that table you will find that the only line in this country that at all approaches the proportion of the Scotch lines is the Great Northern, which is 57 per cent. of the gross receipts, but on the other hand the Great Southern and Western is 60 per cent., the Midland 65 per cent., and a number of other lines, raise the average cost up to 70, and one or two, I believe, rise to 98 per cent., and some light railways with baronial guarantees go beyond the gross receipts?—Would not that be caused, Colonel, by the fact of insufficient rolling stock, and that want of unification.

13356. I don't know what the cause of it is, but it goes to show largely, I think, or to establish an argument in the direction of unification, because it shows that the large lines, what may be called the main lines, the Midland, the Great Northern, the Great Southern and Western, and the Northern Counties, that their ratio of working expenses to receipts is 60 to 64 or 65, but the ratio on the small lines shows an average out of all proportion to this?—It is just the same in a railway as in all other businesses; a man with horses can often with a little increase of the number, and the business available, do double the amount of work, though the working expenses are about the same, and therefore I think unification would be productive of a saving on working.

13357. I think that is the point, that the ratio of the smaller lines would be very much reduced. Look at the Scotch lines, and you will find that in the case of the three great principal railways—the Caledonian, the North British, and the Glasgow and South Western—their ratio of working expenses, as compared with gross receipts, is 53 North British, 54 Caledonian, and 59 per cent. in the case of the Glasgow and South Western—that is largely owing to the reduced expenditure?—And the cheaper cost of fuel.

13358. The cheaper cost of fuel has, no doubt, something to say to it, but at the same time I should question very much whether it would not be possible for us to more nearly approach to something like their figures than we do at the present time?—But is not that one of the reasons of the reduced cost, because the principal railway work of Scotland is done by three lines—in fact, by two.

13359. The average for the whole of Scotland is 54, and these three lines reach 54, 53, and 59; and I daresay you remember that in the case of the Allport Commissioners they reported that if the ratio on working expenditure in this country could be brought down to anything like that of Scotland that at once a saving of £140,000 a year would be made?—Yes.

13360. And I think the consideration of these figures would show that if the smaller lines were absorbed there would be a great reduction in working expenses?—Yes, and is not that the policy of the railways of the Three Kingdoms. A great number of little companies have been absorbed by the larger railway companies of England—by the London and North Western and the Great Western and the Midland.

13361. Oh, certainly?—I am not prepared to go into the exact figures, but I have read about the matter, and I know that the larger companies have absorbed a great number of the smaller lines.

13362. A great deal has been done in that direction in this country?—Yes.

13363. There is the case of the Midland and the Northern Counties?—Yes, and of the amalgamation in the case of the Great Southern.

13364. On page 25 of your evidence you lead one to believe that you consider the amalgamation with our Irish railways resulting from the different English companies coming into this country has not been in

the interests of this country?—Certainly not; I believe the English railways come here for the purpose of making money at our expense.

13365. Has the effect of that amlagamation in different parts of the country been rather to concentrate the traffic from the districts that the railways serve into two or three large ports at the expense of the small ports?—Yes, that is my view, and a diversion of traffic from its natural geographical route into whatever particular line these railway companies control. For instance, the Great Southern and Western Railway sends all their stores round now by Rosslare, taking them via Inchicore, instead of bringing them into Dublin. I brought the case under the notice of the Port and Docks Board in Dublin, of which I am a member, about goods being sent this way instead of by the natural route. The natural geographical route for traffic is altered to suit the interests of those English railway companies in order that they may get traffic on their own lines; it is the natural effect of a natural cause.

13366. Would your idea be that where you have as in Ireland a number of ports studded round the coast with railways in most cases leading to them that the natural outlet for the district served for fifty miles—and few railways are more than fifty miles from the port—that the natural channel would be through the nearest port?—Yes; I have always advocated that. I think the railway companies serving a port should do their utmost for it, and also that the consignor should have the liberty of choosing his own route.

13367. That is one reason why you are in favour of amalgamation or nationalisation?—Yes, certainly.

13368. And you think if such a scheme were carried out?—That the jealousy of the railways would disappear.

13369. And that there would be no tendency to divert traffic from its natural port?—No. At present Belfast tries to take the traffic from Dublin, and Dublin tries to take traffic from Belfast, Cork tries to take it from Dublin and Belfast, and Waterford tries to take it too. There is a kind of friction and tension going on to force traffic by particular routes. That policy is all wrong.

13370. And that would, to a large extent, be rectified and obviated under a national system?—Certainly, I think it is quite plain.

13371. I just want to have your views. I suppose when you brought forward the motion which you refer to on pages 25 and 26, on your amendment to the Queen's Speech, I suppose you did not employ quite such vigorous language when addressing the House as you do here in the Minute?—Which is the particular portion?

13372. The amendment to the Queen's Speech—the passage, "England is our debtor to the extent of hundreds of millions wrung from us by over-taxation. I claim this as a measure of restitution for the destruction of our industries through legislation and preferential rates, and the emigration of our people, which was a natural result of a natural cause arising from felonious landlordism, over-taxation, and railway management in the interest of aliens"—I don't suppose you used such strong language as that in the House of Commons?—Well, I think if I did not actually use it that I went very near it. I am just as strong in the House of Commons as I am here. I remember being put out of the House of Commons once, and the only time I ever was, when I was speaking on this question of over-taxation. I think my speech was very nearly as strong. I don't know that that precise paragraph was in it.

13373. The reason I ask is that I should have hardly thought that in the House of Commons you would be commending yourself to your audience, or going the right way about gaining your point by addressing such strong language to the House?—I think I sent you a copy of that document entitled "High Rates and Railway Monopoly in Ireland," and you will see what I said in it.

13374. On pages 29 and 30 you have gone in some detail into the intervening authority which you consider should be placed between the central national authority, so to speak, and the railways?—Yes, sir.

13375. You speak, first of all, of a transit master-general, and then a national directory board of four commissioners, and a provisional consultative committee, and one expert railway manager; would not you rather prefer, assuming some central authority is constituted, would not you rather leave the constitution of any board that they might entrust with the control of the railways to such an authority, instead of allowing the Committee to be elected—some by members of Parliament, some by the County Councils' General Council, and some by the different provinces?—My reason for making that suggestion is this: I would like to get all parties in Ireland together as far as possible, and I don't believe in a policy of centralisation of commercial powers in any particular body. There are so many interests to consider. In the first place, as to the transit master-general, I claim that that is a new phrase. I sometimes do originate a phrase, and I say that that official should occupy pretty much the position of the Postmaster-General.

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13376. Oh, I was not taking any exception to that?—Well, there is some jealousy about these things in Ireland, just as there is in other places, and I wanted to have the body thoroughly representative.

Constitution of suggested new controlling body.

13377. I agree with you, but I suppose if any central body is set up in Ireland for the administration of local affairs, including the control of the railways, that it will be representative of all interests?—Yes, but this is a special work. This consultative committee that I suggest ought to consist mainly of commercial men who know what they want, and some men acquainted with railway management. If you leave the control altogether to what might be termed a political body I think they would not manage always properly or to the best advantage.

13378. I hope if this body is ever set up it won't be a political body?—Well, I don't know how you can keep politics altogether out.

Question as to religion and politics having an undue influence over an Irish constituted controlling body discussed.

13379. Well, I should look on it then with very grave suspicion?—But is not everything determined on political lines now-a-days.

13380. I am quite aware of that?—Well, how can you make Ireland an exception to the rule that obtains everywhere else.

13381. But if you contemplate a political body being set up here in Ireland, and that to that body should be entrusted the control of the railways, I am afraid the points raised before us here on several occasions as to political and religious considerations influencing that body will be found to have some justification?—I don't share that view.

13382. But assume that it is a political body?—Well, even so; the County Council is a political body, and Colonel Vesey is its vice-chairman and does not hold the same political views. The County Council does not share your views. In Blackrock, which is similarly constituted, we hear very little of politics.

13383. If you got a body representative of the whole country?—Yes, I would approve of that, but I think we have too much politics everywhere.

13384. I quite agree with you, and I think that politics are the curse of this country?—Oh, I would not say that.

13385. We have too much politics?—They are introduced into everything, and they have nothing to do with trade.

13386. I will only ask you one more question, and that is in consequence of the remarks you have made. We had Mr. Ennis giving evidence here representing the Wexford County Council, and the County Councils' General Council, and in reply to my questions he said that assuming that some central authority, such as we have referred to, was set up in this country that he believed, notwithstanding anything that might have occurred in the past, that in future every shade of political and religious thought in this country would find a place on such a body, that he believed the minority were entitled to receive such consideration, and that it was in the interests of the country that they should receive their fair share of representation, I wish to ask you as a man of considerable weight and influence in this country——?—I am glad to hear it.

13387. And certainly I believe, I know I do myself, and I believe the other Commissioners do, attach some value to what you say, and we are certain that whatever you said you would do your very best to see carried out; now, I ask you are you prepared to share in these views of Mr. Ennis?—Yes; certainly.

13388. And to associate yourself with him in the desire he expresses that the minority should receive their proper share of representation in any such body?—I think the majority is bound to rule in Ireland as in all other countries, but I believe, and have

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said, and have always acted up to it, that minorities have their rights and ought to be represented. I was in a minority myself when I was a Parnellite.

13389. I don't want to go into that?—I merely mention it to show that minorities are sometimes right and convert majorities.

13390. The people you represent are in a majority, and as long as the existing state of affairs prevails must be in a majority, but the minority are at present absolutely unrepresented—you admit that?—No, I don't.

The rights of the minority in Ireland to full representation admitted and recommended.

13391. Pretty nearly so?—I think it would be a very unfortunate thing for this country if the minority were not represented on any such Council, and I hope the time is coming when Irishmen of all creeds and classes and sects will unite for the common good of the common country, even though on some points we may differ.

13392. Certainly, we can all agree to differ?—Yes; we want more toleration. I have often expressed that opinion.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

Transference of the existing powers of the Board of Trade re settlement of disputes between traders and railway companies in Ireland to the Board of Agriculture suggested.

13393. You alluded in your evidence to the insufficiency of the powers conferred by Parliament on the Board of Agriculture, and you favour the strengthening of those powers by statute?—I think it would be a useful thing; if there is really a necessity for it why should further time be allowed to elapse before making such amendments.

13394. I am assuming the continuance of something like the present state of things; you are aware of the powers conferred on the Board of Trade for the purpose of affecting amicable settlements between traders?—Yes.

13395. You may also be aware that they are made use of largely in England, although so far they do not appear to have been used much in Ireland. Would you be in favour of the powers now exercised by the Board of Trade being transferred to the Board of Agriculture in respect of Irish complaints?—Yes, temporarily.

13396. You think that that would have a good effect?—Certainly, a temporary effect. I have often brought it up before my Association, but Irishmen, as you can understand, don't want to go before an English body if they can avoid it, but it is a very good suggestion, and I hope, if necessary, it will be carried out.

Cross-examined by Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.

Ownership of the Irish canals discussed.

13397. In your proof you say that the canals of Ireland have been purchased by the railway companies to secure their own monopoly?—Most of them.

13398. Will you mention any canal besides the Royal Canal that has been purchased or grabbed?—I don't know.

13399. Do you know how many canals there are in Ireland?—I could not tell you.

13400. There are fifteen canals and the Royal is the only one that has been taken?—How many out of the fifteen are pooled by the railway companies?

13401. You said "purchased to secure a monopoly." The Royal Canal is the only one. You state in your proof that the English companies rule the Irish railway companies in the management of their affairs; are they not governed by two cattle conferences in the South of Ireland?—How can I tell. I am a member of the Transit committee. Surely you don't imagine that I have come here to give you tips as to how things are to be carried on.

13402. We know that you are in communication with the cattle conferences?—I have spoken of the monopoly of the railways. They are all clever men and keep it to themselves.

The proportion of miles of State owned to private owned lines discussed generally.

13403. You have also stated that the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States are the only places in which the State don't own the railways?—Or control them.

13404. Have you any idea of what their respective mileages are?—I have some. What do you want to know about them?

13405. *Chairman.*—Our practice, Mr. Fitzgibbon, has been for counsel only to ask questions as to particular points against particular railways and not general questions.

Witness.—I have no objection to answer Mr. Fitzgibbon. From my pamphlet, "Irish Railways and Railway Monopolies" I will give you a few figures. In Victoria the State-owned railways have 3,122 miles; of privately owned railways there are none. In New South Wales the State-owned railways have 2,139 miles; the private railways, 84. In New Zealand there are 2,018 miles of State-owned railways, and of private-owned railways 167 miles. In Queensland there are 2,430 miles of State-owned railways, and of private railways none. In India there are 5,095 miles of State-owned railways, and of private railways 1,238 miles, and I understand that since then the Indian Government has acquired the control of more railways. I exclude those that belong to native States. In Cape Colony there are 2,153 miles of railway, State-owned, and 254 miles privately. Now, if you want any more figures I will give them to you for all over the world.

13406. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—I don't think you have met my question. You were not dealing in your proof with the Colonies at all, and you refer to Spain, Turkey, and the United States as the only countries where they are not controlled?—Yes.

13407. You do not include the Argentine Republic with its enormous system of railways, and France with a greater mileage than Great Britain?—France is controlled, to a certain extent.

13408. Then there are 202,000 miles of railway in the United States?—That is the worst example that you could give us. She is in hell over her railway properties at the present time. Surely, if you were a prudent man, you would not mention the United States; when a man like Mr. Harman boasted that he made £3,000,000 in connection with a deal in the United States. And the Mexican people are going to take in their railways now. A gentleman sent me a paper from New York the other day. Mexico with 11,000 miles of railway, of which about 7,000 has been nationalised.

13409. You charge as a subject of extravagance against the railways the number of workshops, and suggest that amalgamation would reduce the number of workshops to one?—One or two certainly.

13410. Large establishments. You are aware that, when the Great Southern and Western Railway Company were carrying out their amalgamation, the representatives of the Irish people insisted on a clause being put in to the effect that all the old workshops were to be carried on notwithstanding the amalgamation?—Yes, that is so. I do not propose to close up any workshop at all, but to keep them going, to do the work at home, and do not be exporting it across the Channel.

13411. Then you could not carry out the suggestion of having one instead of a number?—One or two, but you do not do the work here, a great deal of it, that is the worst of it.

13412. You state that the Great Northern Railway ought to build, at Balbriggan, a cattle bank at the northern end instead of at the south end of the station?—Yes.

13413. Are you aware that, if that suggestion were adopted, it would require the removal of the signal cabin and a change of the whole arrangements at the station?—Yes, certainly; but surely, if it would, the railway companies are bound to a certain extent to meet the wishes of their customers. The railway companies in Ireland are the only bodies that defy their customers. The customers have to please the railways.

13414. You say that they do not comply with the requirements of their customers. Have you any idea of what the amount of the cattle traffic is there at Balbriggan?—It is not a very large station, I quite agree. I know the place very well. I went down and saw it. I blocked the Bill.

13415. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Can you give us the figures at all?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—Yes.

Chairman.—The witness has admitted that the traffic is very small.

Witness.—Certainly.

13416. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—You also state that the raiway companies, as at present managad, have a shortage of wagons in consequence of not having a supply. Do you state that the railway companies do not lend wagons to each other in emergencies?—No, but I do know as a matter of fact, and I will

get our secretary to come here and prove it, that in a good many instances wagons could not be supplied at fairs; and I think, if the Irish railway companies were abolished as at present and put into one unified system, these wagons would be available when wanted. You know that as well as I do.

13417. You also state that a large saving could be effected by the abolition of agents or drummers. As a matter of fact, do the Irish railway companies employ drummers or canvassers at all. Are they not employed by the English railway companies canvassing for the through traffic?—That is so to a large extent, but I am sure that the Irish railway companies must have some hand in it. As a matter of fact, I know some of the men canvassing at Smithfield.

13418. Was not that for the English through traffic?—Certainly, but when they go to the various fairs, it is not for the through traffic.

13419. You also state that you had an objection to the live stock consignment note?—Most decidedly.

13420. Are you aware that there is no owner's risk rate for the locally consigned traffic in Ireland?—I said so. You need not pick me up until I fall down. I explained that to the Chairman.

13421. Also you give a list of a number of free grants to Irish railway companies prior to the recent ones?—I did not give you a list.

13422. You stated the figures?—I did not give you the list. The Secretary of the Treasury gave you the list. The official document is there.

13423. Are you aware that a large quantity of these loans have been repaid?—Possibly, but I did not give you the list. Well now, sir, may I say, as this gentleman has been cross-examining me—and I think that the witness that cannot bear cross-examination is no good—but may I point out that I got this the other day from the Irish County Councils General Council. It is a resolution passed by the County Wexford County Council:—

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Mr. William Field, M.P., Member of Dublin County Council and Blackrock Urban District Council, etc.

"That this Council desires to call attention to the intolerable position created for Irish County Councils generally by defects in the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, whereby County Councils, entrusted by that Act with the charge of important interests, now find themselves debarred from giving effective protection to those interests, eminent counsel having advised that neither the Irish County Councils General Council nor any County Councils, or a number of County Councils can apply their funds towards the cost of appearing by counsel before the Viceregal Commission on Irish railways, now sitting, before which Commission the associated railway companies of Ireland have been permitted to appear by counsel.

Resolution of Wexford County Council protesting against being debarred from availing of legal assistance when appearing before the Commission. (See Appendix No. 18–XX, Vol. I.)

"That we consider the fact that the directors of the Irish railway company are assisted by counsel at the expense of the shareholders, whilst the County Councils of Ireland are debarred under the existing law from availing of legal assistance, will not conduce to an impartial consideration of the question of Irish railways.

"That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party and Irish Unionist Party, Viceregal Commission on Irish railways, and the General Council of County Councils."

I do not want to shelter myself behind that. I am ready for any cross-examination.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—I do not think that a body that is represented by Mr Field requires the assistance of counsel.

Chairman.—The Commission consider that you have prepared your proof with exceedingly great care and the information it contains is very valuable, and we are exceedingly obliged to you.

Witness.—I am very much obliged to you for the courteous manner in which you have treated me.

Mr. J. Dolan examined by The Chairman.

13424. Do you appear before us on behalf of the Ardee Town Commissioners?—Yes.

13425. Are you a Commissioner?—Yes.

13426. You also represent the trading interest of your town?—Yes. I am a shopkeeper there.

13427. And also the farming interest?—Yes, in the neighbourhood.

13428. Where is your district situated?—In the County Louth, midway between Dundalk and Drogheda.

13429. The Great Northern Railway have a branch line to Ardee from the main line?—Yes, three miles long.

13430. Now are you satisfied with the railway facilities and rates offered in your district by the Great Northern Railway?—We have no grievance in the matter of the rates except the general grievance of any other trading community, I mean, as far as our own district is concerned, we are as well provided as they, except where there is a keener competition. Dundalk has a competition, a sea competition, and they get more advantageous terms, but otherwise our rates are the same as any other equi-distant place. But we see how the high rates hamper some local industries.

13431. That is the point to which I wish to direct your attention. Mention any particular small industry in your district that is retarded in consequence of the action of the railway company?—Not in our own county. But my own experience as a shopkeeper is, the proportionately high rate of getting goods from manufacturers in Ireland operates against them. From any place south of Dublin the carriage is considerable, and makes it rather hard to supply those goods in comparison with the rate for goods that come across the Channel.

13432. You, as a trader, would like to have the rates reduced?—Yes.

13433. You make no complaint *per se* that the rates are themselves excessive?—Not in comparison with the general rates in Ireland. I do not say that the rates to our town or from it are higher, but the general rate hampers industries to that extent.

13434. Have you not some complaints?—We have a local complaint.

Mr. J. Dolan, representing the Ardee Town Commissioners.

13435. With reference to the Great Northern Railway Company fostering Belfast as against other ports?—Yes, Dundalk and Drogheda. I have put the thing here in writing:—

Gt. Northern Railway Company charged with favouring Belfast Port as against Dundalk and Drogheda: example.

"The Great Northern Company assist Belfast Shipping Companies and divert all the Louth and Meath traffic they can to Belfast, that might naturally go to Dundalk and Drogheda Steam Shipping Companies."

13436. How is that a grievance to you?—It is a grievance to our county, not to the town.

13437. A grievance to the district?—A grievance to Dundalk and Drogheda, as the companies lose that amount of trade, and these towns lose that much recourse of business.

13438. How many steamers are there in the week from Drogheda?—I think there are three, and from Dundalk there are four services a week between Liverpool and Glasgow.

13439. And in Belfast there is a daily service?—Yes.

13440. Is not that the reason for the preference?—That is a point. But the rates are made so advantageous to Belfast that they come to something under the rates by Drogheda and Dundalk.

13441. Give us an instance of that?—The rate for a wagon of cattle from Ardee to Glasgow by Belfast is 53*s.* 6*d.* With nine beasts to the wagon, that is equal to 6*s.* a head. The rate from Ardee to Glasgow by Drogheda or Dundalk is 6*s.* 9*d.*—by Dundalk certainly. I cannot be accurate as to Drogheda, but I am told that it corresponds generally. Therefore you have the rate by Dundalk 6*s.* 9*d.*, whereas from Ardee to Glasgow by Belfast it is only 6*s.* a head.

Cattle rate Ardee to Glasgow.

13442. But Belfast seems to me the natural route to Glasgow?—There is direct steam service between Dundalk and Glasgow.

13443. Direct?—Yes.

13444. How often are the sailings?—Once a week. It sails for the cattle market, which is generally caught by the dealers in our district.

Steamship sailings, Dundalk and Glasgow, for cattle traffic.

13445. It goes direct from Dundalk to Glasgow?—Yes.

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Mr. J. Dolan, representing the Ardee Town Commissioners.

13446. And the whole rate is by sea?—Yes.

13447. What have the railway company got to do with it then?—They make their land rate from Ardee. From Ardee to Belfast the rate is 4*s.* 4*d.* a head, and from Ardee to Dundalk is 1*s.* 5*d.* a head.

Cattle rates, Ardee to Belfast and Ardee to Dundalk, quoted

13448. Give the land rate?—From Ardee to Belfast the land rate is 4*s.* 4*d.* a head by train; from Ardee to Dundalk it is 1*s.* 5*d.* a head.

13449. And why do not the cattle go by Dundalk?—Because although the rate from Ardee to Belfast is 4*s.* 4*d.*, for an extra 1*s.* 8*d.* they can bring them to Glasgow, and the railway company I suppose has the advantage.

13450. But they seem to be laying it on there?—5*s.* 4*d.* is the charge on the other way, and the presumption is that the railway company gets more by Belfast.

13451. I do not think that the Great Northern Company have any interest in the Dundalk steamers to Glasgow?—No; none whatever, but our complaint is that they favour the Belfast steamers to the extent of injuring the Dundalk and Drogheda steamers by cutting their own rates, making their land rates so low that the through rates they are able to arrange with the Belfast boats are so moderate that it diverts that traffic by Belfast instead of letting Drogheda and Dundalk get their share of it.

13452. I do not see the particular grievance you have?—The trade of the town suffers and the local companies suffer.

13453. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—From Ardee to Belfast, what is the distance?—About seventy-two miles. And from Dundalk to Ardee about fifteen miles by rail.

Complaint that privilege of cheap excursion fares from country stations on Gt. N. Ry. to Belfast not extended to Dublin.

13454. *Chairman.*—What is your next point?—This is a small one, that the company assists Belfast trade to the detriment of Dublin by giving cheap excursion fares to Belfast (*reading*)—"The Great Northern Railway Company assists Belfast trade to the detriment of Dublin by giving cheap excursion fares to Belfast by ordinary trains on a specified day of each week from the towns along the line except those south of Dundalk, including towns 100 miles from Belfast, while there is no such equivalent to Dublin except the daily single fares by afternoon trains from stations a distance of fifty miles from Dublin, and an occasional excursion at irregular intervals from the other stations."

13455. Have you represented that to the railway company?—Our town did not because we are concerned directly, but I understand that representations were made from towns that thought they had a grievance in the matter—the towns that border on our county which are nearer to Dublin.

13456. I thought you would be prepared here to show what the railway companies had stated?—No, I can not.

13457. The North-Western Company have a branch line from Greenore to Dundalk?—Yes; that is a purely London and North-Western line.

Pooling agreement between the L. & N.W. Ry. Co. and the L. & Y. Ry. Co. as regards receipts from cross channel traffic *via* Greenore and *via* Drogheda alleged and complained of.

13458. What is the complaint about that?—"It is a matter of common knowledge that this English railway company and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway which owns the steampacket service from Drogheda, have pooled their Irish trade, and thus may succeed in getting complete control of the seaport trade of these countries and of strangling local shipping enterprise which is in itself an important industry and by thus killing competition, have the exporters of Drogheda and Dundalk and of the neighbouring county entirely at their mercy.

13459. Was not the Drogheda Steamship Company independent?—Yes, until the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company bought it up.

13460. Compulsorily?—No.

13461. Do you object to that?—I objected to it on national grounds, but the shareholders did it of their own act. But that goes to create a monopoly for these two railway companies.

13462. How do you know that these two have an agreement?—That is public knowledge.

13463. But public knowledge is sometimes wrong?—That is a matter of universal statement. It was stated six months ago.

13464. It was nothing but rumour?—I think the cattle dealers seem to have got some definite information upon it more than mere rumour.

13465. Now, as to this Drogheda business; do you suggest that the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company since they took over the steamers have a less service than before?—They were about curtailing it, and there was a good deal of noise made about it, and I think the question is unsettled still. I am not very clear upon that point. I can only give it as an illustration of traffic becoming a monopoly.

13466. But a monopoly may be good in same cases?—Not to a locality.

13467. What harm has the acquisition of these steamers by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company done to Drogheda?—If it was the cause of curtailing the shipping at Drogheda it would be an injury to the trade.

13468. But it is there still?—I mean the shipping trade. If they by a combination with the London and North-Western Railway Company at Greenore, by pooling their traffic became thereby indifferent as to which route the traffic went by, they might then be able, with equal profit to themselves, to curtail it.

13469. Do you know that they pool it?—It is a matter of universal report. It is universally known.

13470. What special grievance have the ratepayers in your district against the Great Northern?—I will read what I have here—"The ratepayers of the Ardee district have a special grievance against the Great Northern Railway Company which I am sent to ask attention for. The Ardee branch line was made by the Great Northern Railway Company on receiving a guarantee, on the rates, of the district, of 2½ per cent. on £32,000, or £800 a year. The Ardee branch line is a very important feeder to the main line. It brings to the main line many thousands of cattle from Ardee and from fairs in County Meath—Drumconrath, Nobber, and Kingscourt."

13471. How do they get from these places?—They are driven from these places to Ardee Station, and "from the home sales of cattle feeders in this district, which would be otherwise walked to Dundalk or Drogheda Steamship Companies, or be trained by the Midland Railway line from Nobber and Kingscourt, and on which the Great Northern Railway would thus have no earning. But for all this the Ardee line gets no credit whatever in reckoning its earnings."

13472. Now this is a complaint from the district that the line is not credited with what is brings in by feeding the main line?—Yes, that it is only credited with its own receipts and not with the extra traffic brought to the main line.

13473. Why should it?—Because it has brought that large extra traffic to it and it should get credit for portion of the increased earning of the main line because the main line would not have got any of that but for the Ardee line.

13474. That is an addition?—Yes; that is an established fact, because it is well known that before the line was made the cattle, goods, and passengers traffic went otherwise, and they did not go by the main line.

13575. They might have walked to Drogheda?—Yes, and got the boats there or walked to Dundalk and got the train there for Belfast.

13476. But in that case the railway company got the rate?—If they did, if the cattle went by train to Belfast after being walked to Dundalk, the railway company did not get the journey between the main line junction and Dundalk, but of course that is a small part. But, from the fairs in County Meath, the cattle, previous to the making of the Ardee line, were sent by the Midland Railway and the Great Northern did not get them at all.

13477. I suppose that this is a bargain on the contribution made at the time?—Yes.

13478. And all the terms were set forth?—They are all in the Bill.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—They are in the Act of Parliament.

13479. *Chairman.*—You are raising a point now that ought to have been raised before the Committee in the House of Commons?—They did not understand it at the time. The people of Louth and the Boards of Guardians and the Associated Boards all assented to the Act of Parliament.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—Section 18, sub-section 3 of the Act of 55 and 56 Victoria, Chap. 102, says—"The Great Northern Railway Company, for the purpose of ascertaining what sums of money."

Chairman.—There is a clause as to the receipts accruing to the short line.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C. (*reading*)—"There shall be credited to the said account the gross earnings of the company from the Ardee Branch."

Mr. J. Dolan, representing the Ardee Town Commissioners.

13480. *Chairman.*—You do not contend that they have not done that?—No, but it should be interpreted to mean a proportion of the profits brought to the main line.

13481. It is the gross earnings of the line that are to be credited to the line, and this witness is contending that the gross earning should mean the profit derived from the Great Northern Railway.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The State appoints an arbitrator if that was their contention, the arbitrator is appointed and they can get him to say what the gross earnings are.

13482. *Chairman.*—Are you aware of that?—The question was raised by the Grand Jury, and since by the County Council. This is an argument for the nationalisation or unification of the lines.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—It is an old complaint.

Witness.—It is in reference to this that my evidence chiefly deals. I have tried to set out here what is the increased traffic that is brought to the main line, for instance, coals from Dundalk, which was the natural source, amounted to 6,000 tons a year, and there is the corn traffic to Drogheda. These are all great additions to the traffic of the main line.

13483. *Chairman.*—Now go to the management of the Great Northern Railway. You will state that you have no particular grievance against the management of the railway?—No; not locally. We cannot say that our district is not as well served as others. We complain of the general rates that prevail, but not for Ardee particularly. But there is one head of complaint that we make in reference to the train service; there is no connection with towns north of Dundalk till one o'clock. We asked the railway company about that and they said it was not possible to arrange it; it is a matter of inconvenience to people attending our town from time to time. It is pointed out to them that an alteration of trains could easily be made to remedy that, but they did not see their way to alter it.

13484. Have you anything to say about through rates to English goods?—Yes; we consider that they are one of the things in which the Irish railway systems are deficient, in allowing through rates to be made so as to have a prejudicial influence on Irish industries. We understand that these through rates are fixed at a general conference of the English and Irish railway companies, and as the English predominate in the voting at the conference the through rates are of course made in their interests.

13485. Do you say that they are made too low?—Yes, so as to assist the English.

13486. But surely that is in the interests of the consumer and the public in Ireland?—Yes, it may be in the interests of the consumer, but the consumers' interest would eventually be better served the other way.

13487. Do you suggest that the rate should be advanced?—That the through rates should not be so favourable to English importers and not so unfavourable to the Irish manufacturers.

13488. But nine-tenths of the traffic in manufactured articles is not produced in Ireland at all?—Yes.

13489. And therefore the lower the rate the better?—Except that the allowance of these rates makes it almost impossible to attempt to manufacture at home. It is not an inducement to begin to manufacture here in Ireland.

13490. Have you or the parties you represent considered the question of the nationalisation of the railway?—Yes; they are in favour of the nationalisation.

13491. Is that the opinion of your district?—Yes, on our County Board and on the Town Commissioner's Board.

13492. It would be an advantage to Ireland if the whole of the railways were the property of the State?—Yes, if the State were an Irish authority, not an Imperial authority.

13493. You object to English money?—Not to English money, but to English management and control.

13494. You mean that the control should be in Ireland?—Yes, if there was a National authority established in Ireland.

13495. Have the Council passed any resolutions on the subject in your district?—No; it only gave a general expression of opinion. Our Board is a small one.

13496. Did you hear Mr. Field's statement?—Yes.

Mr. Field's (previous witness) views on nationalisation approved of.

13497. Do you agree with his views?—Yes, generally. I am not so acquainted with the subject as he is and cannot go into the details, but in the general opinion I agree.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Population of Ardee.

13498. What is the population of Ardee?—2,000—strictly 1.885.

Constitution of the Board of Town Commissioners.

13499. What does your Board of Town Commissioners consist of?—Nine members.

Question of the purchase of the Drogheda Steam Packet Co. by the L. & Y. Ry. Co.

13500. You spoke of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company buying up the Drogheda Steampacket Company?—A line between Drogheda and Liverpool.

13501. While that line of steamers was running did you have better rates than you have at present?—No, I do not think it affected the rates. As a matter of fact the connection with Drogheda for import trade is not much; the import trade is through Dundalk.

13502. Wasn't there a coasting line of steamers?—There was for a very short time some years ago. It pulled down the Great Northern rates and affected Dundalk and Drogheda more.

Cattle rates from Ardee to Belfast, Dundalk, and Glasgow discussed.

13503. With regard to the rates from Ardee—4*s.* 4*d.* a head for seventy miles to Belfast, which is, roughly speaking, ¾*d.* a mile, and 1*s.* 5*d.* from Ardee to Dundalk, which works out at 1*d.* a mile. When you come to consider the distance 4*s.* 4*d.* is not an unfair proportion to charge?—No, certainly not. I only gave the figures to illustrate that while the carriage to Belfast is 4*s.* 4*d.* the carriage to Glasgow is only 6*s.* There is a large difference between the carriage by ship from Belfast to Glasgow, and that from Dundalk to Glasgow, and that is to the damage of the Dundalk and Drogheda boats.

13504. Unless you can say what proportion of that through rate went to the shipping company you can't argue the point one way or the other?—No.

Ardee Branch guarantors' grievances.

13505. The only other point is as to the guarantee; have you frequently been called on?—We have always been called on to pay up.

13506. When the receipts exceed the expenditure you pay nothing?—No, but it has almost always been called up in full.

13507. You say the full rate is £800 a year?—Yes. In one year it was only £755.

13508. In this last year you say only £470?—Yes, but that is independent of the interest on the capital. It was a deficit of £470 on the working expenditure. We had to pay the £800, and the railroad had only a credit of £1,900 on the three miles of line that are made.

13509. You gave an instance of 6,000 tons of coal, and you say 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton. Of that 2*s.* 6*d.* Ardee gets 6*d.* and the Great Northern gets 2*s.* If you put it into money, the 6,000 tons represents £750. At 6*d.* Ardee gets £150, and at 2*s.* Dundalk gets £600. That stands as, in one case, one-fifth, and in the case of the other the proportion is four-fifths, so you are getting your proper proportion?—We do not deny that we are getting a proper proportion.

13510. *Chairman.*—His point is that this is a new traffic, and that the Great Northern should give them a bonus?—Yes, and another thing that increases the cost of our line is the junction station they made against our wishes and recommendation.

13511. You have just said that the railway company loses £450 a year?—Yes; that is what their last statement was.

13512. Then how can you expect them to give a bonus?—No, but I am sure that they have earned a good deal more than £450. I am sure that account is true, but it does not show the profits of the increased traffic. The profits would be very much more than the £400 they have lost on our line.

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Mr. A. Weir, Managing Director Convoy Woollen Company, Limited, Donegal.

Mr. Alexander Weir examined by the Chairman.

13513. Mr. Alexander Weir, you are managing director of the Convoy Woollen Company, Limited, in the county of Donegal?—Yes.

13514. Where is your factory situated?—At Convoy.

13515. Have you a station there?—Not at present. There is a new railway being made from Strabane to Letterkenny

13516. You make what is called Donegal tweed?—We don't make "homespuns." We make powerloom Donegals in order not to palm them off as "handspuns."' We always call them Donegal Tweeds.

13517. What is your nearest station?—Our nearest station on the main line is Strabane.

13518. How far are you from it?—Eight Irish miles—about ten English.

13519. Everything you make at Convoy has to be carted to that railway station if it goes by rail?—Mostly; but we cart through to Londonderry also.

13520. How far is that?—About twenty English miles.

13521. As to wool, coal, and other things, are they all carted from the railway station?—The wool comes from Londonderry mostly, and has to be carted from Londonderry to Convoy at 10*s.* per ton for cartage.

13522. Have you had any particular experience with regard to railway rates, and any particular complaints to make with regard to them?—I have one or two complaints.

13523. So far as they affect your business?—Yes; I have no authority to speak for anyone but ourselves.

13524. Just give us one instance?—Through rates from Strabane, County Tyrone, to southern towns I consider very excessive and detrimental to the development of our trade. In support of this—for woollen goods, Class 3, I give the following examples.

Through rates from Strabane Station to southern towns considered excessive compared with rates from Ireland to English and Scotch stations.

13525. Give us two examples?—From Strabane to Cork the rate is 64*s.* 1*d.* per ton from station to station. From Strabane to Limerick the rate is 50*s.* 11*d.*

13526. What do you say about those rates, do you say they are reasonable?—I say I consider them very excessive. Much cheaper rates can be had to English towns, where goods are carried longer distances—namely, Londonderry to London, 46*s.* 8*d.* per ton; Londonderry to Leicester, 40*s.* 10*d.*; Londonderry to Leeds, 35*s.* 10*d.*; Londonderry to Birmingham, 40*s.* 10*d.*

13527. Very well: now you say these goods going to England are carried at a much cheaper mileage rate than when sent over Irish railways?—Yes, goods going to England and to Scotland.

13528. Can you tell me the distance from Strabane to Cork?—Roughly, 300 miles.

13529. And from Strabane to Limerick?—I don't know that.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—It is 242 miles.

13530. *Chairman.*—From Londonderry to Leeds, do you know the distance?—No, I don't.

13531. Do you know which way the traffic goes?—It goes either by Heysham, Fleetwood, or Liverpool.

13532. Through Belfast?—No, by direct steamer from Londonderry to Heysham, Fleetwood, or Liverpool.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—There is a service from Derry to Heysham. It is a recent service.

13533. *Chairman.*—Of course to Scotland. I see you have much lower rates; gives us two of these?—From Londonderry to Glasgow 25*s.* per ton.

13534. That is by steamer?—Yes, by steamer direct from Londonderry. Londonderry to Edinburgh 33*s.* 4*d.*; to Dundee 41*s.* 8*d.*

13535. Those are on a much lower basis than the rates to inland towns in Ireland?—That is my complaint.

Suggested placing of obligation of refunding voluntarily all cartage charges when included in rates but service not performed by the railway companies.

13536. And those rates you gave us to Cork and Limerick—do they include collection and delivery?—No, from station to station.

13537. What do you say about delivery and cartage rates?—Perhaps I ought to say that the railway companies have arranged a number of through rates for us, but we think they might do a lot more. About cartage, I say some of the railway rates include an amount for cartage, and some rates are "station to station," and in the latter no cartage is included. In many instances where the rates include cartage the companies don't perform the cartage service at all. In these instances the trouble of claiming the rebate falls on the trader. I consider the company should be called upon to render an account of these overcharges, and not the trader, for the reason that no company should be allowed to charge for a service they do not perform.

13538. Yes; I follow your contention?—We have been fighting to get that for about twenty years and we haven't succeeded yet.

13539. Has the factory been in operation for twenty-years?—Since 1883.

13540. Has it been successful?—Yes, in a small way.

13541. It appears to me you cart your stuff to Londonderry or to Strabane. Do the rates include collection and delivery on the Great Northern, or are they from station to station. We had evidence here that all the class rates on the Great Northern include collection and delivery?—Some of the through rates are station to station and some include cartage and delivery.

13542. Where do you say an account should be rendered for services not performed. Either this is a grievance or it is not?—We do claim it, and we get it refunded every month by the railway companies.

13543. You do get it refunded?—Regularly and constantly.

13544. It is a traffic that comes in from various places to Strabane, and you send your own cart and cart it to your works?—Yes, and also the other way.

13545. You cart your own goods to the station and you claim cartage for that?—Yes.

13546. And you get it?—Yes, but why should they overcharge in the first instance?

13547. Have you asked them to make a station to station rate?—We have, and in a great many instances they have done it, but not in all.

13548. They can't make special arrangements for your firm simply because you do your own cartage?—But when they charge us for what they don't perform, when they make up the rebate they should refund it to us.

13549. You think the company should render an account?—Yes. What happens with the people who don't take the trouble to render an account is, they don't get anything.

13550. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You get it all right?—Yes, we do.

13551. *Chairman.*—You have a lot of small consignments?—Yes, we have.

13552. Under 3 cwt.?—"Consignments under 3 cwt." A considerable portion of our trade is for consignments under 3 cwt. I submit that the ton rates should be made applicable to all parcels of a cwt. upwards. Under present conditions a piece of tweed is not always ready to be forwarded with the bulk of the order, and the extra rate has to be paid on the balance. The rates for parcels under 3 cwt. are from 20 to 33⅓ per cent. higher than the ton rates.

13553. Do you know what the small parcel scale is in England. Do you know if it is the same as in Ireland?—I don't know. I think perhaps it is. Here is a scale that we have (*document handed in*).

13554. That is the same, but it only says "Scotch and Irish railways." I see it is a London and North-Western scale. Yes, it is the same scale in England, Scotland and Ireland. You don't want preferential rates?—Well, I understand that some railways when they deal with several parcels sent at different dates to the same consignee, do not take them as separate items, but put them together.

13555. That is a trick of the trade I am not acquainted with. In this particular small parcel scale you admit that the rates are the same in England, Scotland and Ireland?—I don't know.

13556. Well, here it is on the list you have handed me?—Then I would like it altered in England, Scotland and Ireland.

13557. You would like to see that "3 cwt." altered to "1 cwt.?—Yes.

13558. What are the rates for short distances?—These I consider far too high. From Londonderry to St. Johnston on the Great Northern, a distance of 7 or 8 English miles, the rates are Class 2, wool, 7*s.* per ton, or about 1*s.* per ton per mile.

13559. Never mind the mile for the minute; give us the woollen goods?—Class 3, woollen goods, 7*s.* 9*d.* per ton.

13560. 7*s.* per ton for 7 or 8 miles. Do these rates include collection and delivery?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—It is a collection and delivery rate.

13561. *Chairman (to Witness).*—Take the woollen goods?—Woollen goods, 7*s.* 9*d.*

13562. You talk about a shilling a mile—what do you get for cartage at your end?—We cart right through from Derry; we cannot afford to pay that rate.

13563. Supposing you were taking goods to Derry to send to Limerick, what cartage allowance would you get?—We get 10*d.* per ton.

13564. What cartage do you claim from the Great Northern when your delivery goes out at collection and delivery rate at Londonderry?—We claim 10*d.* a ton.

13565. For everything?—If it comes in at St. Johnston it would have to come across Londonderry, and the Great Northern would perform the cartage at Londonderry, so that we would only get the one 10*d.* at St. Johnston. We take the goods at St. Johnston, and bring them on to Convoy.

13566. If you deduct the cartage and terminal service at each end it would bring the mileage down to 2*d.* to 3*d.*?—That would leave 7*d.* per mile.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The terminals amount to 3*s.*, including 1*s.* 8*d.* for cartage, and that brings it down to 3*d.* a mile.

13567. *Chairman (to Witness).*—You see that when you deduct cartage and terminals it reduces the rate per mile to about 3*d.* instead of a shilling?

Witness.—3*s.* off 7*s.* 9*d.* = 4*s.* 9*d.* or 7*d.* per mile for eight miles. In that connection I will read on what I have down. What we were at was, woollen goods, 7*s.* 9*d.* per ton from Derry to St. Johnston. Add to the railway rate of 7*s.* the cartage from St. Johnston Station to Convoy, which we perform, 7*s.* per ton, and the total is 14*s.* The direct cartage, all the way from Derry to Convoy, as done by ourselves, is 10*s.* a ton. Our firm, therefore, saves 4*s.* per ton by carting right through, instead of having the consignments sent by railway to St. Johnston.

13568. You cart instead of using the railway?—Yes, but it seems an enormous sum for such a short distance.

13569. But it includes the 10*d.* at each end—that is 1*s.* 8*d.*?—Granting all that the balance is still very large.

13570. It comes down to 3*d.* a ton per mile; you can't cart for 3*d.* a mile in Dublin?—It comes down to 7*d.* a ton per mile, not 3*d.* By carting the whole way we save 4*s.* a ton.

13571. I would cart it all the way if I were you?—That is what we are doing.

13572. You don't contend that the railway company should carry it for nothing?—No; but I contend that it is a very serious charge for such a short distance.

13573. Taking into consideration the collection, delivery, and terminal services I don't think it is; if it were a station to station rate it would be excessive. I understand you to admit that the railway company have arranged several through rates for your firm with which you are practically satisfied?—I think they all might be——

13574. All might be reduced—is that it?—Yes.

13575. Now, you are not in favour of the State purchase of railways?—That is such a complex and complicated question that I havn't thought it out.

13576. Very well; I won't ask you about it. Do you think there would be any advantage in the amalgamation of the light or small railways amongst the bigger ones?—Yes, I think it could be arranged—the larger railways taking up the smaller railways. It would facilitate through rates and also tend to make better time table arrangements for the passenger traffic.

13577. That is to say, it would give greater facilities for through rates and better facilities for the passengers?—I think so.

13578. Beyond that you are not prepared to go?—No; I havn't thought it out.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

13579. You consider that the through rates from Strabane to the inland towns of Ireland compare very unfavourably with the through rates to the English towns?—Yes.

13580. Londonderry to London—isn't that altogether a sea route?—*Via* Heysham.

13581. And then the whole way by railway to London?—That is my contention.

13582. Are you sure of that?—There are plenty of gentlemen to contradict me if I am wrong.

13583. And the routes to Birmingham, Huddersfield, and Manchester—they are all by Holyhead and Heysham?—By Heysham from Londonderry.

13584. In the case of the Scotch towns—Glasgow, Perth, Peebles, and Dundee—there is sea competition?—But take the distance to Aberdeen from where we are—51*s.* 8*d.* per ton.

13585. By what route?—Londonderry to Glasgow, and a long railway journey to Aberdeen.

13586. I suppose the Scotch railways carry at lower rates in consequence of the possibility of the traffic going to Glasgow by sea?—Well, I understand that whatever the rates are the one rate applies the reverse way. I understand that the rate from Strabane to Aberdeen is the same as the rate from Aberdeen to Strabane.

13587. You don't get anything back again, and so you are not in a position to say whether the rate back is higher or not?—No, I cannot state. It would give the result that woollen goods from England and Scotland can come in here cheaper than we can send goods to various parts of our own country.

13588. I don't think that follows from anything you have put down in your memorandum. Do I understand you to say that the terminals from Londonderry to St. Johnston are 1*s.* 6*d.* at each end?—At each end.

13589. Isn't that a very high terminal charge?

Chairman.—There is loading and unloading and station accommodation.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The total is 3*s.* 1*s.* 8*d.* for cartage.

13590. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You say that you take all your traffic by road from Derry to Convoy, and that the railway company don't try to meet you by lowering their rates to induce you to send your traffic by rail?—No. It is merely a commercial question.

13591. It seems extraordinary to me that at present you have to send all your traffic by road?—Yes, except any that goes to Strabane for Belfast, &c.

13592. And that none of it goes by rail over those two points?—Yes, none of it.

13593. *Chairman.*—You cart a considerable amount from Derry to Convoy?—Yes—large quantities.

13594. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And yet the railway company don't think it worth their while to give you a rate to correspond with your cartage rate?—That is the natural conclusion. That is our complaint.

Cross-examined by Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.

13595. Did you ever apply to the railway company for a special rate from Derry to St. Johnston?—Their canvasser comes often to Convoy for traffic, and he has often asked me—"Why do you not use the railway to St. Johnston?" and we always have the same reply, that we save 4*s.* a ton by carting right through.

13596. Have you ever applied to the railway company for a special rate?—Yes, verbally.

13597. Verbally to the canvasser?—Yes.

13598. You never communicated with the railway company themselves?—I could not tell you without looking up the correspondence.

13599. You have given some English towns that have cheaper rates than prevail in Ireland; isn't the substance of your complaint that your tweed is put on the market in English towns at a cheaper rate than it is allowed to compete with the Blarney tweeds in Cork?—I don't object to the low rates in England and Scotland; what I would like would be low rates in Ireland.

13600. To compete with Irish manufactures?—Naturally, we would like to go all over Ireland in the same way that the Cork man would like to come to us. We wish a cheaper rate both ways, and would not object to it. We want a fair field.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

Mar. 13, 1907.

Mr. A. Weir, Managing Director Convoy Woollen Company, Limited, Donegal.

Question of excessive through rates from Strabane to Southern Irish towns discussed.

Alleged excessive rate for woollens, Londonderry and St. Johnston stations

TWENTY-FOURTH PUBLIC SITTING—THURSDAY, MARCH 14TH, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER (Chairman); Right Hon. Lord PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; and Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Lord Pirrie.—Will you allow me to say how much I regret my absence yesterday, and especially so because of the important evidence given by Mr. Field. I have read what appeared in the papers to-day with the greatest interest, and it makes me still more feel how much I lost by not being here.

Chairman.—We all regretted your absence, too.

Mr. W. A. CURRIE, Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Board, examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mar. 14, 1907.

Mr. W. A. Currie, Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

13601-2. Mr. Currie, I think you are the Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners?—I am.

13603. Have you been in that position for some time?—About twenty-three years.

13604. Of course you are acquainted with the railway systems connected with Belfast?—Yes, generally.

Railway companies serving Belfast.

13605. What are the companies?—The Great Northern, the Midland (that is the old Northern Counties), and the County Down.

13606. The Belfast and County Down Railway?—Yes, the Belfast and County Down Railway.

13607. Well, now, the Harbour Commissioners are directly interested, of course, in the export and import trade of Belfast?—They are.

13608. And are naturally interested also in the proper transit of traffic to and from that place?—That is so.

13609. Have you anything to say with reference to the working of the railways so far as your particular department is concerned—any complaints to make?—We have had complaints from the coal trade.

Insufficient supply of wagons for coal traffic at Belfast complained of, and unsatisfactory result of applications to the railway companies on the subject.

13610. In regard to what?—First, in regard to the insufficient supply of wagons; these complaints have extended over a considerable number of years.

13611. That is coal imported into Belfast?—Coal imported into Belfast by steamer.

13612. And sent into the country by the various railway companies?—Quite so.

13613. And the railway companies supply wagons for the coal?—They do in all cases except one at Belfast. There is one firm, John Milligen and Co., who supply a number of their own.

13614. With that exception the rolling stock for the coal traffic has to be supplied by the railway company?—Yes.

13615. You say complaints have come to you with regard to the insufficient supply of wagons?—They came to the Harbour Commissioners. There have been complaints from time to time, asking the Commissioners to take the matter up with the railway company, and on one occasion the coal merchants asked the Commissioners to take it up with the Railway Commission.

13616. What has been the result of your applications to the railway companies?—After the first eight years or so, off and on, the Great Northern Railway Company (it was chiefly they), supplied, I think it was 100 wagons, and promised to supply more. The coal trade were not quite satisfied, and in the following year we had further complaints, and on this occasion the result was that Messrs. Milligen, of whom I have just spoken, supplied a number of wagons for their own trade. In consequence of that we did not proceed any further. There are still complaints from time to time. Of course the railway companies gave explanations, but the coal trade still urge that there is an insufficient number of wagons supplied by the railway companies for the traffic.

13617. Of course, in consequence of the short supply of wagons at Belfast I presume the steamers are delayed—they cannot be discharged except wagons are there?—They throw the coal out on the quay.

13618. Then the Harbour Commissioners suffer?—Yes, and the coal trade suffers, because they have to pay a very high quayage rate for the use of the quay.

13619. So that the coal traffic is taxed to a certain extent in consequence of the short supply of wagons—that is the point you make?—Yes, and also the coal traders say that the trade is leaving Belfast and going to Newry.

13620. In consequence of the short supply of wagons?—Partly in consequence of the short supply.

13621. And partly in consequence of the dues that you levy?—No, our dues are extremely low, but partly in consequence of the undue preference which they allege is given by the Great Northern Company to Newry, to which I will refer later on.

13622. Well, now, so far with reference to the short supply, or alleged short supply, of wagons at Belfast. Have you anything to say with reference to a preference being given to other ports?—Yes, the coal merchants complain that the Great Northern Railway are charging a rate much above what has been fixed by the Railway Commissioners.

13623. We must get that clearly; have you any figures?—Yes. I will just give the points shortly, if you will allow me.

13624. Give them in your own way, please?—(*Witness reads*): "The coal merchants complain that the Great Northern Railway are charging a rate much above what has been twice fixed by the Railway Commissioners, and much above what would give a reasonable profit on the coal traffic, also that the difference between the rate from Belfast and that from Newry for the traffic to Armagh is much greater than the circumstances justify."

13625. Can you give us, first, the rate for coal from Belfast to Armagh, and from Newry to Armagh?—Yes, from Belfast to Armagh, 3*s.* 9*d.* per ton is the present rate.

13626. Do you know the distance?—Thirty-five miles.

13627. What is it from Newry to Armagh?—The rate is 2*s.* 8*d.*

13628. And the distance?—Twenty-one miles.

13629. That does not seem out of proportion, does it?—From Newry the twenty-one miles is a very stiff gradient.

13630. Have these rates been in operation for some time?—They have. But I understand the coal trade were deterred from taking any steps in the matter by the difficulties and the cumbrous working, as they allege, of the Railway Commission.

13631. I see from 1870 to 1879 you mention in your proof that the rate for coal—perhaps you had better have it put on the notes?—From 1870 to 1879 the rates from Newry or Belfast to Armagh were 3*s.* 6*d.*, the outcome, I believe, of a mutual agreement.

13632. The rates were the same from both places?—Yes.

13633. The figures you gave just now are the present rates?—They are, 2*s.* 8*d.* and 3*s.* 9*d.*

13634. Up to 1879 the rates for coal from Belfast and Newry were the same?—Yes, 3*s.* 6*d.*

13635. And to-day the rates are—what?—2*s.* 8*d.* from Newry to Armagh, and 3*s.* 9*d.* from Belfast to Armagh per ton, a difference of 1*s.* 1*d.*

13636. What comment have you to make on these rates?—In 1879 the company reduced the local rate from Newry to Armagh from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 3*d.*, and they applied to the Railway and Canal Commission——

13637. Who applied?—The Great Northern Railway —to grant a through rate of 4*s.* 3*d.* from Belfast to Armagh. The short railway which was then in existence, the Belfast Central Railway Company, opposed the application. They contended that the difference of 1*s.* between the two railway rates would cause Newry to be preferred at the expense of the coal traffic by the route of which the Belfast Central formed part, and they made a counter application for a through rate of 3*s.* 6*d.* The Railway Commissioners, believing that coal from Belfast to Armagh at a rate of 3*s.* 6*d.*, divided in the proportion of 1*s.* to the Belfast Central Company and 2*s.* 6*d.* to the Great Northern Railway Company, was a fair and reasonable rate, and would pay the Great Northern Railway Company as well at least as the company's general traffic, declined to authorise the 4*s.* 3*d.* rate, and approved of the Central Railway Company's application for 3*s.* 6*d.* per ton. Then in 1882 the Great Northern Railway Company applied to the Railway Commissioners to have this 3*s.* 6*d.* rate increased to 3*s.* 10*d.*

13638. What was the result of that application?—"The Railway Commissioners, feeling satisfied that in the manner in which the Irish coal traffic was worked from Belfast, a through rate to Armagh, paying 2*s.* 6*d.* to the Great Northern Company, was capable of producing a profit not inferior to the average profit earned by that company from its goods traffic in general, declined to make any alteration in the rate."

13639. Are you quoting from a judgment of the Commissioners?—As nearly as possible.

13640. I thought you were reading from the judgment. At any rate, the result was that they declined the application?—They did, and the coal trade now contend that under any circumstances, even at the worst, seeing the Great Northern Railway Company have admitted (I should mention that the Great Northern purchased the Central Railway at a later stage), and they have quite recently admitted to the Belfast Chamber of Commerce that a rate of 7*d.* would pay them for the use of the Central line, that is, as against 1*s.*, which I have mentioned—the coal trade feel that, at the worst, adding the 2*s.* 6*d.* to the 7*d.* which the railway company admit now pays them for the use of the Central line, it would only bring it to 3*s.* 1*d.*, as against the 3*s.* 9*d.* which they are at present charged.

13641. Can you tell us what is the quantity of coal imported into Belfast during any one year—have you got any figures there?—I have.

13642. *Lord Pirrie.*—Are not they in the annual report?—Yes, they are in the report.

13643. *Chairman.*—I want to see whether there is a substantial grievance, or whether it is a small one. The total amount of coal imported into Belfast in 1905 will do?—The total import in 1906 was 1,248,281 tons.

13644. Have you got 1905 there?—In 1905 it was 1,219,056 tons.

13645. The amount in 1906 was a little more —Yes, a little more in 1906. I can also give you the imports for Newry.

13646. Yes, give us the Newry imports as well?—In 1905 they were 251,000 tons, and taking the imports of Belfast and Newry respectively for the year 1900, five years before, the Belfast coal imports were 1,185,001 tons, and in Newry for the year 1900 they were 186,500 tons. Those figures show an increase in the Belfast coal imports in 1905 upon the imports of 1900 of 2·87 per cent., whereas at Newry the coal imports for 1905 show an increase on the imports of 1900 of 34·5 per cent. That shows a considerable and greater proportion of the coal trade is going via Newry of late than from Belfast. Of course it is a much smaller total, but the proportion is much greater.

13647. Am I right in saying that a large proportion of the coal is sent inland?—Yes, a large proportion.

13648. Of course you do not allege that they are charging from Belfast to Armagh a rate that is in excess of their powers?—We do not.

13649. You do not allege that they are charging in excess of their Parliamentary powers?—We do not.

13650. Or even in excess of the amended powers that are fixed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh?—The Athenry rates; no, we do not.

13651. Lord Balfour of Burleigh dealt with the coal rates?

Colonel Plews.—Yes, and fixed the charge for the Belfast Central Railway, a special toll rate for that line.

Chairman.—1*s.* a ton?

Colonel Plews.—I think it is a shilling a ton; no, ninepence is the amount.

Chairman—Lord Balfour's Committee fixed it?

Colonel Plews.—Yes, in the Act itself.

Chairman.—Now, does that rate include the use of the wagons?—It does.

Alleged rebate on coal rate from Larne to Ballyclare by Midland Ry. (Nor. Co.'s Committee).

13653. What is this question about the Midland Railway Company giving a rebate on coal. We have heard a good deal about rebates here?—It is alleged by the coal trade that the Midland Railway Company make a rebate or concession of 6*d.* per ton on coal, in lots of 100 tons, from Larne to Ballyclare; and they refused to grant a similar rebate in respect of coal from Belfast to Ballyclare. The Midland Railway Company also, it is alleged, allow coals to be sent to Ballyclare by the broad gauge railway, that is in broad gauge wagons at 1*s.* 6*d.* a ton—that is a lower rate.

13654. What is the distance?—By broad gauge from Larne to Ballyclare it is twenty-six miles, and from Belfast to Ballyclare fifteen miles; but the Midland also have a narrow gauge line from Larne to Ballyclare, which is only 11½ miles, and the coal trade allege that the company allow coals to be sent to Ballyclare in broad gauge wagons at the 1*s.* 6*d.* rate instead of 2*s.*, which is the rate from Belfast to Ballyclare, and which is their broad gauge rate.

13655. Is that rebate given indiscriminately for any quantity?—I think it is only fair to say that the railway company say that they give no rebate.

13656. That is the Midland Railway?—The Midland Railway. But I have a letter here—I do not care about giving the name——

13657. I understand you to say that the narrow gauge route from Larne to this place is 11½ miles?—11½.

13658. That is the shortest possible route?—Yes.

13659. That fixes the rate, I suppose?—For the broad gauge, would it?

13660. It does not matter; the short route must be the guide. Is it the same rate on both?

13661. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—Equal rates by the two routes, both being in the hands of the same company. The most circuitous is in the hands of the same company, so the short route and the rates are equal.

Chairman.—That is so, the shortest route fixes it.

13662. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is not that what you gave in evidence?—Yes, my lord.

13663. *Chairman.*—Just let me follow that up. Is the rebate given on any quantity, or is it limited to a fixed quantity?—100 tons.

13664. You did not mention that?—I think I did; I intended to.

13665. Then the statement that was made to you, and denied by the Midland Company, is that upon 100 ton lots of coal there is a rebate of 6*d.* a ton?—It is, in other words coal can be sent in lots of 100 tons from Larne to Ballyclare, and are sent, at 1*s.* 6*d.* over a route of twenty-six miles, whereas the charge for a similar quantity of coal from Belfast to Ballyclare, fifteen miles, is 2*s.*

13666. Yes, that I understand, but although they carry coal twenty-six miles they have another route which is only eleven miles?—That is so.

13667. You said you had got a letter. I do not know whether you want me to look at it?—I do not care about giving the name of the writer.

13668. We won't mention names if you do not wish. I will read it. (*The Chairman reads it.*) I will just ask a question on that letter. Am I right in assuming that the coal is only sent by the broad gauge and the long distance when there are not sufficient wagons to carry it by the short route?—I understand that would be the railway company's contention.

13669. But is not that the statement made in that letter?—Yes, when the station-master at Larne certifies that there are no narrow gauge wagons available.

Mar. 14, 1907.

Mr. W. A. Currie, Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

13670. Yes, I do not see anything wrong in that. I think it is a convenience to the public?—No doubt.

13671. Well, of course, as Harbour Commissioners, every ton of coal or anything else diverted from Belfast to a compeitive port is more or less to your injury?—Of course it is.

13672. And therefore it is the object of the Harbour Commissioners in Belfast, as well as in other places, to get as much traffic through the port as they possibly can?—Quite so.

13673. And you would be perfectly satisfied so long as the rates in operation from competitive ports were upon the same basis as the rates from Belfast?—Quite so. I am afraid we could not object.

13674. You do not object?—We do not object.

13675. But you think Newry is unduly favoured with regard to rates for coal in comparison with Belfast?—We do.

13676. And you have given us the figures?—Yes.

13677. Now, your Commissioners, of course, have had under consideration the question of a Railway and Canal Commissioners Court?—They have.

13678. And you think that it would be a satisfactory tribunal to settle a dispute of this kind?—The Commissioners do not, and I myself think it is capable of improvement. I would like to mention that the remaining portion of my evidence is really the opinion—that I am giving the opinion, as far as I give any opinion at all, of the Harbour Commissioners as a body.

13679. I understand that you are representing the Harbour Commissioners, and it is not your personal opinion, but the opinion of your Commissioners?—Yes.

A cheape and more accessible tribunal than the Railway and Canal Commission Court for adjusting disputes advocated.

13680. Well, now, what do the Commissioners suggest with regard to the powers of the Railway Commissioners?—They suggest that the powers of the Railway Commission should be made more effective, its procedure rendered economical, and brought more easily within the reach of all traders who consider themselves aggrieved, and that its visitation to the various centres of the country should be frequent and regular.

13681. Of course that could not be done with the present constitution of the Railway Commissioners Court?—I am afraid not.

13682. It would be a new tribunal established for that purpose in Ireland?—I think the Harbour Commissioners' idea is that—though, of course, it would be a new tribunal—some modification of the present existing body might answer the purpose.

13683. It has been suggested to us on three or four occasions that the County Court Judge would be a competent person to deal with questions of this kind. Have you formed any opinion upon that?—The Harbour Commissioners discussed that point, but they did not form any opinion in favour of it.

13684. They did not think the County Court Judge would, amongst his other duties, be the proper person to deal with complicated questions like this?—They did not.

13685. You would substitute another tribunal of a cheaper character, so that any trader that feels aggrieved could easily and cheaply appear before it to have these cases investigated?—Quite so.

13686. But you have not formulated any particular idea as to what that other tribunal should be?—No, the Commissioners have not, beyond indicating that they think there ought to be a couple of commercial men on it.

13687. Exactly, that has been suggested?—Two or three practical commercial men.

13688. To sit as arbitrators, in fact?—Quite so.

13689. At any rate the Commissioners take the same view as others that the present court is a very expensive court?—They do.

13690. To deal with a little question of this kind?—Yes.

13691. And that the traders have no chance against the railway companies in appearing before it?—None whatever.

13692. That is the view?—That is the view. In regard to the Newry rate that I spoke of just now, they were approached by the coal trade with a view to bringing the matter before the Railway Commissioners, but the expense chiefly deterred them from doing so.

The railway arrangements generally, apart from the coal traffic, considered satisfactory.

13693. Well, now, to come to a larger question, I might ask, independent of this coal traffic, do you consider the railway arrangements generally are satisfactory?—I do; the Commissioners do.

13694. I mean your Commissioners?—They have no general complaint to make.

13695. Except as regards this particular coal traffic?—That is so. I may mention that I called personally on several gentlemen who, from time to time, had complained to me in regard to the railway companies, but none of them would give me any definite complaint for the purposes of this Commission.

13696. Well, now, have the Commissioners had under consideration the question of the nationalisation of the railways in this country?—They have.

13697. Have they formed any conclusion upon the question?—They have.

13698. What conclusion have they arrived at?—They say that "they are of opinion that the competitive element in respect of the three railway systems in the North of Ireland has tended to the development of the trade and commerce of the country, and that it would be extremely undesirable to eliminate such competition. They believe that the suggestions for the acquisition and control of Irish railways, either by the State or by a General Council of County Councils, or any system of State-aided railways, or the amalgamation of all the railways under a single central authority, would be fraught with most disastrous consequences to Ireland, and would result either in a substantial loss to the State or a general advance in rates of freight, detrimental to the industrial and commercial interest of the country."

13699. That is the conclusion they have arrived at on that particular part of the subject?—It is.

13700. Then did they consider the question of whether it would be an advantage to have a certain unification of the railways—say reducing the large number to about three or four principal railway companies—has that question been under consideration?—The Commissioners did not express any definite opinion on that subject, but you will have noticed "the amalgamation of all the railways under a single central authority." Probably they would not object to the amalgamation of some of the small ones.

13701. You do not say a word about it; that is the reason I asked the question. Do they consider that all these twenty-seven companies in Ireland should remain independent as they are to-day?—No, they do not say so. They say they object to the amalgamation of all the railways, but I know since I have been in Belfast there have been one or two amalgamations which I am quite sure have been very advantageous.

13702. Do you think that the acquisition of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway and the Donegal Railway by the Midland Railway Company of England has been to the advantage of your district or the disadvantage?—I think it is to the advantage. That is my own personal opinion.

13702A. And you think that many of these small railways, not being able to earn a dividend, it would be better for the companies and the districts concerned if they were taken over by a larger railway——

Lord Pirrie.—It was only the Belfast and Northern Counties.

13703. *Chairman.*—The Belfast and Northern Counties was taken over by the Midland?—Yes.

13704. Was not the Donegal line taken over jointly by the Midland and the Great Northern?

Colonel Plews.—Yes.

Lord Pirrie.—Jointly?

Colonel Plews.—The Midland have one half.

Chairman.—You are quite right. I am much obliged. Of course I do not know all about these lines, but I thought I was not far wrong. We have had evidence, as you know, Mr. Currie, to the contrary of what you are now saying, that it has been a great disadvantage to the country for large English companies to come over and take any control over Irish railways?—By the Heysham route the Midland Company have brought thousands upon thousands, I suppose, of English tourists into Ireland who have spent their money here; surely that is an advantage.

13706. Did your Commissioners support the Bill in Parliament?—No.

13707. Did they oppose it?—They did not oppose it.

13708. I thought there was some authority that opposed the transfer of the Donegal line?

Colonel Plews.—The Derry Commissioners, sir. They blocked it the first year. They wanted to keep their own traffic in Derry and not have it coming from Belfast, and the Bill was thrown out the first year on the opposition of Derry.

13709. *Chairman.*—Quite so, it was only blocked for one year. Do you think, from your large commercial experience in Belfast, that it would be an advantage if these various small lines in various parts of the country were absorbed by the larger companies?—I have very little knowledge of the lines in the South, but in the North I think that it would probably be an advantage if one or two small lines were amalgamated.

Examined by Sir HERBERT JEKYLL.

13710. Mr. Currie, you gave us some figures about the imports of coal to Belfast and Newry showing that the import was very much larger in Belfast than Newry, but I suppose in a large manufacturing place like Belfast a considerable proportion of the imported coal is consumed at the place?—No doubt it is.

13711. And that at Newry, which is not such an important manufacturing centre, the portion consumed is relatively small?—That is so.

13712. Therefore, if you take from the total figures which you gave, the amount consumed in each place, the balance would represent what is sent inland?—It would.

13713. And the increase in the amount sent inland from Newry, assuming that the local consumption is practically stationary, would be really larger than is indicated by the percentages you gave. Would not that follow?—Yes.

13714. So that we may take it that the transmission of coal inland from Newry is growing at a rapid rate?—It is growing rapidly.

13715. Whereas the amount sent inland from Belfast is not growing at a rapid rate, if at all?—That is so.

13716. Then, with regard to the Court of the Railway and Canal Commissioners, you mention the great expense of that tribunal. You are, no doubt, aware that the main factor in the expense of the tribunal is the expense of Counsel?—I am.

13717. And that the Court fees are not large—the expenses of the Court itself are not large?—I believe they are not.

13718. And that the great cost is the expense of the fees of counsel?—Yes.

13719. Would not that equally apply to any other tribunal?—Yes.

13720. Would you exclude counsel from appearing before the new tribunal?—I would not.

13721. If disputes took place between traders and Railway Companies would you forbid the employment of counsel?—Personally I do not see very well how you could forbid it, but I am afraid I am travelling a little beyond my authority. I have no authority to say that represents the views of the Harbour Commissioners on the subject.

13722. But if you have counsel will not any other tribunal be just as expensive as the Railway and Canal Commission?—The tribunal, I think, which was in the mind of many of our Harbour Commissioners would be similar to what was suggested by Mr. Alexander Cooke a few days ago. His idea was that there should be no counsel present at this tribunal. He said he would exclude counsel.

13723. *Chairman.*—He said he would exclude counsel, and your Commissioners agree with that?—Some of them do. I want to keep as closely as possible to my minute, which expresses the view of the Board, without a division.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

13724. Can you give me any idea of how the coal, the one and a half million tons, which came into Belfast in 1906—in what period of time that was distributed, so to speak? Does any great quantity come in at one time of the year?—I think the imports are pretty regular throughout the year.

13725. In other words that would be about 100,000 tons a month?—Yes.

13726. Can you give me any idea of the number of wagons that would be required at any one particular time?—I could not.

13727. You spoke of the want of rolling stock?—Yes.

13728. I want to know have you any idea of what your requirements would be—what number of wagons would be required at any one time?—I could not give the totals, but I have here some details. Taking two merchants, for instance—on one day they required 120 wagons.

13729. 120 wagons?—120 wagons; the following day 125; the following day 20; the following day 62; next day 40, next day 41, next day 37, and 50, 116, 112, 96, 88, and so on.

13730. 100 would be the maximum in one day?—Yes, thereabouts.

13731. Would you look at that Board of Trade return? That gives the rolling stock of all descriptions on the Irish railways, and if you look you will find it works out on the Great Northern at nine wagons of all kinds, not including passenger wagons (I am only dealing with goods wagons and wagons for similar purposes), 9 wagons per mile; on the County Down Railway it works out at 9 per mile; and on the Northern Counties (now the Midland) 9½ per mile, and the Midland Great Western 6½ per mile. Against that, on the Scotch railways, on three of the principal lines it works out at 50, 40, and 60 wagons per mile. On the face of it does not that seem to imply that there is a deficiency of rolling stock in this country?—Yes, it does.

Comparison of number of goods wagons per mile available for traffic in Ireland and Scotland.

13732. Of course the conditions in Scotland are quite different. At the same time, when you find that of our three principal lines in this country none of them average 10 wagons to the mile, as against 60 in Scotland—the difference seems altogether out of proportion?—There is certainly a large disproportion.

13733. Can you give me any idea as to what reduction of the rates Mr. Milligen, who provides his own wagons, gets? You say in the case of the other merchants they get the use of the company's wagons, and I presume, as he supplies his own wagons, he does not pay so much?—I cannot say. Perhaps it is about 4*d.*, but I cannot tell you.

13734. I understand you say that you do not object to healthy competition between the small ports, such as Larne and Newry, and a large port like Belfast?—We do not object to competition.

Healthy competition between the smaller ports and Belfast not objected to if rates are reasonable.

13735. And you said you would be satisfied if the rates were proportionate?—Reasonable. We do not object to competition if the rates are reasonable.

13736. If you look at the rates you gave, the rate to Armagh is 3*s.* 9*d.* for 35 miles.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—Thirty-eight miles is the actual distance, 35 was the rough figure.

13737. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It was the rough figure was given, and it works out at 1·3*d.* per mile. Now, the rate from Newry to Armagh is 2*s.* 8*d.* for 21 miles, and that works out at 1·5*d.* per mile. In other words, the Newry people, whom you are complaining about, are paying 1½*d.* per mile, and you are paying 1¼*d.* only?—But that is a very severe gradient, and I believe it is a single line.

Belfast and Newry coal rates considered higher than is necessary to give the railway company a legitimate profit on working.

13738. You are paying a farthing a mile less?—Yes, but the complaint of the coal merchants is that the Railway Commission said that 2*s.* 6*d.* was a reasonable rate, and if you add 7*d.*, which the Great Northern Company admit is sufficient to repay them for the use of the Central line, that only brings it to 3*s.* 1*d.*

13739. I will go into that, but the first figures work out as I stated, 1¼*d.* as against 1½*d.*?—There is not much in the rate.

13740. Then, with regard to this admission that 7*d.* paid the Great Northern for the use of the Central line, may I ask to whom that was admitted?—To the Secretary of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce.

13741. At any rate that was since they acquired the control of the Belfast Central line?—Yes.

13742. When did they acquire control of it?—Many years ago. The admission was that they can work the Central Railway portion of the distance profitably at 7*d.* per ton.

13743. They charge, practically, 1*s.*? The Railway Commissioners say the rate is 1*s.*?—Yes, the assumption is that they are charging 1*s.*

13744. Your contention is that they might knock off the difference of 5*d.*?—Yes.

13745. You spoke about the competition between Larne and other ports as compared with Belfast. I suppose you are not prepared to say that it is in the interests of the whole country that the small ports and the traffic which would naturally go to them should suffer in the interests of one or two large ports?—Certainly not. The Harbour Commissioners do not want that.

13746. I do not know what your idea would be, but is it not only fair that the traffic to these small ports should be encouraged?—Quite so, that they should have the advantage of the geographical position, and Belfast also should have any advantage which is

The small ports entitled to the advantages of their geographical position.

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due to it in respect to other matters, such as the severe gradient to which I referred.

13747. It is not in the proof, but in answer to the Chairman you said that you applied for information with regard to complaints made by different traders who had been in the habit of alleging that they had complaints, and you were not able to obtain them?—I was unable to obtain any at all.

Reluctance of some traders to make complaints against the railway companies discussed.

13748. Did they give any reason for not furnishing any information—men whom you knew were in the habit of complaining, did they give any reason why they would not help you?—Except in one case, where I think there was a little reluctance lest the railway companies should penalise them later on, but that was only one case.

13749. But, of course, from your own experience, you do not think such a thing as that would occur?—I am quite sure it would not.

13750. We have been assured that such a thing is impossible, but notwithstanding all that you find there is a disposition on the part of a great many traders in the country to imagine that the railway companies would mulct them hereafter?—I found that idea in one case.

he amalgamation of the small lines in the North of Ireland considered to have een for the eneral good f the country.

13751. You said that you consider the amalgamation which had been carried out in recent years—I suppose you allude more particularly to the acquisition of the small independent lines by the Northern Counties Railway—had been in the interest of the North of Ireland?—Yes, and some of the small lines which were taken over by the Great Northern and the amalgamation of the County Down and the Holywood railways.

13752. Of course, the Midland has also taken up a large number, and as a matter of fact, now that the control of the Donegal line passes into the hands of the Midland and the Great Northern, they will practically control the whole of the North of Ireland, taking a line straight across from Belfast to Bundoran, with the exception of the Lough Swilly Railway?—Yes.

13753. Practically the whole of the northern systems will be in the hands of the Great Northern and the Midland?—Yes.

Question of the amalgamation of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly line.

13754. Have you any idea as to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway whether it would be desirable to amalgamate it with one of these systems I have spoken of?—I have not.

13755. Do you know the Londonderry and Lough Swilly line, I believe we are going to have some evidence later on about it. I do not wish to press you if you do not wish to say anything, but if that line were acquired by these two companies, it would practically mean that the whole northern slice of the island would pass into the hands of these two powerful companies, and judging by the experience of the benefits which resulted from amalgamation in other directions, I only wanted to know whether if we went no further than that—it would not be desirable to recommend the amalgamation of the Lough Swilly line?—I would prefer not to give an opinion on that.

Resolution of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners against amalgamation and centralisation of control discussed.

13756. Oh, very well. Now, you say that any amalgamation under a central authority would be fraught with disastrous consequences, and would result in either a substantial loss to the State or a general advance of rates of freight, detrimental to the industry and commercial interests of the country. I presume you admit that the only possible reason for advocating, or assuming, that this Commission would advocate amalgamation or purchase by the State would be that a reduction of rates would be the natural consequence?—No doubt that is the object of it.

13757. I do not see why you assume that amalgamation would result in a general advance If the State took over the railways the idea would be that the State could afford to reduce rates, knowing that, perhaps, for a few years they might suffer some loss, and could afford it, but that ultimately the traffic would develop and the loss would be recouped. Of course such a reduction and such a loss could not be borne by the present railway companies. They could not afford to experiment?—No; it would not be fair to ask them.

13758. Do you not think that there might be some advantage in getting the State, or some central authority, who would be prepared to experiment and reduce rates and put up with the temporary loss?—The Harbour Commissioners are distinctly of a contrary opinion.

13759. Might I ask were those paragraphs which you read out in the nature of a resolution?—They were. I have got it, and will hand it in if necessary.

13760. We have the resolution, and that is the same one.

Lord Pirrie.—It is not the same resolution as that of the Chamber of Commerce.

13761. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—No. The Harbour Commissioners' resolution?—That resolution was passed without a division by the Commissioners.

13762. How many does that body consist of?—Twenty-one Commissioners. They were not all present.

13763. Was it a full meeting?—An ordinary board meeting.

13764. And was the matter discussed at any length?—It was not discussed at great length, but it was before them on three occasions.

13765. And had State purchase no advocates at all?—When they discussed it at the Harbour Commissioners Chamber we are inclined to ask whether it was unanimous or not?—The resolution was unanimous. It was passed without a division. There was no dissentient.

13766. Whatever difference of opinion there might have been, when it came to a division it was unanimous?—That is so.

Chairman.—He said there was no dissentient.

13767. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—No dissentient. That is a difference?—When it was put it was passed unanimously. It does not follow that they all agreed to it.

13768. Apparently they did not, but they did not wish to carry the difference to a vote. Even if it could be shown to you that amalgamation or nationalisation would result in a material diminution of freights and charges, even under such circumstances, your Harbour Commissioners would not be prepared to entertain the idea?—Of State purchase?

13769. Or amalgamation under some central authority?—They object. They think that it would be disastrous.

13770. I gather from that that you think they object because they assume the rates would go up. I ask the question, if one of the alternatives were accompanied by conditions that reductions must follow, no matter who bore the loss, that reduction must be given, would not that modify the views you hold?—I do not think it is altogether a question of rates that operates in the minds of the Harbour Commissioners.

13771. May I ask what it is that operates in their minds?—Well, I do not know whether I am really authorised to attempt to explain what was in their minds, but I think now—it has been stated here, that in the nature of things a political body, controlling railways, is almost bound to act from political reasons, and, putting it very shortly, I think that that also operates in the minds of the Harbour Commissioners.

13772. I think it is very desirable that we should have the opinions of such an important body as the Harbour Commissioners of Belfast on this point. The evidence we have had from other witnesses in the South of Ireland has been in favour of the unification or nationalisation of the railways, at any rate in that direction, and reasons have been given why they did favour such a course, and I think this Commission would like to have something beyond a mere pious expression of opinion, as to why your Chamber hold a different opinion?—The Harbour Commissioners have not definitely stated their reasons, and I do not think I am authorised to give my personal views as representing the Commissioners.

13773. I understood you were deputed to represent them?—I was deputed, as that resolution says, to do certain things. I was instructed to represent the Board before the Commissioners and offer evidence on the points I have referred to. On the general question of the constitution and working of the railways in Ireland. "We are of opinion"—they give their opinion definitely.

13774. And you think your mouth is closed as to the reasons why they give that opinion?—I do.

13775. I don't wish to press the point any further if that is the case. I think it is a pity that when an important body like that takes up a strong attitude on the subject they should not give their reasons for taking up that attitude. But, of course, if you

say that you do not feel at liberty to express their reasons I don't wish to pursue the matter any further?—Beyond what I have said.

Examined by LORD PIRRIE.

13776. Just one question with regard to your answer to Colonel Poë. I read this in a different way to what you seem to imagine your instructions. "The Secretary is instructed to represent the Board before the Commissioners and offer evidence on the undermentioned points." Then come the points that you are to give evidence on, and surely you do not mean to convey that they were appointing the Secretary of the Board rather than one or two members of the Board in order that he could say: "I can't go further than the resolution of the Board." You are here to represent the Commissioners, and from your knowledge of the Commissioners can you not answer, or would you rather not answer. I don't want to go further than that. I want to point out to the public that I dont' think that a broad-minded lot of business men, in what we in the North look upon as the capital of Ireland, certainly the commercial capital of Ireland, to come and say, "We are going to say nothing, except repeat the bald resolution, without a single explanation,"—it is a strange thing to my mind, and I think the Commissioners sitting here are right in asking why you do it, why you don't feel justified in going further?—I am afraid, my lord, what you said at the commencement of your remarks is very nearly the truth. At the last meeting of the Board words very similar were used there as to the reason why the Commissioners did not appear here, and why the Secretary was sent.

13777. Then I may take from your answer that you have really been sent so as not to be in a position to give the reasons why they arrived at this resolution?—Well, I don't know the reasons of the twenty-one gentlemen.

13778. I know, but that is really the position that you have placed the Harbour Authority in to-day, and I don't say you are wrong in doing it. If I were an official in your position I might do exactly the same; but I can hardly think that was the intention of a great progressive Board like that which you represent?—Of course that would only apply to the latter part of the resolution.

13779. *Lord Pirrie.*—May I go further? You said that the Commissioners had had this matter before them on three occasions. Do you mean that it was before the Commissioners, that they referred it to a Committee, that then the Committee met and drew up a report, and then the whole Board met to receive the report?—No, the idea in my mind was that it was before a Committee, who spent the best part of a day and afternoon discussing it.

13780. How many of that Committee would be there—were there four?—More than that; the Committee met, and adjourned and met again on the same afternoon.

13781. On the same afternoon?—Yes, in order to sketch that resolution; that was what the adjournment was for.

13782. That was quite right?—Yes; that was once it came before the Committee; then it came before the Board—and then it was further considered at a second Board meeting.

13783. Well, now at which of the Board meetings was there a discussion when one member of the Board?—That was the last meeting.

13784. And he did not agree with the statement in the report of the Committee?—You are referring to Mr. Stevenson, I presume.

13785. Yes?—He asked certain questions to which he did not then receive direct answers; but he stated that he would not divide the Board upon the confirmation of the report.

13786. As appeared in the Press, and was read out to us by a witness before the words were—"I do not at all agree with Mr. Heyn in his remarks."

Chairman.—Resolution.

13787. *Lord Pirrie.*—Resolution?—I have some recollection of those identical words, but subsequent to those words he was a party to the adoption of that resolution.

13788. It is not the custom at the Harbour Board never to divide unless there is a great broad question of principle involved?—Any member may dissent from a resolution, and his dissent would be recorded.

13789. I know he might?—Any member might object, and his objection or dissent would be recorded if he wished it.

13790. Yes; but is not putting the question to a vote a very exceptional thing?—Well, it doesn't take place very frequently, but Mr. Stevenson on that occasion said he would not divide the Board.

13791. Well, now, I take it from your general evidence, and the interest you take in other parts of Ireland, as well as Belfast, as regards traffic, that the object of your Commissioners is to facilitate the traders all you can for the benefit of getting dues on the goods coming into Belfast?—No doubt, their interest lies mainly in Belfast.

13792. And that is the object mainly that the Harbour Commissioners have in view—to try to get all the goods they can to Belfast for the sake of their own revenue?—No, hardly that. Their idea is to increase and improve the trade and commerce of Ireland through the port of Belfast, but not necessarily to get higher rates or dues.

13793. To get no dues, to get the trade into Belfast, and therefore your object is to assist the traders in getting as low rates as you possibly can to all inland towns, so that you may make Belfast the distributing centre?—Quite so.

13794. That being the case, how often have the Harbour Commissioners as a body appealed to any of the railway companies to get reduced rates from Belfast to any inland town?—The Belfast Harbour Commissioners do not consider that there are any very grievous complaints in that respect. They have never had any very grievous complaints to make against the railway companies in regard to rates. Occasionally in such matters as those I have referred to a case comes up, but speaking generally, they consider that the railway companies are giving a very satisfactory service from Belfast.

13795. That was not the question I asked you. Have the Harbour Commissioners during the three-and-twenty years, you said it was, that you have been secretary, ever as a body applied to the railway companies to make reductions on any particular goods from Belfast to any inland town?—Certainly not more than once or twice, I think, during the twenty-three years; but I do not think they have considered it necessary in regard to dues.

13796. I am not speaking of dues now, but of the railway rates. Have they ever asked the companies to reduce the rates for the sake of assisting the traders to bring their goods through Belfast?—No; I do not think we have, generally speaking, but we have reduced our own rates more than once.

13797. I am coming to that in one moment. You say they have not done it as a body?—No.

13798. I take it that the gentlemen sitting on the Harbour Board are all members of the Chamber of Commerce?—Well, I am not aware whether that is so or not. I am not a member myself.

13799. You are not a member?—No.

13800. Looking over the list of them as they appear here, I can't see personally anyone that is not a member of the Chamber of Commerce?—I feel sure that the bulk of them are—at any rate, the majority.

13801. To me it is very interesting to see that although the Chamber of Commerce were apparently unanimously of the opinion that there were really no complaints as regards the railway companies, yet the Harbour Commissioners through you, as you say the evidence you are giving is purely the Harbour Commissioners' evidence, give us very important complaints. It is extraordinary to find that two bodies in Belfast have taken such different views as they have done, judging by the evidence of yourself and the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce?—You notice, my lord, that the complaints all come from the one trade—the coal trade.

13802. Well, is it a wonder that the coal trade complain when Mr. Heyn, representing the Chamber of Commerce, told us that he is able to get a rate for grain at 3*s.* a ton from Belfast to Derry, a distance, I think, of ninety-five miles—speaking from memory, ninety-five miles?—By railway.

13803. Yes; and the rate for carrying coal, which, I suppose, you look upon as a less valuable material, and less likely to get either injured or stolen, is more than double the rate for grain. Are you aware of

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that, Mr. Currie?—I think I read something like that in his evidence.

13804. But are you aware of it?—I do not know of my own knowledge.

13805. As Secretary of the Harbour Board I ask you is it not the duty of a great trust like that, who are supposed to be looking after the interests of the traders, as you told us, that is one of the chief matters they have in view, is it not the duty of the Board when they have one of their own members giving it in evidence that he has no difficulty in getting grain carried at 3*s.* a ton for ninety-five miles to actively interest themselves in these matters—do you not agree with me that it would be very desirable to get the coal rates down to the same level, would it not, as grain?—It probably would be for Belfast, but sea competition comes in there, I presume.

Apparent apathy on the part of the Belfast Harbour Board with regard to the question of the rates from Belfast to inland towns discussed.

13806. Sea competition?—Yes, I expect so.

13807. Take another competition. You have mentioned the case of Larne, and you say that from Larne to Ballyclare is a distance of, we will say, twenty-five miles, 1*s.* 6*d.*, they only charge 1*s.* 6*d.* a ton, but they charge 2*s.* from Belfast?—Yes.

13808. Well, if they are bound to charge only 1*s.* 6*d.* because of the distance being so short between Larne and Ballyclare, I ask you, Mr. Currie, if they charge coal 2*s.* a ton from Belfast to Ballyclare, which is only 15 miles—is not that a very exorbitant rate when they take grain 95 miles for 3*s.*?—I feel sure, my lord, that sea competition must come in there.

13809. Does coal not come to Belfast—you have already read out that 1,200,000 tons come into Belfast?—I admit at once that having regard to the distance the one rate is out of all proportion to the other.

13810. *Chairman.*—There is the same sea competition for coal as grain?—Not to Ballyclare. Ballyclare is inland.

13811. You say it is sea competition which makes 3*s.* the low rate?—Yes.

13812. There is the same competition as regard coal?—I am speaking of Ballyclare.

13813. *Lord Pirrie.*—I was right. There is sea competition, and where there is sea competition grain comes down to 3*s.* Why should not coal go at the very same rate or lower?—I could not explain the reason, my lord; it is an extraordinary thing, I admit.

13814. Would it not be the interest of Belfast to get all the coal that is taken to Derry, Limavady, and all these places through Belfast, would it not be better for the Harbour Commissioners?—Yes; I suppose it would.

13815. Let us be sure of that—would it not be in the interests of Belfast?—Yes.

13816. On what grounds do the Commissioners not assist in connection with that. They have no time, I suppose, Mr. Currie. Would you not consider that they would be neglecting their duty if they failed to look after this matter as a Harbour Trust?—I am quite satisfied that the Harbour Commissioners give a great deal of attention and time to all these questions.

13817. But you say they have not done it at all—that in the twenty-three years they have only moved in the matter once or twice. Now, if they had gone into these rates, and if they had known as a body, do you not think they might have come to a different conclusion as regards State Purchase, or State control, or the control of the railways under some body which would be bound to look into the justice of one man getting lower rates than another?—You ask the question, my lord, and I must say I don't.

13818. You don't?—I do not consider that the Harbour Commissioners would have come to any different conclusion.

13819. Even if they knew of those facts?—Yes; taking a comprehensive view of the whole question.

13820. You don't think the knowledge that I have given you, the information I have given you, would have changed their minds in the least?—No.

Question of the charge per head made by the Belfast Harbour Board on outwards cattle and the services rendered for the payment.

13820A. Now, I suppose you have read, as you take such an interest in the welfare of Belfast, the evidence given by a most intellectual gentleman, the strong evidence, to my mind, given by a representative of the Department of Agriculture, when he stated that the only port in Ireland for shipping cattle that had not special accommodation for it was the port of Belfast, and that the port of Belfast was not carrying out the regulations of the Agricultural Board. Is he correct in that statement, do you think, or do you know anything about it?—Well, I inquired yesterday, and I was told that we have had no information in regard to any ill-treatment of cattle, or anything of that sort, and that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have their officers along the quays continually. I could get no information whatever as to any cases of cruelty.

13821. You say you made inquiries yesterday?—I did, yesterday afternoon. It arose out of your remark, which I saw in the papers.

13822. The evidence came on me as a surprise, as I had a false idea, apparently, that Belfast was most up-to-date in all its arrangements for transport and shipping for cattle because such a large number of cattle are shipped there. Then you say it is not correct as far as you know?—The Harbour Board is in no way responsible for not giving accommodation close to where the steam-boats sail, if it is a question of accommodation for the lairage of cattle before they are shipped.

13823. Well?—That question has been discussed on several occasions by the Board, but with the exception of one piece of ground, which was not considered quite suitable, we have no ground in the immediate vicinity of the cross-Channel boats which would be suitable for the purpose. The Commissioners, at one time when it was discussed, thought it was the duty of the railway companies to provide the lairage accommodation for the cattle which they bring in before they are driven down, that they should be examined at the railway station. In fact, I think that is the arrangement now.

13824. Do you charge any dues on cattle going out?—We do, of course.

13825. What do you charge on cattle?—We charge about half the inward rates. It is about a penny or something of that sort—that we fixed many years ago.

13826. You had better give us the actual figure in because I want to speak of it in a minute, if you can give it?—Cattle outwards are charged twopence.

13827. Sheep—there is a difference as regards sheep?—Yes, I think there is. For sheep it is a penny.

13828. I suppose you can give us the number of cattle shipped in the year, can you not?—Do you mean the number of head of cattle exported?

13829. Yes?—For the year 1906 it was 136,158.

13830. That includes all?—No; that is cattle alone. There were 21,000 odd pigs and 29,000 sheep.

13831. What do you do for that—130,000 twopences—what do you do for that?—The cattle have the use of the harbour.

13832. They have. Can you point to any part of the harbour that the cattle have belonging to the Harbour Commissioners?—They pass over the quays.

13833. Over the main roads. They are not allowed inside the sheds?—Well, I have seen the shed overrun by them, but, of course, that we object to.

13834. They are kept outside on the road—that belongs to the Corporation, I think?—No doubt.

13835. They are kept outside on the quay till the gangway is put up—do you supply the gangway for them to walk on board to the ship?—No, that belongs to the ship.

13836. Do you supply water and arrangements for them to get drink or food; have they any place to feed or drink?—No, there is no lairage accommodation whatever.

13837. Therefore you charge the senders a sum of money and you provide no accommodation whatever, except that you allow the cattle to walk from the quay on board the steamer?—This twopence is paid by the ship to us, and the steamship owner is supposed to charge it again to the merchant, but it is not for lairage charges at all; it is really a due or rate.

13838. Then, as regards the cattle, for which twopence per head is charged, the Harbour Commissioners supply no accommodation whatever except allowing them to walk over their quay to their steamer, that is all they do for the twopence. But am I correct in stating that a few years ago the Harbour Trust offered to the Department of Agriculture, and probably before the Department of Agriculture was properly started,

ground for lairages, so that all the steamers would just call at this loading berth, but that the Department of Agriculture themselves did not think that position a good place for cattle?—I don't recollect, my lord, quite in that form. On two occasions, at least on several occasions, two different sites have been discussed for lairage purposes by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, but on neither of them was any arrangement come to, as they were not suitable. One of these sites, I think, was subsequently bought by the Midland Railway Company—the Northern Counties. It belongs to them now, I believe, and the other is still there.

13839. Your evidence is that the Department of Agriculture have never insisted on this point, and that you are not aware that you are breaking the regulations every night?—Certainly. I don't recollect the Department of Agriculture ever having applied for or asked for anything of the sort, and certainly I was not aware we were breaking any regulations.

13840. You have some one in the Harbour Trust who is responsible for reporting to you or the Board on these regulations?—If we broke the regulations I ought to have known, and some one else has been neglectful in not reporting it.

13841. Just one other thing as regards facilities. Mr. Cooke gave evidence about flax. He said he could bring flax from Antwerp at about 1*s.* 6*d.* a ton more than he could bring it from the Co. Antrim or from Strabane. Now what facilities do you give for taking it. He also said that the production of flax was being reduced year by year because of these high local inland rates. Now, suppose you have got certain mills and factories in Co. Down—state what facilities do you give for the flax coming from Ballycastle or Larne or Derry destined for Co. Down. Can it pass over your lines?—As it comes to or from the ships?

13842. No; to inland towns, coming from Ballyclare—the town you named yourself. From Ballyclare does it come into Belfast and then over the Central line to Comber?—No; we could not get through railway traffic over the tramways. It would put a stop to business probably.

13843. Am I not right in saying that on one or two occasions you authorised and allowed this through traffic to go from Larne to Newtownards when Lord Londonderry was Lord Lieutenant his Household party and servants being the travellers?—I did, as a personal matter, on one or two occasions, but the Board expressed their strong disapproval of it and I have not done it since.

13844. Have you ever observed at Southampton great passenger trains taking passengers from London direct to the steamer lying at the quay for the Cape, America, and various places, and going over the main street?—At Southampton it is a railway company who do that.

13845. No, it is a Corporation with a mayor?—The traffic you are speaking of is done by the South-Western Railway, and those lines are railway lines; our lines are tramway lines.

13846. Then you think that because it is a railway company they can manage it better than a separate department. I mean having two departments would make a difficulty?—The circumstances are different—geographically different.

13847. Yes, but the railway company taking these carriages through to the dock at Southampton is better than if on reaching Southampton they had to pass them over to the Harbour Trust, who would take them down to their quay. That would be objectionable?—If the tramways at Donegall-quay in Belfast were in the hands of the railway companies themselves they would not work through railway traffic over these tramways at any rate during the daytime. They might during the night.

13848 As well as you do?—We don't do it.

13849. But your answer to me was that the reason why the Southampton traffic was worked so well, free of accidents and to the convenience of the passenger was that it was conducted by the railway companies. That was your answer, and do you want to modify it. You know Southampton, and you have, no doubt, seen that through the main street they run traffic, excursion trains, and not only over the main street but along to the quay and out at another part of the town along the main road?—My knowledge of Southampton is not sufficient to enable me to say if that is correct.

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13850. You know it takes place, and why should it not take place in Belfast. What I want to gather from you is a clear expression of your opinion which I take to be that if the railway companies were under one management those lines on the quay would facilitate traffic?—I am afraid I cannot agree with that in the case of Belfast.

Inconvenience to through Irish traffic owing to the quay tramways in Belfast, controlled by Harbour Board, not being used to link up the different railway termini discussed.

13851. Then how do you expect trade to be carried on successfully if you have to take goods into one station and cart them across town to another station?—It might be they could not work the traffic—I think the railway companies would bear me out in that—if you had through railway traffic from one company's station to another continually going during the daytime.

13852. But you have seen in Belfast from sixteen to twenty wagons going down the Queen's Road?—That is on the other side of the Harbour.

13853. Yes, on the other side from the Northern Counties Midland line, twelve, fourteen, or twenty wagons going down at the busiest time of the day. Now, what would take place at night on the railways. Is there a single individual on the quays there between 12 o'clock at night and say, six o'clock in the morning. Is there any traffic there, or a single individual, and what is to prevent this traffic being carried on if the lines belonged to the railway company. Are you aware that the railway companies send their goods frequently at night?—I have no idea whether the railway companies would work it during the night or not.

13854. But if it existed, if there was a short junction between their lines to enable this to be done, would you not wish to assist farmers or traders in County Down or County Antrim?—It is not my wish to offer through railway traffic.

13855. To assist farmers in County Down or County Antrim. There is no way in which it could be better done. If you don't allow provision for the traffic it is completely lost?—They could go round by Antrim.

13856. But you objected to certain routes because they happened to be longer. You think the short route would be of advantage to the trader. You have said so, and you improve that by saying that whatever is the shortest distance would be right. Then why not send it by that?—The tramways in Belfast Harbour are constructed for traffic going to and from the ships, and it would be absolutely impossible to work the through traffic on these tramways, in my opinion, during the time the cross-Channel vessels are there.

13857. We will agree with that; but there is no reason why the traffic should not go at night if the railway companies wish?—There is; though it would probably be possible to work it at night.

13858. And you would not object?—Well, we have been advised that it would be a very risky proceeding to allow the railway companies to work through traffic over the line even during the night.

13859. Was the object of preventing it not to keep the traffic from going direct from the County Down to Larne?—No, nothing of the sort. I never heard of any such thing before.

Suggested cause of the objection of the Board to the use of the tram lines for through traffic.

13860. Then there is no objection so far as the Harbour Trust in concerned. They want to facilitate traffic if it can be worked and the railway people consider it advisable?—They will allow it during the night if it has not the effect of technically turning their tramways into a railway. I am sure I can give that promise on behalf of the Commissioners.

13961. Into railway lines?—Turning us into a railway company.

13862. That is very satisfactory. Then you practically will agree to run traffic through, carried at night. You say the Commissioners will agree?—If the Commissioners agree.

13863. Then the remark that the Harbour Commissioners thought at one time to buy Larne Harbour is not true?—I never heard of it.

13864. You never heard the Commissioners thought of buying Larne Harbour?—I did, but not for the reason you gave.

Former proposal of Belfast Harbour Commissioners to buy Larne Harbour.

13865. Was not that the occasion when they had a division or a poll on it?—I am not quite sure.

Mar. 14, 1907.

Mr. W. A. Currie, Secretary of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

Cross-examined by Mr. GERALD FITZGIBBON, K.C.

Practice of keeping loaded wagons standing on the quay an undue time alleged against the merchants.

13866. The Board have brought forward two main complaints: first, the shortage of wagons and that the coal merchants had complained frequently of this shortage. To your own knowledge is it not a very extensive practice on the part of Belfast coal merchants to use railway wagons as warehouses. They load their coal from the ships on them and keep the wagons for sometimes several days loaded at the quay?—Yes.

The rates for coal, Belfast to Armagh and Newry to Armagh, discussed.

13867. As to the Newry preference rate, you said that in the rates from Newry and Belfast to Armagh there seemed to be certain differences. The Newry Commissioners applied to the Court of the Railway and Canal Commission in 1889, and the order is dated 30th December, 1889, restraining the Great Northern Railway Company from giving an undue preference to Belfast, by giving it the same rate as Newry. The Great Northern Railway then raised the rate to Newry in order to put Newry on an equality. The Newry Commissioners appealed against that on the ground that the rate from Newry was still too high, and on 29th July, 1901, the Railway and Canal Commission, the parties coming to an agreement affirmed the present rate. But the present rate being on the mileage basis ought to be lower than it is, but they gave a higher rate on the ground that mileage between Newry and Armagh was eight miles more on account of the heavy gradients?—That I think, was the reason why they should not give undue preference, and if the Railway Commissioners fixed 2*s.* 6*d.* as being a reasonable rate surely they are——

13868. It was fixed at 3*s.* 6*d.* because the central rate, in the judgment of Sir Frederick Peel, was 3*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes, divided into the proportions of 1*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.*

13869. Your Commissioners are all, with one possible exception, great traders?—Yes.

13870. Traders and business men?—Yes.

Explanation of the low grain rate from Belfast to Derry.

13871. With reference to the consignment of grain at a low rate to Derry, I think it is question No. 11433 in the evidence of Mr. Cooke. Grain comes into your port in very large vessels?—It does.

13872. In great big ocean-going steamers and sailing vessels carrying several thousand tons?—Yes.

13873. Coal in similar quantities goes to Derry?—By steamer; yes. Coal boats are smaller.

13874. This particular consignment of grain to Derry was a very large quantity at a special rate?—I have no knowledge of any particular consignment.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—It was 1,500 tons to go to Derry out of a cargo of 4,000 tons.

13875. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do I understand you to say that 2*d.* a head charged for cattle is rather a due paid for accommodation alongside the quay?—The Harbour Commissioners charge these dues.

13876. Then the 2*d.* is the vessels' due?—No, we charge dues on the ship and dues on the cargo she carries.

13877. *Lord Pirrie.*—But you only pay them on the ship. You cannot assess the cattle?—We have power to charge both to the ship. In some ports the tonnage due would be on the ship and the dock rate on the goods.

13878. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—But after providing lairage accommodation?—Then that would be a different matter.

13879. The point is, are cattle dealers being called upon to pay for something they are not getting?—No. In regard to accommodation for the inspection of cattle for which 2*d.* was to be charged, the Harbour Commissioners agreed to contribute one penny, and I think the railway company also contributed one halfpenny, so that it leaves a very small sum behind to be paid by the cattle dealers.

13880. *Lord Pirrie.*—But you generally pay them one penny of the 2*d.* back again?—That is after inspection. There is an extra charge of 2*d.* to which cattle were subject on passing through Belfast, but three half-pence of that has been, and is now being, abolished, one half-penny by the railway company, and one penny by the Harbour Commissioners, and that leaves one half-penny charge to cattle dealers. I am not speaking by the book, but I think I am correct.

13881. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—If you provided extra accommodation you would charge for it?—Yes; we would have to charge for it.

13882. But at first sight it would appear that cattle dealers were paying for something they did not get?—The first charge of 2*d.* per head for cattle shipped is a due for the upkeep of the harbour.

Mar. 14, 1907.

Mr. Robert H. Todd, LL.D., Solicitor, representing the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. ROBERT H. TODD, LL.D., Solicitor, examined by the CHAIRMAN

13883. I think you are a solicitor practising at Londonderry?—I am.

13884. You appear before us on behalf of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

13885. You are a member of the Chamber?—Yes.

The promotion of light railways and tramways.

13886. As a practising solicitor at Londonderry I believe you have been interested for many years in the promotion of, light railways and tramways?—Yes. I have got light tramways and light railways constructed to Donegal and elsewhere.

13887. What is the earliest date on which you began to take an interest in that question?—I think in 1882. In that year the Government scheme which found expression in the Act of 1883 was before Parliament as far as I recollect. A Committee was formed of Donegal landowners and traders and Derry merchants. The Duke of Abercorn was Chairman, and I was Secretary of the Committee that was formed for the purpose of supplying the Government with information as to the necessities of the district, and taking such steps as might be thought desirable to promote railway construction in Donegal.

Action taken in connection with the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1883.

13888. In connection with that Committee you held an interview with members of the Government with reference to what is known as the 1883 Bill?—The Bill as brought in contemplated road tramways only, but the Committee I speak of was of opinion that tramways would be impossible in Donegal owing to the fact that the country was hilly and the roads so light they could not bear tramways.

13889. Did you represent that to the Committee?—I was sent to London and I saw Sir George Trevelyan, Chief Secretary, and Sir Andrew Porter, then Attorney-General, and afterwards Master of the Rolls. He drafted some clauses to carry out the recommendations of my Committee, and those clauses were embodied in the Act.

13890. Did you give evidence before Sir James Allport's Commission?—I did.

13891. Was your evidence in connection with a system of light railways for Donegal, Derry, and Tyrone?—Yes. I suggested a number of light railways, having Derry as a centre, being the port of the district and the natural distributing centre. The scheme I suggested was to have the whole of this light railway system converging on Derry.

13892. Were many of your suggestions adopted?—Practically all—most of them have been carried out. The Donegal schemes have been carried out.

13893. As to these Donegal schemes, do you think they have done any great benefit to the district?—Enormous benefit. I have been going to Donegal for the last thirty years, practically every year, and the hovels that appeared to be a disgrace to the whole country side have so far as the seaboard is concerned practically disappeared.

13894. Then not only the industries of the place, and the agricultural products, but the condition of the people has improved?—The life of the people has enormously improved; the condition of the people is vastly improved; fisheries are developing to a very great extent, I think they will be still more developed, but they have already been very largely developed; agricultural industry has also been developed and improved; the housing of the people and the condition of the people altogether has been changed. The effect of these light railways has been of enormous advantage.

13895. You say deliberately that the construction of these light railways has practically revolutionised the whole district?—It has.

13896. And improved the condition of the people?—Immensely. In connection with that I may say that that portion of the country is the only part of Ireland in which the population has not decreased. Since these light railways were constructed there is a slight increase in the population, in addition to an improvement in the condition of the people.

13897. This is the first time we have had any evidence of an increase in the population?—I think it is the only part of Ireland where there is an increase, and it is largely owing, in my opinion, to the construction of these lines of railway.

13898. May I take it the districts you have mentioned are practically now well served with these light railways or sufficiently served?—I think fairly well served—I won't say the system is absolutely perfect, but fairly well served. The lines were not always constructed exactly as they should have been in my opinion, but on the whole they are fairly well served.

13899. There are some inland districts that you refer to as being still without railway accommodation?—I think there are a great many inland districts.

13900. I suppose you are confining your remarks to this particular district—the counties you mention?—I had an interview with Mr. Bryce when he was Chief Secretary on the subject, and I professed myself to be very desirous of pointing out the country which required railway systems. He said when I explained that to him that I need not say a word, because I was preaching to the converted. He was fully convinced of the beneficial effect of the light railway system, but what he wanted was a scheme that would put before him the circumstances of each particular scheme, so that he could consider them. I prepared a report, and I mentioned in that report twenty-four railways all over Ireland. However, I confine my evidence to you to the three I know more particularly.

13901. We shall have quite enough to deal with in considering these three railways. Please mention them?—There is the Londonderry to Park, or on to Draperstown if possible. There is, however, a difficulty getting from Draperstown to Park—there is an immense hill, and the gradient would be so steep as to make that part of the line impracticable.

13902. Then, what is the second railway?—It is from Donemana to Cookstown.

13903. And what is the third?—From Castlederg to Pettigo.

13904. Do you consider that there is a great need for those three lines that you have suggested?—A very great need indeed. All those districts are capable of great development, but it is impossible to establish successful industries in them until railway accomodation is provided. In fact, it is impossible to develop the districts at all until those railways are constructed. Most of the districts as they stand at present are too poor to induce existing railway companies or individuals to take them up as a commercial speculation, and therefore Government assistance is absolutely necessary.

13905. Do you think similar beneficial results would follow from those three railways as from the other light railways to which you have referred?—I am satisfied of it. I may mention particularly the Donemana and Cookstown line. Along at least two-thirds of that line there is a valuable coal bed.

13906. Is it worked now in any way?—At the Cookstown end a shaft has been quite recently constructed, and a lease given.

13907. And has the coal been proved?—Yes. I am informed there are seams of coal found of from two to nine feet deep.

13908. Nine feet?—Yes; I am informed that the seam in places is nine feet in depth of extremely valuable coal.

13909. Are those districts that you have mentioned congested districts?—They would not all come strictly within the definition of congested districts. A large portion of them would come within the definition, but running into these poor and wretched districts there are comparatively rich districts which would just take them out of the definition.

13910. With regard to the portions that are congested districts, would they be greatly benefited by the construction of those railways?—Yes, enormously.

13911. Can you give us any idea of what population would be affected by those railways?—By the Donemana and Cookstown I would put it at about 20,000, directly or indirectly. The area that would be benefited by the other railways is smaller. By the Londonderry to Park it would be about 15,000, and the other is something smaller. I cannot tell you exactly what the population is.

13912. Are there any other minerals in those districts besides coal?—There are, I believe, but I cannot give you the particulars of them.

13913. Is it a grazing country?—Yes, grazing and petty tillage up to the present, but at the Cookstown end there are a certain number of mills as well as coal.

13914. Mills?—Yes, spinning mills.

13915. Are they small mills?—Not all small mills; some of them are very considerable mills; there are three or four large ones at Cookstown.

13916. How do you get to Cookstown?—There is a railway in connection with Belfast, but I may mention as regards Cookstown that the railway system is such that you have to travel four hours to cover a distance which ought to be done in an hour. That is by one company, and by another, the Northern Counties line, it would take seven hours by some trains.

13917. You have to travel across country?—Yes; the lines are made to serve other districts.

13918. As regards rates have you anything to say?—I do not know much about that.

13919. I suppose you agree with the other witnesses that it would be of advantage to the country that the rates should be low?—Yes; I may mention that I think the inland rates are excessive, as compared with the through rates.

13920. We have had a mass of evidence upon that point?—Yes; I think it is a matter that special attention should be called to. The inland rates are not satisfactory, and the through cross-Channel rates are so fixed that they benefit some particular ports and injure others, and the general opinion is that those rates have had the effect of ruining the inland county towns and preventing the development of the inland district. Belfast, in this respect, has great advantages over Derry and Newry, owing to the policy of the large English railways and of the Irish railways. Of course the directors of those companies endeavour to make dividends for their shareholders. That is natural, but the effect of the rates, as fixed, has been, as far as I can discover, to penalise the inland towns and villages, and the healthy prosperous life of the inland towns and villages has absolutely ceased owing to the operation of the railway rates. This brings me to a very important point, which has been mentioned by a previous witness—that the effect of the acquisition of Irish railways by the English railway companies has been in some respects, extremely injurious to many parts of the North of Ireland.

13921. You think so?—I do not "think" so—I am sure of it.

13922. That is directly opposed to some of the evidence we have heard?—Well, the result of that acquisition and amalgamation has been to kill any healthy competition in the North of Ireland. In the first place, the Midland Company of England acquired the Northern Counties Railway. It is true that the cross-Channel service since that acquisition has been somewhat improved, but the local service has certainly not improved—on the contrary, I am informed it has been distinctly worse. The policy of the Midland Company has, very naturally, been to carry all the goods they can get over the Northern Counties section by their own cross-Channel steamers, and thence over their own line. The result is that the Midland Company carries a good deal of the traffic that was formerly carried by Derry. The County Council, the Harbour Commissioners, and the Corporation of Derry opposed the acquisition of the Northern Counties line by the Midland Company, but the matter was ultimately compromised by the Harbour Commissioners—I think unwisely—agreeing that a differential rate should be given from a certain point to Derry in favour of Derry. But that point was only thirty miles from the city of Derry, leaving the railway company free to operate as they liked upon other portions of the line.

13923. Was that inserted in the Act?—It was; I was doubtful of the legality of it myself, but it was inserted.

13924. It is in the Act?—Yes; it is in the Act, and the result is that cattle are taken from Limavady, which is only seventeen miles from Derry, and instead of being sent by Derry, as formerly, they are sent to Dungiven and thence booked through by Larne and Belfast, thus avoiding the differential rate from Limavady.

13925. Of course, Derry has suffered from that?—Yes, distinctly. Now the Midland Company have also acquired the Donegal line.

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Existing railway communication with Cookstown not satisfactory.

Injurious effect of preferential cross channel through rates on the prosperity of inland towns.

Alleged injurious effect to parts of Ireland by the acquisition of Irish railways by the English companies.

Allegation that the acquisition of the Northern Counties Railway by the Midland of England led to diversion of traffic from Derry to Larne and Belfast.

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13926. In conjunction with the Great Northern Company?—I think that was a subsequent arrangement. I believe it was the Midland Company got the Act to acquire the Donegal line.

13927. Well, at all events, the Midland Company have got a section of it?—Yes, and with regard to the remainder of the line, the Great Northern and the Midland became good partners, and since then the Midland Company promoted a line from Strabane to Letterkenny. Now, on the acquisition of the Donegal line, and the construction of the Strabane and Letterkenny line, an agreement between the two companies was incorporated in the Act, under which the traffic coming from the Donegal line was to be pooled between the two companies, and there was to be no competition.

Suggestions that the partnership in railways in the North of Ireland between the Gt. N. (I.) Ry. and Midland of England destroys competition.

13928. Is the agreement scheduled to the Act?—Yes.

13929. Then we cannot alter that?—No; but what I say is that the result of this policy is to kill competition, and that the carrying power of the whole North-West of Ireland is in the hands of those two companies; and it is in the power of those two companies to starve out the port of Derry. Now, when the acquisition of the Northern Counties line by the Midland Company of England was before Parliament I suggested that the rates should be so fixed that the through rate should be the sea and English railway rates, plus the mileage rate in Ireland, the result of which would be that each port would have the advantage arising from the cheaper rate for a shorter distance.

Actual mileage basis for all cross channel through rates recommended.

13930. I am afraid we have not got to that yet?—Well, that is what should be done if you want to develop the country, and to give every district the advantage to which it is entitled by its proximity to the various ports.

13931. Under the existing arrangements, Derry has evidently got a grievance?—Yes, sir; I have no complaint against the railway companies, except that.

Preferential treatment of Belfast as against Derry alleged.

13932. Do you think any advantage is given to Belfast over Derry?—Yes, I think so. I am informed that, in the way of excursions to Belfast, and cheaper rates for goods, Belfast has a distinct advantage. For instance, take the 3s. per ton rate for grain; we cannot get the 3s. rate from Derry to Belfast, but Belfast can, from Belfast to Derry. Suppose you had a ship coming into Derry with the same load of grain as one coming into Belfast, I think the rates should be the same both ways between Derry and Belfast.

Cost of appeal to Railway and Canal Commission Court prohibitory.

13933. The Railway Commissioners could make an order compelling the companies to do that?—Yes; but if a Derry merchant applied to the railway company for that rate, and the railway company refused, and the merchant applied to the Railway Commission, the costs of the application would be more than the whole value of the cargo.

Cross channel steamer services from Derry.

13934. Is there a daily cross-channel service from Derry?—There is a daily service to Glasgow; a bi-weekly service between Derry and Fleetwood, a bi-weekly service between Derry and Heysham, and a bi-weekly service between Derry and Liverpool.

13935. I suppose that any improvement in the trade of Londonderry not only affects the prosperity of Londonderry itself, but also that of the district around it?—Certainly. The progress and improvement of Derry reflects on the whole district; and anything that injures Derry injures the whole district, and should be stopped, if possible.

13936. Have you considered what would be the best remedy for the grievances to which you have referred?—The best remedy would be to fix the through rates in the way I have stated, but which I understand you object to.

Unification of the Irish railways recommended.

13937. I don't object; I only tell you that there are great difficulties in doing it. Do you think Ireland and your district in particular, would be benefited if there was a unification of the railways, or a State purchase of the railways? Have you considered that subject?—Yes, I have considered it. I may say that I started on the consideration with a strong prejudice against it; but I have considered it carefully; and as the railway companies either will not, or are not able to, develop the resources of the country, I am of opinion that there should be a unification of the railways, either by amalgamation, or putting the whole of them in the hands of a Board, so that the whole may be managed as one line.

13938. Taking those three railways that you have mentioned as necessary; you say the districts are too poor for any private parties to find the capital to construct them?—Yes.

13939. Then, who is to do it?—It must be done by the State.

13940. You think that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, a benefit would accrue to the country by the State owning the railways?—I am not at all sure that State ownership would be the best.

13941. I want to get your opinion, as a solicitor in long practice, and representing Londonderry?—Well, what occurs to me is this: there is no reason why the whole of the railways should not be unified.

13942. You are in favour of unification of the railways?—Yes.

13943. How would you do it?—By taking the dividends of each company, on the average of the last three or five years, and issuing unified stock to the shareholders of each line on that basis.

13944. What about those lines that do not pay any dividends?—I think they should be excepted.

13945. Would you expect the State to find the money in those cases?—They would have to find no money. All that the State would have to do would be to issue stock bearing interest at the rates of the present dividends.

13496. Would you compel the railway companies to enter into the unification?—Undoubtedly. For the benefit of the country, I would have no hesitation in doing so, provided that there should be no confiscation. I do not see why, when a railway company has been given by the State compulsory powers for the purchase of land, for their own purposes, they should not be compelled to sell that property, if the benefit of the country requires it. Whatever is desirable for the welfare of the country should be done. Under the existing system the wealth of the country is not advancing as it should do; and I would say to the railway companies, "If you cannot, or will not, carry on the railways in such a way as to confer the benefit on the country you should, we must do it"—taking the railways from them, of course, on as just and reasonable terms as possible.

13947. You would be in favour of appointing a Board to manage the railways?—Yes; a Board of expert Irishmen who understood the business. It is right that I should state that this matter has not been considered by the Chamber of Commerce of Londonderry, as far as I am aware; and that in what I have said I am not expressing the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce, but my own individual opinion.

13948. I quite understand that. I wanted to have your individual opinion on the matter?—Yes, sir. I don't know that my opinion is of much value.

13949. Now we come to the subject of the Letterkenny and the Burtonport railways; tell the story as to that in your own words?—Yes, sir. In the first place, with regard to the Letterkenny railway, it is 18½ miles long and connects Letterkenny with the Lough Swilly railway at Tooban Junction, and thereby with Londonderry. It was promoted many years ago by some of the County Donegal landowners, who agreed to endeavour to raise a sum of £50,000 for the purpose.

13950. How long ago was that?—About forty years ago. The money was not sufficient to complete the line; it was a broad gauge line. The contractor, I believe, failed after a portion of the railway had been constructed—the embankments and the cuttings were completed, with the exception of a small section of the line, when the contractor disappeared, and the line was left derelict for a number of years. Then, in 1875, the Directors of the Lough Swilly Railway Company suggested to their shareholders to form a company, and induced a number of the Londonderry merchants to assist them in completing the unfinished Letterkenny Railway. They found, however, that they could not raise the money, and they applied to the Treasury, and, through the Board of Works, they negotiated two loans; one, a loan of £50,000, at four per cent., charged as a first mortgage on the undertaking, and the other a loan of £35,000 charged as a second mortgage, and repayable by instalments at five per cent., four per cent. being for interest, and one per cent. as a sinking fund to pay off the loan. The annual instalments on that second mortgage, amounting to £1,750 a year, were charged not only on the railway, but also on the rates of the City of Londonderry and on portions of Donegal, and the ratepayers of the City of Londonderry and of those portions of

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Donegal have had to pay those instalments from the opening of the line up to the present date.

13951. Have they had to pay the whole of it?—Yes; the whole of it. The annual rate for it has latterly been slightly reduced in Londonderry, because there has been an increase in the valuation. It was four pence in the pound originally, but the poundage, owing to the increase in the valuation, has been slightly decreased, but the entire instalment of £1,750 a year, still continues to be paid by the ratepayers.

13952. We have not yet got to the point upon which I was anxious to get information from you, with regard to the Burtonport line?—I am coming to that. I wished to point out that the two railway companies, the Midland and the Great Northern, have promoted a new line, by which the traffic that would have come from the Burtonport railway, and passed over the line to Letterkenny, will be, in part, diverted.

13953. Has that line been made yet?—Not yet, sir.

Colonel Plews.—It is in course of construction.

13954. *Dr. Todd.*—It is expected to be opened some time this year. I think I had better leave that part of the case to Mr. Hanna, who represents the County Council of Donegal, and will be able to explain it to you better than I can. I will come now to the Burtonport railway. I think I know all about that railway, as I acted for the promoters. The Burtonport railway was constructed under the Balfour Act of 1896, by a Treasury grant. The Lough Swilly Railway Company were the promoters, and they entered into an agreement with the Treasury to promote and construct the line, and work it in perpetuity. The Treasury Agreement is scheduled to the Order in Council, which was made on 18th May, 1898, and in that agreement there is the following provision:—

> "If from any cause no contract for the execution "of the works has been entered into within six "months from the Order in Council being recommended to be passed, the Board of Works may, if "they think fit, and with the sanction of the "Treasury, by themselves or their contractors, construct the railway and equip it, and for these "purposes may use all the powers vested in the "company by Order in Council."

Differences of opinion arose between the promoting company and the Board of Works, and in consequence there was considerable delay in getting the plans and specifications completed, and the six months mentioned in the clause I have read passed without any reference being made to it by either the company or the Board; but when the differences of opinion became more acute, the Board of Works said they would act on that clause, and construct the railway themselves, which they did, and the line was opened for traffic.

13955. On the 9th of March, 1903?—Yes. Now, at that time the line was not completed, admittedly. It was sufficiently advanced to be opened for traffic, but it was not completed, and the contractors had a year within which to complete it, and it was arranged by the contractors that any defect which turned up should be made good within the year.

13956. That is the usual thing, is it not?—It is, sir. On those terms the company took the railway over, and commenced to work the traffic. Now, sir, the company allege that the line was not constructed in accordance with the contract and specifications, that a good deal of work was scamped——

13957. That is, the Lough Swilly Company allege that?—Yes, sir. They say that the masonry was not proper masonry, and that the line, as handed over to them, was distinctly inferior to the line they contracted for. The company prepared a schedule of the works which they say should be executed for the purpose of completing the contract. The estimated cost of those works was about £70,000.

13958. What was the total cost of the line?—£318,000. Now, sir, at the opening, or before the opening of the line, differences of opinion arose between the Board of Works and the company as to the type of engines which should be supplied.

13959. Did the Board of Works equip the line with rolling stock?—Yes, under the Treasury agreement. I should mention that before the rolling stock was provided, the railway company sent a requisition to the Board of Works stating what kind of rolling stock and what type of engines, and what number of engines, they were advised should be provided. No substantial difference of opinion arose between the company and the Board of Works with regard to the type of rolling stock; but there was a very distinct difference of opinion with regard to the engines. As regarded the engines, the Board of Works paid no attention to the stipulations of the railway company; and whether for that reason or not, I cannot say, but the engines that were provided were wholly unsatisfactory, and quite unsuitable for the traffic.

Tank-engines supplied by the Board of Works for Burtonport line in opposition to the wishes of the Lough Swilly Company.

13960. Were they too heavy?—No; they were too light to carry the loads, and were wholly unsuitable. What the company wanted was "tender engines;" but the Board of Works chose "tank engines;" and the tank engines provided were not at all satisfactory. There was no adequate means of getting water. The railway company also said that there should be a continuous system from Derry to Burtonport, a run of seventy-five miles, and that if the line were to be worked economically it should be worked without change of engines. However, the Board of Works would not give way to the recommendations of the company, and the result is that from the opening of the line to the present moment those engines have failed to do the work and though the line was to be equipped by the Board of Works, the railway company, in order to carry on the traffic, have had to purchase two powerful engines of their own, and put them on the line. I may mention that I travelled one morning on a fair day from Burtonport to Letterkenny, and the train was delayed three times to get steam up to carry the traffic, owing, as the driver stated, to the engine not being sufficient.

The number of engines supplied alleged to be insufficient for the line.

13961. Was that one of the Board of Works' engines?—Yes; it did not work satisfactorily; and the people were all late for the fair, and were very greatly inconvenienced. The people told me also that the delay on that day was nothing special, but was quite the usual thing, for that every day, practically for months, those delays had gone on, because the engines had failed to do their work. Further, I should mention that the Board of Works supplied only four engines for the whole line; and I am informed that other lines, for a similar distance require eight engines; and that four is a wholly insufficient number for a line of that length.

13962. Has all this been brought under the attention of the Board of Works?—Oh, yes, sir.

Controversy with the Board of Works as to the alleged defects in construction and equipment of the line.

13963. Both as to the alleged defects in the construction of the Board of Works?—Oh, yes, sir. There has been a long controversy about it. I, myself, at the request of the company, called the attention of the Secretary to the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Board of Trade to the matter. There are two sections applicable to the case of such a railway. One is the 24th Section of the Order, and the other is the 7th Section of the Light Railways Act of 1896. The latter section is as follows:—

Powers of the Board of Works under sec. 7 of the Railways Act, 1896.

> "Where any railway constructed under the Principal Acts or this Act has been aided out of monies provided by Parliament, the Board of Works may at any time (whether the undertaking has become the property of a Grand Jury or not), appoint an engineer or other fit person to report upon the condition of the undertaking, and the working, maintenance, and development of the same."

Mr. Tatlow, Manager of M.G.W. Railway, sent by the Board of Works to report on the condition and working of the line.

Now, while all this controversy was going on, the Board sent down Mr. Tatlow, Manager of the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland to inspect the line. You will observe that this section does not appear to contemplate construction at all; and when Mr. Tatlow came down I pointed that out to him. However, he went and inspected the line, and the rolling stock and the engines. I do not know what report Mr. Tatlow made as the result of his inspection; but at all events there was nothing done.

Lease in perpetuity held by Lough Swilly Company for working of line if done satisfactorily.

13964. I suppose there is some clause dealing with the construction of a line. First of all, let me ask you, is this line leased in perpetuity by the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes; they have a lease in perpetuity under the Treasury agreement. I should state that there is a clause providing that if, on inquiry by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, it is found that a working Company does not work the line satisfactorily, an Order may be made giving them a certain time to amend, and failing amendment, to take over the line and work it. It is provided by the 21st Clause of the Treasury agreement that in case a difference shall arise between the company and the Board of

Clause in Act of 1896 empowering the Lord Lieutenant to make an order for the line to be taken over and worked if the company are not working the line satisfactorily.

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Works as to the construction of the line, it may be settled by an appeal to the Board of Trade, on the application of either party, in which case the decision of the Board of Trade thereon shall be final. Now, when this difficulty arose between the Lough Swilly company and the Board of Works a correspondence took place, in the course of which the Board of Works said an arbitrator should be appointed by the Board of Trade under the provision which I have mentioned. Some delay occurred, owing to the illness of the Chairman of the railway company, but he directed that a claim should be prepared, giving the particulars of the works which were unexecuted or were defective, and estimating the cost of them, and that was done, and when the claim was put in, it amounted to upwards of £70,000. When the Board of Works found that the claim was so large, they said, "You are not entitled to an arbitration under the 21st Section of the Treasury agreement or at all." They had previously suggested that there should be an arbitration, but when they found that the claim was so large they refuse to arbitrate; and what they said was this: "We are prepared to give you additional rolling stock, if you waive all your other claims." The railway company said "No; the line is not properly constructed, and is not complete; we want a public inquiry, to see who is right, and who is wrong; and if the railway is found to be defectively constructed we ask to have it set right, in accordance with the plans and specifications." The Board of Trade was appealed to, and the law officers' opinion was taken; but their opinion was that the clause did not apply; that the Board of Works having taken over the construction of the line itself, the railway company had nothing to do with it until they took up the working, and they could not inquire into the construction at all. The company thought that was unfair. Appeal after appeal was made; and I myself saw the Secretary to the Treasury, and pointed out to him that even if, technically, the inquiry could not be held under the 21st Clause of the Treasury agreement, there was no reason why there should not be some expert appointed by the Treasury itself, and have the matter inquired into. I thought the Treasury would have acted on my suggestion, but the inquiry has not been held, owing to the opposition of the Board of Works. On the 7th March, 1907, the following question was put to the Secretary to the Board of Trade:

Arbitration clause in Treasury agreement.

Alleged conditional offer by Board of Works of additional rolling stock.

The railway company refuse the Board's offer and press for a public inquiry.

> "Mr. Charles M'Veigh asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade if he could state whether an inspection had been made, and, if so, when, of the Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension Railway line, County Donegal; whether complaints had been made by the working company as to defective construction and insufficient equipment; whether he was aware that many passengers travelling by the line were in a state of trepidation until they got off it, and would he say when he would cause an inspection and report to be made that would allay those fears or cause the defects to be made good?"

> "Mr. Kearley wrote—The railway referred to was inspected on behalf of the Board of Trade in February, 1903, before it was opened for passenger traffic. The Board of Trade are aware that complaints have been made by the working company respecting alleged defects in the construction and equipment of the line by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, but we have no knowledge of any special risk to passengers on this railway. The Board has no power to inquire into the condition of the line, except upon representations made to them by the County Council or by twenty or more ratepayers of the guaranteeing area, as provided by section 24 of the Authorising Order in Council of 1898. No application under this section is at present before the Department."

The Board of Trade had no powers of inquiry except a provided for in Sec. 24 of the Authorising Order in Council of 1898.

Resolutions were passed by the Corporation of Derry, and, I think, by the Harbour Commissioners and by the County Council of Derry, protesting against the condition of the line, and asking for an inquiry. Two or three resolutions on the subject were also passed by the Donegal County Council. Those applications were not, technically, within the 24th Section of the Order in Council of 1898 referred to by Mr. Kearley, but contemplated an inquiry under the 21st clause of the Order. Now, the 24th section is as follows:—

Sec. 24 quoted and the effect of an application under it explained.

> "In any case in which it is represented in writing to the Board of Trade by the Grand Jury or by twenty ratepayers of the guaranteeing area, which is or which may become liable to any payments on account of any baronial guarantee given in respect of the railway, that the promoters have made any default in the completion, working, or maintaining of the line, the Board of Trade may, if they think fit, direct an inquiry by an officer to be appointed by the said Board, such inquiry to be conducted in such manner as the Board of Trade may order, and if the Board of Trade certify that the default mentioned in such representation has been proved to the satisfaction of the said Board, the promoters shall make good such default in the manner and within the time specified in such certificate."

As you will observe, the effect of an application under that section would be that, if the inquiry were held, and it was found that the Board of Works or the Treasury had not satisfactorily constructed and completed the line an Order might be made, not against the Board of Works or the Treasury, but against the Lough Swilly Company, the promoters, to expend a sum of £70,000, and make good the default.

13965. How can we remedy that?—Well, sir, in my opinion, if you make a representation to the Treasury it could be dealt with. If you get evidence from Mr. Tatlow as to the condition of the line, showing that it has not been properly completed and equipped and represent that state of things to the Treasury, it could be remedied.

13966. Your contention is that the district suffers in consequence of the state of things at present?—Yes, sir, undoubtedly. As regards the insufficiency of the engines, the effect is that people travelling by the railway have been kept waiting and delayed in the middle of their journey, because the engines are wholly unfit for the traffic.

(At this stage the Commissioners adjourned for a short time, and on resuming, the examination of Dr. Todd was proceeded with.)

13967. Just another word. Do you know anything about the Carndonagh line?—A little.

13968. That is part and parcel of the Lough Swilly system?—Yes, it was made under the same Act as the Burtonport line.

13969. Was it made by the Board of Works?—It was made by a grant under a Treasury agreement similar to the Burtonport line.

13970. And who did the work?—The railway company itself carried out the work in that case.

13971. And is the construction and equipment of that portion of the line satisfactory?—There have been no complaints about that.

13972. The complaints deal with the Burtonport Railway?—Yes, with that railway.

13973. And your contention is that the inefficient way in which it was built and the inadequate rolling stock that was supplied has materially retarded the interesting district through which the line runs?—It seems to me that that is so. I am so informed, and I believe that information is correct.

13974. Both the public and the working company suffer?—Suffer, and suffer seriously.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

13975. You say that the extension of these light railways through Donegal has been of great importance to the districts?—They are great improvements; they are beneficial.

13976. Even though, as I believe is the fact, that few of them have been remunerative?—Some of them have paid more than their working expenses.

13977. The Letterkenny line?—That is different. It was built under the Light Railways Acts.

13978. You alluded to the Burtonport Extension and to the Carndonagh railways?—Yes, and to the Killybegs railway.

13979. Even assuming that the light railways generally, such as you refer to, or which may be made hereafter, and which pass through a poor district even if they should not be as remunerative as some of the others, you think the expense would be justifiable by reason of the opening up of the country, the improved conditions of the people amongst whom they pass, and the better prices which farmers and traders in the districts would be able to get by putting their goods on the market, and that these advantages

would more than compensate for any loss the Board of Works or the Treasury might suffer?—It would more than compensate. And the lines I specially refer to as lines that should be made, would, in my opinion, not only pay their working expenses, but when the traffic is fully developed would pay a reasonable dividend.

13980. I notice you refer to three lines—one from Derry to Park and preferably on to Draperstown?—Yes.

13981. I had the advantage lately of reading your detailed evidence in the Appendix of the Allport Commission, at which time I see you were strongly in favour of through connection from Draperstown *via* Portglenone and on to Ballymena. That was the scheme of Mr. Chaine, and at different times has been advocated by the County Councils and other bodies interested?—There is some misapprehension. The line to Draperstown and the line to Portglenone was the same line up to a certain point, but at a certain point one would diverge to Portglenone and the other to Draperstown. One terminus was not the same in both cases.

13982. The scheme I refer to was from Derry to Portglenone, but touching at Draperstown?—No.

13983. And the only difficulty was that it involved a very heavy expenditure in connection with a tunnel costing £250,000?—That is so. An Act of Parliament was obtained to run a line to Draperstown.

13984. Is it the same line as you now advocate from Londonderry to Draperstown and Park?—One of the tunnels is avoided by the new conditions. The line from Derry to Strabane can be utilised and the new line to Draperstown and Park can be run off it so as to avoid one of the tunnels, but if the line is continued beyond Park I fear very much it cannot be constructed without having a tunnel through the mountains.

13985. At any rate it would put the centre of the County Derry into touch with the other parts. At present, if I may judge by the map and by the evidence which I see you gave before the Allport Commission, the conditions have not been materially altered as regards railways in Derry, seeing that the whole centre of the County is still practically cut off?—That is so. In point of fact Londonderry itself has practically no railway access to the far side of the county.

13986. The trader or farmer wishing to go from Draperstown to Derry, whither he may have to go in the course of business, or other work, would have to travel at present 75 miles by rail?—That is right.

13987. Whereas the distance from Draperstown to Derry is 30 miles?—Yes.

13988. In the same way, from Magherafelt he would have to go 67 miles by rail, whereas if he had direct through connection to Derry the journey would be 35 miles?—Yes.

13989. Previous to the amalgamation and acquisition by the Northern Counties of all the different little branch lines of which that system has been made up, viz., the Derry Central from Magherafelt to Coleraine, the Draperstown line, the Limavady and Dungiven and other systems—previous to the acquisition by the Midland of these lines, did more traffic go to Derry than has done since—did the lines in their independent position bring more trade and traffic to Derry than they have done since they were taken over by the Midland Company?—I cannot say that myself definitely. I have heard that the cattle traffic that formerly came from Kilrea and went through Derry now goes through Belfast and Larne, but I know nothing of it of my own knowledge.

13990. In your evidence you spoke of the trade between Derry and Cookstown, that formerly used to go to Derry?—Before the Northern Counties line was constructed, all the traffic from the Belfast side of the County Derry came to Derry, but all of that is now carried by the Northern Counties line by Belfast.

13991. That is a bigger question. In your opinion the construction of the railway on its present lines was not calculated to develop the whole of the south of the county; it was calculated to draw all the traffic to Belfast which, if it had been constructed on different lines, might have gone by its natural channel, Londonderry. That is your contention, I suppose?—Yes, and that will continue so long as there is no line through the centre of the County Derry.

13992. The second line which you propose, Donemana to Cookstown, does not that seem to run on almost parallel lines with the Derry to Park and Draperstown line?—Yes, but there is a range of hills between. I think between the two lines there would be a distance of ten or twelve miles, and all the intervening space is hilly country, and one is absolutely shut off from the other.

13993. Can you give me any idea of the fares that a traveller has to pay now from Draperstown to Derry *via* Magherafelt?—I am afraid I cannot, but if you wish I will hand you in a time-table. I have not travelled there for a long time.

13994. I suppose they are not so high as they were 20 years ago?—I think they are.

13995. At that time the fares were 20*s.* first-class fare, whereas of course the distance is only 30 miles, and if there had been through connection the traveller could have gone for very much less?—I recollect the first-class fare to Belfast used to be 20*s.*, and it has been reduced very substantially within the last few years, and probably the company has reduced the other fares.

13996. In your experience the consolidation of all these small lines into the large Midland system has not been in the interests of the port of Derry?—Certainly not in the interests of Derry.

13997. You think it has diverted traffic which should have gone to Derry, being much the shortest route, for the longer distance to Belfast?—That is admitted by the Midland Railway Company. Mr. Beale, the solicitor, and one of the most influential men in the company, when I proposed to fix the through rates, as I suggested, said if Parliament fixed the through rates on that basis they would not take over the line at all, as it would prevent them carrying the traffic over the Northern Counties Railway to Belfast.

13998. If that is your experience would you be in favour, in the event of a further amalgamation of the present existing Irish railways, that the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway should be taken over by the Great Northern, for example—at present, as you know, they have acquired the Donegal line?—Yes.

13999. And if they had control of the Lough Swilly line they would practically control the whole system over the North-West of Ireland. From your experience would that be advantageous to the interests you represent?—I do not think that would affect matters much, for this reason, that the Lough Swilly has its terminus in Derry, and it would be rather difficult to land the traffic in Derry, and then take it across the city to the Great Northern. On the whole, I think it would be better to leave matters as they are.

14000. I understood one of your objections to this small line between Strabane, Convoy, and Letterkenny to be that traffic which would go *via* Letterkenny into Derry would be diverted from Letterkenny *via* Strabane and then away south?—South and east.

14001. Not north?—Not north. That would not be so to the same extent in the case of the Lough Swilly line, because the terminus is in Derry.

14002. I think you said the portion of the Donegal line between Strabane and Derry is now the joint property of the two companies?—I believe it is the property of the Midland Railway Company of England, and that the two companies, the Midland and the Great Northern, are joint owners of the remaining portion.

14003. In the absence of any statistics, which you say you could not give us, as to the increase or decrease of trade through Derry, the only thing we have before us is the sailings of the steamships. I think you said there were six in the week?—That is to England, and a sailing each night to Scotland.

14004. Two to Heysham, two to Liverpool, and two to Glasgow?—No, two to Heysham, two to Liverpool, and two to Fleetwood, and daily to Glasgow.

14005. Does that compare favourably with the state of things which existed ten years ago?—Before I had any connection with Derry at all, I believe there was a better service to England and better to Scotland.

14006. Was it as frequent?—Yes, I believe it was a daily service to England, but I cannot speak of my own knowledge, and it is attributed to the action of the railways that the daily service was done away with.

14007. I should have thought that where you had such a service of steamers as you have at present it

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Passenger fares Draperstown and Derry.

Probable effect on flow of traffic if the Lough Swilly system were absorbed by the Gt. Northern Railway.

Steamship sailings from Derry.

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must indicate there is a good deal of trade?—There is a good deal of trade undoubtedly.

14008. With regard to the Letterkenny line, that, I think, as a matter of fact, was originally projected in 1864?—I think so.

14009. And I believe it then lay idle until 1880?—Yes.

14010. It was in December, 1880, that, I believe, they approached the Board of Works and borrowed £85,000?—That is right.

Promotion, date of construction, and method of financing the Letterkenny line.

14011. I see that in the Board of Trade returns the capital is put down at £57,155 ordinary stock paying nothing. That, I presume, represents the original capital of the old company?—Yes.

14012. Then there are charges of £50,000, £35,000, and there is a sum of £2,750?—That was money owing to the engineer.

14013. He had a mortgage of £3,000?—Yes, he got part of it, and that remains.

14014. Is that a first charge or a second charge?—Third charge. It comes after both the Board of Works charges.

The line a financial failure.

14015. In other words, he has had nothing for a good many years?—And is not likely to get anything. The highest estimate of the value of the line is £70,000. Probably the real value is between £50,000 and £70,000.

14016. I think you said the receipts on that Letterkenny line have been sufficient to bear the interest on the first charge?—I said on the first mortgage £50,000 has gone in arrear.

14017. So that practically the whole of the interest on the second mortgage of £35,000 has had to be borne by the City of Derry and parts of the County Donegal?—Yes.

Scheme to afford relief to the ratepayers by sale to the Lough Swilly Railway, as submitted to Treasury and Board of Works

14018. £1,750 a year, roughly speaking?—Yes. May I mention a fact that there was a proposal that that line, the Letterkenny line, should be amalgamated with the other Donegal lines, the Lough Swilly, and the Carndonagh and the Burtonport Railways, and that the ratepayers should be relieved of any taxation, that the Letterkenny line should be improved and a proper rail substituted for the present light rail, and of the same weight as the other portions of the line, so as to make them uniform. That in my opinion, is an extremely important thing for Donegal and Derry. It can be done without any loss either to the Treasury, the ratepayers, or the shareholders, and with a very distinct advantage to the trade of the country. A scheme to that effect,* particulars of which I shall send in, was put by a very important deputation before Mr. Hanbury, Secretary to the Treasury, and he seemed to be favourably impressed with it, and I believe he told the Duke of Abercorn, who introduced the deputation, that he was favourably impressed with the scheme.

14019. You proposed that the Letterkenny to Tooban portion should be taken over practically by the Board of Works?—No, that the Board of Works should sell it to the Lough Swilly Company, and that they should hand over the other two lines, the Burtonport and the Carndonagh, absolutely, and that the ratepayers should be relieved of all guarantees. The proposal was that it should be left to the Board of Trade to fix the price, if they could not agree, that a wholly independent authority should fix the actual value. The Lough Swilly Company agreed to raise on the whole undertaking sufficient to pay them off, and undertook to relieve the ratepayers of all liability under the guarantees, and to enter into terms under an Act of Parliament to provide a service of trains that would be satisfactory.

14020. Was any proposition of that kind made to the Board of Works?—I made a similar proposition myself.

Proposals declined by both Departments.

14021. And what was the reply received?—I was disposed to think that the Board of Works were prepared to accept it, but it turned out that they did not; and I was under the impression Mr. Hanbury would agree on behalf of the Treasury, but after communicating with the Board of Works he refused.

14022. The agreement with the Lough Swilly Railway for working the Letterkenny branch expires in 1917, in about 11 years' time?—Yes.

14023. And the balance outstanding at the present moment is £50,000 on the first mortgage and £22,000 on the second mortgage?—Yes.

Increase in receipts of Letterkenny line for last quinquennial period.

14024. For the last five years there has been a steady rise in the receipts of the Letterkenny line?—I should rather say there was a rise during the time the Burtonport Railway was being constructed, due largely to the material being carried over the line, but last year there was not so much earned.

14025. I believe in 1903-04 the receipts were £3,632, showing an increase of £1,200 over the previous year?—It was.

14026. In 1904-05 they were £3,234, and in 1905-06 they were £3,078, whereas some years before that it was only £1,700 or £1,800?—That is quite correct, sir. The ratepayers fear now that the Strabane and Letterkenny line will take away that additional traffic and leave them where they were.

14027. Assuming that increase is continuous, it does not leave a great deal to go towards the reduction of the interest on the second mortgage?—It does not. The railway company and the ratepayers are of opinion that the Treasury should not charge such a high interest on that loan.

14028. And your fear is, and the fear of the guaranteeing areas with regard to the Letterkenny line, is that when the new branch is opened from Strabane to Letterkenny, a good deal of the traffic will be cut off at Letterkenny, and will not go over the Letterkenny line at all?—Quite so.

14029. I believe the Board of Works are prepared, as far as they can, to provide safeguards which would protect them from the contingencies which might otherwise occur?—I do not agree with that.

14030. You do not believe they have done so?—I would rather not speak of that. There is another witness who can tell you the why and the wherefore, and who has a strong opinion on that.

14031. I suppose at the time the Bill was before Parliament the Board of Works had to consider not only the Letterkenny line but the interests of the people who would be served by that new connection. The Treasury were the people who would suffer?—No. The ratepayers suffer first. The Treasury is absolutely protected.

14032. You are aware the Board of Works had to get the security of the ratepayers for these lines?—Yes, the Treasury have that security. They have the ratepayers to fall back upon. It is a gilt-edge security. It is the ratepayers, therefore, that must suffer, and I am prepared to show clearly there is not a shadow of probability that the Treasury will lose a penny if they choose to insist upon payment.

14033. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They need not have lost on other lines if they had chosen to insist on their pound of flesh—but they have lost money in some cases, have they not?—Yes, but in those cases they had only the security of the undertaking, whereas in this case they have not only the security of the undertaking, but they have also that of the rates. I am prepared to give you the figures that will show clearly there is not the slightest chance of the Treasury losing a penny.

14034. I agree: they need not have lost on the other lines, but I think I am correct in saying that there are other instances where they had a guarantee and did not claim the money?—That is so, and what we think is that they should be satisfied with the security of the undertaking, and run the risk of any loss, if there is any such risk, and relieve the ratepayers of this burden. Suppose the line is worth £60,000 they should relieve the ratepayers of the guarantee, and put the line in good order. I think—if you will allow me to state this—that it is within the lines of your inquiry. I think the scheme is a thoroughly good one, and that in the interests of the country the Treasury should support it.

14035. I agree it comes within this inquiry. In the evidence you gave before the Allport Commission, you gave it as your view, and I believe the Commission subsequently recommended, that the line should go to Kilmacrenan and thence *via* Milford to Dunfanaghy?—Yes, and we pointed out that it would be a considerable saving to take the line in that direction rather than going to Creeslough, and they advocated that—I don't know why it was not carried out—but their recommendation certainly was that the line should go in that direction and subsequently through to Creeslough?—There was a pitched battle in the Grand Jury over that very subject, and ultimately the scheme was rejected and the line run as now.

14036. The cost of this line is given as £6,400 a mile; but you spoke of this line having been badly constructed and equipped. As a matter of fact, I think the Buncrana and Carndonagh line worked out at

*See Appendix No. 7.

£5,600?—Yes, but the works are distinctly heavier on the Burtonport line, cuttings through the rock, viaducts, and other heavy expenses, which were not necessary on the other.

14037. We discussed this question in London when we had the Engineer of the Board of Works before us. While admitting that the works were heavier he said the cost of construction of both lines was unnecessarily heavy, because the Lough Swilly line took good care that as the work was being done at the expense of a public department they should not spare expense in any way. In the face of that evidence it seems rather curious you should now come forward and say the lines were very inefficiently made?—I take leave to differ with the engineer. The Carndonagh line is very well built, I agree; the stations are very well made, but I believe the stations were built by the Lough Swilly line at their own expense. As to the Burtonport line, the permanent way is soundly built, with some slight exceptions; but not being an expert, not having the training of an engineer, I cannot tell all the works that are deficient, but I know that some are.

14038. I suppose I am correct in assuming that before the Lough Swilly Company took over these works they satisfied themselves that the line was, in their opinion, one that they could take over with every prospect of working it efficiently and to their own benefit?—I think you are not right in that. So far as regards the Burtonport line the company tell me they took it over on the distinct statement and arrangement that during the year of maintenance the works would be finished satisfactorily. They had no time to inspect, because they were not allowed in the works till the last moment.

14039. They took it over, and had no idea of what would equip the line in a satisfactory manner?—No; they protested from the beginning, but I understood that the Board of Works said that if the traffic showed that more rolling stock was necessary they would provide it.

14040. I should have thought the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company would have been asked to see that everything was efficient before they took it over?—No, they were under a contract with the Treasury. The contractors have a year of maintenance, and the usual custom is that several things in lines that are not completed at the time of opening are made good during the year of maintenance. In this case it was undertaken that they should be made good during the year of maintenance, but the engineer had no chance of checking the works except during the time of inspection by the Board of Trade engineer, and they then called attention to various defects, and the deficiencies they then pointed out and others since observed are said to total up to £70,000.

14041. A quarter of the total cost! That seems extravagant. £6,000 a mile compares unfavourably with the construction cost of other lines; and then to be told that it needs another £70,000 before it is in a satisfactory condition sounds extraordinary. These are business men of experience who have worked the Lough Swilly line successfully; I should hardly have thought they would buy a pig in a poke. The only evidence we had was from the engineer of the Board of Works, who gave it as his opinion that it was a very well equipped line?—I believe it was badly constructed and insufficiently equipped, and in consequence could not be properly worked.

14042. Then, I am afraid you are not prepared to modify the opinion which you expressed before the Allport Commission as to the generally unsatisfactory manner in which the Board of Works carried out their duties. Surely the Board of Works officials are thoroughly capable?—So far as the Board of Works officials are concerned they are courteous and efficient, but it is notorious that the works carried out under their supervision are not satisfactory. I hope under the regime of my friend Mr. Batchen, they will improve.

14043. Since the Burtonport extension things have been pretty satisfactory?—Yes, it has made a profit of about £2,000 a year, which is divided between the Treasury and the working company, and has been sufficient to pay a portion of the interest on the original capital.

14044. That is an unusual experience, I am afraid, with the railways constructed under Treasury grants?—Yes, I think it is chiefly owing to the good management that resulted, in the case of the Lough Swilly Railway, in a continuous dividend of 7 per cent.

14045. But you find that there is a volume of traffic running over it, and after discharging working expenses there is a profit of £2,000 a year?—The claim of the company is——

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The question of arbitration between Board of Works and Lough Swilly Co. discussed.

14046. You are authorised to speak on behalf of the company?—No, I am not speaking on behalf of the company, but I know, as a matter of common knowledge, that the Company has claimed to have an impartial inquiry held by an officer appointed by the Board of Trade, and that has been refused. That would lead one to suppose on the face of it that there was something to justify the claim. A petition was sent from Londonderry to the Board of Trade on the matter.

14047. With reference to that petition, was not the action of the Board of Trade suspended to see what effect the remonstrances of the Board of Works would have on the Company?—No, the Board of Trade consulted the Board of Works from first to last, and the Board of Works protested against such an inquiry.

Mr. Tatlow's inquiry.

14048. I remember them calling attention to the fact that complaints had been received as to the unsatisfactory working of the line. Some defects were remedied, and in 1906 there was no mention of faults, and Mr. Stevenson said things were very much improved, and they did not propose taking any action for the present?—They refused to allow any action to be taken. They sent down Mr. Tatlow, but no action was taken on his report. But the complaint was as to construction and engines, not as to working and maintenance. Mr. Tatlow could not deal with construction and equipment, and therefore the inquiry was abortive. The inquiry that is asked for is as to whether the line is properly constructed, and that inquiry has been persistently refused. The only redress proposed was an inquiry under the 24th Section of the Order in Council, the result of which would be that an order would be made against the working company to make good the defects in the line, and to expend the money which the Treasury contracted to expend.

14049. Of course there is no doubt, looking at the Board of Trade returns, that the rolling stock of that line is lower than on other lines of the same length?—That is so.

14050. It works out as one locomotive to six miles of line?—So far as regards the parent line that would be only two engines to the line.

14051. *Chairman.*—He is taking the whole line?—The Lough Swilly line is 12 miles long.

Question of the sufficiency of rolling stock on Burtonport line.

14052. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I am taking the whole system, 99 miles. I presume that the Chairman of the Company took very good care to satisfy himself that the line was properly supplied?—The Treasury refused to supply what was required. That is admitted by the Treasury and the Board of Works. In effect they say, "We admit you have not the proper rolling stock, but if you waive all your other claims, and undertake to do all the necessary improvements at your own expense we will give you proper rolling stock." I shall send in copies of their letters. (See Appendix No. 7).

14053. You say the traffic is seriously crippled by the bad construction of that line, but in spite of it they are paying £2,000 a year?—Yes, by good management; but if the line were properly constructed it would develop the country, the traffic would increase, and the Company would put up stations that are required, and which the people are clamouring for.

Improvements by Board of Works on Letterkenny line.

14054. Have not the Board of Works made several improvements to that line by making a crossing and providing telegraphic communication?—That is on the Letterkenny line. The Letterkenny line belongs to the Board of Works. They are making improvements to their own line but they make no improvements on the Burtonport line, for the contract is that the Lough Swilly Company shall work it in perpetuity.

14055. But is it not rather a misrepresentation to say that one line is owned by the Board of Works and the other is not, and to say that having advanced the money for the making of the Burtonport line, that because it is leased to the Lough Swilly Company, the Board of Works and Treasury do not care how the line is worked?—It was built by public money.

14056. And by a free grant from the Treasury?—Yes, and the Company has a contract to work it in perpetuity. There is a provision in the Treasury agreement according to which profits under £2,000 a year can be applied to development. The Company

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want to apply that in development and the Treasury refuse.

14057. I suppose they are not satisfied that the equipment is wanted?—They have admitted it is wanted. They practically say, "If you waive the claim as to construction we will supply additional rolling stock." The rolling stock is wanted.

14058. Do you say a Board which is willing to spend money on that (Letterkenny) line, and to throw good money after bad, will do nothing for the Burtonport line?—The Letterkenny line is their own.

14059. Yes, but according to you they refuse to allow money to be spent on a line which you say requires £70,000, and yet they are content to spend those various sums on the other line?—Undoubtedly, I can prove it.

Board of Works treatment of the Letterkenny and the Burtonport lines contrasted.

14060. Does it not strike you as strange that where you find a public body throwing good money after bad—doing that with their eyes open—as they have done in the case of the Letterkenny line, you should find them grudging of assistance to a good line like the Burtonport. I don't suppose a public body is so indifferent to the way in which money is spent, and it seems to me inconceivable why they should not be as liberal with the one line as they are with the other?—It is complained on every hand that the Burtonport line is not completed as contemplated. I can speak by comparing the equipments on other lines.

14061. You don't give us figures to show what is the rolling stock compared with the parent line?—If you want them I can get them.

14062. You have nothing to say as regards that point?—I think it is desirable that the Burtonport Railway should have a public inquiry to ascertain whether the line is properly completed, and no company should be called upon to spend some thousands for the purpose of completing the work that the Treasury undertook.

Source from which cost of further extensions should be derived.

14063. In the event of any further railway extensions, do you think they would have to be done by free grants or that the barony should be prepared to guarantee anything?—I think in some cases there should be a contribution from the localities. In my opinion there should be a public inquiry before money is spent to settle that the best line be built in the most economical manner and to see what the localities can give.

14064. Do you think the procedure under the Act of 1896 is better than the procedure under the 1889 Act?—It is better, but not satisfactory. The railway company sends an engineer to prepare a scheme, and the plans are lodged——

14065. But the Lord Lieutenant chooses terminals and practically decides the course of the railway?—Yes.

Suggestion that full inquiry should be made before the routes, termini, etc., of new lines should be decided.

14066. I understood that the principal complaint with regard to the railways that have been constructed under the early Acts was that they did not follow the routes that were most required?—In the case of the Burtonport Railway the general feeling was that it should go by Dunfanaghy and Falcarragh. The Board of Works objected, and they chose a route avoiding those places. Everybody was in favour of the route through them, both the working company and the people of the district. I myself offered on behalf of the company to spend £10,000 and extend the line to Dunfanaghy and Falcarragh, but for some reason or other the Board of Works refused to agree to that suggestion. It turned out afterwards that the line through Dunfanaghy and Falcarragh could have been done more cheaply, and it certainly would have conferred more benefit on the country, than the line that was actually made. What I complain of is that, without due inquiry, the details of the line were settled before the public authorities and the districts interested were allowed an opportunity of putting forward their views on the subject; they ought to have an opportunity of doing so. A full inquiry should have been held before any other expenses were gone to, and the route of the line should be definitely fixed, upon full information and after careful inquiry, by the best experts, and when it was so settled it should have been promoted.

14067. That would in your opinion be an improvement, but you would still leave the determination with the Lord Lieutenant?—Yes, after a full inquiry.

14068. Supposing any railways are constructed in future under local guarantees, the guarantees may run for two or three years before the ratepayers get any recoupment from the traffic?—I think the guarantee should only run from the time of the opening of the line for traffic.

14069. Don't you think it would be a desirable amendment if the Treasury were to guarantee the whole sum, and recover the proper proportions from the baronies? At present the latter get the Treasury recoupments after the line begins to run, but in the meantime they have to collect the full guarantee in the first instance. Would you be in favour of trying to get the Treasury to see their way to guarantee the full interest and to recover from the baronies. It would be a saving both to the Treasury and the baronies, as in such an event, money could be raised on more favourable terms than at present?—I quite agree with that suggestion, and it should be adopted. There is another suggestion, too, that I would make. Provision could be made that the guarantee of the barony should not run until a time had been allowed for development. If they got a line open for traffic for five or seven years, they might then be in a position to pay the minimum rate upon lines where there would be no prospect of development until five or six years after their construction. The people of the district might be willing to guarantee to aid in the construction of those lines, and it could be settled as to what liability the ratepayers should incur and for what period; this should be determined upon an inquiry to be held before the scheme was promoted.

14070. You are opposed to the control of Irish lines being placed under any British railway?—I am. The interest of English railways is not always that of the people of the locality. The policy would be dictated by the majority, and that policy would naturally be to favour English railway companies at the expense of the Irish.

14071. Would you be opposed to putting them under the control of a central authority, such as may be created in the near future?—I have not considered that subject.

14072. You do not contemplate that any shareholders would object to the purchase of the lines, provided they got fair terms?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gerald Fitzgibbon, K.C.

14073. You said that the effect of amalgamation in the North of Ireland was practically to starve the port of Derry? I think "starve" is the word you used. As a matter of fact, since the amalgamation, have not the London and North-Western Railway and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company combined to give you a service to Fleetwood that you had not before?—The Act establishing the service was a year before the amalgamation.

14074. But the amalgamation was going on. Previous to that you had not the service?—No, but we had other services in its place. We had the following services:—Derry to Fleetwood, Derry to Morecambe, and Derry to Liverpool. The Morecambe then became the Heysham service.

14075. That old service to Fleetwood you told us about, you heard of—it was before your own personal knowledge?—No; it was going on a few years ago.

14076. Did it stop for many years, at any rate before the Lancashire and Yorkshire amalgamation took place?—I don't know.

14077. You stated that it took seven hours to get from Cookstown to Londonderry. Do not the Northern Counties Company give you three trains a day that run in four hours?—That is so, I believe.

14078. It took you four hours by the Northern and seven by the Northern Counties?—Yes.

14079. But there are three services a day which do the journey in four hours?—I believe so.

Mr. Robert Watson examined by the Chairman.

Mr. Robert Watson, representing the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce.

14080. You appear on behalf of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce?—Yes, sir.

14081. Are you a member of that Chamber?—Yes, sir.

14082. Are you a merchant in the city of Londonderry?—Yes.

14083. And you also appear on behalf of a number of merchants interested in the prosperity of Derry and its neighbourhood?—I do.

14084. What particular business are you in?—Our chief business is the grain trade, flour, and corn grinding, and we are also engaged in the herring business, herring curing on the coast of Donegal at the different stations, Burtonport, Downing's Bay, and Buncrana.

14085. I suppose you have a general knowledge of the Co Donegal?—I have. I have travelled for 25 years regularly, chiefly through the Co. Donegal. Our business lies there very largely, and I have an intimate knowledge of the whole of the county, and of the history of the promotion of narrow gauge railways, and the history of the Co. Donegal generally during that time.

14086. Will you tell me what you have to say with reference to the question of through rates?—With regard to through rates we feel that they are unfair to Irish manufacturers, like ourselves for instance, in Londonderry. As an example I would say that flour, which we manufacture, and which is an industry that is reviving very much of late in Ireland, we consider it unfair that the railway companies should get more—take a town like Londonderry to Enniskillen on the Great Northern line—we feel that it is an injury in the case of millers sending their stuff from Liverpool to Enniskillen that we should have to pay more for our flour from Londonderry to Enniskillen than the proportion that the railway company would get from the English miller for the same stuff in similar circumstances, and we think that through rates are unfair, in some cases at least, to the Irish manufacturers like ourselves engaged in the manufacture of flour.

14087. Do you import wheat?—We do, sir.

14088. Do you want a through rate for that?—Londonderry is a port, and it comes in there largely.

14089. Do you get any from Belfast?—Rarely. I would like very much to have an opportunity of referring to the evidence of the secretary of the Belfast Harbour Board in regard to that, because I would like to correct what would seem to me to be the false impression created regarding the grain trade to Londonderry; the 3*s.* rate was referred to him as being low from Belfast to Londonderry, and it was suggested that the grain trade of Londonderry was done largely through the port of Belfast. Such is absolutely untrue. On the contrary, the grain trade is one of the particular trades that has maintained direct importation almost entirely.

14090. I think the Commissioners are aware of that, and they understand that the 3*s.* rate applied to a special cargo under special circumstances?—It was not a special cargo, though the circumstances were special. Occasionally Indian corn comes from Belfast to Londonderry, but under special circumstances. A special cargo would come direct, but they might bring a small lot from Belfast by rail. As a general rule the grain coming to Londonderry comes by direct importation from the United States, the River Plate, or Russia, as the case may be—I should say that nineteen-twentieths of it come that way.

14091. As to the question of through rates you have explained to us what your objection is?—Might I also refer to the point made that if the Belfast Harbour Commissioners would make an effort they might do the coal trade through Belfast to Londonderry.

14092. No, I think you need not go into that?—The matter seemed so absurd to me that I just wanted to refer to it, but it would probably be unnecessary.

14093. Are you of opinion that the rates, speaking generally, from Londonderry are reasonable?—Well, we have no general complaint to make of the rates, but we think there are special cases where a lower rate might be given by the railway companies in respect of particular articles. Of course, I can only speak of what largely concerns ourselves. We do a considerable business in Indian corn, grinding it and making it into what we call Indian meal in this country, and it is used largely for cattle feeding, and in some parts for human food, and the rate on the railways for it is practically the same rate as for flour, which is almost double the value in money, and which requires very much more care and attention in transmission. This Indian meal is very largely used in Donegal, and we have frequently thought that there might be a reduction in Indian meal for the benefit of our part of the country.

14094. What benefit would there be in that to your part of the country?—I don't mean to say that a reduction would benefit the traders or millers very much. Of course the millers would get the reduction, and that would be given by them to their customers, and again it would be given by the customers to the consumers.

14095. Why should the railway company charge less for Indian meal if it is precisely the same bulk?—It is not exactly the same bulk, and it is more easily handled and requires less care.

14096. Why?—It is not in the same kind of sack. It is in jute, whereas flour is in small bags of four, seven, to eight or ten stone, and requires more care in handling, and the wagons require to be cleaner for flour. There is some difference, some slight difference made occasionally in the rates between the two, but generally speaking they are the same.

14097. Generally speaking you have no complaint to make of the railways?—No, generally speaking we have no complaint to make of the railways in Londonderry. We do five or six thousand tons a year with the Great Northern Railway Company, and my experience is that those who have the least use for railway companies, and who have the least business are the loudest and soonest to complain, and those who have most business say very little about the matter.

No general complaint to make of the railways.

14098. What do you suggest about obtaining better rates from the railway companies?—It occurred to me—this is not an opinion of our Chamber of Commerce, because the matter was not before them, but I have myself thought that if an inspector was appointed even by the railway companies themselves who would be available for any trader, or if, say, even the goods manager, or whoever they appointed, would come to the smaller places, if he would come to Londonderry or Omagh or the smaller centres at stated times, and his coming would be announced, he could hold a sort of court of inquiry there, and traders could come before him at a certain time with their grievances, and in that way they might have them redressed. At present it is exceedingly difficult for a provincial trader who has to go to Belfast or Dublin to have matters looked into. If you write about these things it takes a considerable time to have them put before the proper authority, the manager of the railway company, and perhaps if you want some special thing to be done in a given time the period has passed in which it is of any use before you get an answer. I think if the goods manager would come to the small places, and hold a court, and advertise his intention of doing so, for the purpose of giving traders an opportunity of going there and stating their grievances, it would be a good thing for the small places.

Conferences between the railway managers and the traders at certain places and at stated times suggested.

14099. Have you heard the evidence of Dr. Todd?—I did, sir.

14100. Did you hear the questions put to him as to the unification of railways?—I did, sir.

14101. Do you agree with what he said?—Not quite, sir. It was not, as he told you, before the Chamber of Commerce the question of nationalisation or unification of railways. But I may say that the general feeling in Derry, in the Chamber of Commerce, and the Harbour Board, of which I am a member, would be against State ownership of railways It was not before them, and no resolution was passed on the subject, but from my own observations and from discussing it with the members at different times I don't think a resolution to that effect could be passed in either of those Boards suggesting either State ownership or unification of railways.

Question of unification or nationalisation of Irish railways.

14102. You mean that there would be a difference of opinion?—I don't think there would be a serious difference of opinion about State ownership. I think the opinion would be almost entirely against it.

14103. You heard what Dr. Todd said about the unification of railways?—Well, I don't exactly know where the difference comes in.

14104. Well, I will put it this way, do you think the present system of a large number of railways is the best system for Ireland?—I think, generally speaking, that the Great Northern and the Northern Counties lines, of which I have the best knowledge, serve the district well. There have been grievances, and drawbacks, and complaints, but I think, generally speaking, they are well managed and serve the district well. There has been an extraordinary improvement in the Great Northern Railway during the

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last 25 years both in the system of travelling and the comfort provided for the passengers.

14105. Is the Great Northern in existence all that time?—Yes.

14106. I mean has there been amalgamation for 25 years?—Yes.

Colonel Plews.—For 32 years.

Chairman.—There were previously three or four lines in the system?

Colonel Plews.—Yes, three companies between Dublin and Belfast, and four companies from Dublin to Derry.

14107. *Chairman.*—You are perfectly satisfied, Mr. Watson?

Witness.—I don't say that I am perfectly satisfied. I say at times there have been complaints made, and of course we receive them occasionally, and we ask for certain changes to be made one way and another, but speaking generally I think that the larger traders who do most business with the lines are fairly well satisfied both with the way their traffic is carried, and with their comforts for travelling, and with the management generally.

Absorption of the Donegal system by the Midland and Great Northern Companies disapproved of.

14108. Then you agree that the action of the Great Northern and of the Midland Companies in buying all these railways in the North has been to the advantage of your country?—That is another matter altogether. I was not speaking of that. I was one of the strongest opponents of the buying up of them, and I went to London to give evidence against it, and I feel it strongly that the Donegal Railway should pass into other hands, perhaps partly on sentimental grounds, and perhaps because I took a great deal of interest in the extension from Strabane to Derry—I was certainly opposed to the amalgamation of the Donegal system.

14109. I was speaking generally of the railways in your district?—I was speaking of how the country was served by the two railways, the Midland and the Great Northern, and as to the extension from Strabane to Londonderry—

The acquisition of Irish railways by English railway companies regarded as disadvantageous.

14110. Well, just tell me, do you or do you not agree that the advent of the Midland Railway, an English Company, into this country has been an advantage or a disadvantage?—I think it has been a disadvantage. That is a matter that I did not think you thought I was discussing when I spoke of these railways. I think that hardly any of the promises that were made by the Midland Railway of England to the Irish shareholders when they proposed to purchase the Northern Counties Railway have been carried out, and that is why I would be against powerful English Companies coming here and buying up or being amalgamated with Irish railways at all. I travel regularly on the Midland Railway—

14111. Of England or Ireland?—The Midland Railway of Ireland, or the Northern Counties Committee, and it was a most popular line, the officials were popular, and the management is popular, and I think that but for them there would have been a great many more complaints about the management of the old Northern Counties Railway by the Midland of England since it has been taken over. No one who travels on it and uses it and knows it would say for a moment that there has been the slightest improvement in it since it was taken over by the Midland, and that is putting the matter very mildly.

14112. What have you to say with reference to a railway partly owned and controlled by the Government?—I think that that also is a great drawback.

14113. What railway do you refer to?—The Londonderry and Burtonport Extension, which, when I put it that way, I mean is not owned by any particular railway company. It is under the supervision of some public body, I suppose the Board of Works.

14114. Well, we have heard enough about it?—You don't want to hear any more about it, perhaps, and I have no desire to say any more.

14115. That is all I want to ask you?—Very well, sir.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

14116. Mr. Watson, am I right in assuming that you just send your five to six thousand tons at the ordinary rate in accordance with the rate quoted and hung up at the Derry station?—You are right in assuming that.

14117. You don't get a special rate as Mr. Heyn told us he did, a special rate quoted to him on his ringing up the railway companies by telephone?—No, we send five or six thousand tons over the Great Northern line every year, and the farmer or trader sending five tons would get it at the same rate.

14118. I want to have it clear. It is the first time I ever heard of a railway company giving these rates, and sending such large quantities as you do you should know. I think, however, you are very wide awake in Derry, more than we are?—No, I think you are wide awake when you wanted to get the coal trade of Derry through Belfast.

14119. Well, there is no advantage to the large trader?—I am speaking for myself, and I believe others are in the same position.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

14120. Are you well acquainted with the trade of Derry?—I am.

14121. Is it an increasing or diminishing trade?—I believe it is an increasing trade. Derry is a prosperous town, and is holding its own well.

14122. You heard Dr. Todd say that it had largely been diverted to Belfast, that a great deal of traffic from the centre of Londonderry that should go by Derry goes by Belfast?—That is a fact, but it involves a question that it would take a long time to explain. There is a certain amount of traffic going by Belfast that I would like to see going through Derry. But our export traffic from Derry has been getting on very well. I would, of course, like to see it larger.

14123. You don't think there has been any decline or decay?—Not lately.

Mr. R. L. Yeates examined by The Chairman.

Mr. R. L. Yeates, representing the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce.

14124. You are also from the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

14125. Are you a member of that body?—Yes.

14126. Of the Chamber?—Yes.

14127. Are you in business in Londonderry?—Four miles out of it.

14128. What particular business?—Bleaching.

14129. Where does your traffic go to or come from?—Ireland, Lancashire principally, London, and the West of England.

14130. Do you get the yarns and scutch them?—In cotton piece goods.

14131. They come from Lancashire?—They do.

14132. How?—As a rule, by the Midland Railway and Heysham and direct boat to Derry, or the Lancashire and Yorkshire and direct from Fleetwood to Derry.

14133. They go through the bleaching process at your place?—Yes.

14134. Do they go back to Lancashire?—Some goods to Lancashire, Derry, Dublin, London, and the West of England.

Complaints as rates for cotton goods.

14135. Do you find the rates satisfactory?—Not at all in some cases.

14136. Give us one instance?—Compared with the through rates for cross-Channel traffic.

14137. Are you dealing with the rates in Ireland?—When compared with through rates for cross-Channel traffic, the rate of 12*s.* 6*d.* per ton for cotton piece goods from Derry to Belfast as against 22*s.* 6*d.* from Derry to Manchester direct, is unreasonable, as this sum leaves only 10*s.* for the voyage from Belfast to, say, Heysham, and thence rail and haulage to Manchester.

14138. You think the proportion you pay locally is out of proportion to the through rate?—Exactly. Then there is another point about it. They make no difference here between the raw material and the bleached material which is the finished article. The rate is identically the same for the two, though a few years ago there was a difference of 5*s.* There was formerly a difference made between greys and whites, but now whether greys or whites are sent the charge is the same really. They have kept the same nominal rates, 27*s.* 6*d.* and 22*s.* 6*d.*, but for the bleached they direct a rebate of 5*s.*

14139. Who?—The Railway Companies Commission, I presume.

14140. On which railway?—On both the Midland and the Lancashire and Yorkshire.

14141. Is that in the rate book?—I think so.

14142. It is applicable to everybody?—It is applicable to everybody, but there is only one bleach works there owned by me, and consequently it is only applicable to me.

14143. *Lord Pirrie.*—The rate for bleached goods is 27*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes, but they give a 5*s.* rebate.

14144. Why don't they alter the rate book?—That is their own business. I don't know.

14145. *Chairman.*—You get the rebate?—No; the other people get it.

14146. What other people?—The merchant in Derry can import white goods as cheaply as I import grey. Then the white goods are at the company's risk, and the grey goods are at the owner's risk. The rate is the same, don't you see.

14147. Explain?—I pay 22*s.* 6*d.* for grey goods, and they come at my own risk, but the manufacturer of shirts in Derry imports his white goods at 27*s.* 6*d.*, with a 5*s.* rebate, and at the company's risk, and there is this difference that white goods can easily be damaged, and in the case of grey goods it is difficult to damage them with dirt, and the material is only coming in at the same rate as the finished article. That is my complaint. Then the Derry to Cork through rates are 66*s.* 5*d.* a ton, whereas the Derry to Dublin rate is 20*s.*; Dublin to Cork, 27*s.*, amounting to 47*s.* The through booking is 47*s.* as against 66*s.* 5*d.*

14148. *Lord Pirrie.*—That is where you lose on it?—Yes.

14149. *Chairman.*—Have you ever represented that to the Railway Company?—No, but I represented the other matter until I am tired. Then there is a through rate from Derry to Limerick of 53*s.* 6*d.* a ton, while the rate from Derry to Dublin is 20*s.*, and the rate from Dublin to Limerick 22*s.*, making 42*s.* as compared with 53*s.* 6*d.* for through bookings.

14150. As a matter of fact, Mr. Yeates, do you send the traffic that way?—There is a considerable amount sent that way.

14151. And you save the difference of rate?—Yes.

14152. You have not represented that to the Railway Company?—I have not, because it does not directly concern me. I am giving evidence on the part of the Chamber of Commerce from the shirt manufacturers.

14153. You have heard the evidence of Dr. Todd and the last witness, Mr. Watson, as to what they call the disadvantage of English railway companies being connected with the Irish companies; so far as Derry is concerned, do you agree with what they said?—Yes, I think it does away with competition to a large extent. I don't think it has been for the benefit of Derry, except for the advantage of the Lancashire and Yorkshire and the London and North-Western boat; that is the only advantage.

14154. It is a distinct advantage to Derry?—Yes.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The witness has given evidence of the through rate that is in excess of the local rates from Derry to Limerick, but we wish to say in answer to that that the Dublin rate is a temporary rate, because of temporary competition by sea.

Colonel Plews.—The rates were disturbed.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—I won't go into it further now; this is more a question of evidence for my own witnesses.

Lord Pirrie.—That is the opposite of what Mr. Knox told us a few days ago. He said it was a mistake on the part of the railway companies, and that they proposed to alter it.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—Thank you very much. I was not here then. I have only come in lately, and that is the explanation given to me.

Chairman.—There is a trading steamer going round the coast from Derry to Dublin, and that has reduced the local rate of the railway company; in order to get some of that traffic they had to reduce their rates?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—Yes.

Chairman.—Mr. Yeates found that it reduced his rates also. You had no reason to draw the attention of the railway company to it?

Witness.—Not the slightest. I am glad the boat started.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The lowering of the rate or the rebate from 27*s.* 6*d.* to 22*s.* 6*d.* is caused by independent steamship competition from Belfast to Manchester.

Chairman.—That does not affect the question of the grey goods as compared with white goods.

Colonel Plews.—The allowance is not made by the railway company, but by the steamboat company.

Chairman.—But that does not touch the question of grey and white goods.

Colonel Plews.—The nominal rate for white would be 27*s.* 6*d.*, and this steamboat company, to equalise it, are making a rebate that we know nothing about.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—We will explain that later on.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

TWENTY-FIFTH PUBLIC SITTING, FRIDAY, MARCH 15TH, 1907.

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER (Chairman); Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; and Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mar. 15, 1907.

Chairman.—I have to announce, for the information of the railway companies, that we do not propose to sit to-morrow, and that the next meeting of the Commission will be on Monday, the 22nd April, and the following meeting on Tuesday, the 7th of May. I thought perhaps it would be advantageous to the railway companies to know what we had decided. We have already a very large number of applications to give evidence, and we think it is necessary to announce that no further applications will be received after to-day, also that at the next meeting we shall hope to be able to announce when it will be advisable for the railway companies to prepare to give evidence. We will give ample notice of the date which would suit the convenience of the Commission to hear the Railway Companies.

Dr. Todd (Solicitor, Londonderry).—I was about to ask you, if you will permit me to send you some documents substantiating the statements that I made to you yesterday. I have documental evidence that substantiates every statement that I made. I got notice last night that Mr. Batchen, the Engineer of the Board of Works, proposed giving evidence correcting some portion of my evidence. I would like to ask you to postpone taking his evidence until counsel is here to cross-examine him, who will be supplied with the necessary documents. I would ask to appear personally, but I think it would be better, as Mr. Vesey Knox is acquainted with this particular matter, to wait until he is here. He will be here at the next sitting.

Chairman.—If you will kindly send the documents* to the Secretary we will look at them.

Dr. Todd.—Thank you.

Mr. W. J. HANNA, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. W. J. Hanna, J.P., representing the Donegal County Council.

14155. Mr. Hanna, I think you are a County Councillor for County Donegal?—I am.

14156. And also a member of the Londonderry No. 2 District Council?—I am.

14157. Are you also connected with the Derry Chamber of Commerce?—I am a member.

14158. And you are familiar with the trade and commerce of that particular district?—Yes; I represent the local bodies in my neighbourhood—Guardians.

14159. I think you wish to refer to the Letterkenny narrow guage railway?—I do.

14160. But do not you think we have heard sufficient evidence upon that?—Well, I merely want to put forward what my District Council, Derry No. 2, think is a particular grievance which they have. They are to a considerable extent guarantors for the Letterkenny railway.

14161. Very well, we will not go into the details with reference to what has been done in the past, if you will kindly refer to the special grievances which you wish to bring before us?—This guarantee which we gave was surrounded by certain conditions and circumstances when the loan was made, and I have typed off a short statement if you will allow me to read it.

History of the promotion and financing of the Letterkenny railway.

14162. Certainly?—About the year 1850 a considerable movement of commercial activity took place in Derry. Two excellent cross-Channel steamboat services were established—one to Liverpool and one to Glasgow. The old Ballast Board that had charge of the Harbour was abolished, and replaced by the present Harbour Board. The Harbour Board borrowed a large amount of money from small capitalists in and around Derry, and gradually improved the wharves, and deepened the channel all the way down the river. These services brought a large amount of goods into Derry, but a difficulty arose in distributing them through the surrounding country, as there were no means except by the slow and expensive method of using horses and carts, and the cattle for English and Scotch markets had to be driven long distances on foot. The Londonderry and Enniskillen line commenced to run a few years prior to this period, and was an object lesson, showing the people what valuable assistance a railway was both in feeding the port and distributing merchandise through the districts in which it ran. This caused the people of Donegal, who depended upon the port of Derry chiefly as their market town and for their supplies, to ardently desire a railway between Derry and Letterkenny. They thereupon promoted a Bill, about the year 1860 for a broad gauge railway, connecting Letterkenny with the Lough Swilly Railway at Tooban Junction, a distance of about eighteen miles.

14163. That is from Derry to Letterkenny?—From Tooban junction to Letterkenny. The Letterkenny Railway is a junction with the Lough Swilly main line at Tooban. The Londonderry and Lough Swilly line ran originally only from Derry to Buncrana, and the new line was to form a junction with the Lough Swilly line at Tooban junction and run into Letterkenny. The people of Donegal, land-owners, small private investors, and the citizens of Derry, subscribed to the capital of this railway to the amount of £57,155. This money was, every shilling, expended in blocking out the railway, but the promoters failed to get any more money subscribed, and the line had to be abandoned. About 1876 they got Parliamentary sanction to change the gauge of this railway from broad gauge to narrow gauge, and they borrowed from the Board of Works to finish the line a sum of £85,000, of which £50,000 was secured by a first mortgage upon the entire line, which meant that the £57,155 already expended on the line and the outcome of this £50,000, made a security of £107,000 for the £50,000 lent, and I think this was good security. The £35,000 was a second mortgage secured by the rates of a large part of the County of Donegal, within the district of Londonderry No. 2, and the entire rates of the City of Londonderry, amounting in all to about £150,000 to £160,000 valuation. Now I think, in all reason, that the Board of Works had absolute security for the monies advanced.

14164. *Chairman.*—Board of Works?—The Board of Works. Yet a great public Department like the Board of Works, exacted on their first mortgage of £50,000, 4 per cent. flat as interest, and on the second mortgage secured by the ratepayers' guarantee they also exacted 5 per cent., *i.e.*, 4 per cent. as interest and 1 per cent. towards sinking fund, the tax amounting to £630 on Donegal and £1,120 on Londonderry, making £1,750 per annum for guarantee. I think these were very hard and illiberal terms for a Government Department to lend money on, to people who established a claim to Government aid in the development of their districts by subscribing the large amount of private capital of £57,155, which sum they absolutely lost.

* See Appendix No. 10.

14165. Your contention then is that the rate of interest is too high?—Yes.

14166. What do you suggest? I suppose it was a bargain entered into at the time?—The Board of Works laid down their terms, and the railway could not be finished unless they accepted them, but I do not think that it lay within the province of a great developing Department of the Government to exact terms which a private investor could scarcely get, especially as they had gilt-edged security for their mortgage. In 1883 the narrow gauge railway opened, and under these mortgages, in default of the payment of the interest, the Board of Works took the railway into their own hands, and entered into a working contract with the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway on a sliding scale of 60 per cent. to 67 per cent of the gross revenue as working expenses. From that date up to the year 1900 the net earnings of the railway was never sufficient to pay the £2,000 per annum interest on the first mortgage of £50,000, there being an average deficit of about £500 a year, showing that the real net earnings of the road for seventeen years after the working company took charge of it were never more than 3 per cent.

14167. What had the district to pay?—£1,750 a year.

14168. It was reduced by the surplus?—No.

14169. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—There was a deficit?—A deficit. The net earnings were never above £1,500.

14170. Not sufficient to pay the interest on the first mortgage?—No. In the year 1900 the Corporation of Derry and the County Council of Donegal appointed delegates to interview Mr. Hanbury, the Secretary of the Treasury, and urge him to induce the Board of Works to sell the Letterkenny Railway as it then stood to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, at a sum to be ascertained by an arbitration of railway engineer experts, or at a lump sum of £70,000, the sale to be made subject to the condition that the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company should remove the 40 lb. rails then in use, and which were entirely insufficient to either give safety or to put weighty enough engines on, and re-lay the railway with at least 60 lb. steel rails, and otherwise strengthen and re-make the railway and give a service to Letterkenny equal in all respects to that given by the Lough Swilly Railway on their main line between Londonderry and Buncrana. The Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company offered to take powers to issue bonds based on their entire undertakings to effect these purposes, and to relieve the ratepayers of Londonderry and Donegal from all claims under the guarantee, the Corporation of Londonderry and the County Council of Donegal at the same time agreeing that they would renounce all claims to recoupment on the £30,000 odd which the ratepayers had already paid. They would renounce that in order to get clear of the future liability. The Board of Works absolutely refused to entertain the question at all, and thus matters remained until the opening of the Burtonport Extension Railway in March, 1903. As soon as the freight brought forward on the Burtonport line began to be carried over the Letterkenny Railway the earnings of the line gradually increased until they were not only able to discharge the full interest on the first mortgage of £50,000, but to liquidate the accumulated arrears of interest at the rate of £600 to £700 per annum. In 1903 the accumulation of arrears amounted to between £8,000 and £9,000, and the ratepayers fully looked forward to the increased earnings paying off the arrears of interest in a few years, when they would be then applied in relief of the interest paid by the ratepayers on the second mortgage. In 1903 a company of private gentlemen promoted a competing railway to run between Letterkenny and Strabane. This railway ran parallel with the Letterkenny line for about three miles out of Letterkenny, and then turned off at an angle through a mountainous country for three or four miles further. The ratepayers and the Letterkenny Company strenuously opposed this line before the Committee of the House of Lords. They showed that there was no natural traffic for this proposed new railway between Convoy and Letterkenny except by competition with the already existing Letterkenny, for the Burtonport freight at Letterkenny.

14171. *Chairman.*—Yes, of course, as a matter of history that is all right, but the Act was passed and the line has been made, and therefore I do not see how we can alter that?—That is just the very point of the grievance of the Londonderry No. 2 District Council. They say that they got very illiberal terms in regard to interest.

14172. That is another point?—And then, at the very time when they had a prospect of being——

14173. Being relieved from further payment. A new line is made which you think will rob the old line of part of its traffic?—I will just finish in two or three sentences. They showed that there was no natural traffic for the new line except by competition with the already existing line for the Burtonport freight at Letterkenny. The Lords' Committee considered the reasons for the opposition of the ratepayers of the Letterkenny Railway Company so strong that they refused to give Parliamentary sanction to the proposed new line beyond Convoy. They stopped it there. The following year the promoters made an arrangement with the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland and the Midland Railway Company of England whereby these two great railway companies were to subscribe £70,000 to the capital and work the line. They then applied to Parliament again to extend the line from Convoy (where the Lords stopped it) to Letterkenny, thereby bringing these two great companies into acute competition with the comparatively small railway company, for the very limited freight at Letterkenny, and the ratepayers clearly saw that this competition would entirely destroy any chance of their ever being relieved of the £1,750 a year interest which they had guaranteed on the second mortgage of the Letterkenny railway. Now the complaint of these ratepayers is that the Board of Works from the very beginning charged an exorbitant rate of interest for the money which they borrowed in their efforts to develop their district, and that at all times they refused to make the slightest concessions for their relief, but even when the competing railway was before the Parliamentary Committees the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Board of Works (Mr. Wyndham), who held these mortgages against the Letterkenny line appeared both before the Committee of the House of Commons and the House of Lords and used all the influence of his great personality and his great public position in advocacy of this new line. The Committees authorised the making of the line from Convoy into Letterkenny, and it has been alleged that it was largely through the influence brought to bear upon them, that it had little or no merits of its own beyond Convoy, where the Lords stopped it the year before, thus making it impossible for the Letterkenny line, when the new competition set in, to earn the interest upon the mortgage which his department held against the Letterkenny Company. I now wish, on behalf of the County Council of Donegal, to bring before your honourable Commission a matter in which they feel aggrieved. The line from Letterkenny to Burtonport was built, as a free gift, by Parliament for the development of a part of the County of Donegal which was very poor and largely congested, money was provided for makng the line and adequately equipping it. Shortly after the line was opened in 1903, great complaints were made by the people of the County of Donegal and from the districts which were guaranteeing £5,000 of capital, as to the irregularity and frequent interruptions in the running of the trains. Complaints were forwarded to the working company and they replied that they were doing their best, but that the Board of Works had taken the supervision of the entire construction of the line into their own hands and had not given them more than half the equipment which any similar narrow gauge line in Ireland was entitled to. They stated that the Board of Works, after having agreed with the working company on plans and specifications, had allowed the contractors to depart from the plans and specifications, and, in fact, had allowed scamping to take place in the entire construction of the line and that they furnished to the Board of Works an itemised statement showing defective construction to the amount of £78,000, that in regard to equipment they had refused to give them suitable engines such as their own engineer demanded and approved of, but furnished them with four unsuitable tank engines instead of eight, and that the same proportion of insufficient equipment attached to

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. W. J. Hanna, J.P., representing the Donegal County Council.

Anticipated effect of the railway extension from Strabane to Letterkenny on the Letterkenny railway's receipts.

Burtonport State Railway. Unsatisfactory working since opening in 1903.

Alleged defective construction and equipment.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. W. J. Hanna, J.P., representing the Donegal County Council.

Necessity for arbitration between the Board of Works and the Lough Swilly Railway on the subject of the Burtonport line urged.

Failures of engines and collapse of bridge mentioned.

their wagons and railway carriages. The County Council of Donegal, in view of the serious latent responsibilities which rested upon themselves in the event of any default of the present working company, and not wishing to take any partisan stand between the two parties, passed three resolutions, copies of which I forward to you, and copies of which were lodged with the Chief Secretary, the Board of Works, and the Treasury, begging them to give effect to the 21st section of the Burtonport Railway Extension Act which says:—"That if any difficulties should arise between the working company and the Board of Works that the Board of Trade might appoint an expert arbitrator, and decide who was right and who was wrong." The Board of Works absolutely refused the Board of Trade arbitration, and so the matter has been allowed to drift along since, each party accusing the other as being the cause of the default in the proper working of the line. I myself, was personally on the line in the autumn of 1903, and in going up the grade at Gweedore there was an ordinary passenger train on the engine—five or six carriages of people going to a fair in Letterkenny, and there was only one freight wagon. The engine stopped three times, and I came into Letterkenny an hour and three-quarters late, disappointing the people who were on that train in the business they were going to transact. That is an experience of my own in regard to the engines. I do not think the engines are at all of sufficient power to do the work. The next private experience I had was on 3rd August, 1904. I left Letterkenny at 8 o'clock in the morning to transact business at Falcarragh. The country was dry in the morning when going down, but about 12 o'clock it commenced to rain, gradually increasing till near 4 o'clock. I was judging at a cattle show and I was out in it all the time, so that I know exactly the character of the rain. At a quarter past four I got into the train to go home. At a place near Foxhall, three or four miles from Letterkenny, the country people were out shouting and throwing up their hats, and the train stopped at the brink of a one-span bridge. I got out of the train. I had to walk into Letterkenny to catch the train home, and I examined that debris as much as I could.

14174. Was there a collision?—No, no. It was a new bridge, built to carry the railway train only the year before.

14175. The bridge gave way?—It was completely swept away.

14176. By the rain?—By three hours of summer rain. I examined the debris as much as I could. Of course with the heavy turbulence of the water I could not see exactly through, but as far as I could see the abutments were mainly built with dry stones and plastered with mortar on the outside. I say that that was not a sufficient work to carry a railway train, and if it had been after night our train would have been wrecked. As it was, I got four months' suffering from it, for I had neuritus, and suffered martyrdom for four months. There was certainly a great danger to life travelling on that road. Nobody could have expected, from a casual investigation, that the bridge was defective in any way, and yet, I daresay that any reasonable man will say that a three or four hours' rain ought not to be able to wash a bridge away.

14177. It depends on the rain?—It was pretty heavy rain.

14178. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The Board of Works built it?—The Board of Works superintended the building of the road.

14179. *Chairman.*—All that you read goes to confirm what we heard yesterday?—Mainly. Dr. Todd was in the same train when the engine stopped.

14180. And Dr. Todd's evidence was precisely similar to the statements you have read?—I think it was, but you see our guarantee——

14181. What have your Council to pay now?—£1,750 a year.

14182. They are paying that now?—They are paying the full amount and must pay it unless it is remitted.

14183. Of course you will admit that there are two sides to this question?—That is exactly the point that we want to have brought up. Whatever one of the parties alleges the other denies, and it is not easy getting them to agree on any statement as to anything done in the last two or three years. We do not want, as a Council that has an ulterior responsibility, we do not want to say which side is right, for we do not know, but we do say that if the Board of Trade had any power——

14184. The Board of Works?—No. The Board of Trade has the appointing power, that they should use it and have this miserable dispute settled, because if it is not settled, and the County Council have ultimately to take over a lot of scamped work and rebuild it and maintain it, there will be certainly a row.

14185. Is that a contingency likely to arise?—Yes.

14186. I thought the agreement was in perpetuity?—It is, but the Lough Swilly Company is comparatively a small company, and have only about £80,000 capital, and if there is £78,000 of defective work and that they have got to make that good, their capital would not be of much account.

14187. Very well. I think you have explained very clearly the grievance of your Council, and we thoroughly understand it, especially after the evidence given by Dr. Todd, and I think we must leave it there now until we hear what the Board of Works have got to say about it. Is it your opinion that these defects of construction, and defects—alleged defects—of working, retard the progress of the district through which the railway runs?—I am perfectly satisfied of that. I understand that, over and above the allowance for working expenses, that the Burtonport, railway on the average of the last two years and a-half or two years and nine months, has been making £1,300 a year. I really think that if the equipment was sufficient, and that there were no grounds for complaint and improper work, that the income of that road would gradually increase and it would be four or five times that amount.

14188. You have no complaint about the number of trains?—No, it is more in regard to interruptions and breakdowns and all that.

14189. That I understand is inefficient working. That is the complaint?—It is fifty miles of a single track railway, and the engine is not able to carry enough coal and water to carry her that distance, and I believe the water supply is very deficient—very bad.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

14190. At the time that your County Council proposed that the line should be sold to the Lough Swilly Railway Company you said if it were sold you would be prepared to forego any portion of the recoupment money which you had paid in respect of the guarantee?—Quite so.

14191. Surely you do not contend that you are entitled to any recoupment?—Yes, according to the Act, as soon as the railway becomes supporting and earns a surplus, we would be entitled to recoupment.

14192. There was no probability of the line paying. It had not done so for seventeen years?—I confess there was very little, but still you will recollect that the only claim of the Board of Works was £86,000, and nearly £9,000 of that was for interest.

14193. I think the claim that you put forward would not have had much weight with the Board of Works—the fact that you waived the claim?—No, but it made a clean transaction and rid the line in future of all complications.

14194. With regard to the petition which I believe the ratepayers presented to the Board of Trade asking for an inquiry, what reply was received with regard to that matter in 1904 or 1905?—None.

14195. There was one later than that?—No.

14196. That was the last?—The County Council of Donegal appointed delegates, of which I was one, who interviewed Mr. Hanbury in London, and the proposition that we put before him was that the Board of Works would take for their £86,000, which the railway owed them, a sum to be ascertained by an expert engineer valuation of the road at that time. (You will recollect it was a road laid with 40-lb. rails and had been in use for seventeen years), or a lump sum of £70,000, and the Lough Swilly Railway Company agreed to enter into a binding contract that they would issue bonds on their own undertaking (of course the Letterkenny railway would form part of their line if they bought it), they would issue bonds to pay off the £70,000, the agreed amount, or whatever other sum it would be, to relay the line with at least 60lb. steel rails and to give as good a service as was given

on the main line. That would have fully satisfied the whole of the community in regard to the service and have got rid of the guarantees that we were paying and had been paying for eighteen or nineteen years.

14197. After the loan had been obtained from the Treasury in 1880, was the line relaid by the Board of Works or was it done by the promoting company?—I really could not tell you.

Dr Todd (*Solicitor, Londonderry*).—It was the promoting company.

14197A. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—How was it they came to lay the line with 40 lb. rails instead of 50 lb.?

Dr. Todd (*Solicitor, Londonderry*).—Dearth of money, I believe. They built it as cheaply as they possibly could.

14198. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They had not plenty of money then apparently. You consider that you are subjected to a very high rate of interest?—Yes.

14199. You are aware that the interest that the Board of Works are empowered to charge is under a very old Act of William IV., which lays down that for railways the Board of Works shall not be allowed to charge a lower rate of interest than 4 per cent.?—I was not aware of that, but I thought that a developing Government department had discretionary power——

14200. I was coming to that You are aware also that under a much later Act, under the Act of the 3rd March, 1904, the Board of Works are empowered to make loans or advances for local works, any other works except railways, at rates of interest calculated on a sliding scale according to the number of years in which the loan is repayable, that is from 3½ per cent., I think, for a twenty year loan, to 3¾ per cent. for thirty years, and so on?—We have had no remission yet.

14201. You think that considering that a change has been made to a lower rate of interest (that the Treasury has been given power to charge a very much lower rate than 4 per cent. on the security of local rates), that they ought to be given the same power to reduce their rates in respect of railway loans?—They ought to consider the circumstances. For instance, if they had been lending the £85,000, and lent it solely on the security of the railway, I would think that then they were taking a considerable element of chance for their security, but when they only lent £50,000 on an actual expenditure of £107,000, and they got the ratepayers to guarantee the interest, on the second moiety of £35,000, they were getting two gilt-edged securities.

14202. Exactly. For the sake of argument if they had been able to give the loan at the rate of interest on the sliding scale under the Act of 1904, you would have been relieved of a considerable portion of the sum which you have had to pay?—We would not have had any arrears if it was 3 per cent.

14203. Then you think it would be a good thing if this Commission were to try and bring it before the Treasury and the Government that some remission should be made in the hard and fast rule in regard to railway loans?—I certainly think so, because Parliamentary sanction has been given to a new competing railway which would make it impossible to earn the present charges.

14204. That is the Convoy railway?—The Letterkenny and Strabane railway. It is owned by two of the richest companies in Great Britain, and when a small company has to compete with them for a limited quantity of freight we all know which will go to the wall.

14205. But I believe the Board of Works, and I suppose the Harbour Commissioners, have something to say as to safeguards being introduced into the Act protecting the route for traffic which had been going to Londonderry and which it is possible might now be diverted to Strabane—I mean you have some safeguards introduced?—Really I did not see the Bill. I only knew that these Bills were promoted and sanction was given for the making of the railway, but what the terms of the Bill were I could not tell you.

14206. Of course it is too soon to say whether you will be affected or not, but you have a dread that you may be affected?—Yes. The main thing in regard to that Burtonport line is that we do say there ought to be some inquiry to stop these continual bickerings between the working company and the Government department. We do think that there ought to be some way of ascertaining who is liable for the defaults.

14207. Now, with regard to the Burtonport railway, you said that the profits on the line now amounted to £2,000 a year, over and above the working expenses, and that it was capable of great development?—That takes in the first year, in which there was no maintenance. I believe the actual profit is some £1,800, but that includes the first year, which, I think, ought not to be included in an average, but, taking the remaining two years and nine months, in which the company maintained the line themselves, the average is £1,300.

Profit on the working of the Burtonport line.

14208. It is more than that. I think you misunderstood me. The profit, over and above all the working expenses, has been at the rate of £2,000 a year?—£1,800.

14209. It is really more, but we need not split straws?—But that takes in the first year, in which there was no cost of maintenance.

14210. The point I want to bring out is this. You said you thought if the line were properly maintained and equipped with the proper amount of rolling stock, that the profit might rise to four or five times its present figure?—I do.

14211. What industries are capable of development to give such an increase of traffic?—With all its defects and with all its difficulties the Burtonport line has greatly promoted the interests and industries along that whole north-west coast.

14212. What are the industries?—Fishing, largely, and the Congested Districts Board have been very useful in introducing newer methods of agriculture. Their cattle are very much better, and the social conditions of the people are immensely improved since the opening of the line. The value of property has largely increased.

Industries developed and capable of being developed in the district served by the Burtonport Railway.

14213. What I want to get at is, are there any latent possibilities—I am not talking from an agricultural point of view—but from what I read I was rather inclined to believe—(I do not know your district personally)—to believe that there was a large marble and granite industry which, with a certain amount of expenditure, was capable of large extension?—If you begin at Dungloe and go all along the country bounded by Kedue Strand, round by Kincashlagh and round by Crolley Bridge and Gweedore, the whole country is rough granite fit for kerbing and the like of that—more than would kerb a city as big as Liverpool.

14214. And there are a large amount of flagstones also?—There are. Muckish is all marble, and Errisle and all that country is simply full of granite, and I am told by experts that when you sink in the quarries that the grain of the granite becomes very good and takes an excellent polish. I was told by the foreman (a Scotch gentleman, the name of Mr. M'Bean, I think, who had bees working the quarries of Donegal)—I was told that they would take a polish quite equal to Aberdeen granite.

14215. *Chairman.*—How far away are the quarries from the railway station?—The railway runs in the neighbourhood of them all, more or less. The whole country is full of marble cropping out—you would think you were going through a cemetery full of monuments.

14216. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think it was very largely those considerations of industrial development that led to the construction of the line—I have no doubt of it.

14217. And has anything been done in the twenty years that elapsed since the line was first recommended towards developing these particular industries?—Under the Marine Works Act they have built at Gortnasate through the Board of Works—I think it was superintended by Mr. Batchen here—they have made an admirable pier there that will allow vessels of large tonnage to come in, and will give a first-rate waterway to take away these heavy goods. That is in the neighbourhood of the quarries.

New pier at Gortnasate built by Board of Works recently.

14218. That won't help the railway?—In this way, that there were other points and other quarries that for finished stones I think would give a very large traffic for the railways if they were worked.

14219. At any rate you consider that in the present state of the line, even if these quarries were opened, the rolling stock could not carry their output?—I am perfectly sure the present rolling stock could not.

14220. So that even if the industries were developed the output could not be carried over the line?—The reason I mentioned that pier was that there have been private companies, I believe, trying to form limited liability companies to start these quarries. They

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never had an opportunity before, because they had no way of getting off the rough material such as kerb and paving sets. I think if these private companies had begun to work the quarries they would develop that industry so largely that the railway will come in and do its part with the finished traffic that now could not be done.

14221. Even though the output of that quarry may go by sea, it is possible that there are others that could not go by sea and would have to go by rail?—A large district of country is full of granite and marble, and the railroad could carry to the ships.

14222. The only other point is that I think the ratepayers petitioned the Board of Trade to hold an inquiry?—They did, three times.

14223. What was the reply that they received from the Board of Trade—not the Board of Works, but the Board of Trade?—Just an acknowledgment.

Action taken by Board of Trade on the petition of the Donegal County Council for an inquiry into the construction and working of the Burtonport Railway.

14224. When you approached them the second time or the third time, probably bringing to their notice that you had only received an acknowledgment, and that nothing had been done to remedy these defects, surely they gave something more than an acknowledgment in reply?—I think that the Board of Works sent down a representative with a written reply, but the session of the Donegal County Council that was to be held that day—(it was rather stormy, and the distances are very long in Donegal, and facilities for travelling are not good)—there was no quorum, and as far as I can recollect, the reply of the Board of Works was never before the County Council.

14225. I am talking about the Board of Trade. I do not wish to mix them up?—The Board of Trade never replied at all, except to acknowledge the receipt of the letter.

14226. Of course we must take that as your answer, but it seems extraordinary that they should not take notice of your repeated applications.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

14227. You have given, on behalf of Derry No. 2 District Council, very clearly and distinctly, the complaints that you have in regard to the construction and equipment by the Board of Works of that line, but have your Council, or you, any views as regards railways generally in Ireland, whether nationalisation or amalgamation would be to the benefit of the industries of the country?—Do you mean an opinion about this railway?

14228. I mean a general opinion on the question of nationalisation or amalgamation. I merely ask you, as an Irishman and a gentleman evidently who takes a great interest in the welfare and industries of Ireland, have you any views, or have you considered it? Have you any recommendation to make?—Not from the County Council.

14229. Have you any views of your own in connection with what would assist and develop the industries of Ireland, or your own district, if you like?—Except just as a thinking member of the community that takes an interest in public matters. I have the opinion that I think it would be good for the interests—the general commercial interests of Ireland—if the main railroads—the broad gauge railways of Ireland—if they were capitalised at their ascertained value, and the State issued stock, and let them be managed from some central power or policy, that policy to be an Irish policy, that is, taking into consideration Irish interests. One of the great complaints has, heretofore, been in regard to through rates—that English goods came cheaply at through rates into Ireland, but Irish goods were charged a higher rate into England. Of course I am not a trader, and I cannot give evidence on that point.

14230. I only wanted to know what your own personal feeling was in connection with that. You think that a railway company, managed by a central body, would cheapen transit and be beneficial to the country?—I think it would cheapen administration to begin with, and I think in the working of the line that there would be less interruption in travelling, good connections, and all that.

14231. I think you have given your evidence on that fact just as clearly as you did the other.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gerald Fitzgibbon, K.C.

14232. Mr. Hanna, do you know that the Donegal County Council passed a resolution in favour of the construction of the Strabane to Letterkenny Railway?—I do, but I know that all the eastern members of the Donegal County Council voted against it. The members from Letterkenny voted in their own interest. So would I.

14233. I just wanted to get it that the majority of the County Council passed a resolution in favour of it?—They did.

Mr. W. K. Fayle, J.P., examined by the Chairman.

Mr. W. K. Fayle, J.P., representing the Birr Urban District Council.

14234. Now, Mr. Fayle, you appear on behalf of the Birr Urban District Council?—Yes, sir, I do. It is in King's County, very close to the borders of Tipperary.

14235. What particular railway serves you district?—The Great Southern and Western Railway. It surrounds it in all directions.

14236. Does the railway at Birr belong to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company?—Yes.

Method of charging "mixed" consignments under "smalls" scale condemned.

14237. I will just take you briefly through your proof. The first point that you raise is the question of what you call mixed consignments. What do you mean by mixed consignments?—I mean a consignment of goods coming from, say, a wholesale merchant or from a manufacturer that will manufacture two or three commodities in the railway classification—not two or three different classes coming all together. What I complain of is that they split it up into the small component parts—where the whole consignment would weigh so as to be above the minimum it is split up into small components so that each portion of it is brought below the minimum.

14238. Supposing you are getting your mixed consignment from a store in Dublin, if you had furniture and iron ware and groceries, do you say you should be charged the lowest or the highest rate?—What I say is that things that could be carried practically with as little risk—one set of items as the other—I do not think there ought to be any difference.

14239. Are you aware of the Clearing House classification?—Yes.

14240. You know there is a statutory classification?—Yes; there are five classes besides the A, B, and C, and the modifications of them, the X, Y, and Z.

14241. Your complaint is that these mixed consignments are separated and charged separately?—Charged separately and brought under "smalls." That is what I object to.

14242. Under the small parcels scale?—Yes.

14243. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company, I suppose, are not exceptional in that. that is done by every railway company in the country?—What I say is that it is a great hardship.

14244. It is done on every railway in England?—I do not find it quite so minutely entered into by any other railway as by the Great Southern and Western Railway.

14245. Can you just give me any figures to illustrate what you mean?—Yes. I have a consignment note before me in which the total weight came to 7 cwt. 2 qrs. 21 lbs., and that being split up into the various items made smalls, and the cost of carriage was 9*s.* 2*d.* for the lot, whereas if you take it at a reasonable rate, I would say that the cost would only be about 5*s.* 10*d.*, taking it at a rate of, say, all round 15*s.*, instead of being from 15*s.* to 30*s.* The things that are carried at the lowest rates are the things that I consider, if it were possible, that could be most easily damaged. It is very difficult to decipher them.

14246. *Chairman.*—I can't decipher this document. It seems to me you have got some sponges.

Witness.—It is not included a case of sponges.

14247. *Chairman.*—What is not included. I can't make it out, I am afraid.

Witness.—I may interpret it as well as I can. One pump, two flanges, a pipe, two churns, and stands, one crate, a box and a cask of hardware. The pump charged at 15*s.*, and the churns 30*s.* 2*d.*

14248. They are all charged as smalls?—That is it.

14249. What you suggest is, you think as a trader that all these should have been lumped and charged together. I suppose you will admit that the metal

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should be charged separately, say at the lowest—or the highest rate. Is that your suggestion?—The reason I suggest 15*s.* is that we have had all goods, including 5th class goods, carried from Dublin at that rate into Birr. There is fully fifty per cent. of an advance made there. That is constantly occurring.

14250. Yes, it is constantly occurring because that is the practice of all companies?—I know it is: I complain of it. I think it is anomalous. I think it ought to be remedied. I have other cases, but I think that will suffice.

14251. I think that is sufficient on that point. Just go on and tell us what you have got to complain of in the through rate from London to Tralee. First of all, tell us what class of goods are they?—Fourth class.

14252. All 4th class goods?—Yes. This is dealing with 4th, probably, or 5th class.

14253. What is the rate from London to Tralee?—It is 125*s.*

14254. *Via* Dublin?—Yes, *via* North Wall. I think it is by the L.N.W.R. Company. Possibly it may be. Yes, the L.N.W.R.

14255. Through Dublin?—Yes, it is by the L.N.W.R.

14256. Give me the rate from London to Dublin, fourth class goods?—100*s.* 10*d.*

14257. Then, I suppose there is cartage in Dublin?—There is cartage, but they generally bring it over the North Wall tunnel line, the loop line.

14258. It is equivalent to cartage?—Yes, it is; they charge cartage rates on it.

14259. What do they allow for that?—2*s.* 6*d.* a ton for fourth class.

14260. What is the Dublin to Tralee rate?—62*s.* 11*d.*

14261. The total rate?—The total rate I make it out to be 166*s.* 3*d.*

14262. 166*s.* 3*d.*?—Yes, 166*s.* 3*d.* Yes, it is a typographical error.

14263. What is the difference between the sum of the locals and the through rate?—41*s.* 3*d.* Apparently the G.S.W.R. would get for their proportion 21*s.* 8*d.*

14264. Well, I don't think either you or I know what they get?—No, we don't know what they get, but apparently their proportion would be 21*s.* 8*d.* It is on mileage.

14265. Surely the through rate there is a great advantage to you?—That is what I say. If you are a manufacturer here in Dublin you have got to pay 62*s.* 11*d.* for what the German or any other manufacturer sending it in over the same railway from Dublin to Tralee will only pay 21*s.* 8*d.* If you manufacture the thing in Ireland you have got to pay 62*s.* 11*d.* to send it to Tralee. If you send it from Germany coming through London you get it for 21*s.* 8d.

14266. Your explanation would be valuable if you could tell us what particular articles you refer to?—Fourth class goods.

14267. That is a very wide term?—Wood is a thing you have very largely grown in Ireland.

14268. Wood?—Timber.

14269. That is not fourth class?—No, but if you manufacture it up into furniture it will be fourth.

14270. Fifth?—Probably fifth. That is worse still, sir, so that practically I say if you grow timber in Ireland, and make it up into chairs, as is done in many places, and send it to Tralee from Dublin you will pay 62*s.* 11*d.*; if you make mattresses—fourth class probably, whatever you call it—they will carry it for you.

14271. If we are discussing actual traffic sent it would be an easy matter if you could tell us the particular articles, because then we could judge whether these articles could be made in Ireland?—This is furniture, which can be made in Ireland.

14272. Furniture—you are dealing with furniture?—I am, which is made in Ireland.

14273. Why get it from London?—Because you can get furniture from abroad; a good deal of it is made in Belgium, a good deal in Holland and Germany.

14274. Furniture?—Yes.

14275. This is all news to me?—Well, I understand you can get furniture in parts made up.

14276. Are you dealing with traffic that you yourself deal in at Birr?—We deal in beds and mattresses, and they come under the head of furniture.

14277. Well?—We deal in chairs; they come under the head of furniture, which as far as——

14278. You don't complain that the rate in itself from Dublin to Tralee is too high, but you complain that it is too high proportionately?—I do say it is too high; that is what I do say—I say it is too high.

14279. You argue because there is a low through rate from London to Tralee, therefore the G.S.W. Company should accept as their rate from Dublin to Tralee something in proportion to that through rate?—My point is that if it pays the G.S.W. to carry for the apparent proportion of the through rate from Dublin to Tralee for 21*s.* 8*d.* that I think—for foreign goods—that, I think, we ought to be entitled to expect that any goods we get from home ought to be carried at the same rate. If it pays them to carry the one it ought to pay them to carry the other. The probability is they would remedy the thing by raising the through rate up to the 62*s.* 11*d.*

Complaint as to cross-channel through preferential rates London and Tralee.

14280. The figure you mention as accruing to the G.S.W. being an assumption on your part. You don't know it—the 21*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes, of course it is an assumption in this way. Probably it is a mileage rate that they get, but I mean the through rates are split up at the Clearing House and they get their proportion of it. Apparently, if you take these figures, if it is 30*s.*, my point is the same thing—if it pays them to carry at the proportion they get out of the through rate it ought to pay them to carry timber at the same rate. I argue from that that the rates are too high.

14281. Of course, there are illustrations you give altogether on the same basis?—The same basis.

14282. From beginning to end?—I could give plenty of them.

(See Appendix No. 12).

14283. We need not deal with these now?—I consider that that forms a subsidy.

14284. Oh, we quite understand your point?—Yes. I think it is a monstrous state of affairs.

14285. When did the G.S.W. acquire the Waterford and Limerick Railway?—I think the amalgamation took place in 1900 or 1899.

14286. 1900?—1900. I happened to be giving evidence with regard to that.

14287. You say that the G.S.W. gave some undertaking there when they took over that railway?—The undertaking that was given was——

14288. First of all, tell me what sort of an undertaking was it?—I was examined as a witness for the amalgamation by the Committee.

14289. In London?—In London by the Parliamentary Committee, and I heard it stated there that there were safeguards. I wanted to get safeguards put in, as they were getting a monopoly of a whole country.

14290. Who did you give evidence for?—I opposed.

14291. You opposed the amalgamation?—I opposed the amalgamation for several reasons.

14292. We need not go into that. You heard the statement?—I heard it stated that the rates which were then in existence on their line and on the amalgamated line—that they were not to be raised above the figure that they stood at then, except by notice and with the consent of the Railway Commissioners, I suppose it was, or a Railway Commissioner of the Board of Trade.

Action of the G. S. & W. Ry. Co. in attempting to raise certain rates which the Railway and Canal Commission declined to approve.

14293. The Railway and Canal Commission?—I am a bit hazy about the authority. It was the Commissioners, because they afterwards gave notice to raise certain rates, and the case came before the Railway Commissioners. I went up to oppose the application, and nothing ever came of it, because there were certain inequalities. An application was made to raise certain rates to certain places, and the Railway brought the matter before the Railway Commissioners, the G.S.W. and their plea was thrown out. Well, this is, sir, what I say. The classification I deal with——

14294. Let us go on to this Waterford and Limerick amalgamation. You say that in spite of the promise that was given certain rates have been raised?—Well, I think that is further on than the other matter.

14295. I am getting further on?—They raised the rate 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton without notice and without consent. It is only one, but still it is just as I state it.

14296. You mentioned it, but you don't say from where or to where?—From Glasgow to Birr.

Alleged increase of rates by the company between Glasgow and Birr.

14297. Let us get the rate the railway companies will have to deal with it?—This rate was raised from Glasgow to Birr.

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14298. Glasgow to Birr—the rate 28*s.* 4*d.* to 30*s.* 10*d.*, and 32*s.* 6*d.* to 35*s.*?—Without notice I think that might be especially second or third class rate—X and Y or Y and Z.

14299. Without notice?—Without notice, that is my contention, or, as far as I know, without consent.

14300. Were you personally interested in these rates?—Yes, I was.

14301. Did you pay?—Yes, I paid—I protested.

14302. You protested to the company, and did you get any reply from the company?—No, except that I would have to pay them—nothing more than that. It was to the local stationmaster. I didn't go further than that. It was to the local stationmaster that I protested against paying an advance in the rate without receiving what I thought I had a right to receive, that is the notice and consent.

Complaint that local rates are not carted and delivered while cross-channel rates are.

14303. Well, proceed?—There is another thing I want to bring under your notice that invariably these through rates, although they are so low, as I have shown, in the proportion, they are carted and delivered rates. Now invariably first, second, third, fourth, and fifth rates in Ireland are neither carted nor delivered. They are practically station-to-station rates for haulage. It is simply for haulage. They keep so few men to do their business in the country places that we have got to do it ourselves; if we want our goods we have to unload.

14304. Do they allow cartage?—No, they don't allow cartage.

14305. Though you cart yourselves?—Yes.

14306. Yet the articles are carried on collected and delivered rates?—I don't know; they admit it is. They allow the cartage for the cross-Channel.

14307. That is what I want?—They allow that.

14308. Do you know what they allow?—I could not tell you.

14309. 1*s.* 6*d.*?—I would only be guessing. There is no use—I don't know.

14310. Well, we had better not, you say?—I don't know.

14311. Have you anything further to say on this point?—What I say is that the cross-Channel rates, of which I say the Irish proportion is so low, are carted and delivered, and that the Irish rates, the local rates charged by the G.S.W., are not carted and delivered, although greatly higher, and small traders—it is a great hardship to them.

14312. That is quite clear. Is there any company in Ireland that collect and deliver class goods?—I believe the G.N.R., but I am not sure.

14313. Not the G.S.W.?—The G.S.W. don't at Birr, certainly; they won't if they can help it.

14314. Let us have it perfectly clear about collected and delivered rates, and the cross-Channel through rates from England; class rates are collected and delivered, and if they don't deliver they allow a delivery charge—is that what you say?—Yes. Well, no, I can't say that they allow a delivery charge, because I have never applied for it. I have sometimes been obliged, as I could not get delivery quick enough—I have sometimes been obliged to take delivery myself, but I have never applied for the refund afterwards.

14315. Why?—Well, it is a hopeless thing dealing with them; you can't get anything out of them.

14316. Indeed?—No. I am absolutely hopeless.

14317. Well, if you never asked?—I have not asked it, so therefore I don't charge them with that, but I took it that it was a matter absolutely hopeless.

The G. S. & W. R. Company's management condemned, *e.g.*: alleged insufficiency of staff and inconvenient hours of arrival of goods trains.

14318. I gather from these next two or three pages of your proof that you are not very favourably impressed with the way the G.S.W. do their work in Ireland?—I am not.

14319. Need you go into all this detail?—I thought it well if I stated that. I thought it ought to be made public.

14320. Well, do so very shortly?—Yes, I will state it very shortly.

14321. Summarise first of all?—What I say first——

14322. One minute, you say that the staff is insufficient for dealing with the traffic?—I do.

14323. Leave that—what next?—Next point. That the goods train arrives at such an hour that it is impossible to do your business. It comes to Roscrea, ten miles away, at five o'clock in the morning. We don't get it in until practically eleven—it comes in about 10.30. It is supposed to come much earlier.

14324. Your complaint is about the first goods train?—It is there at five o'clock in the morning.

14325. At Roscrea?—Yes. We don't get it into Birr, till eleven, and very often the goods are not checked until three o'clock on account of the paucity of the staff.

14326. That is a substantial grievance if correct?—That, I said, is my experience of it.

14327. Your experience?—Yes.

14328. You need not enlarge on that?—They charge demurrage after forty-eight hours.

14329. Isn't that fair?—They charge it from the time it ought to be there, though it is not there at all. They have charged me for demurrage for goods, for wagons for goods that were supposed to be there, and were not there at all. If you do your business you have got to begin at it in the morning, and if you have things coming in, in the afternoon.

14330. You are going back to the other subject?—To the demurrage.

14331. Deal with the demurrage. Forty-eight hours after the arrival of a truck if it is not unloaded they charge you demurrage?—Yes.

14332. Isn't that reasonable?—It is not reasonable, taking the facilities, first of all, the very late delivery; secondly, the facilities they give you.

14333. The late delivery has nothing to do with it. I understand the charge is only made forty-eight hours after the arrival of the truck at the station, and notice given to you that the truck is there?—If you get notice of things in the afternoon, and after you have laid out all your work you are thrown out. It is useless to begin it. You have forty-eight hours notice; twelve or fourteen of them are gone from you before you can do anything.

14334. You have a large margin left?—The facilities given are bad, and if it is wet weather they have no cover.

14335. Deal separately with them. There is no covering?—The goods store is not open until eight o'clock in the morning, so you cannot begin your work until eight o'clock in the morning.

14336. That seems pretty early, but what do you suggest?—I suggest that the goods train should be in earlier, and that the premises ought to be open a bit earlier, so as to let me get to work at seven.

14337. Next point?—There are no facilities at the station for weighing goods—no weigh bridge.

14338. What is the population of Birr?—Birr itself would be under 5,000, but then there is a very large district to be served.

14339. Under 5,000. Is it 1,000?—Oh, yes; it is very nearly 5,000.

14340. That is what I mean. Is there a goods warehouse or shed?—Yes, there is.

14341. And the yard, like every other yard, is open?—Yes.

14342. Well, what do you complain of in that respect?—I have to complain of that. Men loading timber have no way of knowing—or coal—of knowing whether you get your own coal or not.

14343. Stick to the one thing?—Well, it is the weigh bridge.

14344. You say there is no weigh bridge?—No weigh bridge.

14345. I suppose there is an ordinary weigh bridge for light goods?—Yes.

14346. What you want is a cart weigh bridge, so that the timber and coals may be weighed?—Yes.

14347. Well, do you know that three-fourths of the stations in England have no cart weigh bridge?—Well, I suppose they settle claims reasonably, or they dispute them to an extent that——

14348. You want to cart away and weigh your coal?—Or timber.

14349. But the railway company don't want to weigh either coal or timber?—If they ask me to pay so much per ton for goods, and if they charge me for two tons more than I get, and I find it outside, and they say it has been lost on the way, then, sir, they plead they are not responsible for anything that occurs outside their premises.

14350. Very well, Birr is not provided with a cart weigh machine, and you think that it would be a great advantage to the place?—To timber men sending——

14351. Timber is carried by measurement?—Yes, and by weight, too.

14352. Is it?—Yes.

14353. Round timber?—I think so. After it is squared it is cut at saw-mills.

14354. Saw-mills?—Yes.

14355. Round timber is carried by measurement?—Yes, and the other is carried by weight. There are no facilities for loading or unloading traffic in wet weather. You have got the goods chucked on the line anyway.

14356. What about the warehouse?—They won't allow you to put such things as cement, or flour in—they won't allow you. You have got to take that out of the wagons, and you are charged demurrage after forty-eight hours. You have got to take them out, no matter whether it is raining cats and dogs. You have got to take them out, and it is open to the elements.

14357. Supposing you are stopped by the elements, do you say they allow for that?—No. As a matter of fact, they brought me to court. I refused to pay. They brought me to court for being stopped by the elements.

14358. And had you to pay?—I had to pay some of it. Really the only thing that saved me was there happened to be a holiday—St. Patrick's Day came in, and the judge said he would not ask me to cart on a holiday, that he would not ask business to be done on a holiday, but so far as the weather was concerned I had to do it.

14359. Now, have you any more complaints?—What I claim is that there is very gross neglect in the handling of goods at owner's risk rate and that the company shelter themselves—destroy your goods and shelter themselves behind the owner's risk rate to repudiate any claims.

14360. You know the owner's risk conditions are now under discussion by Parliament—do you know that?—I have heard that.

14361. It is so?—Yes. Well, of course——

14361A. In fact there is a Bill before Parliament now.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The second reading is to-day.

14362. *Chairman.*—So I don't think we need discuss that. That will be altered probably, the conditions of the risk will be altered?—It is time that they were. When goods are lost in transit the Company refused to pay except at their own valuation. I will give you an instance. A gentleman said his cooking apparatus was out of order, and I found, sending a man out, he reported that the boiler was broken, and that they were very anxious to have the range as soon as possible. I took the dimensions and sent away to the makers to get it. The makers sent me wrong ones; they could not understand. They sent wrong ones, and finally I could not get it without sending away the old boiler as a pattern. I sent it away, and from that day to this I have never seen it. The gentleman complained to me and said you will have to put in a new range. I said I am very sorry, but the railway company have lost the pattern, and they are responsible for that. I asked the railway company to pay me for the expense of putting in a new range. They say no, we will pay you the cost of old metal for the part you sent away. That is the way they treat me in practically everything.

14363. You have given that instance. When was it?—I have the date.

14364. Is it within the last 20 years?—Oh, within the last 12 months.

14365. That will do?—About 12 months. I have the claims book here, and will give you the whole of the details if you want them. It may be 15 months, but I think it is within that.

14366. Within 2 years?—Oh, yes, it is.

14367. But it is quite an exceptional case?—I don't think it is exceptional. I find it is an every day occurrence.

14368. Every day these boilers go wrong?—Oh, no. But cases on the same lines that are occurring.

14369. I am afraid your relations with the Company are not very friendly?—They are; they were very friendly, but I find it very difficult to get on with them. As to your suggestion that I should ask for the payment of cartage I would pay more in stamps in applying for that than when I would get the thing it would be worth.

14370. Have you written to the manager of the Company?—I have, but he repudiated everything.

14371. Repudiated everything?—Absolutely it comes to that.

Mr. W. K. Fayle, J.P., representing the Birr Urban District Council.

14372. We will go on now?—I say the supply of wagons is very insufficient.

Insufficient supply of wagons for goods traffic alleged; also unsatisfactory condition of passenger coaches on branch lines.

14373. Goods wagons?—Yes, very insufficient. I don't think there are more than 4,000 odd miles of railway in Ireland, and there are only about 23,000 vehicles, wagons in the whole of the railway companies in Ireland. Now one company in England would have over 123,000 or 124,000. The result is that in Ireland, during the busy season, traffic is very greatly delayed on account of the difficulty of getting wagons.

14374. That is what we want to get at. Now have you brought that matter under the notice of the company, or the agent at Birr?—It was brought under the notice of the company and they apologised and said they would do their best. But the same thing occurred again and the same excuse was made; the thing is recurrent and there is the same excuse.

14375. Well, what about the passenger stock, what have you to say about the passenger coaches?—They are very bad.

14376. I mean the working of the passenger traffic. I suppose that is satisfactory?—No, sir, it is not at all satisfactory. They keep the carriages very dirty indeed; they are very antiquated on the branch lines. They had those old cushionless carriages until I called attention to them. I was coming from Cork, some little time ago, and I got to Roscrea fairly comfortably, but when I went to get into the carriage at Roscrea for Birr—it was a third-class—and after I had put my things into it I felt rather ill. I found a very bad smell in the place and I got out and I made four attempts to get my luggage out, but I was unable to approach it on account of the horrible smell. They are cleaned only very slightly and they are cleaned very roughly, but they are never disinfected.

14377. You are only referring to passenger vehicles on the branch line?—Yes.

14378. Not on the main line?—No, but they should be disinfected too.

14379. Did you call the attention of the station-master at Birr to that?—Yes.

14380. What did he say?—I believe that carriage was taken off, that is, the cushionless carriage was taken off and there has been some improvement made in the cleansing of these carriages, but they have never been disinfected. I believe the Great Northern disinfect their carriages, and when there is influenza or other ills going about I think it would be a great matter, and I trust the railway company will take note of it and have their vehicles disinfected at least once a month.

14381. Have you thought over what is the best remedy?—Pardon me, may I deal with the Portumna railway now, I wish to speak of it now.

14382. Where have you brought that in?—It is on page six. What I say is——

14383. You are speaking about Portumna?—Yes. I think the present arrangement under private management is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it will prevent railway extension or retard it. Portumna is a case where they have deliberately destroyed railway extension. It is just on the Shannon, at the head of Lough Derg.

System of private ownership of railways alleged to retard further extension.

14384. It runs from Birr to the north-western point of Lough Derg.

Witness.—That line was constructed thirty-eight years ago. It runs from the Great Southern at Birr on a branch line to Portumna.

14385. There is no railway marked on the map?—There is a railway in existence, but it is derelict. It was made thirty-eight years ago, and it ran twelve miles, from Birr to Portumna. It cost the country actually to make it from £98,000 to £106,000.

Birr to Portumna derelict railway.

14386. What do you mean by "cost the country"?—It was subscribed locally.

14387. Private subscriptions?—Yes, from the district; practically nearly three-fourths of it was contributed locally. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company subscribed £15,000, the Loan Commissioners of Public Works, I suppose the Local Government Board, the Loan Commissioners advanced £12,500. This latter body became the mortgagees of the line and leased it to the Great Southern for ten years, but that company worked it in a manner that made it a bye-word in the district. The train left Portumna at 6 o'clock in the morning and reached

Original cost and how subscribed; line leased to G. S. & W. R. Co., but badly worked by latter.

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Train service on the Portumna line when worked by G. S. & W. R. Co.

Birr at 6.30; left Birr at 12.29, reached Portumna 12.59; left Portumna 1.20, reached Birr 1.50. Finally left Birr at 8.34 in the evening and reached Portumna 9.4. There were only two ordinary trains each way, and one went at 6 o'clock in the morning. Thus, if a passenger wanted to go from Birr to Portumna he would have only twenty minutes in Portumna to do his business, or he must stay all night there. With regard to that you see——

14388. I want to see what deduction you draw from that?—The deduction I draw is that they deliberately set themselves to prevent this line from being developed. You see the time table is most erratic. You could not get from Birr to Portumna and do anything there in one day. You had only twenty minutes and it would take you that time to walk from the station to the town.

14389. I understand you meant going to Portumna. You left Portumna at 6 o'clock in the morning?—But if you could tell me how I could go from Birr to Portumna and back again to Birr, and stay more than twenty minutes in Portumna——

14390. You left Birr at 12.29 and arrived in Portumna at?

14391. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You got to Portumna at 12.59 and left again at 1.20—that is you had twenty-one minutes there?—Yes.

14392. That was the sole facilities in that direction?—Yes.

14393. But the other way it was all right?—Yes.

Line offered to G. S. & W. R for £10,000, but declined. Railway now derelict and dismantled.

14394. *Chairman.*—I want to see what deduction you draw from it?—The deduction I draw is this—that the line was worked for ten years, but at the expiry of the lease the Great Southern said, "We won't work this any more," and the Loan Commissioners offered the whole thing for £10,000 to the Great Southern. After bleeding the line to death the Great Southern wanted to buy the carcass at knacker's prices.

14395. Did they buy?—No, the Great Southern and Western Railway wanted it for nothing—the shareholders would not agree to it. The railway company would not pay £10,000 and the shareholders would not take less. I don't know exactly what they wanted, but I do know the Great Southern and Western Railway would not pay £10,000 for what had cost £106,000.

14396. I suggest to you that neither the Great Southern nor any other company could work it at a profit?—That is not so. I think I can show that it could be worked at a profit, but the railway company thought they would get it for nothing and they did not see why they should pay £10,000 for it.

14397. What has become of it now?—It is derelict.

Failure of a second proposal for the G. S. & W. Ry. Co. to take over and work the line owing to the grant asked for by the company not being forthcoming.

14398. It is derelict?—Yes, and robbed—all the material is stolen. In 1890, owing to local effort, the Great Southern and Western Company were approached and the Chairman consented to take over the line accompanied by a grant of £12,000 of public money. The money being forthcoming they refused to ratify the undertaking given and declined to take less than £24,000, with a guarantee of any further sum that might be found necessary to equip it to the satisfaction of the engineer of the Board of Trade. And to make the terms still more onerous to the satisfaction of their own engineers' requirements over and above, and that they should also be guaranteed to be recouped for any loss that might accrue in the work of the line. I have no doubt, if reasonably worked, the line would have paid and made a most excellent "feeder," and proved a great public utility and convenience. But it was wrecked by the Great Southern Company. Again, I have unimpeachable authority that the line could pay and would pay well. I think if it was taken in comparison with the narrow gauge lines in Ireland the thing would have paid remarkably well. The ordinary gauge works out at a profit of about £1,240 per mile, that is the average, taking the branches and everything else, it is the average earnings for Ireland per annum per mile. In light railways the average earning is £259 per mile. The only two exceptions to that are two short lengths which earn about £150 per mile. Now, what I say is the Great Southern and Western Railway would have got a very good bargain if they had taken the line even if it cost them £12,000. They said they would take £24,000 with a further guarantee. They practically wanted to be recouped for any loss they might have sustained after getting their own terms without their giving any guarantee for proper working.

14399. I understand they merely wanted to be reimbursed any loss in the working?—Yes, but what undertaking did they give or what guarantee that they would work is sanely, or reasonably. When the Great Southern and Western Railway worked it in 1869 they only gave credit for earnings over the twelve miles, and piled on all charges of both stations. They gave no credit for the great feeder for traffic which it brought to their main line.

14400. If the company got no profit they wanted to be reinburesd?—Anyone reasonably approaching the matter would be struck with the large district that is around Portumna.

14401. What is the population about?—The population of the town is not large—about 2,000 or 3,000.

14402. It is 961?—Yes, but there is a large district; it is a smallish town. There is rather a good district on this side, and on the other side, and you will notice there is no railway connection practically in the whole of that district. There is a very large back country to it.

14403. Now, have you considered what is the remedy for all this?—May I say my idea is that I would like to see the railway company rising to the situation, but I am afraid it would be impossible to expect them to do so. I do not see any other way, considering that Ireland is situated in a position that she cannot afford competitive traffic—there would not be sufficient traffic in the whole country to support competition, which would be a good paying traffic and which could be worked for the benefit of the country—but failing competition, I do not see that there is any other reasonable way I can suggest except that the Government should take over the line by State purchase.

14404. To put it shortly, you are strongly in favour of State purchase of Irish railways?—I advocate State purchase, and nothing else, under Parliamentary control. I assume that under a single management carefully exercised on business lines there would be an enormous saving in the dead charges for management, fixed charges for management.

14405. Let us confine ourselves to the principle?—The principle I go on is this. You have 300 directors and 26 Boards of Directors and general managers for managing 4,000 miles of Irish railways. A single line of that mileage in England is managed by a single Board of Directors. The cost of the management of Irish railways is excessive, and would, if modified and managed under one control, if unified under one control there would be a very great saving and a very great benefit to the country; the rates would be considerably less. I estimate it would save about £300,000 per annum.

14406. That is only your own idea. You are strongly of opinion that the nationalisation of railways that we have heard so much about would be an advantage generally to the whole of Ireland?—What I say is this——

14407. Please answer yes or no to that?—It is difficult to answer a question yes or no sometimes.

14408. Is it?—Because you may fall into a fallacy. My idea is that the railways as managed at present are very unsatisfactory. I do not think it could be worse, State purchase would modify that if it was properly worked. I think it would be the only remedy that I can see that would be reasonable to them.

14409. One word about the passengers: you are in favour of a large reduction in the second-class fares?—I am.

14410. Making a small percentage over the third-class fares?—A friend gave me that paper. He paid that excess fare from Banagher to Belmont. The fare was 5*d.*, and the excess was 5*d.* for travelling second-class. What I say is that it costs you fully 60 per cent., and sometimes 70 or 80 per cent difference between the third and the second-class fares, whereas in England I have travelled from Holyhead to London for a couple of shillings additional in the second-class.

14411. Some of the second-class fares in England are about 10 per cent. over the third?—Yes—most of them.

14412. No—don't run away with that idea; some of them are?—Any of them that I have had to deal with are not much more than that.

14413. You may take it from me that a small portion of the second-class fares in England are 10 per cent. above the third; your idea is that something of that sort should be done in Ireland?—Yes; I think the second-class carriages are very little used, and that

they would be used by respectable people if they had that facility. I will give you an instance. 12*s.* 3*d.* is the third-class return fare from Birr to Dublin, and 20*s.* 6*d.* is the second-class.

14414. Nearly double?—It is the same thing all over the country.

14415. Do you know the first-class charge?—Somewhere about 30*s.*

14416. Your point is that 10 per cent. above the third-class fares for second-class would be a great advantage to the travelling public of Ireland?—A great advantage.

14417. *Lord Pirrie.*—The first-class is 100 per cent. higher.

Witness.—Might I also say that I object to the special rates and the rebates that are given to traders. I am unfortunately in a position where the Great Southern have a monopoly absolutely; and they are giving special rates and rebates outside. This was sworn by two traffic managers—the Great Southern and Western and the Dublin and South Eastern Railways.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—This question of rebates over the Limerick Junction to Waterford line is actually at present the subject matter of a judgment which has been reserved by the Railway and Canal Commission. The Dublin and South Eastern Company having got running powers from Waterford to Limerick began granting rebates within the last twelve or eighteen months. The Great Southern and Western did the same. Each applied for an injunction to restrain the other from doing so; the applications were heard about a fortnight ago, and the judgment is to be given.

14418. *Chairman.*—The thing is *sub judice* and besides the proceedings have been printed and we have got them. (*To Witness*).—Where did you get your information?

14419. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do you want to say that you object to it?

Witness.—I want to say that it hits me very hard, and the thing being *sub judice* should not prevent me from saying so.

14420. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—Both the railway companies are objecting to it.

Witness.—They denied it here in evidence given before you in November last that such was given. It was denied here by the Great Southern; and it was afterwards admitted and sworn to in evidence; and I say that it is one of the worst forms of bribery and corruption. These rebates are not put in the rate book; they are secret and illegal.

14421. Did you get any rebates?—No, they would not give me any rebates. I never looked for them.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

14422. In support of your argument that mixed consignments should be charged at the rate applicable to the larger scale of gross weight, you gave some figures: what was the total weight of your consignment?—7 cwt. 2 qrs. 21 lbs.

14423. What would your idea be as to the charge?—Of course I can understand that in England it is necessary where very large quantities of these things are carried, but in Ireland, where you have only small quantities, and there is no difference in the risk, I maintain that these classifications are antiquated and out of date, and should not apply to Ireland.

14424. Would your contention be that where a mixed consignment is sent by one consignor amounting to, say, 8 cwt. the charge should be not under 3 cwt. scale, but according to the scale applicable for the whole consignment?—Yes—that practically would be a fair thing. When the total consignment is above the scale rate the component parts of it should be above the scale rate, and should be charged at the rate applicable to the gross weight of the consignment.

14425. That is what it comes to. Then, as to the through rate affecting you in the instance of furniture, your contention is based on the assumption that the proportion of the rate that the Irish railway people receive is 21*s.*?—No, not at all. My assumption is based on the fact that the proportion that the Great Southern would get—which may be over that—would be very considerably less than the amount that they charge for local rate.

14426. The local rate is 47*s.*?—62*s.* 11*d.*

14427. You are penalised to the extent of 42*s.*?—No; I don't live in Tralee. I say I mean that the Irish manufacturer is penalized to the extent of the difference between 21*s.* 8*d.* and 62*s.* 11*d.*

14428. What you say is based on the assumption that the Irish railways get a very small margin; would your idea be that their proportion of the through rate should be levelled up, or that the other company's proportion should be levelled down?—I say that if it pays them to carry at the low through rate it should pay them to carry at a low local rate. The local trader is entitled to have carriage on the same basis.

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14429. It is very difficult to say anything until one knows what the proportion of the through rate that the company gets?—It is of course; and what I believe the Clearing House principally act on is the mileage.

14430. Your contention is that it prejudices the home manufacturer?—Yes.

Preferential cross-channel through rates prejudicial to home manufacturers

14431. In page 3 of your statement you say that the companies raised the owners' risk rate from Glasgow to Birr by 2*s.* 6*d.*—is not that so?—Yes.

14432. That is the owners' risk rate?—That is the owners' risk rate, but I should say that the company's risk rate would also be raised.

Railway company's explanation of the increased rates between Glasgow and Birr.

14433. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—There is a perfect explanation of that. They are prohibited from raising any rate without the consent of the Railway and Canal Commissioners. But the rate did not include the dues that were payable in the Clyde and in Dublin. The steamship company withdrew the rate, and then the dues were added in order that the through rate might be put in force again, and the actual money paid under the 30*s.* 10*d.* rate is 2*d.* less than the old rate plus the dues. The steamship company withdrew the rate because they found a difficulty in collecting the dues. Then almost the entire dues were put on the rate. That is the explanation.

Witness.—How is one to know that?

14434. *Chairman.*—Well, of course, you have got it now.

Witness.—Their undertaking was to give notice. I say that if that occurred they ought to have given notice, and to have applied for it.

14435. But their contention is that instead of the rate being advanced it is actually reduced by 2*d.*?—Well, it might be the other way and a great deal more.

14436. At any rate you could not know it?—I could not know it.

14437. You know it now?—But I say they ought to do what they undertook to do, namely, give notice or apply for leave to make the rate.

14438. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You say that they did not tell you why the extra rate was actually put on, and that in their explanation they have not done so?—The 28*s.* 4*d.* rate was, to my knowledge, actually in force for ten or fifteen years.

Chairman.—Plus the 2*s.* 6*d.* for dues.

Lord Pirrie.—You had to pay the dues then.

14439. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—The dues were paid by somebody

Witness.—They were not paid by the consignee.

14440. *Lord Pirrie.*—I don't think the railway company's answer meets your argument.

Witness.—They gave a promise and did not keep it.

14441. *Lord Pirrie.*—His contention is that he paid 28*s.* 4*d.*, and that by a new regulation the railway company raised it to 30*s.* 10*d.*

Witness.—They can do anything they like on the same authority. Supposing it was an arbitrary rate, how are we to know it?

14442. *Chairman.*—But an arbitrary rate would be illegal.

Witness.—Well, when you come to deal with the conscience of a railway company you have to be very careful. I say that they have not carried out what they undertook, and I look on it as a very serious matter.

Necessity for a cheaper and simpler court than the Railway and Canal Commission to adjust disputes urged.

14443. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Your next point is that the illegalities of which you complain, or that you allege, cannot be satisfactorily inquired into under the present system by the Railway and Canal Commissioners?—Yes.

14444. I suppose you probably agree with the evidence given by other witnesses that a simpler and cheaper tribunal of some kind would be better adapted to the requirements of the country?—Quite so.

14445. Without expressing any opinion as to the composition of it?—The cheaper and the more easily reached the better.

14446. As to the accommodation at Birr—do you mean to convey that there is absolutely no store of any kind at the station?—No.

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14447. You say that there is no store where cement and flour and other things that would suffer by exposure can be placed?—Well, it is not that. I don't think it would be reasonable to suppose that station to station goods should be taken out and stored; but what I do complain of is that if the railway company charge demurrage they ought to give facilities for the trader to take delivery in weather that is unsuitable for the open air.

Inadequate facilities at Birr Station discussed.

14448. I understand you to say that you have actually to unload flour and certain other articles from the wagons into your carts?—That's so.

14449. But that if the wagons came alongside of the store the goods could be lifted into the wagons?—There is an expense in lifting out of the wagons and into the store.

14450. In the way of unloading?—Yes.

14451. You pay for that in the way of a terminal charge?—Well, I suppose I do.

14452. As regards the demurrage, you complain that it is very often for goods that are actually not at the station?—One case that I have here did occur.

14453. Probably, there will be some explanation of it. It may be an isolated case?—In one case they applied for demurrage, and the second time that they applied for it it was their own fault.

14454. You refer to the German railways?—I don't think these figures can be relied on.

German railway rates and methods not admitted to be analagous.

14455. In Germany there are only station to station rates; there is no collection or delivery; there are no warehouses; in some cases demurrage is charged after six hours' delay, and there is great shortness of wagons, so that there are not so many advantages in the German system as you seem to imagine.

Witness.—Yes.

The history of the Portumna derelict railway discussed.

14456. And if you want quick despatch you must send by either an express or a passenger train at very much higher rates?—It was only just the difference in the cost that struck me as being considerable; but I dare say there may be other inequalities, and it would be necessary to account for some of them. I don't for a moment take it that all the disadvantages are confined to this country; but I am quite open to the opinion that under the present system of management you cannot get anything settled right. But under Government you could bring pressure on them. There have been concessions on the part of the Government of late years. They were quite willing to contribute money for the Portumna line, but the country was not willing to penalise the ratepayers to an expense beyond what was right and fair.

14457. After the Great Southern Company had thrown away £15,000 on it, as you have said, would it not have been a very good "deal" if the Board of Works had contributed £12,000 and the Great Southern Railway Company £10,000—would it not have been a very profitable one for the Company? I believe the permanent way has been taken up?—No; it was working at the time that they were offered it for £10,000. The equipment, staff, and everything were on the line when they refused to take it over for £10,000.

14458. You say there is great scope for the development of traffic. Does not a great deal of traffic go down by Lough Derg to the Shannon?—The railway practically controls the canals, so that there is no advantage to anyone in getting things by canal.

14459. How does the traffic at present go from that district which you say would go along the Birr and Portumna line if it were made—does it not go down by Lough Derg, to a large extent?—Any that is; but there are many disabilities connected with it. In fact, you would not send anything good by it.

14460. By steamer service?—Yes.

14461. And you think that the Great Southern Company, knowing, as I suppose they did, that they might develop a big traffic by the line, refused to buy it at this very low price?—My belief is—and I had it from the late traffic manager of the Great Southern and Western Company—that the line would have paid well; but there was some dispute or unfortunate matter of temper between the parties that were concerned in the re-opening of the line and the Chairman for the time being, and I think that was unfortunate for the country.

14462. When you say that the Chairman in 1890 consented to take the line, I presume that that was a mere personal consent; he had to put it before the shareholders and the directors?—I cannot answer that.

14463. On the face of it, it looks as if the Company agreed to take over the line and subsequently receded from their agreement?—I cannot say that; but I say that a man in the position of Chairman of a great company ought to have known what he was doing.

14464. With regard to passenger accommodation, several witnesses have given evidence that the second-class accommodation might be improved with advantage, so as to attract a considerable number of third-class passengers; whilst others have urged that it would be better to do away with the second-class altogether, and confine the train to first and third class; what is your opinion about that?—My opinion is that perhaps a first and a third class would be satisfactory, too, but with a second class that might be used. At present they are running empty.

14465. I suppose in any case you would not do away with the second class, unless the third class could be considerably improved?—Certainly not.

14466. If you had first and third classes with better accommodation it might meet the requirements of the travelling public?—Well, of course, where ladies are concerned it is rather difficult to say.

14467. With regard to State purchase, have your Council considered what form the controlling power should take?—Well, there is a mixed Council in Birr, and many of them are Home Rulers. Personally I am not; and I don't think it is a thing that I could well enter on.

*14468. Did they pass any resolution in favour of State purchase?—Oh, yes.

14469. Were you deputed to represent them on that point?—I was deputed to represent that my Council are in favour of State purchase or unification.

14470. You say under the Imperial Parliament's control?—That was my idea.

14471. They did not demur to it?—They gave me a very free hand.

14472. By "mixed Council" you mean that it includes a considerable number of Protestants or Unionists—is that what you mean by "mixed Council"?—Yes. They say that we have no right to be there, but they have taken us in.

14473. Did you submit this draft of your evidence to them?—Oh, yes. I submitted it to them and they approved of it.

14474. You say, "Imperial Parliamentary control"; does that negative their being in favour of what I call Nationalist or Irish control?—Well, I think they are in favour of State purchase; but I do not think they have considered the matter very carefully with regard to all the details; and I thought that as the Post Office is managed exceedingly well, if the railways were managed on the same principle as the Post Office I would be very well satisfied.

14475. You are not prepared to give any opinion as to the particular body which should take over the control of the Irish railways?—The Council did not go into any details, but they are in favour of the National movement.

14476. Did the Unionists in the Council express any opinion that while they might be in favour of State purchase, or the control of the railways by a Government Department—did they go so far as to say that they were not in favour of the control of the railways by an Irish Department?—Well, what they said was that the matter was not before them. There was nothing definite before them, so that they did not discuss it.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

14477. Only one question. I take it—and I want to have it clearly in the evidence—that what you object to is the railway companies giving special rebates or special rates to large traders and to others, and that you want everyone to be treated alike, even to the extent of carrying Irish goods at the same rate as foreign goods?—Those are my opinions. I also wish to say that the Great Southern and Western Railway carry goods from Sligo *via* Limerick to Dublin, 334 miles, at the same rate that the Midland Great Western Railway Company carry between the same places *via* Mullingar, a distance of about 134 miles.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gerald Fitzgibbon, K.C.

14478. You quoted a through rate from London to Tralee, and you object to it as letting goods be carried from London to Tralee at a proportionately cheaper rate than Irish goods can be brought down from Dublin?—That is only one. I can take you to other points.

*See Appendix No. 39–VI.

14479 You gave a rate of 125*s.* a ton from London to Tralee, and say that the rate is considerably more if the goods are carried by Dublin?—As a matter of fact, I may state that on the same class of goods coming into the town I live in, which is a hundred miles or so nearer to Dublin, we are paying 140*s.*

14480. Do you know that the London to Tralee rate is ruled by the long sea rate?—My point is that if it pays the Great Southern and Western Company to carry this through traffic to Tralee for a proportion of the rate, it should pay them to carry our traffic through the country at the same rate; and what I also state is, that I consider it a matter of very great hardship that other places on the line, which are not competitive, should be penalised in order to pay for the concessions given to other places.

14481. Do you know that the rate from London to Tralee is ruled by the long sea journey from London to Cork?—What I state is, that if the Great Southern Company carry the traffic—and I have heard it sworn to by the railway manager—if they cannot accept the traffic at through equal rates, they can stand down; but if they do accept these rates it should pay them all round. Representing the Birr Council, I do not say that I have had to complain myself; but there have been complaints.

14482. Have you had to complain?—I have not been in a position to do so.

14483. You gave us a list of times and trains between Birr and Portumna?—Yes.

14484. Surely your object ought to be to let the Portumna people into your town; what do you want to go to Portumna for?—Well, people would like to go to Portumna, too; and there is Lough Derg, which the Shannon steamer serves.

14485. Then they don't want to go back in twenty minutes?—Nor does anybody that wants to go from Portumna to Birr want to go back in twenty minutes.

(The Commission then adjourned for an hour.)

On resuming after the luncheon interval,

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Mr. W. K. Fayle, J.P., representing the Birr Urban District Council.

14486. *Chairman* said.—Mr. Fayle, I think I omitted to ask you whether any resolution had been passed by your Council?—Yes, sir, there was a resolution passed by the Council.

14487. Have you got a copy of it?—I have a copy. It has been sent to me this morning, if I may place it before the Commission.

14488. We will have it printed on the notes. What is the date do you know?—The 14th of March, yesterday. I received it this morning.

14489. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—Is it a general resolution?

Chairman.—It is generally in confirmation of the evidence that has been given.

The following is the resolution:—

Resolution of the Birr Urban District Council *re* working of Nenagh and Limerick Branch.

"Resolved.—That we, the Birr Urban District Council, hereby unanimously direct public attention to the gross and needless waste of time on the Nenagh and Limerick branch of the Great Southern and Western Railway, and to the unnecessary time allowed for the journeys of most of the trains, particularly as regards the portion of the line from Birr to Ballybrophy. Also to the fact that owing to the late hour of starting and the slowness of the first train from Birr the people of the town and neighbourhood are seriously prejudiced. That notwithstanding repeated promises of improvement the Railway Company has failed to effect any reforms."

Mr Edward Sclater, J.P., examined by the Chairman.

Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P., representing the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

14490. I think, Mr. Sclater, you appear before us on behalf of the Irish Cattle Traders and Stock Owners' Association?—Yes.

14491. You have been deputed to appear?—I have.

14492. I need not ask you whether you have had any experience of the Irish cattle traffic?—I have been connected with it for the past 24 years, and I farm a large area in the County Meath.

14493. Are you in the habit of buying cattle in the county?—Yes. I buy cattle myself and rail them up from the West.

14494. And do you then export them?—No, I feed them.

14495. Then your business is really internal?—Yes, except in so far as large numbers of the cattle go across to England.

14496. After you have sold them?—No, I sell them in Wakefield, Manchester and Liverpool.

14497. During the long period which you have been connected with the cattle traffic in the country have you noticed any tangible improvements in the matter of transit by the Irish railways?—I gave evidence ten years ago before the Committee that inquired into the inland transit of cattle. I think some of those recommendations have been acted upon. There is a certain amount of improvement, but still our Association considers that the condition of affairs is not at all satisfactory.

14498. But still you admit that during the last nine or ten years there has been some improvement?—Yes, a considerable improvement in many ways.

14499. Of course the cattle traffic is a very important item in connection with the prosperity of this country?—I should say one of the most important, if not quite the most important.

14500. Is there any particular railway which you are acquainted with that you wish to refer to as not having brought up their improvements to the standard that exists in other countries?—I have principally dealings with the Midland Great Western Railway, and as far as our Association is concerned we have a very large number of complaints. I can give evidence on two cases which happened last November to myself, and I have evidence of two others belonging to members of the Association to put before the Commission.

14501. Then let us deal with the one company first. What do you consider is necessary that they should do that they have not yet arranged for?—Well, the speed of trains is a matter that requires great improvement. If I may quote this particular case in point. There were 180 bullocks that I bought at Ballinasloe on October 5th, that is the large Ballinasloe Fair. The roads were so blocked that I did not get them to the railway till ten o'clock in the morning.

Instances of faulty arrangements for dealing with traffic from fairs on M.G.W. Railway system.

14502. You mean the country road?—The road from the fair to the station.

14503. That had nothing to do with the railway?—So far it had not, but they were on the loading bank at 10 o'clock in the morning. They were boxed at 2 o'clock, but the cattle did not arrive at the Hill of Down till 11 p.m., a distance of 56 miles, so that they were from 10 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night on the company's premises.

14504. Of course there must be at a fair like the Ballinasloe fair a great pressure on traffic?—There is.

14505. And you cannot expect, and do not expect, I am sure, that the transit could be carried on the same as under ordinary conditions?—Certainly not.

14506. Did you expect some delay on these occasions?—Certainly.

14507. But, speaking generally, on the whole is the traffic worked from the fairs in what I may call a reasonable and fair manner?—I do not think it is thought so by our Association.

14508. That is what I want, the views of your Association?—Our experience is that the first lot of specials are got away in good time, but towards the end there is either an absence of wagons or of engines, and so forth, and we are often left, as in this particular case, a very long time; they were kept hours waiting there in the wagons, and that injures any cattle. There is a similar case from Loughrea a month afterwards. I had 100 cattle. They were put in the wagons at 1.30 and when I left at 3.30 the cattle were still there, and they did not arrive at the Hill of Down till two o'clock in the morning, so that they were for twelve hours in the trucks. That I believe was caused by there not being an engine.

14509. Was that a large fair?—A large fair.

14510. They had sent away several specials before that?—They had, and I must say I was shown every courtesy by the company individually, but it is a very serious loss to have cattle left all that time in a wagon.

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Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P., representing the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

14511. I suppose the Midland Great Western at these places have a foreman or a man superintending the cattle traffic in addition to the ordinary staff?—I think they have for the large fairs, but what always strikes me—and I have heard a great many complaints about it—is that the man who is in charge of the arrangements is out on the tracks, and it is very hard to see or communicate with him. I have always boxed my own cattle and sheep. I see it all done myself, and I find a difficulty in getting anybody who has any authority. The head man is outside on the track.

14512. I suppose he is arranging for the special trains?—Yes, and what occurs to me is, if I had anything to say to it, that I would like to see somebody in charge of the loading banks.

14513. Would you rather see a man superintending the loading than superintending the marshalling of trains?—So far as our Association is concerned, yes.

Recommendation that a responsible Railway official should be placed in charge of loading banks at all big fairs.

14514. You think it would be a great advantage to your Association, to the cattle dealers in general, if in these special cases of fairs, where there is a large cattle traffic to deal with, that there should be a special man appointed to look after the loading, in addition to the man who looks after the marshalling of trains?—That is what I would suggest. I have two other cases that I have been asked to bring forward. One is the case of a Mr. Goodman, of Laracor. I have a copy of his letter here.

14515. You need not read it all. State its import?—The facts are that he bought 20 bullocks in the fair at Roscommon on November 6th, and he sent them to Nobber station. He saw them into wagons at 11 o'clock in the morning, and they did not arrive until seven o'clock the next morning, the distance being 132¾ miles from Roscommon to Nobber. The cattle in that case were 20 hours in the train, and one bullock was killed and two very much injured.

Alleged faulty arrangements for the conveyance of fat cattle traffic to the Dublin weekly market.

14516. Now, of course there are other places where fairs are held—have you any complaints in regard to what I may call the general arrangements for the carrying of cattle to Dublin markets?—Well, we do not find the arrangements for the fat cattle are satisfactory. The cattle are kept too long in the wagons, and I have had personal experience in that respect during the whole of this year. Through the whole of last summer I found that the cattle going about 30 miles from Kells had to leave by the 11 o'clock train in the morning and they are not here in Dublin, as a rule, until 5 o'clock in the evening, so that there is a whole day in the train.

14517. What is the distance do you say?—About 30 miles, I think.

14518. Is that general, or is it exceptional?—It is general over all that district.

14519. *Lord Pirrie.*—From 11 o'clock till when?—Till nearly 5 o'clock. I have had a good deal of correspondence with my friend, Mr. Tatlow, about it, and occasionally the train is expedited, but I find that after one or two weeks it went back again and was as bad as before.

14520. *Chairman.*—What you are referring to now is the regular traffic every week?—Every week for the market.

14521. When is the market?—On Thursdays.

14522. The cattle are sent away on a Wednesday?—On Wednesday. There is a special train for the market.

14523. What time is it due—is it in the ordinary time-table?—It is a regular goods train.

14524. What time is it due to arrive, do you know?—I do not know. It is generally late, because extra wagons have to be taken up. To some extent efforts were made to deal with the matter.

14525. It is not a special cattle train?—It is not. Later in the season the manager gave us an extra engine and ran them up specially, and once they get to Kilmessan, two stations from Navan, they ran up to Dublin in good time. There is a great advantage in favour of a person living in Dublin, who has only got to take his cattle from a field into the market, as compared with the man who has to train them a considerable distance, as keeping them in wagons all day causes a very serious loss.

14526. Is the deterioration perceptible?—Far more so with fat cattle than with stores.

14527. And the price is reduced accordingly?—Yes, the cattle look shrunk up. I think that is a very serious loss to our people, and that applies equally on the other line, the line from Mullingar. I have cattle from there too.

14528. Are the trains arranged at convenient times for the cattle traffic as a rule?—Well of course for the large fairs there are special trains from the fairs, but the ordinary goods trains are run at night principally. On a large number of the Irish railways the goods trains run at night, and that is very inconvenient to the members of the cattle trade. In the first place they have to be boxed late at night, which is a very serious expense to the man. He has to pay for their keep and extra men to look after them, and cattle are more apt to fall in a wagon at night than in the day time, and they are not so easily looked after by the company's servants. If it could be managed that the cattle traffic could be worked in the day time it would be much better. The dealers and shippers, and soforth, at a small fair have to box their cattle very late at night or very early in the morning.

14529. That applies to odd wagons of cattle?—Yes, but the inconvenience it causes often prevents people buying odd lots.

14530. The natural time for a goods train traffic is at night?—For goods, but not for boxed cattle.

14531. What do you suggest in regard to telegraphic communications at the Irish railway stations?—I should suggest there should be an opportunity of sending a telegram at all the company's stations. It is so, I believe, in England on a great many of the railways. I know it is on the London, Brighton, and South-Coast Railway. At any station there you can hand in a message to the company's servants who transmit it to the post office. That would be a great thing for the trade of Ireland if that could be arranged, so that the companies' servants would take post office messages, not to deliver them of course, but to forward them. That is at work on the London, Brighton, and South-Coast Railway now, and it is a great boon to everyone.

14532. Don't the Brighton Company act for the Post Office?—If they have no postal telegraph office at the station they transmit the message to one.

14533. You suggest that a similar arrangement should be made in Irelanl?—I would suggest that any station-master should be allowed to receive messages from the public and transmit them on the company's wire to postal telegraphs.

14534. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At a good many stations we have these facilities now?—We have some, but there are a great many places from which you cannot communicate. You go to the office and there is the company's instrument and you cannot use it.

14535. At only the smaller stations?—Only the smaller stations.

14536. *Chairman.*—I think at the smaller stations in England you will find there is no communication like that?—I know it is at every station on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. In Ireland I have had a difficulty myself in going to small fairs and not being able to send a telegram to my men to meet the cattle.

14537. *Lord Pirrie.*—Won't the company send it for you?—I have been refused the use of the company's wire.

14538. Though you want it for the sake of the company's benefit to get the wagons for the cattle. Surely at any station where there is a market the company will send a telegram to their main office to say so many wagons must be here for that—is that not done regularly for the market?

Chairman.—That is not what Mr. Sclater means.

Witness.—I want to communicate with my men to meet the cattle, and I cannot do it in some small stations.

14538A. *Lord Pirrie.*—If you telegraph that you have bought some many cattle and to meet the cattle, won't they do it?—I have been refused that. I know they won't.

Mr. Tatlow.—We have no right under the arrangement with the Postmaster-General to send telegrams except on railway business. I may just say at a great number of stations on the line there is a postal telegraph office, but that is a matter that depends

more upon the Postmaster-General than on us, because he is at the expense of paying for it.

Witness.—I throw it out as a suggestion. I threw it out, also ten years ago.

14539. *Chairman.*—I think we should like to hear from you, if you can give us briefly, any suggestions which you are disposed to make in the interests of the cattle trade in this country. Take first the matter of the construction of trucks?—Yes, I would like to suggest that all new trucks that have to be built should have a boarded roof, and a footboard that would let down.

14540. A loading board?—Instead of having to carry the loading board along. There is very often a danger of cattle getting down between the wagon and the platform. The other plan is the best.

14541. The same as the flap, or fall, for horses?—Yes.

14542. And that all the cattle trucks should be covered?—That is what I suggest.

14543. What is your second suggestion?—That there should be a standard truck of specified dimensions, which should be adopted generally.

14544. I think it is done now, isn't it, on all the new vehicles?

Colonel Plews.—All new wagons are built to a standard.

14545. *Chairman.*—You do not suggest alterations in the existing vehicles, but that all new vehicles should be built upon a certain standard?—Yes, and that screw couplings should be introduced.

14546. The same as on passenger rolling stock?—Yes.

14547. *Lord Pirrie.*—Have the Agricultural Board not put that into one of their conditions?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—We will prove that all new trucks are built to standard dimensions, and according to the requirements of the Board of Agriculture. They have approved of a cereain sort of truck, and they are built to that standard now.

Lord Pirrie.—With screw couplings on them?

Mr. Tatlow.—The screw coupling is not of much advantage. It is not required by the Board of Agriculture.

Chairman.—There are no cattle trucks with dead buffers?

Mr. Tatlow.—No; they are all spring buffers.

14548. *Chairman (to Witness).*—I do not see any great advantage in the screw coupling?—I would not like to argue with you, sir, on that.

14549. You have practical experience?—I would say screw-coupled cattle trucks would go much easier.

14550. At any rate, we will take that as your suggestion?—That is one suggestion.

14551. What is your fourth suggestion?—That the power conferred upon the Department of Agriculture by the Act of 1899 has been no practical use in the matter of grievances to those engaged in the cattle trade, and that some less expensive facilities of a practical nature should be given to traders to bring reasonable complaints before the Railway and Canal Commissioners.

14552. Are you enamoured of the Railway and Canal Commissioners' Court?—No, I do not think we, any of us, are. What we mean is that we should have facilities before some tribunal——

14553. And that the tribunal should be cheap and easy of access for traders?—That is what is required.

14554. No matter what it is called?—Not the slightest difference.

14555. I think you said just now that the communications with the managers of the railways are always of a friendly character?—Certainly.

14556. In fact, I gather that you really have no serious complaint to make except that at these particular fairs where congestion of traffic may cause some delay. Of course, it would be infinitely better for you if the cattle could all be sent away in a reasonable time, but the pressure at fairs causes delay, and, I gather from you that the delays are exceptional and not chronic?—What we complain of principally is the speed of goods trains.

14557. Too fast or too slow?—Too slow. We consider there should be a limit to the speed of cattle trains.

14558. In which direction?—That the company should be bound to run them at a certain speed.

14559. At a minimum of, say, what?—I was going to suggest 16 miles an hour.

14560. That should be the minimum?—Yes.

14561. What would you fix as the maximum?—Well, if I may quote Mr. Tatlow, who stated ten years ago he made inquiries in this matter and he found his average speed was 16 miles an hour, and that the running speed was up to 23 miles.

14562. We have had evidence before us that the special cattle trains in Ireland run at from 20 to 25 miles an hour?—They certainly did not run at that speed in these two cases I have spoken of.

14563. Were those special trains?—Yes.

14564. You did not tell us whether that delay was in the running or at the stations?—I cannot say. I think in the second case the delay was in the station, because there was no engine.

14565. And the train, when travelling, might have been running at 30 miles an hour for all you know?—It might.

14566. But odd wagons of cattle carried in a pick-up goods train are necessarily slow?—Yes.

14567. They stop at every station?—Yes.

14568. Your suggestion with reference to the speed refers only to the special trains of cattle traffic?—I should like it to apply generally to all trains where you carry cattle.

14569. It is a very important thing that goods traffic should not be left at intermediate stations in the same manner—I mean one wagon of cattle going from any point you like to another point with ten wagons of goods on a pick-up train, it is just as important at these intermediate stations that that traffic should be set down and picked up so that your particular wagon of cattle should be carried?—It is.

14570. I should have thought your recommendations would be confined primarily to the special trains for the cattle traffic?—To ordinary market trains it ought also to be extended. We only get special trains at special times of the year. My cattle have to go by the ordinary goods trains. They often have to stand two hours at Navan—where the change is from the Great Northern—while the shunting is going on. Where there are no special trains at the fair at Navan, if I buy cattle at it, if I send them by the ordinary goods train they will not be delivered at the Hill of Down, 56 miles away, until the middle of the night. If I want to send the cattle by what they call a "P" wagon and get the cattle away on passenger trains, of course, I have to pay extra for that, and that is the only way we can get cattle taken in a satisfactory manner.

14571. Is there much difference between the "P" wagon and the ordinary rate?—Something like 33 per cent.

Mr. Tatlow.—Twenty-five per cent.

Witness.—It greatly adds to the value of the cattle.

14572. What have you got to say in reference to cattle sold in England—in Wakefield or Manchester—what do you want to say about that?—Well, as to the cost of selling a beast in Wakefield or Manchester without going into the actual details of the freight and soforth is, roughly speaking, for a £20 beast 22*s.* or 23*s.* a head. That is including everything.

14573. *Chairman.*—5 or 6 per cent.

Witness.—And to Manchester it would be about 12*s.* 6*d.*

14574. *Lord Pirrie.*—Or more than third-class fare?—Yes. And then we have to compete with the Americans, of course, in Liverpool or Manchester

14574A. Surely there are no American cattle in the cattle markets?—No; in the trade we have the competition.

14575. Of course, we have nothing to do with that?—No.

14576. What is the point you wish to raise then?—I only wanted to show the difficulties the trade has, the freight is so high, but others will go into this matter.

14577. *Chairman.*—Now, do you think things would be improved with reference to the cattle traffic if there was any radical change in regard to the ownership of the railways in this country—supposing there was an amalgamation of the various railways, and that there were two or three or four great systems instead of the twenty-seven we have heard of—do you think that would be of any advantage to the cattle industry?—Personally speaking I think it would. I am not speaking on behalf of the association; I am giving you my own views as a business man.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P., representing the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

Recommendation that a minimum rate of speed for cattle trains should be fixed.

Extra cost for conveyance of cattle on Passenger trains

Amalgamation of the smaller systems with the larger railways recommended.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P., representing the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

14578. You favour the amalgamation of the small lines with the larger, is that so?—Yes, that would be my own idea.

14579. Under one or more systems?—I would not like to go any further than four systems.

14580. More than one?—I have not thought out the matter sufficiently as to how that should be carried out.

14581. At any rate may I take it that you with your large experience in this important trade in the country are on the whole satisfied with the arrangements that exist?—I would not like to commit myself.

14582. How far can I carry you?—I think we have a great many complaints.

More consideration to suggestions from the cattle trade by the Railway Companies suggested.

14583. Then what remedy do you suggest?—Well, I have one remedy—I would suggest that the railway managers should give more consideration to the suggestions of the cattle traders, and I think that would tend to increase the volume of traffic.

14584. Yes. But have not you access to the managers of the railways?—Oh, decidedly.

14585. I mean that they are approachable?—Yes.

14586. And you can see Mr. Tatlow?—Yes; I very often see him.

14587. And others?—Yes.

14588. And you have not found them unreasonable?—I did not find Mr. Tatlow, certainly, unreasonable. He is most courteous to me in every way.

14589. With that exception shall I take it you have no general complaint?—I don't think the railway system is satisfactory, so far as the cattle trade is concerned.

14590. Then, I ask you again what do you suggest as a remedy?—Well, I have suggested one remedy.

State ownership of the Irish railways not endorsed.

14591. You have—is that the only one; do you think it would be improved if the State owned the railways?—No, I do not, personally. I have experience of the working of State railways in other countries—at least I have seen the working of the system, and I think people in this country who have seen it would never be in favour of it—I do not think they would be very much in favour of it.

14592. *Chairman.*—I think that is all I have to ask you.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

14593. What countries do you refer to in your last answer?

Witness.—I have no knowledge of any countries but Germany and Belgium.

14594. No experience of Australia or New Zealand—the Colonies?—No.

Condition in which cattle arrive after long sea passages.

14595. You have given very clear evidence in regard to the cattle traffic and the great loss you suffer by the cattle being injured on the journey, by these delays at stations, and the delay on the journey from the various towns to the particular port to which you are sending them—would you be surprised to know that in sending cattle by steamer, say, 4,000 miles across the Atlantic they are improved from the day they are shipped until the day they are landed owing to the care taken of them, and that in fact greater care is taken of them on the cattle steamers than what is actually taken of them on large passenger steamers. In other words, that when a little gale or storm arises the captain is bound by his instructions from the managers to so guide his steamer, or put the steamer, that there may be the least motion, the least annoyance to the cattle, so as to prevent their injury. What I take your intention or desire to be is that the railway companies should try to carry the cattle without injury so that they should be landed at their destination in the same condition as after a long voyage on a steamer?

Witness.—That is my idea.

14596-7. You would think that what can be done on board a steamer that has to run all the chances of storms and fogs and fearful wintry weather could be done much more easily on land where every possible convenience is obtainable?—Well, I have no experience of the sea; I may say that.

14598. But from your knowledge of what occurs on the land would not you think it would be much easier to carry cattle with less risk on land than on sea with all these inconveniences?—I think certainly there might be a very large improvement.

14599. That brings me to the question of screw couplings. Do you not think that if the steamship companies make every effort and adopt every mechanical invention for the purpose of carrying cattle safely it would pay the railway companies to put in screw couplings and prevent what you complain of—is not that the way the case stands?—Yes.

14600. Don't you think the Department of Agriculture, if they in any way considered the interests of the farmers, should make that one of their first considerations?—I think it is a most important matter.

14601. I agree with you so thoroughly that I was perfectly amazed when Mr. Tatlow said it was not one of the conditions in carrying cattle, because I personally have often felt that I would not allow cattle to be carried on a train unless there were screw couplings. Do you go quite as far as I do?—Quite, my lord. I am not able to carry it out in detail, but generally I agree with what your Lordship says. I would like to see it carried out if possible.

14602. You would, and probably as a large shipper would not object to pay something extra for this convenience?—Quite so.

14602A. Therefore it should be the duty of the Department to do something in this direction. Another of the complaints you make is that there is no one of importance at the fairs to see that the cattle trains are sent away in time. Have you never observed a local director with the general manager to see that these things were attended to. Don't you think that is one of the duties of a railway company, and that the local director if he were there could notice things which could be considered at the next Board meeting?—I have often seen them present.

14603. Do you think they would earn their fees a great deal better if they did that sort of thing?—Yes.

14604. I understood you to say that the cost of sending cattle to Manchester was 23*s.* a head. Was that merely the commission?—Oh, no; the total cost of sending the beast there and landing and selling him there. I was putting it as against foreign competition.

14605. You say that is what it costs you—does that include the cost of carriage?—It does. It is included in that sum. It is the total of selling the beast.

14606. It includes the cost of carriage and commission in selling the beast?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

14607. I think you said your business is chiefly in the West of Ireland?—Yes.

14608. And principally with the Midland Great Western Railway?—All complaints have been so.

14609. Are you in a position to speak in regard to the Great Southern and Western Railway?—No; there are other witnesses from the association.

14610. I take it that in your opinion, at those fairs, the difficulty of getting the cattle away arises from a deficiency of rolling stock?—Well, certainly in the last few years it has not been so often as formerly.

14611. You have heard the evidence from Mr. Prentice that at last October fair at Ballinasloe there were 21 special trains with 700 wagons despatched, starting at half-past eight o'clock in the morning—in other words, one-fourth of the available wagons on that line—you could hardly expect the company to provide more than that?—I had 182 cattle at that fair.

14612. They were there, you said, at ten o'clock at night and were not boxed until two in the afternoon?—I can't answer for the delay, but the delay took place.

14613. Seven hundred wagons means 5,000 or 6,000 cattle?—Ballinasloe is a very large fair.

14614 The complaints are not so much with regard to special cattle traffic trains as in regard to small quantities of cattle bought at these small local fairs—it is with regard to them that damage ensues?—There has been damage throughout all the cattle fairs.

14615. Even by the special trains?—Yes the cases I have mentioned have been special cattle trains.

14616. They have precedence of goods trains?—They do, and they should have.

14617. But they would hardly have precedence of passenger trains?—I would not like to ask that.

14618. Don't you think that in regard to the small fairs something might be done by the cattle dealers combining together and sending off the cattle in larger quantities?—I think something might be done in that way.

14619. The railway companies are always very glad to make up ten or twelve wagons, that only means 80

Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P., representing the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stock Owners' Association.

or 90 cattle, and if they can be sure of getting the traffic they will go to the trouble and expense of providing a special train; where it does not come up to that the wagons are attached to a goods train?—I know that specials have been offered for ten or twelve wagons, but whether it has been carried out I am not in a position to say.

14620. The point I want to put to you is this. If the cattle dealers would try and co-operate and combine a little bit instead of each man sending off his little lot of cattle—combine together and arrange with the railway company—would not that be better than each one sending off on a particular day nine or ten cattle?—I think it is not very easy to carry that out. I think there is a great difficulty in that being carried out practically, because dealers buy certain cattle at certain fairs and they want to get them away because they have to pay for the keep of them, and in small fairs they only get a certain number of cattle.

14621. But at small monthly fairs is it not your experience that cattle to the extent of 200 or 300 are bought and sent away by train?—If there was that number I think the railway companies would make provision for them.

14622. But my point is this: there is a great want of co-operation amongst the cattle dealers in not trying to act together and getting the advantages the railway companies would offer them?—I cannot follow you quite as far as that. I don't think you could carry out the idea quite as far as you go.

14623. But still they might do something?—Yes. But I think the fact that you have not railway facilities detracts from the size of the fairs. People go to fairs because there are railway facilities, but the man who goes to small fairs is principally the small dealer. These people buy in small lots, and they want to get their cattle away.

14624. And then it would not pay them to keep them for perhaps a day or two until two or three of their friends came in?—It could be done occasionally, but I don't think it would be of any practical value what you suggest.

14625. With regard to any injury that has occurred, have you found any difficulty in recovering compensation from the railway companies; you gave an instance of that at Roscommon?—Yes. Well, that, I believe, was the subject of considerable correspondence between the man and the railway company. I think I am right—they arranged that.

14626. Have you any experience yourself?—I had a beast killed two years ago, and I was met very fairly by Mr. Tatlow.

14627. That is a point I wish to bring out—it is your experience that the companies have met you when there has been a fair case?—Yes, in my case, but I believe my association have had very considerable difficulties with the railway companies.

14628. Have you any instances to bring before us?—No, I have not.

14629. You say that cattle suffer great loss through shunting by tumbling down in wagons; have you any idea of the loss in actual weight that would result to a beast?—Of course it depends on the size of the beast. I find that they lose from ¾ to 1 cwt. I weigh every beast myself I send out.

14630. You would say they lose ½ cwt. at any rate?—Yes. Of course, a great deal depends on the condition of the cattle. You must weigh the cattle and see them yourself. If fat they won't weigh so much. It is very difficult, however, to arrive at any statistics with regard to that.

14631. With regard to the recommendations of the Department of Agriculture, I see in Mr. Prentice's evidence that the falling doors to the wagons, screw couplings, and vacuum brakes are part of the recommendations of the Transit Committee, and that the Committee advised the Board that the vacuum brakes should be increased.

14632. *Chairman.*—Mr. Tatlow has denied that.

Witness.—It was part of the recommendations of the Transit Committee of ten years ago, but it has never been carried out.

14633. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And you remember most of these recommendations were subsequently acted on in accordance with a minute prepared by the Department of Agriculture?—Some were not.

14634. But Mr. Prentice gave evidence to show they had been—that effect was given to the Board's recommendations in an order issued by the Department—the order of 1904 with regard to railway delays and the carriage of animals. So that at any rate the points to which you have directed our attention, so far as the Department is concerned, have been brought to the notice of the railway companies, and, in the view of the Department's Inspectors, have been carried out?—I don't think that is the opinion of the Association.

Lord Pirrie.—Keep yourself right.

14635. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You are totally opposed to State purchase or the buying up of the Irish railways, and you state in connection with that opinion that your conclusions were formed in consequence of your experience of the railways in Germany and Belgium. In what way was your experience derived?—Only through travelling in these countries. My reason is that I think there would be a great want of competition, and we have not great competition at present. We would have none then.

Reasons for objection to State ownership.

14636. You don't complain of the fares?—I am thinking of the speed of the trains and the general accommodation.

14637. Well, I believe, it is generally recognised that the accommodation on the English railways and to a less extent in Ireland is far superior to that on the Continental railways?—Decidedly.

14638. But I don't think that good accommodation is everything. Don't you think that any disadvantages in that respect would be more than compensated by the very much lower passenger fares and goods' rates that are charged in those countries as compared with the high rates charged in this country. You can't have everything, you know?—No; I see your point. But my opinion is that if the State had charge of the railways there would be a complete absence of competition.

14639. Would you require competition. There would be no object in trying to draw traffic in different directions, and it would go to the nearest centre. You would not be drawing traffic from the West of Ireland right away to the east. It would probably go to some nearer port?—In my opinion, when the small lines were under State control traffic would be much worse served than at present.

14640. But that couldn't be—they would be under one management—under one system of State management?—They might, but that would be my opinion.

14641. If you are opposed to State purchase you would be still more opposed to nationalisation?—Yes.

14642. You have no doubt at all on that point?—No, no doubt at all.

14643. *Lord Pirrie.*—You say you are in favour of the competition of one railway against another. You were speaking some time ago of Navan. They have two railways from Navan to Dublin?—They have.

Limited competition between Irish Railway Companies under existing conditions.

14644. If you send cattle, do you get any advantage—can you send cattle from Navan by the Great Northern and by the Midland at the same price exactly?—Yes. I am very glad you have reminded me of this point. At the present time there is very little competition, but there would be none then.

14645. At present there is little competition, because the railway companies have an agreement among themselves, therefore nationalisation or amalgamation without competition—you don't gain or lose anything at that point?—Not at that point.

14646. There is no better example than Navan—you can send cattle direct through to Dublin—yet there is no competition between the railway companies—they have started the same rate and they have stuck to it?—Yes.

14647. Therefore you lose nothing by it?—Nothing actually there.

14648. What about this Central Organisation, with a small body—assuming even amalgamation—elected 15 directors, say, and one great able manager, that would cost less than the 300 odd directors, 26 managers and 26 engineers at present?—That would cost less certainly. That is my view.

14649. It would save £350,000 or half a million of money—that would go to the reduction of rates?—Yes, I think so.

14650. It would be a benefit to you. Then, on the whole, you are rather in favour of amalgamation?—Yes, I said so before.

Amalgamation of the smaller lines advocated.

14651. *Lord Pirrie.*—I don't think you did. I think you meant it, but it was not quite clear.

Witness.—I said the small lines should be amalgamated.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. Edward Sclater, J.P. representing, the Irish Cattle Traders and Stock Owners' Association.

Reduction in rates through amalgamation anticipated.

14652. *Lord Pirrie.*—You are in favour of amalgamation so as to get if not a saving of rates a reduction of rates?—I don't see—perhaps a reduction of rates.

14653. Well, I want you to state what benefit you would gain by it?—You are assuming that the State is purchasing.

14654. Not at all—I am speaking of amalgamation—I am taking your own answer, so that it would——?—I beg your pardon. Now I understand.

14655. A reduction in the railway rates—so that the saving would go towards the reduction of rates?—Yes, I agree with you. I was afraid when you were speaking of rates you meant——

14656. *Lord Pirrie.*—I mean the rates on traffic.

Witness.—Quite so; it is my mistake.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gerald Fitzgibbon, K.C.

14657. You quoted instances from Ballinasloe fair last year and Loughrea fair of last year—was not Ballinasloe fair unusually large?—Yes.

14658. A very large increase on the year before?—Yes.

14659. And your own cattle were amongst the lots sent off?—Yes.

14660. There were over twenty specials sent off?—Yes.

Delays to live stock from M G.W. Rly. fairs, and arrangements for transit,

14661. Was not the Loughrea Fair also very exceptional?—It was a particularly large fair, too.

14662. Your cattle are carried on the line from Meath—isn't that a single track?—Yes.

14663. What is the commission on beasts sold in the Dublin market?—The ordinary commission is 4*d.* in the £1 on the beasts sold.

14664. How much would that be a beast?—That depends.

14665. That would work out in the case of these beasts to practically the same as the carriage for 90 miles. The fair from Ballinasloe for eight beasts would be £2 5*s.* 8*d.* and the commission at the rate you say would be considerably more?—I don't quite follow you. I don't raise the question of the expense of the rates.

14666. I don't know, but I thought you quoted some figures. The railway companies do to a great extent give you specials from Meath fairs—Kilmessan and Navan?—Yes, at Navan they do.

14667. And they also carry cattle by passenger trains at goods rates?—That I am not aware of.

14668. When the goods service does not suit they will put on a wagon or two of cattle?—But not at goods rates.

Chairman.—Perhaps they will promise to do it.

14669. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—I think the railway companies recognise the great courtesy with which you have given your evidence. Don't they give from the West special trains for six wagons—from Ballinrobe and Claremorris on the branch lines?—That I cannot answer.

14670. You have not known the existence of that?—I have not.

14671. The sixteen miles an hour you asked when you were giving your evidence as to speed of cattle trains—you were referring to from the time of loading to the time of delivery—you give no evidence as to running speed?—I have not given any evidence except that that should be the rule—that is sixteen miles an hour.

14672. But you stated that they book so many miles an hour to run a given distance—from Loughrea to the Hill of Down and Ballinasloe to the Hill of Down—you have not actual knowledge of the running of the train?—No.

14673. *Chairman.*—He said so.

Witness.—I took those two cases. We have many more complaints. If we take the Irish cattle trade generally we can make a very large number of complaints.

14674. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—There are some unreasonable people in your association.

Witness.—I have only given you my complaints—two in a month.

14675. As to the question of screw couplings on the cattle wagons I wish to say that it will be gone into by the railway companies specially. They have a special witness to deal with that.

Lord Pirrie.—I was going to ask the Chairman to get the gentleman representing the Department of Agriculture to go into the question again. The evidence given by him and the statement on the subject by Mr. Tatlow have been contradicted.

Mr. Tatlow.—What I said, sir, was that the Department had made no order on the companies about screw couplings.

Lord Pirrie.—Yes.

Mr. Tatlow.—I don't know that he said that they had made any such order.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That was not proved, but merely that he gave the recommendations of the Transit Committee.

Mr. Tatlow.—I would like to mention that the Secretary of the Departmental Committee on Inland Transit of cattle wrote a letter to the railway companies before issuing their report asking what the railway companies were doing with regard to those matters, and with reference to the particular point of the screw couplings. I wrote the Committee on 15th January, 1898, stating my company directed me to say that none of the trucks for the conveyance of live stock on goods trains are fitted with screw couplings, and that evidence before the Committee dealt fully with this question. I also stated that we had 49 specially constructed vehicles for the conveyance of live stock by passenger trains, all of which were fitted with screw couplings.

Chairman.—That is the "F" wagons.

Mr. Tatlow.—I will see that the whole thing is put before you when we come up.

Lord Pirrie.—I think, personally, it is a great misfortune that the Department of Agriculture gave no information that lead us to believe that these were the orders, and we were told that these orders were not heard of in Belfast, and that Belfast was specially exempt from orders which were in existence in every other part of Ireland. Again this morning we heard it, but you have fortunately corrected the statement that all railway companies had to put screw couplings on wagons for cattle. That is a misfortune, and should be cleared up.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I think Mr. Prentice's evidence was to the effect that a number of recommendations were brought forward by the Transit Committee, and had been acted on in pursuance of the Department's Order of 1904, and that special attention was devoted to the construction of wagons. I don't think he actually said the screw couplings had been fitted.

Chairman.—No.

Mr. Tatlow.—That is so.

Mr John M. Cox examined by the Chairman.

Mr. John M. Cox., Seed merchant, Dundalk.

14676. I think you are a seed merchant in Dundalk?—Yes.

14677. In a large way of business?—Yes.

14678. How long have your firm being in business?—Over fifty years.

14679. Well, now, I suppose you buy grass seeds and other seeds in various parts of Ireland?—Yes.

14680. And they are taken into Dundalk?—Yes.

14681. Do they go through any process at your firm?—They are cleaned of impurities—the impurities are all taken out of them.

14682. And they are re-sold?—Yes, re-sold.

14683. Do you sell again to the people in Ireland or export from Ireland?—Both.

14684. When I speak of export from Ireland I assume that you send to England?—Yes.

14685. Do you send any beyond England?—Oh, yes.

14686. To the Continent?—Oh, yes.

14687. Is that sent by direct steamer or from Liverpool, or Fleetwood, or some of those places?—Principally by two routes, Liverpool and Leith.

14688. From Dundalk?—Yes

14689. How does it go from Dundalk to Leith?—By steamer to Ardrossan and rail to Leith.

14690. And then shipped from Leith to the Continent?—Yes.

14691. Do you find that the rates that you have to pay are any serious impediment to the development of your trade?—The cross-Channel rates are reasonable, and the Continental rates are reasonable, but the rates to the South of Ireland are prohibitive.

14692. You have no complaint to make as to the rates for traffic that you send out of the country?—No.

14693. And the only complaint is that Dundalk rates to various stations in Ireland are, in your language, excessive, and operate against the development of your business?—Undoubtedly.

14694. Are there similar seed establishments down in the South of Ireland?—No, it is only a North of Ireland industry. Rye grass is only grown for seed in the North of Ireland, and the North of Ireland practically supplies the United Kingdom.

14695. You do send from Dundalk to the different parts of Ireland?—Yes, I paid £450 in freight to the Great Northern Railway last year.

14696. For the year?—Yes.

14697. That does not seem a large sum?—I think it is a good deal.

14698. I suppose the stuff was sent out in small parcels?—It is not a constant trade the year round, but a season trade.

14699. Perhaps, looking at it in that light, it is a big thing; have you represented to the railway companies that the rates in operation are a drawback to your extending the trade?—I have.

14700. Have they met you?—No, not at all; at least the Great Northern Company have met me fairly, and I can't say they did not give me everything I could expect, but from the attitude of the Great Southern and Western you would imagine that they did not want the traffic at all.

14701. How do you get to the Great Southern and Western?—Through Dublin. —

Colonel Plews.—Through the Great Northern.

Chairman.—On a through rate from Dundalk?

Colonel Plews.—Yes.

Chairman.—I thought you would have arranged a through rate?

Colonel Plews.—So he says.

14702. *Chairman.*—Your account is that the Great Northern Company, when you had made a complaint——?

Witness.—Yes, about four or five years ago I applied for wagon load rates from Dundalk to the South of Ireland, and the Midland and the Great Northern gave wagon rates, but the Great Southern refused. I asked them for through rates for a long time, and they refused to give them, but they did give through rates eventually, and the rates they gave were the two rates added together, and in some cases these rates were in excess of the local rates. I can give you the figures.

14703. We don't want all the figures; just give us an instance?—I wanted this year to do business in Tralee, and there is nobody in a better position to do the business in Tralee if I were put on proper terms as regards the railway rates. I asked the rate to Tralee, and the Great Southern and Western quoted a rate from Dundalk to Tralee of 41*s.* 2*d.* per ton ordinary rate, and 35*s.* per ton exceptional rate. I found out when in Belfast that the rate from Belfast to Tralee by rail was 25*s.*, whereas for fifty miles less the rate was 10*s.* more. I think they might as well have written to me to say, "You are not at liberty to do business in your own country, because the rate is prohibitive." That rate is on the rate book, and its effect is to stop traffic.

14704. *Lord Pirrie.*—How is the rate to Belfast fifty miles less?

Chairman.—Dundalk is fifty miles less distance from Tralee than Belfast.

14705. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The rate from Belfast was 10*s.* lower than the rate that they quoted you from Dundalk.

Witness.—Yes.

14706. *Chairman.*—Is not the explanation this, is not there a steamer direct between Belfast and Cork?

Witness.—There is such a steamer.

14707. And is not Tralee not far from Cork?

Lord Pirrie.—The opposite side of the country.

14708. *Chairman.*—Is not that the explanation.

Witness.—Yes.

14709. Have not you a steamer now from Dundalk to Cork?—We have now.

14710. But it was not in operation then?—No.

14711. Now, you have a steamer from Dundalk to Cork, and you can send the traffic that way?—It is not direct.

14712. Is the Belfast to Cork steamer a direct service?—I am not sure.

Colonel Plews.—Yes it is.

Witness.—It only goes to Cork, and the stuff would require to be transhipped.

Colonel Plews.—It calls at Waterford and Cork.

Lord Pirrie.—Dublin, Waterford, and Cork?

Colonel Plews.—Not at Dublin; it does not call there.

14173. *Chairman.*—With that through rate in operation you found you could pay the local rate and save money—the through rate from Dundalk to Tralee?

Witness.—The local rates are about as bad.

14714. But dealing with the local rates you save money?—No; Kingsbridge to Tralee is 25*s.*, and there is 8*s.* from Dundalk to Dublin, and 2*s.* cartage, that is 33*s.* and 2*s.*

14715. The rate that was quoted to you from Dundalk to Tralee, was then of such a character that it was impossible for you to do any business?—Quite so.

14716. You don't do any business?—Quite so.

14717. With the same rate in operation as is in operation from Belfast to Tralee you could have done business?—Yes.

14718. And Belfast is fifty miles further than Dundalk?—Yes

14719. About fifty miles?—Yes. I then wrote asking them, when I found out that the rate from Belfast was 25*s.* a ton, to give that rate to me with a fifty mile less carriage. The Great Northern wrote and proposed to make this rate from Dundalk, and I received a letter from the manager of the Great Northern saying that he proposed to the Great Southern and Western Company to make a rate from Dundalk at 25*s.* per ton, station to station, owner's risk, but that they could not agree to this.

14720. We understand that. There is a very large number of cases here which I do not think it necessary to go into; just give us another case dealing with cross-Channel rates?—The cross-Channel rate from Dundalk to Hull is 15*s.* 5*d.*, that is steamer to Liverpool, thence rail.

14721. What is the 15*s.* 5*d.* for?—Per ton.

14722. Is it for grass seed?—Oh, it is grass seed that I am talking of.

14723. At owner's risk?—At owner's risk.

14724. Dundalk to Hull, 15*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

14725. What comparison do you want to make?—Compare it with the Tralee rate of 35*s.*

14726. Give us another instance, can you?—I can.

14727. Take Clonmel?—Clonmel, I think, is 26*s.*

14728. 26*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

14729. Are the conditions the same in each case, Dundalk to Clonmel and the others?—They are both at owner's risk rates.

14730. And both in the same quantities?—Yes.

14731. From Dundalk to Clonmel, it is 26*s.* 5*d.* a ton, whereas from Dundalk to Hull, that is from Dundalk to Liverpool, and to Hull from Liverpool by rail, it is 15*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

14732. The conditions being the same?—Yes.

14733. We need not go into any of the other figures here?—I can give you any amount of similar cases.

14734. Give us a rate to the Continent, from, say, Dundalk to Antwerp?—22*s.* 1*d.*

14735. Still on grass seeds?—All on grass seeds.

14736. Is there any traffic sent?—Oh, yes.

14737. Give us now a typical case of the stations in Ireland?—Take Mallow.

14738. Yes?—29*s.* 7*d.* from Dundalk.

14739. Now, how does the traffic go from Dundalk to Antwerp?—Via Liverpool.

14740. And across the country?—No, two steamers, one to Liverpool and one to Antwerp, wholly sea.

14741. Have you got a Continental port where the transit is across the country in England?—Take seed shipped *via* Leith, steamer to Scotland, thence rail, or take Hamburg, Dundalk to Hamburg *via* the Caledonian Railway, the rate is 22*s.* 6*d.*

14742. But first of all there is a steamer from Dundalk to what port in Scotland?—To Ardrossan.

14743. Then it is transhipped there and brought by the Caledonian Railway to Leith?—Yes.

14744. And shipped then from Leith to Hamburg?—Yes.

14745. And that is the exact rate which you have given us?—Yes.

14746. You guarantee that?—Yes, I know it.

14747. Give us another case in Ireland; take Fermoy?—Yes. Fermoy is 32*s.* 1*d.*, from Dundalk to Fermoy via the Great Northern Railway.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. John M. Cox., Seed merchant, Dundalk.

Steamer service from Dundalk to Southern ports.

Instances of rates from Dundalk to English and Continental towns comparatively lower than inland Irish rates.

Mar. 15, 1907.

Mr. John M. Cox., Seed merchant, Dundalk.

14748. To sum up what you have got to say, you think that if the local rates were based somewhat proportionately to these throughout rates that your particular business in Ireland would largely increase?—Yes; what I complain of is that there is no inclination whatever to meet me as a trader. I don't know whether that is other people's experience or not, but it certainly is mine. There is no concession whatever, and these rates are prohibitive, and if the company consulted their own interests they would try to carry traffic by land instead of allowing it to go round by sea. I will just take the case of Youghal in County Cork. I had to send it by sailing vessel from Drogheda.

Alleged disinclination on the part of the Irish Companies to meet Traders requirements.

Rate for grass seeds, Dundalk and Youghal, higher than the sum of the locals.

14749. Sailing vessel from Drogheda?—Yes. I sent it to Drogheda by rail, and from Drogheda to Youghal by the sailing boat, because the rate from Dundalk to Youghal is 37*s.* 6*d.*; the rate from Dundalk to Cork is 22*s.* 6*d.*, and the local rate from Cork to Youghal is 7*s.*, making 29*s.* 6*d.* The through rate is 37*s.* 6*d.*, and the other rate, 29*s.* 6*d.* I sent by the through rate at 37*s.* 6*d.* and they refused to refund the money over the local rate.

14750. Have you the correspondence?—Oh, yes.

14751. Let me look at it?—Here it is.

14752. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the seed rate from Drogheda to Youghal?—The rate by sailing vessel from Drogheda to Youghal, worked out at about 14*s.* a ton. The rate from Dundalk to Youghal, sailing from Drogheda is about 20*s.*

14753. *Chairman.*—I think that correspondence is not complete, so I won't refer to it?—It is going on since last March.

14754. Well, it is not complete, and we won't deal with it at all—they speak about writing further?—All right.

14755. You may have a satisfactory reply when you get back?—I hope so. I am twelve months at it now.

Complaint as to passenger service: night mail from Belfast to Dublin.

14756. Now, what have you got to say as regards passenger traffic?—My experience of passenger traffic is particularly on the Great Northern, and I think the trains are all that could be desired, with some exceptions. We have a very good service from Dundalk to Dublin, and Dundalk to Belfast. There is an exception; the night mail train from Belfast is an awful train.

14757. A what?—An awful train, it is a bad train.

14758. Why?

Colonel Plews.—There is a great delay at Portadown for postal purposes.

Witness.—It is a worse service for passengers than the cattle get. This train leaves Belfast at 10.30 p.m. and arrives in Dublin at 5.0 a.m. next morning.

14759. *Chairman.*—I am afraid you did not hear the previous witness?—I did, but this is worse.

14760. You are not stuck in a wagon all the night?—I was there one night, and I would not relish it again. I would like to point out about the North Wall connection. The Great Northern run a connection for morning trains that leaves Dundalk sometime about 9 o'clock, and they run it to form a connection with the North Wall boat, which sails about 11 a.m., and it is a very good service, but coming back again it is a very bad service. The North Wall boat is due to arrive about 8 o'clock at night, and the train from Amiens Street leaves at 8.20. If the boat happens to be 10 minutes late you yourself, and perhaps your family, are stranded in Dublin for the night. There is no other train, and if it is Saturday night you cannot get down to Dundalk, certainly you cannot get to Belfast, until late on Sunday evening. You can't get to Dundalk until 12 on Sunday.

Better train connection to Dundalk with steamer service Holyhead and North Wall, urged.

14761. What do you suggest, as a practical man, should be done?—Put that train back half an hour. It leaves at 8.20, and does not get into Belfast until 12.

14762. But suppose 50 people were going from Dublin to Belfast, and it was important that they should get there as soon as possible, and that five people were coming from this boat, which would you suit in the matter of the train service?—The train stops at every station and they have to fill up time, talking and singing at the stations. It should do the journey in an hour less.

Colonel Plews.—This is, again, a Post Office train, a scheduled train, and we have no control whatever over it. The Post Office fix the time for every station.

Witness.—I think the public ought to be considered in some way.

Lord Pirrie.—Are you, Colonel Plews, prepared to alter the time if the Post Office give their permission?

Colonel Plews.—Yes.

Lord Pirrie.—I think that I can undertake to get that done.

Witness.—That is satisfactory. You will admit, Colonel Plews, that the present arrangement is a bad one.

Colonel Plews.—It is very good for the public generally, and there are very few passengers by the North Wall boat.

14763. *Chairman.*—You have got something to say about the third-class passengers not being allowed to travel by the mail trains?—I consider it most unfair.

14764. Tell Colonel Plews that?—I have told him that. The Great Northern Railway is living on local traffic, and residents on the main line are not allowed to travel third-class, although occasional passengers from cross-Channel are allowed to do so. Even if you have a second-class ticket you cannot travel by the mail except you pay excess fare. The other day an English cattle dealer travelled North from Dublin on third-class ticket without excess, but a Dublin man with a second-class ticket had to pay excess fare.

14765. We had all that explained before. You have something to say with reference to a cheap tribunal for traders to appeal to, in cases where they think they are unfairly treated?—Quite so.

14766. Do you think the present Railway and Canal Commission Court is not a proper tribunal?—Well, I have been, myself, before that several times, and I have never seen very much good come of it.

14767. Not being in your favour?—They never decided anything. They passed copies of letters between me and the railway company.

14768. Just stop a minute. You don't follow my question. I am dealing with the Railway and Canal Commissioners, not the Board of Trade?—I don't know about this other thing.

14769. Do you know that you can communicate with the Board of Trade?—Yes.

14770. You have communicated with them?—Yes.

14771. Do you suggest any tribunal in this country to which you could appeal?—I think an independent tribunal of say one railway man, and one trader, with either an independent man, or a man up in law points could decide a great many grievances.

14772. Do you know that that is the exact constitution of the present Railway Commissioners Court?—I am glad to hear it, but it is hard to get near that court.

14773. It is a disadvantage having the court in England?—I think so.

14774. But still they come over here when there is any case to be heard?—I have always been told that it is very expensive. You cannot appear in person.

14775. It is the litigants themselves who make it expensive?—Perhaps it is.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

14776. Can you give us the rate for grass seed from Dublin to Tralee, for instance?—Yes, 25*s.* from Kingsbridge to Tralee, and from North Wall to Tralee, 25*s.* 5*d.*

14777. Have you any knowledge or any evidence to show that there is any importation of grass seed from Scotland to Dublin, which finds its way thence down to the South of Ireland by the Great Southern?—No. I should think that that would go through Cork.

14778. By sea?—Yes, sea to Cork.

14779. The Great Northern, you said, proposed a through rate from Dundalk to Tralee at 25*s.*?—Yes.

14780. If the Great Southern and Western Company could get any traffic of the same kind in grass seed on their own system, and could carry it to Tralee for, say 25*s.* they would naturally not be inclined to accept merely a portion of 25*s.* for the carriage from Dundalk to Tralee?—Quite so.

14781. You think they don't carry grass seed from Dublin?—I don't say that. I say they don't carry it at the 35*s.* rate for us.

14782. Do they carry any grass seed on the Great

Southern and Western Railway?—Oh, I think they do. I think you asked me if grass seed came in by Dublin. I think not, I think it is mainly by Cork.

14783. Where do they get it. I thought that that business was particularly confined in this country to Antrim and Down?—It goes by the Great Northern Railway and comes in by steamer.

14784. From other firms than your own?—Yes, there are other large firms in the North of Ireland.

14785. Do you suppose that these other large firms in the North have the same difficulties?—Not to the same extent. Belfast has great facilities in getting stuff sent by steamer.

14786. *Chairman.*—That is by rail all the way?—25*s.* by rail all the way.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

14787. I understand you to say that a great deal of grass seed goes down the Great Northern cheaper to Dublin on account of the sea competition than you get it?—It is as much for half the journey as they pay for the whole. The rate from Belfast to Dublin is about 8*s.*, and my rate was 8*s.* until the new competition steamer was put on.

14789. I suppose the Belfast grass merchant wants to send beyond Dublin?—They have a rate of 25*s.* from Belfast to Tralee.

14790. What do you pay from Dundalk?—They wanted to charge me 35*s.*

14791. I should have thought that the Great Southern Company would have been delighted to get your traffic or anyone else's if they were not getting it in another direction. Naturally if they get the whole they don't care to take the share of a through rate?—Yes.

14792. I presume your contention is that they do that?—I am sure the railway company act in their own interest; we all do that.

14793. You say that you were driven out, and could not do any trade in Tralee?—Quite so.

14794. Who got the benefit?—Belfast.

14795. At any rate, it remained in the country?—Oh, it did.

14796. You said that the grass seed trade has been driven into the hands of Scotch merchants?—To a certain extent.

14797. But to any appreciable extent?—The rate from Glasgow to Youghal is 29*s.* 2*d.*

14798. Is there any great quantity of grass seed coming from Scotland?—Oh, there is.

14799. By this sea route?—Yes, a large quantity.

14800. Of course, the very low rates that you admit you have to the Continent and England are very largely in your favour—you don't complain of that?—I do not.

14801. They enable you to do a very big trade?—I think so; but I ought to be put in a position to do business in my own country.

14802. Other people in your country get it?—They have greater facilities.

14803. Because they have the sea under their lee?—That's our crime—that we have no steamer.

14804. Other people have, and you can't help it. Your evidence is very clear.

Cross-examined by Mr. GERALD FITZGIBBON, K.C.

14805. One question, Mr. Cox. You said you applied to the Great Northern Company for a rate to Tralee. Was there any application for rates to Clonmel, Fermoy, and Youghal?—I made application some time ago for those rates.

14806. To the Great Northern?—Yes.

14807. Have you any idea of what the time was—we want to have it looked into?—I think you will find it was about 1904.

(*Witness handed counsel a list of rates*).

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Mr. John M. Cox, Seed merchant, Dundalk.

Suggestion that excessive inland local rates helps foreign competition.

See Appendix No. 13.

Mr. JOHN SWEENEY, Burtonport, examined by the CHAIRMAN.

14808. You appear before us on behalf of the Donegal County Council?—Yes.

14809. You are a member of that Council?—Yes.

14810. What particular rates do you wish to bring under our notice?—The rates I want to bring under your notice are with reference to what interests us, namely—our district fish trade. We have large quantities of herrings, salmon and other fish, and shell fish; and we consider that we are not fairly treated by the Irish railways in getting through rates by sea to London.

14811. Is there a trade now to London?—Oh, yes.

14812. And you think it would be developed and increased if more favourable rates were put into operation?—Yes.

14813. Have you made any comparison with the rates from Scotland?—Yes.

14814. For the same articles?—For the same articles.

14815. Let us have first of all the rate for fish from Wick to London?—The rate from Wick to London, which is a distance twice greater than from Burtonport to London, is less 3*d.* per cwt. for small lots, and it is less by 6*d.* per cwt. for lots over three tons.

14816. Have you made any inquiry as to the rates from other Scotch ports?—They offer a similar comparison.

14817. What is the rate for salmon to London?—1*s.* 1*d.* per cwt. cheaper from Wick to London than from Burtonport to London.

14818. We need not go into the other fish except the shellfish—lobsters and crabs—there is some difference in the rates?—The same thing applies. The distance from Wick to London is about twice greater than from Burtonport to London—and it is all rail—and part of the route by Burtonport is by sea, which should make the rate cheaper.

14819. Are the empties carried back—what is the difference of rate?—It is the railway rate from Wick to Glasgow and from Derry to Burtonport.

14820. What is the distance from Wick to Glasgow?—I would say about 400 miles.

14821. Is there a traffic of empty herring barrels between these points?—Yes; between Wick and Glasgow.

14822. There are also barrels made in Derry which are sent from Derry to Burtonport?—These same barrels are taken by steamer from Derry and by the railway that runs between Derry and Burtonport; and their rate for seventy-three miles is 13*s.* 4*d.* a ton for a distance of nearly six times less.

14823. Do you tell me that the herring barrels are sent all the way from Wick to Burtonport?—They are. I don't mean to say that all of them are used. There is a cooperage in the congested district, but it is not able to supply us with barrels.

14824. Of course this district is a poor district and the fish workers I suppose are a poor class of men?—The fish workers are a poor class of people. The principal people who migrate are the female population who become experts in the way of packing and curing; and they go as far as Shetland, in Scotland, from Burtonport, and as far as Berwick and Wick, in the north of Scotland, and to all the fishing ports. They take them in preference to the Scotch girls for the purpose of curing.

14825. They go about like the Irish harvest men?—Hundreds of them go off in the fishing season.

14826. And then come back?—And then come back.

14827. What do you suggest with reference to them?—What I say is that the fish curers should be encouraged to employ these girls by giving them cheap rates on the railway. The Lough Swilly Company have refused to give this concession.

14828. Do you know whether the harvest men travel at a cheap rate?—They make a slight concession if about half a dozen or ten harvesters go together. Singly, they give them no concession.

14829. But you don't ask the concession for single persons; you only want it when they go in numbers?—In the case of the girls three is the smallest number, and sometimes they go as many as fifty. There is a large population there, and the only reason why the population holds its own is the fishing traffic.

14830. Have you a tourist traffic?—We have to the highlands of Donegal. A great many people like to come for the wild scenery.

Mr. John Sweeney, representing the Donegal County Council. Complaint as to rates for returned empty fish barrels.

Cheap fares for female fish curers between Burtonport and Scotland recommended.

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Mr. John Sweeney, representing the Donegal County Council.

14831. Is there good hotel accommodation?—The hotel accommodation is good.

14832. Do you think the railway companies are doing all they can to foster that traffic?—No; as far as the Lough Swilly Railway has gone it has been a great loss to the country on account of the way it is worked, and the numerous break-downs. I had a particular interest in that line, as a baronial director for two years, on behalf of the ratepayers, to see that the public were served; and I had a lot of letters to write to the Board of Works asking them to put a pressure on the company to give a good service; but the railway company blame the Board of Works and the Board of Works blame the railway company, and between the two of them we can't get a good service.

Complains in his capacity as a Baronial Director of the line, that the development of tourist traffic is retarded by the inefficient working of Burtonport line by the Lough Swilly Company.

14833. Have you been in the room all to-day?—Yes.

14834. Did you hear the evidence of yesterday?—No; I wasn't here yesterday

14835. Do you say that the train service is bad in consequence of the bad road, the bad rolling stock, and the bad engines?—I do not. I don't agree with that opinion at all. I say it is due to the working of the line by the company.

14836. The Lough Swilly Company?—Yes.

14837. You said something about break-downs?—It is due to their putting on incompetent drivers and burning out their engines.

14838. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Are you one of the directors of the company?—I am a director on behalf of the ratepayers, which is quite a different thing.

14839. You have nothing to say to the working of the line?—Oh, yes, I have.

14840. To the working of it?—In respect of anything that inconveniences the public.

14841. You say that you are one of the baronial directors?—Certainly I am, on behalf of the ratepayers, to see that they are properly treated

English people deterred thereby from travelling on the line

14842. *Chairman.*—You say that the Lough Swilly Company are not properly developing the transit traffic because of the number of break-downs on the railway?—What I said was that their inefficient and bad service deters English people from travelling on the line. They have got such a name all over England that people are deterred from travelling by it. English people come for a holiday but not to be left on the road or in the middle of a bog.

Neglect of Lough Swilly Company to summon the Baronial Director to attend at Board meetings. Baronial Director's appeal to Board of Works on this point.

14843. You are a director of the railway and you say that it is the fault of the company?—I do, and I can show it.

14844. Have you brought the matter before your colleagues on the Board?—Before the Board of Works

14845. But before your own Board?—I never had the pleasure of being summoned to any meeting, for the two years that I was a director, but one. If you will allow me I will read the letter which I wrote to the Secretary of the Board of Works:—"Burtonport, 12th June, 1905. Sir,—I have been appointed a director by the ratepayers to safeguard their interests on the Board of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company; and though the Board of Directors have meetings I am never notified of the date and hours of such meetings; and therefore anything coming forward for the benefit of the ratepayers I am powerless to assist in, and anything against their interests I am powerless to oppose. I would feel obliged by your informing me what position I hold. The Act of Parliament which gives the ratepayers the right to appoint a director contemplates that he shall be summoned to the meetings of the directors of the company who are working the line; but as it is the company seem to treat me and my predecessor, Sir John Olphert, with contempt. They even went so far as to refuse him admittance to their meetings. I shall therefore feel obliged by your giving me the information—What are my rights."

The Burtonport line a paying concern notwithstanding bad working by the Company.

14846. Your opinion, then, is that if the line were properly worked by the Lough Swilly company these ratepayers would be relieved of the burden which now falls on them?—There is no burden. Even with the bad conditions with which it is worked it is still able to pay a dividend—that is, from Letterkenny to Burtonport, which is the line I refer to. A certain sum of money was borrowed and the part I represent—from Letterkenny to Burtonport—is only responsible for a share.

14847. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You are only responsible for £5,000?—That is all.

14848. *Chairman.*—Have you gone into the question of rates on general goods?—No, I haven't gone into that. At least I have gone into the question of rates on weighty goods, such as meal, and flour, and bread stuffs. I have found that wherever there is a sea competition they give a fair rate. Wherever we get away from the sea they charge nearly twice as much. There is a place called Crolly, which is nine miles nearer to Derry than Burtonport, and the rate from Burtonport to Derry for cured fish is 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton for five ton lots, whilst the rate to Crawley is 13*s.* 9*d.*

Chairman.—That is for a one-ton lot.

Witness.—But even for that one-ton lot it should only be 10*s.* proportionately.

14849. What about drapery?—Drapery is charged 15*s.*

14850. Take the rate for drapery from Belfast to Burtonport?—I find that double booking is cheaper than the through rate from Belfast to Burtonport.

14851. You mean that if it is brought from Belfast to Derry, and from Derry to Burtonport the two rates are less than the through rate?—Yes.

14852. Have you represented that to your colleagues on the Board?—I hadn't had the opportunity. It did not come before me at that time. The double booking is cheaper than booking through from Belfast to Burtonport.

Colonel Plews.—There is a steamer.

14853. *Chairman.*—The through rate from Belfast to Burtonport for goods in boxes is 42*s.* 9*d.*, at the owners' risk; whereas the local rate from Belfast to Derry for goods collected and delivered, still at the owners' risk, is 20*s.*, and that from Derry to Burtonport is 15*s.* 2*d.*; so that the two local rates are less than the 42*s.* 9*d.* Well, now, what are the remedies that you would suggest?—I would like to bring under your notice another rate. We can send cured herrings cheaper to New York than to Portadown or Enniskillen. I will give you the fares.

14854. You are talking of salt herrings?—I am talking about cured herrings in barrels. The rate from Burtonport to Derry for five-ton lots is 7*s.* 6*d.*, and the rate from Derry to Portadown is 18*s.*, that is 25*s.* 6*d.* The through rate from Burtonport by rail to Derry, from which there is a steamer to Glasgow, is 12*s.* per ton, and 1*s.* 6*d.* cartage; and the ocean rate from Derry to Glasgow and from Glasgow to New York is 11*s.* 8*d.*, making a through rate altogether of 25*s.* 2*d.* The through rate from Burtonport to Portadown is 25*s.* 6*d.*, that to New York is 25*s.* 2*d.*, Derry to Clones is 19*s.* We are anxious to develop the home trade. In sending to New York we are dealing with a lot of Jewish gentlemen, who are not very reliable; and the people in all the inland towns, if the rates were anyway fair, would be very glad to take our fish, and we are anxious to get them to do so; but under the rates that are made we cannot do it.

14855. Could you tell us what amount of fish traffic was sent away from Burtonport during the last year?—The last season was not a big season; it was partly a failure; but in the season before there was a very heavy traffic. We sent away, I suppose, about 15,000 barrels of herrings. That doesn't include the fresh fish.

14856. Is it done by trawling?—No, by net fishing. That does not include the fresh fish that we sent to London, Manchester, and elsewhere. I would say that there went as many more that way by rail.

14857. Have you made any effort in your County Council to get lower rates for this particular traffic?—Well, the Council did not take up the matter.

14858. They haven't taken it up; I suppose the senders of fish are not a class of men to take up a matter of that sort?—A great many people are not interested in it at all. I am the only party along that coast who does take an interest in it—that is, who is on the County Council. Therefore, the matter remained with one or two. The others are not interested and know nothing about it.

14859. Is there fish all the year round?—All the year round. We have the winter fishing and the summer fishing of herring and the salmon fishing, and at intervals the shellfish.

14860. So that it is an industry?—Oh, it is a vast industry.

14861. Going on all the year round, more or less, but according to the seasons, of course?—Certainly.

14862. And worthy of encouragement in the interest of Ireland and of the district?—In fact I might say that

but for it the district wouldn't exist at all. The land is poor, the district is populous, and the people could not support themselves on the land, and would have to go away to America, and their families would be scattered; but this industry keeps them in the country, and makes them comfortable at home, and enables them to improve their houses; and if the railway company could see their way to giving them facilities, it would be an advantage to everybody.

14863. Now, what do you say about coasting steamers round the coast of Ireland?—Coasting steamers do exist, and only for the coasting steamers our rates at Burtonport would be very high. They keep the railway often in check, and they are in a position to do trade from Killybegs to Londonderry and exist at present. There are three of them; there are Pinkerton and Co. and——

14864. Oh, that does not matter; private enterprise, I suppose?—Yes. There is a line of steamers from Derry, calling at Portrush, Coleraine, Newry, Dundalk, Belfast, and ends here in Dublin, going once a week. What I say about these steamers is if they could be created all round the coast of Ireland, taking traffic from short distances inland, and there is no place in Ireland more than 50 miles from the sea—if such a service could be established it would be an important factor to keep the railway rates in order. The only thing that would be required to carry out that scheme would be something to encourage the steamers to give a regular service.

14865. Of course you inquired, and I should like to know if you have any information with reference to rates for similar traffic, say, from Grimsby or Hull, or Yarmouth or Lowestoft, to inland places, so as to furnish a comparison between the rates in England and Ireland?—No, not further than Wick.

14866. But Wick is an extreme case?—I made London the centre for all.

14867. But your comparisons in this country are to show that the rates are very high from Burtonport to inland places?—Yes, from Burtonport to Clones and Enniskillen.

14868. Have you similar rates in your mind from any fishing port in England to similar inland places?—No, I did not get that. I would have got it if I thought it was necessary.

14868A. It would be interesting, because it is only by comparisons that we can draw conclusions?—I have not got that.

14869. Well, now, have you considered the question of amalgamation of the railways?—Yes, sir. I have considered it for the last while since it was mooted.

14870. Have you formed any opinion on the subject?—I think the nationalisation of the railways would be a very good scheme. It is a very big question.

14871. I wanted your opinion. You don't know, do you, is that the general opinion of the majority of your Council?—As far as our Council is concerned I think I speak for the whole of them, or nearly the whole of them, as far as that goes.

14872. And they are in favour of nationalisation?—Yes.

14873. Purchase by the State, and control by some body in Ireland for the Irish people?—Oh, in Ireland, certainly.

14874. That is your view?—Yes.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

14875. You said you considered, in connection with the fishing industry that it was very important to find work for the girls?—Yes.

14876. For the female population?—Yes.

14877. Do you look on that as a great benefit?—I do.

14878. You don't agree with Mr. Sweetman who, when he was giving evidence, said that any employment for women was of practically no use to Ireland; in fact, he did not, he said, want women to support their husbands or brothers?—The women form the biggest part of the population, and in a poor district, like ours, I think it is a necessity that the girls should work.

14879. I quite agree with you, and I think it is a very important thing?—Another thing I wanted to mention was about another industry we have in our district, the granite industry. We have the best granite in the world, red granite and grey, and all colours, and it is an industry which requires to be fostered. We have made an application to get the railway to take stone from the quarries, which are about a stone's throw from the Dungloe railway station to the sea at Burtonport, a distance of two miles, and the charge is sixpence a ton, and to make our own siding, and supply our own wagons. That was not very encouraging.

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Mr. John Sweeney, representing the Donegal County Council.

Rate for granite from Dungloe station to Burtonport complained of.

14880. Now, Mr. Sweeney, I don't think you can expect much else than that?—Sixpence a ton.

14881. Yes?—For large quantities.

14882. What do they do for that?—Bring up an engine and draw to the quay, a distance of two miles.

14883. Don't they find the wagons?—No.

14884. They don't find the wagons?—No, that is not my recollection, but Mr. Spence can tell that definitely.

14885. That is your recollection, sixpence a ton without wagons?—Yes.

14886. And making your own siding?—Yes, and supplying our own rolling stock.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Unsatisfactory working of Burtonport line attributed to bad management on the part of the Lough Swilly Railway Company and not to defective construction as alleged by Company.

14887. You attribute a good deal of the unsatisfactory working of the Burtonport Extension to the bad management of the Lough Swilly Company?—To their putting on incompetent hands.

14888. Well, bad management?—Yes.

14889. Well, there has been a great deal of discussion about it, and the evidence given before us up to this point has been that the inefficient working of the Letterkenny line has been due to the permanent way being very bad?—It has.

14890. You don't join in the condemnation against the Board of Works for having constructed the Burtonport Extension in an inefficient manner, and you don't allege that the complaints are in consequence of this badly-constructed line?—I don't. I am certain it is not due to the construction of the line.

14891. Can you give us any information as to your experience of the branch between Letterkenny and Tooban junction?—Yes.

14892. That connection is badly constructed; a light railway might suit?—It is a light railway. It is badly looked after.

14893. Now as to the directors of the Lough Swilly Company, they seem to be rather high-handed?—They seem to pay very little attention to the public welfare.

Constitution of the Lough Swilly Board of Directors and attendance of Baronial Directors at meetings discussed.

14894. How many does the Board consist of?—I think about half a dozen.

14895. Is it generally well attended to by these gentlemen?—Yes, it is a good paying line.

14896. Oh, it does well, but has anybody much voice in the management of the line except the Chairman?—I think the Chairman is the Company.

14897. I understood that he was the head and front and tail of the whole Company?—Yes.

14898. Have you made any representation to the Board of Works or Board of Trade about not being summoned to these meetings of the Board?—I did, sir.

14899. What reply did you get?—I received a reply saying they were bound to summon me to the meetings, and they wrote to the Company on the matter.

14900. You did not go on with the matter; you did not pursue it any further?—I got one summons, and that was the only summons I got to attend their meetings.

14901. You mentioned 15,000 barrels of herrings; that is the principal export?—Yes, there are a lot of Scotch curers who come over and cure fish. The local curers cure also. There is a London house, John L. Sayers, that attends to the smoking and curing of fish.

Extent of Burtonport fish curing business.

14902. But is there a local trade for 15,000 barrels?—Part of them are the smaller fish and they are sold in Londonderry and the surrounding districts, and we can't send them further owing to the rates.

14903. You could do a much bigger business with better rates?—Yes.

Composition of Donegal County Council.

14904. What is the composition of your County Council as regards political views—are there many Unionists on it, or are they principally Nationalists?—Mr. Hanna who gave evidence here to-day is a Unionist, and there are two more. Captain Stoney was elected by the people since the time of the Grand Jury.

14905. How many of them have you?—I think four.

14906. And the matter was discussed at your County Council, the matter of railway nationalisa-

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Mr. John Sweeney, representing the Donegal County Council.

tion?—I cannot say that it was discussed, but I know what their feelings on the matter are.

14907. Has the question of State purchase ever been before them?—No, but I know what their minds are on it.

14908. But it has not been before them?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. Gerald Fitzgibbon, K.C.

14909. You applied for a rate for your herrings to Dublin, and were given a rate, a through rate, of 21*s.*, I think—you got a rate for your herrings?—I can get a rate from Derry to Dublin of 17*s.* 6*d.*, but I get that because the steamer is running from Derry to Dublin.

Rates for cured herrings to Irish towns.

14910. You gave evidence as to Clones and Portadown and other places to which the rates, as you said, were prohibitive. Have you ever applied for a reduction of those rates, or brought the matter under the notice of the Railway Company?—No, I am only giving them as comparisons.

14911. So far as you know no application of the kind was made?—No.

14912. As to fish curers, do you know that fish curers get specially cheap rates to Burtonport on the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway?—They have been refused.

14913. When?—I have had it from Mr. O'Donnell who applied for them.

14914. When?—About—I think it was last winter. I can get the date.

14915. You also gave evidence as to the carriage of barrels from Londonderry to Burtonport at 13*s.* 4*d.* a ton?—Yes.

14916. Are not these new barrels going to Burtonport?—Certainly.

14917. And they go away from Burtonport by sea?—Sometimes by sea and sometimes by the railway.

14918. It is a very bulky traffic, empty barrels?—Yes.

Rates for empty barrels.

14919. Do you know what is the carriage of empties coming back by rail?—We don't get them back.

14920. Barrels that are going to come back full, where the Railway Company get carriage both ways—returned empties?—We send them away full, and that is the last sight we see of them.

14921. I am speaking of returned empties; do you know that they are carried at 6*s.* 8*d.* a ton?—Do you mean fish.

Lord Pirrie.—Do you mean if the barrels go away and come back the charge is only 6*s.* 8*d.*?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—My instruction is that a barrel goes back to Burtonport to be loaded again the charge for carriage is 6*s.* 8*d.* a ton, but if the railway only get the carriage of empties the charge is 13*s.* 4*d.* a ton.

Witness.—I was comparing the rate from Wick to Glasgow and Derry to Burtonport, and the comparison stands still.

Lord Pirrie.—They evidently admit it.

Rates for fish, Burtonport to London and Wick to London.

14922. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—You gave the rate for fish from Burtonport to London, compared with the rate for fish from Wick to London—what class of fish?—Fresh fish.

14923. Ordinary coarse fish?—Yes.

14924. You stated that the rate from Wick to London was less than the Burtonport to London rate?—Yes.

14925. Where did you get that?—From a Wick gentleman, Mr. Moore.

14926. What is the rate that you have got from Wick to London, and what is the amount?—3*s.* 9*d.* per cwt.

14926A. It is £3 15*s.* 0*d.* per ton to London from Wick. Do you know what the Burtonport rate to London for coarse fish is?—£3 10*s.* 0*d.*

14927. And that includes carriage in London?—It all means the same.

14928. No, the Wick to London rate is a station to station rate?—No.

Yes it is. The Wick to London rate is £3 15*s.* 0*d.*, and the Burtonport to London rate is £3 10*s.* 0*d.*, and that is carriage in London?

Chairman.—What about the comparative distances?

Witness.—You are not taking the distances into account.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—The statement is that the rate for fish from Wick to London was 3*d.* a cwt. less than the rate from Burtonport to London.

Chairman.—3*d.* per cwt.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—3*d.* per cwt. for lots under a ton, and the actual Burtonport rate is 5*s.* less instead of being more.

Witness.—You are taking that as the same distance and under the same conditions.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—I am taking the actual rate.

Witness.—It bears no comparison at all with Wick, and it is all rail from Wick.

14929. *Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.*—Was I right in believing that your evidence was that the rate from Wick to London was 3*d.* per cwt. less for cwt. lots than the rate from Burtonport to London?—The rate from Wick to London is 3*s.*; that is the quotation; 3*s.* per cwt. for three ton lots.

14930. You said that you are a director, and that you got no summonses to the meetings. Is not it a fact that you are only entitled to attend such meetings of directors as deal with the separate undertaking of the Burtonport Extension?—Yet, but if they deal with it at all they should deal with it more than once in two years.

14931. How many summonses did you receive in the last year of your office?—Two altogether. I attended one, but was unable to attend the second owing to an urgent call to London.

Chairman.—The figure here is £6 12*s.* 0*d.*; it is the North-Western. They have not quoted you a three-ton lot rate, and the witness has quoted it.

Colonel Plews.—We will have that cleared up. The English Companies said they would put Burtonport on the same footing as the Scotch fisheries, and if they have not done it they have not carried out their promise.

Chairman.—Can you tell us the distance from Wick to London?

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—757, and Burtonport to London 571.

14932. *Chairman.*—The Burtonport rate is out of proportion to the Wick rate; that is your point?

Witness.—Yes, that is my point, and it should be cheaper, because part of it is done by sea.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, K.C.—As to the question of incompetent drivers on the line the Company will welcome any inquiries that may be held.

Witness.—No person as a driver should take charge of an engine that had not a certificate.

Chairman.—You are going into something that we need not go into.

Witness.—I am going into what interests the public very much.

Chairman.—It is not done anywhere.

Witness.—On board ship it must be.

Chairman.—Oh, yes, officers of a ship, but that is a big question.

Witness.—But the public are in danger on a train as much as on board a vessel.

Chairman.—We are much obliged to you, Mr. Sweeney.

The Commission then adjourned till the 22nd of April

TWENTY-SIXTH PUBLIC SITTING—MONDAY, APRIL 22ND, 1907.

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

THOMAS M. BATCHEN, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Works, Ireland, examined by THE CHAIRMAN.

Apr. 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works Ireland.

14933. You are a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers?—I am.

14934. I think you have given evidence before?—I have; in London.

14935. That was more of a general character—the evidence you gave on that occasion?—It was.

14936. On this occasion you wish to bring under our notice facts in connection with the Burtonport railway?—I do.

14937. Now, how was the Burtonport line constructed—who found the money for it?—The money for the construction of the Burtonport line was found by the Government out of funds provided under the Railways (Ireland) Act of 1896.

14938. Was there any agreement entered into with the Railway Company in connection with it?—There was an agreement between the Treasury—the Board of Works—and the Railway Company.

14939. Which railway company?—The Lough Swilly Railway Company.

14940. What was the date of that?—The 6th of January, 1896.

14941. Are you conversant with the terms of that agreement?—I am.

14942. What were the obligations of the Lough Swilly Company in connection with that agreement?—Under the agreement the Company took upon themselves the obligation of acting in the capacity of promoters, and the Order in Council of 1898 was promoted by the Company in accordance with that arrangement. The agreement provided that the Company should complete and finish the line to the satisfaction of the Board of Works and the Board of Trade, and open the same for public traffic within the time limited by the Order in Council; it also provided that if the free grant should from any action or omission of the Company not approved by the Board of Works, prove insufficient for the construction of the railway the Company should raise and expend all such further sums of money as might be necessary for that purpose, and complete and open the railway for traffic.

14943. Before that agreement was made had the Board of Works power to construct the line?—No. Originally it was not intended that the Burtonport railway should be constructed by the Board of Works. It was intended and so provided for in the Treasury agreement that the Lough Swilly Company should prepare the working plans and documents and carry out the works, but the agreement also contained a provision reserving to the Board of Works the power to intervene and build the line in case the Company neglected or failed to carry out their obligations.

14944. How did the Treasury or the Board of Works ascertain the amount of money that they would have to subscribe to this railway?—It was arranged in the agreement, just as in the case of the Carndonagh railway, that in order to ascertain the amount of the free grant, tenders should be obtained by public competition for an entire or inclusive contract for the works, purchase of land, and all other expenses incurred or to be incurred by the Board of Works and the Company in connection with the promotion and construction of the railway; and from the amount of the lowest tender of a competent, solvent contractor, of whose competency and solvency the Treasury were to be the sole judges, there should be deducted the sum of money produced by the issue of the guaranteed capital, and the remainder including the amount required for engines and rolling stock should be the amount of the free grant.

Acquisition of the lands, and the construction and equipment of the Burtonport line undertaken by the Board of Works

14945. Was that agreement carried out?—It was found impossible to carry out the arrangement owing to the unwillingness of the contractors to undertake the acquisition of the lands, and the Board of Works accordingly proceeded to acquire the lands themselves. They also took inclusive contracts for the supply of permanent way materials and the engines and rolling stock.

14946. When you say they, you mean the Board of Works?—Yes. The cost of these, *plus* a sum fixed for promotion, engineering, and law costs, and a further sum of £2,000 to be paid for a running shed, less the amount to be received on foot of the guaranteed capital of £5,000 formed the free grant.

A running shed to be erected.

14947. You mentioned something about £2,000 for a running shed. What was that?—The provision of a running shed did not form part of the Treasury agreement, nor of the contract plans and documents, but it was arranged by the Board of Works at an interview with the Lough Swilly Company in Londonderry that a running shed would be provided. That shed has not yet been erected, because the Lough Swilly Company want to have it placed on their own system at Londonderry, whereas the Board of Works are of opinion that for the purposes of the Burtonport Railway the shed should be erected on lands belonging to that railway, especially in view of the possibility of the line having to be taken out of the hands of the Lough Swilly Company.

Preparation of plans and specifications, &c.

14948. Now, who prepared the plans and specifications and other documents necessary for the construction of this railway?—The Lough Swilly Company as promoters of the line employed an engineer for the purpose of preparing the plans and carrying out the works.

14949. Did they prepare the plans—did the promoters' engineer prepare the plans?—Yes, he prepared the plans, signed them, and forwarded them to the Board of Works for examination and approval. The plans and specifications were examined line by line by the Chairman of the Lough Swilly Company, who is himself a railway contractor, and knows all about plans.

14950. The Board of Works got the plans and specifications from the promoting company—what was the next step the Board of Works took?—They examined the plans and approved of them.

14951. I suppose as a matter of fact they did approve of them?—They did.

Apr. 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland.

Tenders advertised for.

14952. Who advertised for tenders?—The Board of Works, on behalf of the Company, advertised in the public Press for tenders.

14953. Have you got a copy of that advertisement?—I can get you a copy.

14954. Were the tenders to be sent to the Board of Works or the promoting company?—They were to be addressed to the secretary of the railway company, care of the Board of Works in Dublin, and the tenders were to be opened in presence of representatives of the company and the Board of Works.

Lough Swilly Company's refusal to be present at the opening of tenders.

14955. As a matter of fact who did open them?—When the tenders arrived the company refused to incur the expense of sending any representative to Dublin to be in attendance, and the Board of Works opened the tenders.

14956. How do you know that?—I happened to be there at the time.

14957. How do you know they refused to go to the expense?—I am aware of the correspondence. They used the words, "on account of the expense."

14958. Your evidence is based on the correspondence at the time?—It is, sir.

14959. These tenders were opened by the Board of Works?—Yes.

14960. Were there many tenders?—There were several tenders, about half-a-dozen altogether.

14961. Was the lowest accepted?—The lowest tender was accepted.

14962. Who was the contractor?—Messrs. Pauling and Company, of Victoria-street, London.

Line constructed by the Board of Works owing to refusal of Company to sign the contract.

14963. The promoting company having objected to be at the Board of Works when the tenders were opened, what action did the Board of Works take in connection with it?—The Board of Works informed the company of the lowest tender that had been received, and that the Treasury were satisfied as to the solvency of the contractor and his capability of doing the work, and they asked the railway company to proceed with the construction. The railway company, however, refused to do so, and the Board of Works served them with a notice insisting upon their taking part in the contract and signing the contract deed, otherwise the Board would have to proceed under clause 11 of the agreement. Again they refused. The Board of Works therefore, with the sanction of the Treasury, were obliged to construct the line themselves, with Pauling and Company as contractors. They had all the powers of the company to do so.

14964. That is really how it was done?—That is how it was done.

14964A. What is the total amount of Pauling's contract?—About £220,000. That is exclusive of land, permanent way materials, and other things.

14965. The land you arranged for yourselves?—Yes.

14966. That was an unknown quantity to the contractor?—It was.

14967. Then the Board of Works in consequence of the refusal of the promoting company were bound to carry this out themselves?—They were; if a line was to be made in this district they had no other option.

14968. I suppose there was correspondence on the subject?—Very considerable correspondence.

14969. But it ended in the refusal of the promoting company to accept the tender and construct the railway?—It did.

Engineer and Solicitors employed by Company for the new line taken over by the Board of Works.

14970. Who appointed the engineering staff during the construction?—The Board of Works, having undertaken the construction of the line with the contractors, it was necessary for them to employ an engineer to superintend the works, so they took over the engineer who had been employed by the Lough Swilly Company in preparing the plans and his staff—altogether five engineers—and the works were superintended by that engineer exactly as he would have done if acting directly for the company as originally intended. I represented the Board of Works and the Treasury, and was in constant touch with the line during construction.

14971. And the chief engineer was the engineer who originally prepared the plans and specifications for the promoting company?—That is so.

14972. With his assistants?—With his assistants.

14973. Now, the promoters—of course they had solicitors for their railway?—They had.

14974. Did you take the solicitors over?—In the same way the Board of Works took over the solicitors.

14975. What do you mean?—The solicitors had been already negotiating a good deal in connection with the line.

14976. For the purchase of land and so on?—Yes, for the purchase of the land, and the preparation of the contract documents.

14977. Then the solicitors of the promoters were also taken over?—Yes.

14978. Who were they?—Dr. Todd was one of them.

14979. He gave evidence before us. Did the company—the promoting company—at any time give any reasons for refusing to be represented at the opening of the tenders?—They did. The Board, as required by the Treasury agreement, had fixed the amount of the company's expenses as an item in the free grant. The Company were dissatisfied with the amount so fixed, and demanded more, although they were then unable to furnish vouchers for the amounts already advanced to them, and indeed up to the present moment they have failed to do so, although frequently asked.

14980. Was there any clause in the agreement with reference to vouching expenditure?—There was a clause to the effect that all expenses incurred by the company must be vouched to the satisfaction of the Board of Works.

14981. *Mr. Sexton.*—Was the reason for non-payment that they had failed to furnish vouchers?—That was the reason. The company refused to incur any further expense by sending a representative to Dublin until they got more money. The Board of Works said you have got as much as we consider you are entitled to until you furnish vouchers.

14982. *Chairman.*—And they never furnished vouchers?—They never did. There is a sum of about £1,500 outstanding at this moment that they have not vouched for.

14983. Pauling's having been successful in obtaining the contract—I suppose you made an agreement with Pauling's?—Yes. The agreement prepared by the railway company's solicitors, and which was to be taken part in by the contractors, the Board of Works, and the Lough Swilly Company was utilised.

14984. The contractors got to work. I suppose you gave them the design of the line, and they got to work?—They got to work.

14985. Did the contractors carry out the work as originally specified by the promoting engineer?—There were a few deviations. In July, 1899——

14986. Tell me when was the contract made?—It was made in 1899, about May, 1899.

14987. Early in 1899?—Yes.

14988. Now, on July you say there were certain alterations?—Yes; the contractors suggested certain deviations from the original plans, the adoption of which would in certain instances reduce curvature, and effect improvements in gradients. One of the proposals was to bring the line nearer to Dunfanaghy, enabling a station to be built at a more convenient place for that town.

14989. These suggestions were made by Pauling and Company?—Yes.

14990. Were they made direct to the Board of Works, or were they suggestions to the engineer you had taken over?—They were made to the Board of Works through the engineer we had taken over. Pauling and Company at that time only recognised the Board of Works, as the company never signed the contract with them.

14991. Did the Board of Works approve of the suggested alterations made by Pauling and Company?—The Board of Works approved these deviations.

14992. On the recommendation of the engineer you had taken over?—On the recommendation of the engineer we had taken over and on my recommendation also. I lived in Londonderry at the time.

14993. I suppose the alterations were embodied in the agreement?—They were, in a supplemental agreement.

14994. And were early steps taken to hold an inquiry with reference to this?—The usual steps were taken. A public inquiry was held by an independent engineer, and the statutory report was forwarded to the Donegal County Council, who also agreed to the deviations. The procedure was just exactly as if it had been a new railway.

14995. So that all necessary formal or legal steps were taken to approve of the deviations?—That is quite so, sir.

14996. And the Lough Swilly Company acted as promoters in the case just as they did in the original line?—Yes. They obtained the Order in Council by which the proposals were authorised.

14997. The Lough Swilly Company agreed?—They agreed to the deviations and obtained the Order in Council necessary for their construction.

14998. *Mr. Sexton.*—Although they had refused to carry out the original agreement that they would construct the line?—They did, sir.

14999. *Chairman.*—Now were the railway and the works in connection therewith completed in accordance with the original contract and the subsequent one?—They were, sir, and as varied by these deviations.

15000. The works were completed in accordance with that?—They were.

15001. Who inspected the works—I suppose you inspected the work as it went on?—I did from time to time. That was my duty—I was employed specially to represent the Board of Works and the Treasury in the construction of these lines.

15002. And you saw that the contractor was carrying out his work according to specification?—Yes.

15003. Did the Lough Swilly Company do any inspection?—They did. Several times during the construction of the work their engineer visited the line.

15004. I thought I understood Dr. Todd to say they were not allowed?—That is not so, sir. During the construction of the line the company had free access to the works.

15005. Didn't Dr. Todd tell us that they were not allowed to inspect the line?—He said so.

15006. What do you say in answer to that?—I say that the Lough Swilly Company's engineer came on to the line, made periodical visits, and inspected it, and so also did the chairman of the company, who is a contractor himself; and during the construction they complained to the Board of Works that certain things were not being done properly.

15007. Was that complaint made in writing?—Yes.

15008. And you have got it?—Yes. And a good deal of the correspondence in connection with it, correspondence in which Dr. Todd took part.

15009. Who was their engineer?—The company's engineer was a Mr. Hall.

15010. I mean the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, the Lough Swilly Company.

15011. And you say he did inspect the works from time to time?—He did, sir.

15012. And that complaints or suggestions were made in writing to the Board of Works in reference to these?—Quite so, and the Board of Works sent down an independent engineer to examine into the complaints of the company. That engineer reported that the works were being carried out quite properly, and in accordance with the specification.

15013. Do you remember his name?—Mr. James Barton, of Dundalk.

15014. Civil Engineer?—Yes, the most experienced in Ireland, I should say.

15015. And his reports vindicated the action of the Board of Works?—Yes, entirely.

15016. And you have got that report?—Yes, we have got his report.

15017. And it can be produced if necessary?—It can be produced if necessary.

15018. Of course that answers in a certain sense the question raised by Dr. Todd when he was here as to the faulty construction of the road and works?—I think it does, sir.

15019. What you say is this, that the railway from first to last was constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications originally drawn up by the engineer of the promoting company, varied by a subsequent agreement and that the whole of the works were carried out in accordance with those specifications?—That is so.

15020. Of course in all contracts we know there are variations, but were the variations in this particular line more than usual, of less than usual?—I should say they were less than usual, and where we did vary them it was always an improvement.

15021. To straighten a curve or avoid a gradient? To improve a curve or gradient, or to improve a station plan, as, for instance, Burtonport Station.

15022. Was there anything special about the form of contract that was used for the construction of this line, or was it the usual form?—It was quite the usual form. It was an inclusive contract.

Deviations carried out on Carndonagh line also.

15023. Was there a similar form for the Carndonagh line?—There was, exactly similar, and with the same contractors.

15024. And that contract was made direct by the Lough Swilly Company?—They were parties to the contracts, just exactly as they might have been with the Burtonport contract.

15025. Do you know from your own knowledge whether any deviations took place in the carrying out of that contract for the Carndonagh line?—There were. I represented the Board of Works on that line, and I approved of deviations which had been suggested by the contractors and submitted to me by the company's engineer.

15026. That is alterations from the original contract?—Yes, alterations in curves and gradients and in stations and approaches.

15027. Were the alterations more on the Carndonagh line than on the other?—I should say they were.

Board of Trade Inspection of Burtonport Railway.

15028. When the line was completed, did the Board of Trade Inspector examine the line—was that done in this case the same as in England?—Yes, exactly the same.

15029. Who was the Inspector?—Major Pringle.

15030. Did he inspect the line?—Yes.

15031. And did he suggest alterations?—He suggested that one or two items should be done. It is the usual thing at an inspection by the Board of Trade.

15032. Two or three little things; you mean something not important. Do you remember what they were?—They were very small, indeed. I cannot tell you off-hand what they were. They were very trifling. I can get the list for you.

15033. Did he object to the road or works?—Not at all, sir.

15034. What then?—There were some trifling matters in connection with the stations. I will read a short paragraph from his report, which will give you an idea of his impression of the line:—"As regards the horizontal and vertical alignment there have been no deviations outside the authorised limits. The fencing is, I think, adequate. The permanent way is in a thoroughly satisfactory condition throughout the line, and, for a newly-laid line, provides an excellent running surface. In the case of all bridges and viaducts, the brick and mason work has a solid appearance and shows no sign of subsidence or failure. The interlocking of all stations is correct."

15034A. That seems to be a very satisfactory report?—Yes, it is; and the company evidently thought so.

15035. Now, was Mr. Hall, the engineer of the promoting company, present when the Board of Trade Inspector was inspecting the line?—I am not quite sure, but I think he was. The general manager of the line was there, I know.

15036. There was a representative there?—Yes.

15037. The manager of the company was present at the inspection?—Yes.

15038. Before the Board of Trade sent their Inspector to inspect the line—when the line was about being completed—do you know, of your own knowledge, did Mr. Hall make an inspection of the line?—I do. When the company consented to work the line they sent down Mr. Hall, and he spent several days walking over the line and inspecting every inch of it.

Intimation from Lough Swilly Company of willingness to take over and work the Railway on certain conditions.

15039. Well, now, had you any communication with the Lough Swilly Company after, or immediately before, the inspection of the line by the Board of Trade officer?—Yes, immediately after the inspection of the line we had a communication from the Lough Swilly Company stating that they were prepared to open the line and work it if the Board of Trade officer's certificate was satisfactory, and provided that the Board of Works would carry out their agreement to supply them with the promised running shed, which, I should say, did not form part of Pauling's original contract.

15040. You have got that letter?—Yes.

15041. And the only reservation there is that the running shed should be erected?—Yes.

15042. I understood you to say that allowance was made for the running shed?—Yes; and we have the £2,000 still, and are quite prepared to spend it at Letterkenny or anywhere convenient on the Burtonport line, but not at Londonderry, where the Lough Swilly Company want it.

Apr. 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland.

Date of opening of Burtonport line.

15043. That is on their own property?—Yes.

15044. And you say it must be on the property of the Burtonport line?—On the property of the undertaking.

15045. When was the line opened for traffic?—On the 9th March, 1903.

15046. You said just now that you received a letter from the working company that if the Board of Trade officer's certificate was satisfactory they would work the line?—Yes.

15047. Did you communicate to the Company a copy of the Inspecting Officer's report?—I think they got a copy direct from the Board of Trade. I believe a copy was also sent by the Board of Works.

15048. They had it before them?—Yes.

15049. And it was satisfactory?—Yes.

15050. It was a satisfactory report?—The Lough Swilly Company evidently considered it so.

Application from working Company for additional works and equipment.

15051. What was the next step the working company took in connection with the line after they began to work it?—Shortly after the line was opened they referred to the few items that Major Pringle had asked to be done, and stated that over and above those items they considered the equipment of the line deficient in some respects, and that there were discrepancies between the specification and the works executed. They also suggested that the respective engineers—the Board of Works' and the Company's engineers—should meet and discuss the differences, and that the works and equipment that they decided on should be done and supplied within one month, if possible.

15052. So that if the working company considered one month was sufficient to supply any deficiencies they could not have been very serious?—They could not have been very serious—I think that goes without saying.

15053. Did the working company furnish a list of what they considered necessary?—They did. They furnished a list of what they considered discrepancies on the line.

15054. When was that?—That list was received nine days after the opening of the line—that is to say, on the 18th March. I examined the list and found that, as the inspection upon which it was based had been made about three months previous to the opening of the line, fifty per cent. of the items had been already disposed of, and others related to unfinished works which the contractors had undertaken to complete before they handed over the line at the end of their twelve months' maintenance, which is quite the usual practice in railway construction.

15055. That is so; to maintain the line for twelve months in an efficient state to do the work?—Yes.

15056. It is so in England?—Yes. I wish also to say that many of the items were of too trivial a nature to be taken seriously and some were entirely outside the contract documents.

15057. Was there an attempt made to settle these little differences between you and the engineer, or by correspondence?—I met the engineer and we discussed the matter, and the Board of Works wrote a letter to the Lough Swilly Company suggesting that it might be desirable to leave to arbitration any of the contract items upon which I could not agree with the company's engineer.

15058. Was that done in writing?—Yes, a letter was sent to that effect.

15059. Have you got the date of that?—27th of March, 1903.

Arbitration proposed.

15060. Did you get a reply to that letter offering arbitration?—Yes, the company agreed to an interview between the engineers, and that the differences should be submitted to arbitration.

15061. And you say you did meet the company's engineer?—Yes, I met him.

15062. Mr. Hall?—Yes.

15063. And did you dispose of a good many of the items?—Yes, as the result of our conference we agreed to strike out a number of items that had evidently been put forward under a misapprehension.

15064. Put forward months before the line was opened?—Yes; based upon an inspection made months before the line was opened.

15065. And therefore uncompleted at the time the list was made out, but subsequently completed?—Just so, sir.

15066. First of all, you agreed to strike out some of them, then, I suppose, some of them were in course of construction, and some of them you disputed?—Yes.

15067. And those you disputed the Board of Works agreed, by letter, to refer to arbitration?—Yes.

15068. I suppose there was an arbitration clause in the agreement?—I am not distinct about that. There was a clause giving power to deal with it, which I will refer to later on.

15069. Clause or no clause, the Board of Works were willing to refer the whole thing to arbitration?—Yes, quite willing.

15070. Was there any name suggested?—It was suggested merely to refer the matter to arbitration.

15071. You got a reply to that letter offering arbitration?—Yes; they agreed to an interview between the engineers, and that the differences should be submitted to arbitration. As a result of my conference with the Company's engineer it was agreed between us that the company should be asked to furnish an amended and reduced list, which might be arbitrated upon if necessary, and though that list has been repeatedly asked for, it has never yet been furnished.

15072. That particular statement as to the amended list, is it made upon your recollection or on a verbal communication, or a written communication?—It is made upon a verbal communication, but I made a report of it to my Board on that very day.

15073. When the thing was fresh in your memory?—Yes.

15074. Of course, it was important that all these things should be settled before the year expired for the completion of the contract?—It was an important point for the Board of Works, as we had an inclusive contract with the contractors, and we wanted everything settled before the year expired.

15075. After the year the contractor was freed from all liability?—Yes, he was.

15076. Did you get any further communication from the working company?—There was a good deal of correspondence.

15077. You got a revised demand as to uncompleted works?—Yes.

15078. When?—In February, 1904—about a year after the opening of the line.

15079. Eleven months?—Yes; eleven months later.

15080. What sort of a communication did you get from the working company?—We got an increased list of works which they alleged were necessary for the due completion of the line.

15081. And did these include what had already been brought under your notice?—They did, sir.

15082. And something beyond it?—Yes, something beyond it.

15083. Tell us, shortly, what they were?—They were practically the same works that had been mentioned in connection with the inspection made two or three months before the opening of the line; in addition to which there were a number of works entirely outside the contract which we had no power to compel the contractors to do. The Board of Works refused to accept the new lists, and the company were asked to withdraw them in their entirety and to send in the reduced list already arranged for between the engineers.

15084. Have you got the list that you and Mr. Hall agreed to?—I have got it here.

15085. Is there anything on it bearing the signature of Mr. Hall or the manager of the company?—It comes from the company.

15086. As the requirements of the company—you and the Company's engineer had agreed upon a list of certain works to be done?—Yes.

15087. Have you got a record of that list?—I have.

15088. And the subsequent list included several things not in that list?—Yes.

15089. And which you and the Company's engineer had discussed before?—Yes, those are included in the additional list.

15090. What action was taken on the additional list?—The Board of Works refused to accept it. It was now nearly eleven months after the opening of the line, and the contractor's maintenance period nearly at an end. Many of the items were entirely outside the contract. The Board asked the company to send the amended list of works which, in the company's own opinion, could have been carried out within one month after the opening of the line.

15091. That was their original demand?—Yes.

15092. At this particular period—eleven months after the line was opened—and when this amended list was sent in, was there any suggestion made that the engineers should again meet to try and settle matters—by the Board of Works, I mean?—Yes, the Board of Works suggested that I should meet the

Company's chairman and engineer for the purpose of a joint inspection of the line, and no reply was received for three months after the suggestion was made.

15093. And after the contractor had gone?—Yes.

15094. Who supplied the rolling stock?—The Board of Works, as part of the free grant.

15095. Who suggested the number of coaches and engines to work it originally?—That was arrived at upon the advice of several expert railway traffic managers; I would like to deal with the rolling stock question later on.

15096. But the line was opened, at any rate, with a certain amount of rolling stock which had been supplied, by the Board of Works, upon expert advice?—Yes.

15097. And did the working company ask for additional rolling stock?—Yes, and the Treasury agreed to supply it upon certain conditions. About a year after the line was opened the company's application for additional rolling stock was under consideration by the Board of Works and the Treasury, and although it was recognised by the latter that any stock beyond that which had been already supplied ought now to be provided by the company, who so far had contributed nothing to the cost of the line, they agreed to provide a sum of money for additional rolling stock, on condition that all outstanding differences between the Board and the Company in respect of the Carndonagh, Letterkenny, and Burtonport lines should be settled to the satisfaction of the Board of Works, and that any claim in respect of the construction of the Burtonport line should be abandoned. With regard to the latter condition the Board of Works and the Treasury had in their minds at this time the small number of items which the company had suggested could be completed within one month after the opening of the line, not the tremendous claim of £77,900 to which Dr. Todd referred the other day. This offer was made twelve months before the Treasury or the Board of Works knew anything about the big claim.

15098. I suppose the suggestion that the Treasury would provide an additional sum of money was made in writing?—Yes, to the company.

15099. And did the company accept?—No, they did not.

15100. Did they refuse it?—A conference was suggested.

15101. Who suggested the conference?—The Board of Works suggested the conference, and the company assented, but did not act on it in spite of several reminders. Six months were allowed to elapse, when in December, 1904, the company suggested that an umpire should be appointed by the Board of Trade, to sit at the conference and decide all matters in dispute. When the company made that suggestion the Board of Works were not aware that they were busily compiling their enormous claim of £77,900. The Board of Works refused to have an umpire appointed by the Board of Trade. A good deal of correspondence followed; and eventually in May, 1905—two years and two months after the opening of the line—the company sent forward their claim for £77,912 10*s.* 9*d.*

15102. *Mr. Sexton.*—Did the Board of Works refuse to admit an umpire before they knew the claim would be so large?—They did. They knew nothing at all about this big claim. The Board of Works had in mind the few items which the engineers had discussed, and which the company themselves suggested might be done within one month.

15103. Even then they were unwilling to submit the question to an umpire?—But not to arbitration. They were willing to submit it to an arbitrator appointed by the Board of Trade.

15104. *Chairman.*—The company suggested an arbitrator and an umpire?—No.

15105. What do you mean by an umpire; isn't it two arbitrators—one on each side—and a third to act as umpire?—Yes, I suppose that would be it.

15106. *Mr. Sexton.*—You say the Board refused to refer to an umpire?—Yes.

15107. When was the large claim put before the Board of Works?—On the 20th of May, 1905.

15108. They refused the umpire before that?—Yes, in December, 1904; six months before the big claim came in.

15109. *Chairman.*—In December, 1904, the company suggested that the matters in dispute should be referred to an umpire appointed by the Board of Trade, and the Board of Works would not agree to that?—The Board of Works would not agree to that.

15110. You say that the further list of works sent forward by the company would not amount to this huge claim?—Nor anything like it.

15111. Well, I think you have got it pretty clearly on the notes now. Of course we know that the Board of Works declined to entertain that large claim for £77,000?—They did.

15112. And they also declined to submit such a claim to arbitration?—They did, sir, and the Treasury also refused.

15113. How does the question stand to-day?—The question stands thus:—The Board of Works maintain they have no responsibility for this enormous claim, and that the Company will not get anything further from the Treasury. They have got all that was intended to be given to them under the Treasury agreement, and they have now got to work the line as it stands.

15114. Except that you did agree originally to certain alterations with the engineers of the working company?—These were all done during the contractor's maintenance period.

15115. They were all carried out?—Yes.

15116. And they were not included in the £77,000?—Some of them are included in it.

15117. Although they were carried out?—Although they were carried out. I might state for the information of the Commission that the contractors rendered a claim against the Board for about £100,000 for work alleged to be done extra to the contract, which, if added to the Lough Swilly claim, would practically build thirty to forty miles of new line.

15118. How was the question settled about the £100,000?—Well, there was a great deal of correspondence and discussion over it, but it amounted eventually to this, that under the inclusive contract the contractors had to bear their loss.

15119. And the claim was not paid?—It was not.

15120. No part of this £100,000 was paid?—No part of it was paid.

15121. They had what you might describe as a lump-sum contract?—They had a lump sum contract.

15122. Your contention, I mean the contention of the Board of Works when I speak of your contention, is that so far as they are concerned the only liability attaching to you on this particular railway is in respect of £2,000 for a shed?—Quite so, and the Board of Works are quite prepared to give the Company £2,000 to build a shed anywhere on the Burtonport line.

15123. The items that you and Mr. Hall agreed to originally—could those have been shown on a sheet of foolscap?—They could; they were very small, and they were very few.

15124. And not only small in number, but small in cost?—Yes.

15125. Small alterations they were?—Yes.

15126. You say they could have been shown on a sheet of foolscap?—Yes.

15127. How many sheets did the new claim amount to?—I have it here. I should say 300 pages of double foolscap. This (*produced*) is the original.

15128. 300 pages of foolscap?—Yes, double foolscap.

15129. To make up £77,000?—Yes.

15130. Well, we don't want to go into that. I must ask you a few questions as to items, but I will summarise them, if you don't mind. I take the lump sum of £13,000 shown as being necessary for the viaducts, £13,300 odd as being necessary in the judgment of the engineer of the company for the viaducts. Just tell us briefly what you have to say to that?—Here are photographs of the viaducts on this line at Barnes' Gap, Owencarrow, and Faymore. Each is substantially constructed of masonry piers and steel girders. The Company say that these viaducts ought to have been constructed entirely of masonry, or, in the case of the Owencarrow, entirely embanked across the valley; and they practically ask the Board of Works to demolish them and re-construct them at a cost of £13,356, or in the alternative, and this is very important, that the annual estimated cost of maintenance and renewal charges on the steel work should be capitalised and handed over to the Company in a lump sum.

15131. Stop now. You say a lump sum?—Yes, in a lump sum, capitalised, and the lump sum handed over to them for re-construction and maintenance.

Apr. 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland.

Refusal of Board of Works to submit claim to arbitration.

Large claim for extras made by the Contractors declined by Board.

Present position of the Board of Works regarding the claim for omitted works.

Items of the claim; viaducts.

Apr 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland. Items of the claim *continued.*

15132. They say that this one should have been an embankment?—It was intended to build the line on an embankment across the Owencarrow Valley, but the foundations were so very bad that an expensive viaduct had to be adopted to obtain foundations, for which we had to sink cylinders eighty feet below the bed of the stream.

15133. There is a water course there?—Yes, a water course about twenty feet wide, and we had to go eighty feet below in order to get the rock foundation.

15134. It seems to have been the best mode of construction?—It was; the ground was not capable of supporting a high embankment.

15135. *Mr. Sexton.*—The real objection appears to be that the steel would be more expensive to maintain?—All these viaducts are on deviations, but the valley had to be crossed in any case, even under the original contract, and the Company designed a steel bridge for that. This was the Company's own proposal.

15136. *Chairman.*—This (*produced*) is the original plan?—Yes, just a steel bridge, practically the same length.

15137. *Mr. Sexton.*—And they asked that it should be all masonry?—Yes.

15138. *Chairman.*—I think you have said enough about these viaducts?—Well, sir, will you take the permanent way?

Permanent way.

15139. I will take the permanent way. According to the figure I have here, £4,750, they say, is necessary to be spent to bring the permanent way to a proper standard. Now, what have you to say as to that?—This amount is claimed, not because the line was not in good running order when the company took possession. We have the Board of Trade officer's opinion that it was in excellent condition, and not because the curves were worse or the gradients steeper than the Parliamentary plans permitted them to be; neither is it for new works, but a sum to be paid down to the Company for what they call loss of life on rails, sleepers, etc., which they contend were delivered prematurely. They contend that the permanent way ought not to have been laid on any portion of the line until the formation had been entirely completed. This is not the way railways are usually constructed.

Ballasting.

15140. I don't think you need say another word on that matter. It is perfectly satisfactory. With regard to the ballast there is an item here for £3,683—what have you to say about that?—That is alleged to be for insufficiency of ballast. There were five resident engineers and two permanent way inspectors on the line during construction, and particular care was taken that the permanent way and ballasting should be up to the specification. I have always considered the permanent way one of the most important matters of construction, and gave it my careful personal attention every time I visited the line.

15141. Did Major Pringle raise any question about the ballast?—Not a single question.

15142. He said the permanent way was in excellent order?—Yes.

15143. And then the ballast must have been in perfect order when he inspected it?—It was.

15144. What was it?—Broken stone in one case and gravel in another, up to the specification.

Fencing.

15145. That is sufficient. Then there is fencing, the total of which is £17,513—what have you to say about that?—The Company say that too much seven-wire fence has been erected, and that the contractors ought to have been forced to build dry stone walls in many places instead of wire fence. They say that thirty miles of wire fencing ought to be taken down and replaced with dry stone walling. This is a matter within the discretion of the engineer, but as a matter of fact there have been thirteen miles less wire fencing erected than was scheduled in the documents prepared by the Company.

15146. By the engineer to the Company?—Yes, by the Company's engineer, which is a distinct gain to the Company.

15147. Certainly?—Another item of £2,500 is asked for as compensation for what they allege to be loss on fencing standards which they consider should have been galvanised.

15148. Iron standards?—Iron standards.

15149. They were not galvanised?—No, and there are other items in which they ask to have three inches, four inches, four and a half inches, five inches, and so on to 60 inches added to the height of the five-feet stone walls; that we should take off the coping and make an addition to the height.

15150-1. That is absurd. I think it is satisfactorily explained. Now, as to the earthworks item of £6,824?—Yes, sir. The Company are dissatisfied with the manner in which some of the railway slopes have been finished, and ask for a large sum of money to have them trimmed and dressed to their satisfaction. They also allege that certain embankments have not been made to the proper heights and slopes, and ask for £3,370 on that account.

15152. Do you know if there have been any slips on the banks?—There have been no slips. The earth works have been most successful all through. There was an enormous amount of earthworks carried out. About a million cubic yards altogether were handled on the Burtonport line, and the work was all successful.

15153. There have been no slips?—No slips, sir. There was a great deal of rock excavation on the line. These photographs (*produced*) will give you some idea of what the line is like.

15154. I think that is quite sufficient about the earthworks. There is an item of £2,205 for the formation of railways over bogs?—Yes, sir.

15155. What have you to say about that?—When the construction of the line was in full swing the Company's engineer on one of his inspections complained that in his opinion we were not forming the line properly over the bogs. The Company wrote to the Board about it, and, while expressing confidence that I would have the work done properly, the Board sent down Mr. James Barton, of Dundalk, an engineer of great experience, to inquire into the complaint, and his report was entirely in favour of the method in which the work was being done. In fact the contractors were putting into operation the experience they obtained when constructing the Carndonagh line. The bogs have not given trouble since the line was opened over four years ago.

15156. I think that is sufficient proof that it was properly constructed then?—I have now dealt with nearly three-quarters of the amount of the claim.

15157. In money?—In money, and there is nothing in what I have enumerated which could in any way cause the serious delays and breakdowns which constantly occur on the line.

15158. I think you had better just recapitulate, without any comment, the figures which go to make up the total claim. Just read the items?—The viaducts——

15159. No, we have had those. Just begin as to this £77,000. You have given us the principal items, but there is a lot of smaller items which in the aggregate make a total of £13,000 or £14,000. Just tell us what they are for?—They are items which are additional to the contract plans and schedule of works, and which could not be supplied or carried out under Messrs. Pauling and Co.'s contract:—signalling at public road gates, additional to those ordered by the Board of Trade, £307.

15160. These are items for small works not included in Pauling's contract?—Quite so. Then we have five cottages and level crossing gates, additional to those detailed in the contract documents, £1,438; additional telegraph instruments beyond those specified, £44; the provision of signal cabins at the various stations instead of the open frames specified by the Company themselves, £457; additional sidings and improvements at Letterkenny station beyond those shown on plan and documents prepared by the Company, £1,100; extension of platforms and increased accommodation at Oldtown, Newmills, and Churchill stations beyond what is provided under the contract documents, £446; two new passing places to be provided, viz., Kilmacrenan and Falcarragh, £1,800.

15161. They were not shown in the contract documents?—No; new engine water supply to be provided at Churchill, £300; new overline footbridge, engine cleaning pits, additional cattle pens, etc., at Creeslough, £637; increased accommodation and entire reconstruction of Dunfanaghy station, £2,658.

15162. Now, was the station constructed in accordance with the plans?—Dunfanaghy station was built on a deviation, and is therefore a new station built to designs similar to those of the original contract.

15163. Approved by the engineer?—Yes.

15164. By the engineer of the working company?—The working company were not called in, but approved by the engineer that was taken over from the working company. The last figure I gave you was £2,658; additional siding, loading bank, cattle pens, crane, cart weigh-bridge, etc., at Cashelnagor station,

£358; entirely new station, overhead footbridge, three-ton weigh-bridge, additional accommodation in yard, etc., at Gweedore station, £1,522; new works at Crollybridge, £300; additional works at Dungloe station, £147; for an entirely new station building additions to goods store, etc., at Burtonport they ask for over £1,000; they ask that the corrugated iron roofing which was specified and erected on the waiting cabins should be taken off and slates substituted, £176; for the further lighting and other works at existing stations they ask for an additional expenditure of about £600; in addition to the foregoing works they ask for hand-bells, lamp barrows, luggage barrows, tail ropes, hand lamps for station-masters, porters, brakesmen, guards, drivers, and cleaners, etc., etc., £1,000.

15165. Just give us the total of these items you have been reading?—£14,290.

15166. That is included in the £77,000?—Yes, it is.

15167. Your contention is that so far as these items are concerned under the agreement these should be supplied by the working company?—They should be supplied by the working company under Clause 11 of the Treasury agreement.

15168. What does Clause 11 say? Have you got it?—I have.

15169. Just read the clause?—"The Company hereby covenant——"

15170. The working company?—Yes. "The Company hereby covenant with the Treasury that they will complete and finish the line to the satisfaction of the Board of Works and of the Board of Trade, and will open the same for public traffic within the time limited by the Order, and in accordance with the provisions of this agreement. And that if the free grant shall, from any action or omission of the Company not approved by the Board of Works, prove insufficient for the purpose aforesaid, the Company will raise and expend all such further sums of money as may be necessary for the same purpose, and will complete and open the railway for traffic as aforesaid."

15171. *Mr. Sexton.*—That was on the assumption that the line would be constructed under their super vision?—But they would have to do that in any case, because the free grant has been fixed by the inclusive tender, the tender submitted by the contractors. When the free grant is fixed any further money must be found by the Railway Company under this clause.

15172. Still that clause contemplates a state of affairs that did not arise, the supervision of the construction of the line by the Company. The Company refused, and the actual eventuality was somewhat different from what is provided for in that clause?—Yes, but it is provided for in another clause, in fact in an addition to the same clause. The words are:—"If from any cause no contract for the execution of the works has been entered into within six months from this Order in Council being recommended to be passed, the Board of Works may, if they think fit, and with the sanction of the Treasury, by themselves or their contractors, construct the railway and equip it, and for these purposes may use all the powers vested in the Company by this Order in Council, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the provisions of this agreement shall apply to the railway so constructed and equipped."

15173. The Board of Works may assume the powers of the Company, but you represent now that, by Section 11, the liabilities of the Company remain the same as if the Company had promoted and constructed the line.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They must do it within six months.

15174. *Mr. Sexton.*—You are reading it a little widely, are not you?—I think that after notice had been served on the Company to take part in the contract, and they refused to do so, the Board of Works had no option other than to construct the line themselves, otherwise no line might have been constructed in the district.

Chairman.—Where is that working agreement?

15175. *Mr. Sexton.*—At any rate, the circumstances under which you finally came to this decision are not the circumstances stated in clause 11 taken by itself?—But there was provision at the end of clause 11 which I have read to you.

15176. The point you make is that the liability of the company, the company not having promoted and constructed the line was, in the event that actually happened, the same as if they had constructed the line?—I have read it in the last portion.

15177. What are the particular words—your position is that if you take the two clauses together the position is the same as if clause 11 had stood alone, and as if the company had constructed the line?—Exactly.

15178. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I suppose I am right in assuming it is by virtue of their being the promoters of the line that these liabilities and penalties attach to it?—Yes.

15179. They were the promoters?—Yes.

15180. And the Board of Works entered into an agreement with them that if they did not construct they were still liable for all the penalties as promoters of the line?—Yes.

15181. *Chairman.*—I think we can go on a little further. The working company have objected to the type of locomotive you have supplied?—They have.

15182. What is their objection?—The company have asked that tender engines should be supplied for working the line. They have in their mind that the line should be worked as one system from Londonderry to Burtonport. The Board of Works look upon it that the undertaking is distinct in itself, and should be worked from Letterkenny to Burtonport.

Lough Swilly Company's objection to tank engines supplied by Board for Burtonport Railway in accordance with original specifications.

15183. What is the distance?—From Letterkenny to Burtonport 49½ miles.

15184. That is the length of the line?—Yes, length of the Burtonport line.

15184A. What did you supply for that?—Four tank engines.

15185. Did you supply them after consultation with anybody connected with the working company?—The specifications to which the locomotives were built were submitted to a locomotive engineer on behalf of the Lough Swilly Company. This engineer suggested one or two small improvements or alterations in the specification which were agreed to and the engines built to the altered specification.

15186. He did not suggest that the tank should be converted into tender engines?—Yes, that engineer suggested, acting on behalf of the company, that tender engines would be very suitable for working the line from Londonderry to Burtonport, but he said that the line from Letterkenny to Burtonport could be very well worked by tank engines.

15187. And that was all you were contemplating? That is all that the railway company contemplated. When they promoted the line, they had in their minds tank engines, not tender engines.

15188. Then, so far as the engines were concerned, they were approved for working that particular line?—They were.

15189. And they could carry sufficient coals and water to do the journey easily?—Yes.

15190. Have you any reason to believe that the company themselves contemplated working that line with tank engines?—I have. I find that in submitting evidence before the investigators when they were promoting the line in 1896——

15191. What do you mean by investigators?—If you remember under the Act of 1896, when a railway is proposed by a company in a certain district, an engineer and a traffic manager are sent down to investigate and report upon it.

15192. Oh, I know—that is sufficient. I had forgotten we were in Ireland. I was thinking of the procedure in London?—In sumbitting evidence——

15193. In submitting evidence before these investigators, as you call them, what evidence was given with reference to the engines?—In my opinion there can be no doubt that the company contemplated working the line with tank engines.

Tank engines originally contemplated by Company.

15194. Why do you say that?—Well, the general manager suggests in his evidence the class of engine that he would work the line with; and then their engineer's estimate of cost is based upon the price of a tank engine, which is less, as you know, than a tender engine would be; further, in 1898, when the promoters' engineer was preparing the working plans for the construction of the line, he received instructions from the company that the wheel base of the engine would be 17 feet, and the weight 32 tons—he required the information for designing the girder bridges—and they would measure 28 feet 6 inches from buffer to buffer. These measurements correspond with those of a tank engine; the turntables, and engine sheds were accordingly designed for tank engines.

Apr. 22, 1907.

Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland.

15195. Were they made large enough for tender engines?—No, not large enough.

15196. And the turn-tables?—They were not.

15197. And under the designs of the engineer they must have been designed for tank engines?—Yes; in fact we have a copy of the letter from the company's secretary, or general manager for the time being, to the engineer, clearly showing that it was a tank engine that was in their minds.

15198. I think that seems to me, to prove that tank engines were contemplated to be used on this railway?—Oh, there can be no doubt about it.

Desire of Lough Swilly Company to obtain tender engines to run between Derry and Burtonport.

15199. What is the company's objection to a tank engine?—Well, the company want to run their trains right through from Londonderry to Burtonport—certainly a very desirable thing from their point of view.

15200. What is the distance?—Seventy-four to seventy-five miles.

15201. Extra?—No, altogether.

Objections to working tender engines over Burtonport line stated.

15202. As against the line on this railway?—Fifty. But there are serious objections to the running of tender engines in this way, sir. With the tank engine you get a greater weight on the driving wheels, and consequently more tractive force for working your loads up the gradients on the Burtonport line; the 50 lb. rail on the Burtonport line is very suitable for heavy axle weights. On the Letterkenny line there is only a 40 lbs. rail, and you cannot put a heavy load on it; you cannot run heavy engines right through without re-laying that line.

15203. *Mr. Sexton.*—They offered to buy you out and re-lay it?—I understand they offered——

15204. To buy it at a valuation and re-lay the line with 60 lbs. rails?—As far as the Treasury is concerned I should say the valuation of the line is the amount of money they have put into it.

15205. They have accepted less than that in numerous cases. Is it not embarrassing to that company to lay down a rule that they must use such engines upon that Burtonport extension as will prevent them running through from Derry to Burtonport?—It won't prevent them, for they can use any engines they like, provided the axle weight is suitable for the lighter rail. In fact they do it now. They run engines over the Letterkenny line which have a light weight on the axles, and which if the company wish can be right through, but the engines supplied by the Board of Works were supplied for this undertaking solely, and were not designed for, nor are they suitable for, the Letterkenny line.

15206. They say your tank engines are too light for the Burtonport line?—The tank engines are not too light. They are perfectly capable of doing the work if well treated, but they have been very badly used by the Lough Swilly Company.

15207. *Chairman.*—At any rate both the working companies at the time intended to have tank engines?—They did.

Tank engines the usual type used on narrow gauge Railways in Great Britain and Ireland.

15208. And the Board of Works therefore supplied tank engines?—Supplied tank engines. I do not think there are tender engines on any narrow gauge railways in Ireland, nor in Great Britain so far as I am aware.

15209. What is the gauge?—Three feet gauge; and the company and the Board of Works had in view the working of the Glenties line. They were both familiar with that line. The chairman of the Lough Swilly Company built the Glenties line as contractor for the Board of Works, and he knew exactly the construction of that line, and the engines supplied, and that these were in the minds of both parties there can be no doubt. The lines are similar in respect of gradients, curves, weight of rails, and district traversed.

15210. Who is Mr. Malcolm?—Mr. Malcolm is locomotive engineer for the Belfast and Northern Counties line.

15211. A man of experience?—He is.

Specification for the tank engines prepared by Mr. Livesey (Donegal Railway) and approved by Engineer representing the Company.

15212. Who is Mr. Livesey?—He was the general manager and locomotive superintendent of the Donegal line. He had very large experience of working tank engines.

15213. Were they called in to try and settle this dispute?—Oh, no. The specification for the engines was written by Mr. Livesey, of the Donegal line, on behalf of the Board of Works, and that specification was referred to the Lough Swilly Company who sent it on to Mr. Malcolm. There was a conference arranged between the two engineers, and the result was that Mr. Malcolm approved of Mr. Livesey's specification, and the tank engines were built.

15214. Then they were built and supplied then by agreement with the Lough Swilly Company?—Quite so.

15215. Did Mr. Malcolm suggest any alterations?—Mr. Malcolm suggested a few minor alterations, which were readily agreed to.

15216. Not altering it from tank to tender?—No.

15217. Nobody suggested that?—Mr. Malcolm, acting on behalf of the company, suggested that tender engines should be supplied, but he admitted that tank engines were perfectly capable of doing the work, and since the Board of Works were determined to give them the tank engines he approved of the specification and had some minor alterations included in it, and the engines were built.

15218. Who built the engines?—They were built by Andrew Barclay and Son, Kilmarnock.

15219. Were they supplied by tender?—Yes.

15220. Did the working company in the trial runs of these locomotives raise any objection to them?—None, sir. They were worked by the company on their own line from Londonderry to Buncrana, and on to Carndonagh, and each engine ran over 1,000 miles, working on these lines with perfect satisfaction. When the Burtonport line had been opened, things went well for a few months, but in a very short time the engines became very bad, owing to leaking tubes and trouble of that kind.

15221. Well, of course, the details of construction, I don't purpose to ask you of. You are not a locomotive engineer?—I am not a locomotive engineer, sir, but I may tell you that during construction the engines were continually inspected by a competent engineer at the contractors' works.

15222. Who sent the competent engineer?—The Board of Works. One of those inspectors, whose business it is to inspect for big railway companies—he was inspecting engines for the Natal Government Railways at that time.

15223. Did he report to the Board of Works that everything was satisfactory?—Everything was satisfactory.

15224. There is no objection raised to the other portion of rolling stock, I suppose, carriages and wagons?—Not so far as the construction is concerned, but the company rather object to the quantity supplied.

15225. How did you arrive at the quantity to be supplied, how did the Board of Works arrive at the quantity to be supplied?—The Board of Works on the investigators' report thought that a two train service each day would be quite sufficient.

15226. The investigators being?—A traffic manager.

15227. Who?—Mr. Tatlow.

15228. And?—And an engineer, and they reported that the line might be worked with four locomotives and a certain number of carriages. I should say that at this time the Board of Works had as their Chairman the late Mr. Robertson, who was an eminent railway expert, but, not satisfied with that, the Board of Works went still further, and called in another railway traffic manager.

15229. Who?—Mr. Plews, and he also reported that the line could be worked with the four locomotives and a certain amount of rolling stock, and that amount was supplied to the company.

15230. The Board of Works, at any rate, took the best steps they could to get expert information?—They did.

15231. As to the quantity of rolling stock necessary for the proper working of the line?—They did.

15232. And supplied it accordingly?—And supplied it accordingly.

15233. Well, we need not go into the detail, I suppose, the whole of this detail, the locomotives, and rolling stock, and horse boxes and goods wagons, the Investigators reported in favour of that number?—The Investigators reported.

15234. You did not cut down the number, in any way, they suggested?—We did not. I may tell you that in the case of carriages the Lough Swilly Company suggested that instead of five compartments there might be six compartments in each carriage, and they were willing to have the number of these cut down so that the cost should not be increased, that is, they wanted not fourteen carriages with five compartments each, but twelve carriages with six compartments each

15235. On their suggestion?—The suggestion of their general manager.

15236. You provided the same seating accommodation?—Yes, without increasing the cost.

15237. Well, now, the rolling stock having been supplied, and the working company having got to work on the railway, do you know anything about whether the traffic increased at a greater ratio than was expected?—Oh, yes. Shortly after the opening of the line the traffic commenced to increase beyond all expectation.

15238. The quantity of rolling stock having been based upon the running of two or three trains a day?—Two trains.

15239. I thought Colonel Plews suggested three?—He suggested a two-train service.

15240. Passenger service?—Two mixed trains each way. The experience of the working soon showed that a three-train service would be necessary.

15241. Your contention is, I suppose, that whatever was necessary after the first supply, they should be supplied by the working company?—Quite so.

15242. Under the agreement?—Under the agreement; that there could be no liability on the State after the Free Grant had been fixed; that the liability was entirely on the part of the Lough Swilly Company now.

15243. For additional rolling stock?—Yes.

15244. *Mr. Sexton.*—How long after the opening of the line was it found that additional rolling stock was required?—I do not know, five or six months, I think.

15245. Is it not hard for a small line of twelve miles to face such contingencies over a system of 100 miles?—It was their agreement.

15246. It is very hard?—I may tell you that the Board of Works, with the sanction of the Treasury, were quite prepared to give the company additional rolling stock.

15247. If they gave up everything else?—Not everything else, only their claim, which was considered to be very small, and the works of which, if you remember, they said could have been done within a month, and come to an understanding with regard to other outstanding items.

15248. Settle everything to your satisfaction?—To the satisfaction of the Board. Quite so.

15249. *Chairman.*—Did they work at a percentage?—£3 10*s.* per mile per week; and any surplus is divided between the company and the Treasury.

15250. Then the agreement secures them against any loss?—It does up to an expenditure of £3 10*s.* per mile per week.

15251. *Mr. Sexton.*—They may be losing for all you know by working it?—Oh, but——

15252. You know whether they are?—We know they are not. We have power to examine the accounts, and we know they are not able to certify the cost up to £3 10*s.* per mile per week.

15253. Is it not a very cheap rate?—It is cheap working.

15254. We know of other lines where the working expenses are double that amount?—Unfortunately, I know some.

15255. *Chairman.*—Not a narrow gauge railway?—Yes, narrow gauge railways.

Mr. Sexton.—Yes.

15256. *Chairman.*—You don't know anything about that £3 10*s.*; how that was arrived at?—Well, it was arranged between the Lough Swilly Company and the Board of Works, having the advice of Mr. Robertson at the time. I am not sure how it was arrived at.

15257. It strikes me £3 10*s.* would probably insure the probable cost of working. They were indemnified against a loss in the cost of working?—Last year the cost only came to £3 6*s.* per mile per week, and there is a very large profit divided between the Company and the Treasury.

15258. At any rate, there was a disposition on the part of the Board of Works even to meet the demand for increased rolling stock, provided other things were as satisfactorily settled?—There was.

15259. *Mr. Sexton.*—If the Treasury share all the surplus receipts over £3 10*s.* a week, do you not think that they should share in the cost of provision for increased traffic as some reason for it?—So they do; although there is an obligation on the part of the company to maintain the line and make any improvements, such as additional sidings, additional stations, and that sort of thing, the Treasury may allow their portion of the surplus to go to increased works, but the Treasury are not likely to do so while they have this enormous claim against them.

15260. *Chairman.*—This claim stands in the way of an agreement being come to. Evidently the traffic increased at such a ratio that the rolling stock originally supplied was not adequate to the proper working of the traffic that was on the line?—Well, the company allege that that is the case, and the Board of Works were quite prepared to give them more.

15261. You don't dispute this?—No.

15262. Well, I suppose you can't. I think, Mr. Batchen, that is all I want to ask you.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

15263. Is there any other statement of Dr. Todd except that which you have quoted, to which you wish to direct attention? I ask, because of course you have studied it, and I should wish to know if there is anything more you should think calls for special notice in his evidence?—Well, there are so many of them, sir. There are a great many points I take exception to and which I would like to remark about in connection with Dr. Todd's evidence. Dr. Todd's and Mr Hanna's evidence at the previous sittings.

15264. Perhaps you think it sufficiently dealt with in the general course of your evidence?—I think it is; my general evidence may suffice.

15265. You have read the evidence of Mr. Hanna, County Councillor, Donegal?—I have.

15266. I believe he is, or was, for some time a baronial director of this Burtonport line?—I think not.

15267. What?—I think not; Mr. Sweeney was.

15268. Mr. Sweeney, not Mr. Hanna?—Yes, Mr. Sweeney, not Mr. Hanna.

15269. Mr. Hanna gave evidence of an experience of his on the 3rd of August, 1904, to which you have not referred?—Yes. Well, I will refer to that, sir.

15270. He says, "I left Letterkenny at eight o'clock in the morning to transact business at Falcarragh. The country was dry in the morning when going down, but about noon it commenced to rain, gradually increasing till near four o'clock. I was judging at a cattle show, and I was out in it all the time, so that I know exactly the character of the rain. At a quarter past four I got into the train to go home. At a place near Foxhall, three or four miles from Letterkenny, the country people were shouting and throwing up their hats, and the train stopped at the brink of a one-span bridge. I got out of the train. I had to walk into Letterkenny to catch the train home, and I examined the débris as much as I could. 14174. Was there a collision?—No, no. It was a new bridge built to carry the railway train only the year before. 14175. The bridge gave way?—It was completely swept away. 14176. By the rain?—By three hours of summer rain. I examined the débris as much as I could. Of course with the heavy turbulence of the water I could not see exactly through, but as far as I could see the abutments were mainly built with dry stones and plastered with mortar on the outside."?—Yes, I saw that. With regard to the statement that it was built with dry stones and plastered with mortar on the outside, I say it is quite untrue. We had masonry inspectors as well as engineers in charge of all the masonry work of the line, and I know the mason work is excellent throughout the line. With regard to the rainfall which he describes, I think, as a summer shower, I find here a report which I submitted to my board shortly after the occurrence. I happened to be in the district at the time, and accompanying my report were two extracts from the local press. I will read one of them. "Dear Sir,—In the twenty-four hours——" Collapse of railway bridge near Foxhall. Alleged faulty construction of bridge contradicted.

15271. What is this?—It is with reference to the rainfall of that day.

15272. What is the origin, the authority?—A letter addressed to the editor of the *Londonderry Sentinel.*

15273. By whom?—By a doctor in Letterkenny who keeps a record of the rainfall in the district.

15274. Yes?—"In the twenty-four hours ending at ten o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 4th inst., 2·18 inches of rain fell here. Over one inch of this quantity fell between 3 and 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, the 3rd inst. I never saw rain like it for that hour and a half outside the tropics." The result of that very great rainfall was that a small Abnormally heavy fall of rain the cause of the collapse.

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stream which had been embanked—there are a number of streams in that district embanked on both sides—overflowed its banks, and rushing down alongside the railway embankment, seeking for some place to escape, swept away a small accommodation bridge which was not constructed or meant to meet such a flood, and did enormous damage to the crops in the fields adjoining the railway. The farmer took an action against the Lough Swilly Company for £500 damages. The company defended the action successfully on the ground that the rain was unusual, and the circumstance one over which they had no control.

15275. Mr. Hanna says, "I was judging at a cattle show, and I was out in it all the time, so that I know exactly the character of the rain"?—I might say that on the Glenties line, on the Donegal system, that same day there were several washaways.

15276. If that had been an evening train coming there after dark everyone might have been killed?—Quite true.

15277. And whatever may be the explanation of such an incident, the occurrence of it seems to indicate that an authoritative inquiry respecting this line might be a useful measure?—I don't think so. You could not anticipate a rainfall of that kind; it might happen on any railway.

The suggested Inquiry as to the condition of the Burtonport line generally not considered necessary.

15278. Well, there is evidence that people are afraid to travel on the line. We have had it here, and it has been stated in the House of Commons, that people are afraid to travel on the line. Now, if people are afraid to travel on the line, and if you have such an incident as that, alarming though explicable, does it not occur to you that an inquiry might set doubts at rest and might so be useful?—I don't see that it would help this in any way. You can't make an inquiry as to what is the probable amount of rain to fall at a certain time.

Contractors' work done satisfactorily

15279. Well, I think people would like to know that the bridges over which the trains in which they travel have to go would resist any probable rainfall. However, the incident does not convey to you the same impression that it does to me. I shall not press it further. Now, did the contractors construct this line to your satisfaction?—They did.

Cost of construction of line, and Contractors' additional claim for extras discussed.

15280. What did you pay them for it?—About £220,000.

15281. For about fifty miles?—Yes.

15282. And they claimed another £100,000?—About that.

15283. For what—extras?—For extra works.

15284. Not included in the contract documents?—Which they contended were additional to the contract documents.

15285. Additional, yes?—If I might give you an instance.

15286. What did you contend?—We contended that under their inclusive contract they were bound to carry out the line to the satisfaction of the Board of Works and the Board of Trade.

15287. Yes, for the contract sum?—For the contract sum.

15288. Well, you gave them nothing?—We gave them nothing that in any way increased the free grant. We did this. In the promotion of these deviations there was a certain amount of money expected to be saved. This amount of money to be saved by the deviations was to be divided between the Board of Works and the contractors.

15289. Yes?—The contractors tendered this big claim, and as it was within the knowledge of the Board that a great deal more money was spent than what had been contemplated, the Board gave up their portion of the savings, so that the free grant was not altered in any way by the contractor's claim.

15290. Do you mean they lost by the contract?—Yes. They say they lost an immense amount of money. I am not able to say what they lost, but I can give you one instance; the Owencarrow Viaduct was to cost only £6,500 under the Parliamentary estimate. To my own knowledge it cost over £30,000.

15291. If that be so, those calculations of £6,000 a mile, calculations founded on the contract sum, are altogether wrong as to the actual cost of the line?—I don't think so. The calculation at so much per mile is based on the actual cost to the parties finding the money. If the actual total cost of the line to the Treasury is so much, you divide that by the number of miles, and you get so much per mile.

15292. The total cost to the Treasury. But if the building of the line cost the contractors more than the Treasury gave them, then the cost of the line is more than the accounts will show?—On the other hand, if the contractors had made a large profit we would have had to pay the full contract price. We can only reckon that the contract sum was the amount expended.

15293. You have just admitted that the amount expended was immensely more?

Chairman.—For this particular line?

Witness.—For the Owencarrow Viaduct.

15294. *Mr. Sexton.*—That was a typical fact, I think?—It is of my own knowledge I tell you that. As I explained, the contractors had to go about eighty feet down for foundations below the level of the ground.

15295. Well, if people who met with such a mischance and had to spend so much more upon the line than they received had their claim for £100,000 wholly rejected, it cannot be said that the Board of Works errs on the side of concession?—It was a bargain.

15296. I know. Do public departments administering public money for public purposes always hold strictly to the letter of a bargain where equity appears to the contrary?—I am not prepared to offer an opinion.

15297. Well, then, the Company too made claims which appeared rather to grow with time and eventually came to the amount of £77,000: is that right?—That is quite right.

15298. Your case is, I understand, that they knew what they were about all along, that they prepared the plans, examined the estimates, had access to the line, and knew thoroughly when they began to work the line what the position was?—That is our case.

15299. They say, on the other hand, that they understood and believed that their claims would be made good in the twelve months of maintenace by the contractors, and then they contend that it was only after they began to work the line that they became fully aware of the nature and scope of the defects—that is their case?—Yes, that is their case.

15300. Now, does it not seem that in such a case there is room for an inquiry: I mean when a public department like yours gets into an obstinate and prolonged dispute of this sort with a public company, and the public interested suffer, as everybody admits, do you not think that an effort should be made to settle it in some authoritative manner, rather than let it run on indefinitely?—Well, the Company have been able to interest certain members of Parliament and public bodies, and induced them to believe that the line had been badly constructed and that it required £77,000 to put it in proper order. I have shown you by the details of their claim that they ask us to demolish certain viaducts which are acknowledged to be substantial, and that they ask for about £14,000 or £15,000 worth of work which was not included in the contract, and we hold that under the Treasury agreement, anything in excess of what was shown in the contract plans, must be provided by the Company themselves. They undertook to do so.

15301. I am not disputing your contention, I am simply inviting you to consider that there are two sides presented to the case and that they invite inquiry. You may be right or the Company may be right, but is the difference one of a kind that this Commission can determine? Does it not require a combination of legal and engineering skill to deal with it? Can it be dealt with otherwise than on expert evidence and by an expert decision?—I think it can; it is so apparent from my evidence this morning that the claim is not a proper one. I think that if they got £700 out of £77,000 I would say they got too much.

15302. Have you any doubt that another expert would come here to-morrow and tell a different story?—Well, he would not be able to maintain it so well as I can.

15303. And that is equally the question for the expert to determine?—In our agreement with the Company there is no opening for such an expert to come in to determine. The free grant has been fixed, and anything beyond that free grant must be found by the Company.

15304. I know, on the letter of the bond?—Yes.

15305. But there are also the merits. Are you determined to ignore what may be called the substantial merits simply because they are not in the bond?—

What I say is, if they have any action against the Board of Works, let them proceed at common law. It is not for the Treasury, the Board of Works, or the Board of Trade to appoint an arbitrator. They can take action against the Board of Works.

15306. Well, it is an expensive and an unfriendly method?—It is the proper method. If you appoint an arbitrator, the arbitrator gets a big claim before him; he feels there must be something in it if there is a consent to the arbitration; he feels bound to give something; and I say if they get anything at all they get too much.

15307. I consider that if a bridge is swept away under the circumstances stated there is some ground for an inquiry?—I have explained that the circumstances were exceptional.

15308. The circumstances were exceptional, but the destruction of a bridge was exceptional, too. You say the railway company have induced members of Parliament and public bodies to take an interest in the matter, but if it be true, as appears to be admitted, that people are afraid to travel on the line, that the local traffic in fish and cattle is hampered, and the development of the natural resources of that district retarded, is it not natural that the members of Parliament and the local bodies should take an interest in the case without being induced to do so by the company?—Your suggestion was arbitration as to the amount of the claim. If there is any default about the working it is provided that twenty ratepayers may appeal to the Board of Trade, and they can have an inquiry held. The delays and inconveniences, and the suggested danger to the public, are due to the bad management of the Lough Swilly Company in the way that they have abused the engines of the line and run them down into such a state that they are not fit to cope with the traffic.

15309. Has there been an application for an inquiry under Section 24 of the Order in Council?—There has been.

15310. Have twenty ratepayers applied for an inquiry under the Order?—I believe they have, and I believe an inquiry was held under Section 7 of the Act of 1896.

15311. Surely you have had no inquiry under that Section?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—There was no inquiry, sir, I am told.

15312. *Mr. Sexton.*—There are three special modes of inquiry prescribed by law in relation to this matter; there is Section 21 of the Order in Council, Section 24 of the Order in Council, and Section 7 of the Act of 1896, and so far as I understand there has been no inquiry under any one of them. Section 24 contemplates a failure by the promoters and provides a procedure to make good the default, do you consider that section applicable to this case?—I would like you to leave this to be dealt with by the next witness. I know an inquiry was held by Mr. Tatlow.

15313. That was a personal inquiry by Mr. Tatlow as agent of your Board, but was there any such inquiry as contemplated by law in such a case?—No, an application was made to the Board of Trade, but I think that application was not acted upon, the working had improved shortly after the application was made, and it was not considered desirable or necessary to go on with it.

15314. My memory is that there has been a constant stream of applications to the Board of Works for an inquiry and that you have stood out against them. Now take Sec. 21. It is provided that should a difference take place as to the construction of the line it shall be settled by an application to the Treasury—the inhabitants have tried to procure that inquiry, and you have not granted it?—That inquiry is in regard to the plans of the works to be constructed. That was an inquiry which could be held if the two engineers should disagree about the works to be done on the line. That inquiry cannot now arise.

15315. That is your reading of it?—It says if a difference shall arise between the company and the Board of Works as to the construction of the agreement, the Treasury shall be the sole judges of such, and of all matters and things therein referred to, save as regards the designs and plans of the works to be executed under the agreement.

15316. At any rate that inquiry was not held?—No, it was not necessary.

15317. Then there is Section 7 of the Act of 1896, that is not intended to operate before the opening of the line, certainly, but after. Section 7 provides that the Board of Works may in such a case as has arisen here appoint an engineer or other fit person to report upon the condition of the undertaking, and the maintenance and development of the same, and if the report should satisfy them that there is any further cause for action they may appeal to the Lord Lieutenant, and the Lord Lieutenant in Council may make such order as he thinks fit—have you used that power?—That is the power under which, I think, Mr. Tatlow was appointed.

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15318. Yes, but then, having regard to your evidence to-day, the report of Mr. Tatlow must have been such as to entitle you, and, in fact, render it your duty, to proceed to the Lord Lieutenant—did you do so?—That is a matter that is, of course, in the discretion of my Board. I am not altogether sure how they proceeded, but the next witness is quite conversant with all that followed, and he will be able to tell you.

Mr. Tatlow's report under Section 7 of the Railways Act, 1896.

15319. It is very unfortunate where so many modes of inquiry are prescribed that none of them has been found to suit the case, and that the Board of Works, although your evidence shows they have complete faith in their own case, refuse to allow an inquiry?—An inquiry into the construction of the line? I don't think you can appoint an arbitrator under the agreement to decide about the construction of the line or in connection with this scheme.

15320. I gather your view and the view of the Board to be that your sense of the justice of your case is such that you object to any sort of an inquiry?—I think, sir, you are mixing up the two inquiries; the one inquiry is into the working of the line, we have had that inquiry; the other inquiry you suggest is into the construction of the line; the time for an inquiry under Section 21 of the agreement has long since gone, that was applicable before the works were started, and I might say indeed that there was a time when it was quite possible that clause would have been put in force before the works were started.

Proposed Inquiry as to construction under Section 21 of the Treasury agreement.

15321. To settle the dispute between you and the company an inquiry into the construction would be necessary, and to guard the public interest an inquiry into the working of the line is necessary?—An inquiry into the working of the line may be necessary, I might say it is necessary, but an inquiry into the construction of the line is not necessary. The Board of Trade had to be satisfied and the Board of Works had to be satisfied, and the Treasury is satisfied with the satisfaction of those bodies.

15322. You are all satisfied with each other?—Yes, and if anything now is necessary the Lough Swilly Company have to provide it themselves under the agreement.

15323. That is strictly on the clause. The view I submit to you is that a public body ought to recognise that there is no better use of public money than to employ it for the public interest, and if the public interest requires a concession in this case it might be wise to consider it?—I think my evidence shows that it would be absurd to ask an arbitrator to decide whether three certain viaducts should be demolished and others built in their stead, and whether the Lough Swilly Company should receive £5,000 in their hands for the permanent way on the suggestion that the rails were put on the line too soon.

15324. People claim more than they expect?—No doubt they do.

15325. And no doubt a great modification would be made in the event of the inquiry: but you are determined to concede nothing except a running shed?—Which did not belong to the contract at all.

15326. And as to the rolling stock you say, "We will let you have the rolling stock if you give up everything else," does that not seem to be measured rather by their necessities than by the equity of the matter. You say, "We will concede you one thing if you concede everything else"?—When that offer was made neither my Board nor the Treasury had an idea there was to be a £77,000 claim, the idea was that there were a few articles which could be dealt with in one month.

15327. I understand that there were a great many differences, and your condition was that you would give them the rolling stock, taking advantage of their poverty, if they gave up all the other differences to you?—I said there were very few differences as to the construction of the line, but there were very many

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other matters with regard to the Carndonagh and Letterkenny lines.

15328. You wanted them to swop all those other matters for the rolling stock?—No, but to arrange a conference.

15329. But you would not give them the rolling stock unless they accepted your decision on everything else?—Not our decision, but what decision might be arrived at in the conference—they might get everything and the Board of Works nothing.

Conference regarding the matters in dispute with working Company proposed by the Board of Works.

15330. In a conference between you and them. I should think not; if you go into a conference saying, "We will give you the rolling stock if you give us everything else," then I mistake you very much after hearing your evidence, if on going into the conference you would give more than you had offered?—No; I say if we go into a conference we discuss the matters in dispute between us, and if they are settled to the satisfaction of the Board of Works, even supposing the whole of them had to be conceded, the Board of Works will give the additional rolling stock.

15331. If you go into the conference saying, "I will give the rolling stock if you will satisfy me about all the other differences between us," then I say the other side is entitled to regard that conference as one in which you are determined to have all the rest?—I don't think so.

The payment to Company of £3 10*s.* per mile per week for working discussed.

15332. If the £3 10*s.* per mile per week which you pay the company was measured upon the assumption of a two-train service each way daily, and then if it was found almost immediately after they had got to work that they required a three-train service each way daily, and if you, the Treasury, take half the surplus, over £3 10*s.* per mile per week, does it not appear to you now as a just man that a case has arisen in which you might make a concession, apart from the strict letter of the law, with regard to the rolling stock. They have to work more than they expected they would have to work; you get the benefit of the increased traffic by dividing the surplus; and where you receive an unexpected benefit you might make a concession even though not stipulated for in advance?—I can tell you they never anticipated they would ever have such good traffic as they have on this Burtonport line, and so much is this the case, that in making the agreement for the Carndonagh line it was decided between the Board of Works and the Company that the surplus on the Carndonagh line before being divided should go to make up any deficiency on the Burtonport line. There has been no deficit on the Burtonport line.

15333. If in order to get this higher traffic receipt they have to give a more expensive service than they expected to have to give, and if you share the benefit of the higher surplus resulting from that expanded service, I submit to you that in equity you ought to contribute to the expenditure required for carrying on that extended service?—Consider, sir, if they have that extended service, and this great increase of traffic, on the Burtonport line, they get it on the Letterkenny line, which is in the hands of the Lough Swilly Company, and on the Lough Swilly line itself, so they benefit directly on all three lines.

15334. Is this a small company, a twelve-mile line with a small capital?—It is a small company.

15335. Surely you ought to have regard to that circumstance? The official disposition seems to be to take advantage of everything that turns up to increase the surplus, but to do nothing to provide the additional expenses required towards earning that surplus?—I think these people were perfectly capable of making their bargain.

15336. Who is the gentleman who knows everything so well—who is the chairman?—Mr. John M'Farland.

Suggestion that some concession should be made to the working company in the public interest disapproved.

15337. A contractor?—Yes.

15338. What was the capital of the original Lough Swilly line?—I think it was about £80,000; I am not quite sure—something small.

15339. Well, I should think that public opinion would approve of it if in the case of so small a capital suddenly charged with such a large increase of responsibility a liberal view were taken by the public authorities with regard to these financial difficulties?—I don't agree with you there; I think quite enough money has been spent on this line, and if there is £77,000 to spare there are other parts of the country that require it more than Donegal.

15340. Are you entitled to turn your back on the district and shake yourself free of responsibility where people are afraid to travel on the line and the district is hampered by reason of the state of things?—I may tell you that an appeal was made to the Board of Trade regarding that, and they say they have no reason to consider the line is dangerous. The management is bad, no doubt of it; there are delays and inconveniences to the public, but they are due to the management; it is not the line nor the construction.

15341. I confess I look on the question from the public point of view, and care very little whether you or the company are right, but from the public point of view it is scandalous that this dispute should continue from year to year to the disadvantage of the public because a public department, which I think ought to set an example of reasonableness will not admit any third party to settle the dispute?—I don't see why they should. The management is admittedly bad, and the public ought to go to the directors and get them to put it right, and if the company have any claim against the Board they can go to common law and get their claim set right.

15342. Your position is not that of people using private money; you are a public authority responsible to the public, and if the public or a large section of them think this matter ought to be set right even by a larger expenditure, I think a wider and more intelligent view of your duty would be to conform to that attitude?—You would not suggest that we should demolish the viaducts?

15343. No, I say people ask more than they expect, and when temper is hardened and blackened by years of dispute, they do not tend to become more reasonable. I submit it is not reasonable that this state of things should go on to the damage of the district, because a public department will not admit any arbitrator or mediator on a dispute in which they have such confidence in their own case, I think the public are apt to judge in such circumstances that their case is not as good as they represent. Can you give any evidence on the purchase proposals for the Letterkenny line?—I am sorry to say I cannot; I had no direct dealings with it.

15344. This system consist of four lines, the Lough Swilly, Letterkenny, Carndonagh, and Burtonport, the original line, two lines built under the Act of 1896, and the line of which you are mortgagee in possession, the Letterkenny line. You spoke a while ago about the Treasury getting back their own. Did they lend £85,000 about a quarter of a century ago?—Yes.

15345. And they have charged 4 per cent. interest on all that ever since?—Not on all that.

15346. Yes, every penny of it, on the original mortgage of £50,000 4 per cent. interest, and on the second mortgage, £35,000, 4 per cent, for interest, and 1 per cent. for sinking fund?—That is so.

15347. So that in the time that has elapsed since these lines were made you have got back the whole amount of principal by way of interest?—That may be.

15348. And in addition, out of the second mortgage there has been £13,000 of the principal paid off, leaving a balance of £72,000. There is also some arrear of interest on the first mortgage?—Yes.

15349. Was there not an offer made to your Board on the part of the Lough Swilly Company, to buy the Letterkenny line from you, either at a lump sum of £70,000, or at what might be found to be the value of it on an independent expert valuation?—I believe there was, but I am not familiar with it; I was down in Londonderry, and I would not be consulted on a point like that in any case.

15350. But as an official you are aware of it?—I am just aware of it, but I know nothing about the details, and would rather not go into it.

15351. You know the Lough Swilly Company offered, in case this was done, to relay that line with 60 lb. rails?—So I am told.

15352. And to relieve the ratepayers of all liability under the guarantees?—I heard that also, in evidence.

15353. If that line were relaid with 60 lb. rails there would be no reason for objecting to run engines through from Burtonport to Derry?—Not a bit.

15354. At present if they run an engine through which is heavy enough for the Burtonport line it is apt to be too heavy for the line of which you are mortgagees, and you would object?—Quite so.

15365. If that bargain were carried through it would get rid of all the engineering objection; it surely must be embarrassing to that company with their eighty-mile line to be obliged to run with different engines on separate sections?—I don't think so; the carriages run through, and all that is required is that at Letterkenny there should be an engine ready; one is taken off and another is put on; there is no trouble or difficulty.

15356. *Chairman.*—Except the extra expense in working?—It may cost them a little more in working.

15357. *Mr. Serton.*—Can you say the Board have closed their minds against this offer?—I cannot say.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

15358. I suppose that the agreement which was entered into by the Board of Works with the promoting company is the agreement usually entered into for the construction of railways under these various Acts?—I think so.

15359. And clause 11 under which the Board of Works had power, in the event of default on the part of the promoting company to carry out the work, is also similar to clauses inserted in other agreements?—Well, I am not quite sure, but I believe it is a new clause.

15360. There is nothing exceptional?—I think not.

15361. What you said, I think, was that in determining the free grant tenders were invited, and in this particular instance they were invited by the Board of Works? Assuming the Company had carried out their part, and were prepared to construct the line, would they have asked for tenders?—They did, as a matter of fact. Tenders were asked for by an advertisement prepared by the Lough Swilly Company, and were addressed to the Secretary of the Company, care of the Board of Works, Dublin, and were to be opened by the Board of Works and the Company together.

15362. So that the Company had a voice in the decision as to whether they were in their opinion adequate?—Certainly.

15363. And on the face of these tenders the amount of the free grant was determined and fixed upon at £315,000?—Yes.

15364. At that time when the tenders were submitted and, according to you, considered by the Lough Swilly Company and the Board of Works, did the Lough Swilly Company raise any objection as to the amount of the free grant? As to the insufficiency of the grant?—I do not think they did at that time. They wanted more money under the heading of promotion expenses.

15365. Can you tell us or give us any idea what was the amount allocated out of the free grant towards promotion expenses?—The total was about £15,000.

15366. What is the usual procedure with respect to the payment of the promotion money? Is it paid before any work is commenced with regard to construction?—A great deal of it had to be paid before the work was commenced so as to enable the promoters to pay the engineers for the preparation of the Parliamentary plans and the expenses of promotion before the Privy Council.

15367. I quite understand that?—And a certain amount was handed over to the Company and they were expected to provide vouchers for its expenditure.

15368. In this particular case these plans and specifications and expenses attending the bringing of the matter before the Privy Council, and so on, were all incurred by the Lough Swilly Company?—They were.

15369. And certain expenditure was involved on them?—Yes.

15370. On the foot of that expenditure, what was the actual amount paid to the Company by the Board of Works?—About £15,000, I have not got the exact figures. I think I might tell you roughly that £1,500 of the amount allocated has not been vouched for yet.

15371. Of the £15,000 they received £13,000?—They received more than they have been able to produce vouchers for.

15372. That would leave a balance of about £2,000 due to the company?—They would have received that had they produced the vouchers.

15373. In Clause 11, which has been referred to, you seem to have pretty drastic powers, are they more so than in similar undertakings with other companies, particularly these light railways?—I don't think so.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—May I ask a question, Mr. Chairman, with your permission?

Chairman.—I don't think we are finished with the witness yet.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I beg your pardon. I thought the Commissioners had concluded their questions.

15374. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think you said that the Board of Works on taking over the construction of the railway took over the engineer and staff of the Lough Swilly Company for the purpose of assisting in the work?—They did.

15375. These men were not under the orders of the Company but under the orders of the Board of Works?—Yes.

15376. At the same time, I presume the Company benefited indirectly, because they had confidence, as I presume they would have, in the men who had been in their employ?—Oh, yes.

15377. And this engineer whom you took over, was he in the employ of the Company at the time?—No, being a small company they did not employ a permanent engineer on their staff: a permanent way inspector did all the work. They had to employ an engineer for the work of preparing plans and carrying on the construction of the new line. This was the engineer we took over. He prepared the plans and specifications in consultation with the chairman of the Company.

15378. At that time they contemplated doing the work themselves?—Yes.

15379. He was, presumably, a man in their confidence more so than an outsider?—I should certainly say so.

15380. Whilst the deviations were proposed to be made by this engineer, had the Lough Swilly Company an opportunity of submitting them to their own engineer or to their own consulting engineer?—In addition to having referred to the Board of Works on the deviations, they investigated the deviations for themselves, and satisfied themselves as to the desirability of carrying them out.

15381. And I suppose the very fact that they promoted an Order in Council which approved and confirmed these deviations is conclusive evidence that they saw no reason to object to them?—I think so.

15382. I think you said that the Donegal County Council also had the alterations and modifications of the original specifications submitted to them?—Yes; they had to approve of them also under the Act of 1896.

15383. Did they enter any protest against them?—They approved.

15384. Without demur?—Without demur.

15385. On page eight you go on to say that in consequence of the complaints of the Lough Swilly Company it was the opinion of the Board of Works that an independent inquiry was desirable. Does not that rather indicate that there was some justification for some of those complaints?—I do not understand the question.

15386. On page eight you say at various times during the progress of the works objections were made which were disposed of. Then an independent engineer was sent down to examine into the Company's complaints. Of course that independent engineer was called in by the Board of Works?—Yes. I remember distinctly. The Board of Works, while expressing perfect confidence that the work would be carried out properly, wished to satisfy themselves, in view of eventualities such as have occurred now, and thought it would be desirable to send an independent engineer to see the works—Mr. Barton.

15387. *Chairman.*—That was the gentleman from Dundalk?—Yes.

15388. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It was a course adopted, no doubt, to get the contract through, and to try to satisfy the Company?—Yes.

15389. Did the engineer of the line, the Company's line, at any time during the construction question the way in which the work was being carried out or these different alterations made as to the viaducts or other matters?—Not as regards viaducts. But he did about the construction of the line over bogs, and portions of the fencing, and other matters of that kind. A number of complaints were sent up to the Board of Works in Dublin, and they were specially investigated by myself, and I had the remarks also of the different engineers on the points raised. After receiving my report the Board of

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Thomas M. Batchen, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer, Board of Public Works, Ireland.

Promoting Company's Engineer and Staff taken over by the Board of Works.

Lough Swilly Company's approval of the deviations from original plans, and their promotion of the Order in Council.

Independent Engineer sent to investigate complaints made by the Company during the construction of the line.

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Private agreement between the Lough Swilly Company and the Contractors re'ative to the deviations.

Works sent down Mr. Barton to investigate the matter.

15390. Then, I presume, as regards the allegation that the specification was departed from in several important matters, they did complain at the time that this departure took place; they did in fact raise the point?—They did. I may mention here with regard to these deviations, which extend to about sixteen miles of the entire line, the Board of Works found, after the line was opened, that the Company, although they had no power under the original contract to do so, had entered into an agreement—a private agreement—with the contractors by which they reserved to themselves the right to approve or disapprove of any of the works.

15391. I don't think that has been mentioned yet. I was going to ask a question about it later on, but as you have touched upon it you may take it now. Here it is on page seventeen. Are the Commissioners to understand that a private or, so to speak, secret understanding was arrived at between the Lough Swilly Company and these contractors that before consenting to these deviations which, in the opinion of your engineer, were improvements on the original specification, that, as I say, before consenting to them they had to receive compensation money or something in the nature of compensation money?—Yes, they had. The contractors had to pay a large sum of money to the Lough Swilly Company to get them to promote the deviations.

15392. You are in a position to speak to that of your own knowledge?—Yes. Of my own knowledge.

15393. Perhaps you can tell the Commission what the amount was which was paid over in that way?—The sum of £5,900 was paid over to the Lough Swilly Company as their price for promoting these deviations.

15394. *Chairman.*—For agreeing to them?—For agreeing.

15395. Not for promoting, for agreeing?—To promote also. They had to promote.

(See Appendix No. 8).

15396. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They said they would not agree if they did not get the money?—I have the agreement here between the contractors and the Lough Swilly Company.

15397. Will you read it?—

Chairman.—It is too long.

15398. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The relevant point is the consideration?—The first clause is (*Reads*):—"The Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company shall apply to the Lord Lieutenant in Council for an Order in Council authorising the said deviations and abandonments as aforesaid." The second clause (*Reads*):—"The said Pauling and Company shall in consideration of the premises pay to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company on a separate credit the sum of £5,900."

15399. *Chairman.*—Do you know that it was carried out?—That money was paid into a separate account. You won't find it in the returns, the half-yearly returns of the Lough Swilly Company. The money was paid.

15400. You know it?—I know it.

15401. What was it to be credited to?

15402. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think that point is immaterial, at any rate they got the money?—Clause 6 was:—(*Reads*)—"The works of such deviations shall be executed and carried out by the said Pauling and Company, Limited, in accordance with the provisions and the specifications of the original line as far as same are applicable to the works, and such deviations to the reasonable satisfaction of the said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company and their engineer." They could thus have approved or disapproved of the manner in which these deviations were being carried out during construction.

15403. If they knew a secret agreement had been made, it would, I think, to a certain extent influence the Board of Works in refusing to entertain the demands put forward by the company?—I am not sure they looked upon it quite in that light, but they would be perfectly justified in doing so.

15404. *Chairman.*—You call it a secret agreement?—I did not call it a secret agreement. I said a private agreement.

15405. How did you get it?—I had heard of it for some months. It was a pretty well known matter. About six months ago the contractors had referred to the matter—they had a very much harder name than I should care to use—to the giving of the £5,900, and I asked them to let me see the agreement, and they sent a copy to me.

15406. *Mr. Sexton.*—Although you refused their claim for £100,000 they sent it to you?—Yes. (*Copy of agreement handed in.*)

15407. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You have said the Board of Trade Inspector had considered some minor items necessary, and that they should be attended to. What were these, roughly speaking?—They were small matters. The company said they could be done within a month.

15408. What was the total cost involved, roughly?—I am not sure that I put any price upon them they were so small.

15409. That Board of Trade report was submitted to and acquiesced in by the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, it was. They entered into the usual agreement for working the line in accordance with the Board of Trade regulations.

15410. Were there exceptions, say, with reference to this running shed?—There were.

15411. At the time this £2,000 was set apart for this running shed, I presume it was never contemplated that it would be located upon any other portion of the system except that which you were about to undertake?—That is so.

15412. Afterwards they seemed to wish to have it transferred to an adjoining section, a more distant section of the line?—Yes, to their own line at Londonderry.

15413. Did they give any reason for that departure from the original plan?—Yes. They said it would be more convenient.

15414. *Chairman.*—They said it would be more convenient?—Yes.

15415. It is the natural terminus of the line.

15416. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You say the time to raise that point was when they entered into the agreement?—Yes.

15417. Did the Board of Trade express any opinion after the inspection as to the equipment of the line or only as to the matter of construction?—Not in the matter of equipment. They saw that the bridges were strong enough and that the line was properly constructed in the interests of public safety.

15418. Did they enter into these various differences between sufficiency or insufficiency of equipment. Did the Board of Trade express any opinion?—No, they had no power to do so. The Treasury are the sole judges upon that point.

15419. At the conference which you held with the company's engineer you agreed to have a certain number of the improvements carried out, and others struck out; have you any idea what was the cost of these improvements? Was it a matter of £1,000 or less?—They were very small. I believe little more than £1,000. I have not gone into the question of price. They were all carried out.

15420. The contractor carried them out?—Yes, during the year of maintenance.

15421. In point of fact, were any of the extra items outside the contract essential to the proper working of the line?—Some of them would not be essential. No doubt they would be desirable, but I would not say they were essential. There were two additional passing places asked for, but if these were required they should be built by the Lough Swilly Company themselves under the Treasury agreement.

15422. The different sums scheduled in the claim of the Lough Swilly Company, for passing places, enlarging certain stations, and better accommodation are all given in your evidence. You said that the traffic of the line had increased enormously, and quite beyond the anticipations of the Board of Works, the Lough Swilly Company, or of anyone in the district; and, therefore, I presume that if you had had reason to anticipate such a development of traffic that probably the Board of Works would have made some larger provision in the way of station accommodation, passing places, and other matters of that kind?—The original proposals, designs, and provisions for all these stations and passing places emanated from the promoters themselves.

15423. Admitting that, they were at the same time based upon certain anticipations of the traffic, and I think you said just now to Mr. Sexton the Board of Works, as a matter of fact, anticipated a loss upon the working of this section, and that the Carndonagh

line was, in certain circumstances, expected to make up the deficit upon the Burtonport line. I put this to you. Under all the circumstances ought you not to consider whether such a large increase of traffic and development having taken place, although strictly speaking on the legal merits the Board of Works are not called upon to contribute one farthing beyond what they have done, yet if satisfied that the accommodation at the present moment is insufficient, that the passing places are inadequate, ought they not, I say, or at any rate might they not stretch a point and improve the accommodation to a certain extent?—Yes; I agree with you. If the company abandon these ridiculous claims, as I may call them, and approach the Board of Works and the Treasury in a proper spirit, this £7,000 or £8,000 of profit that has been made upon the line might certainly be devoted to extension. Although I say that, the Board of Works and the Treasury have got to decide it, but I think it would be quite reasonable.

15424. *Mr. Sexton.*—Would not the intervention of a third party be likely to promote that result?—I don't think so.

15425. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Under one of the sections of the agreement, the surplus instead of being divided between the company and the Treasury may be applied from time to time on the erection of additional stations. You have actually power to devote £2,000 of the profit of the last two years which is now divided between the Treasury and the company to such a purpose?—Yes, but that is without prejudice to the company's obligation to construct the same at their own expense.

15426. I take it that on the legal merits of the case the company has not a leg to stand on. The legal construction of the bargain, and the reading of Clause 11, shows they are bound to maintain and work the line in an efficient manner without going to the Treasury for a single penny?—That is Clause 12, the maintenance clause.

15427. Can you tell me in the case of other lines constructed under the Act of 1896, where similar clauses obligatory on the railway company exist, whether any assistance, financial assistance, has been given by the Board of Works such as is asked for now by the Lough Swilly Company towards providing better accommodation. In this case I don't wish to do more than discuss accommodation?—No, I am not aware of any, unless I go into the case of the Letterkenny Railway, where the Board of Works are in possession.

15428. That is their own child. They are looking after it. It is not on all fours with a company working independently. I was referring to subsidiary lines worked by agreement with the Treasury, and where there might or might not be a demand or claim such as this company is asking for exceptional assistance?—I cannot tell just now. I don't suppose really there are many lines where there is any surplus to be had which could be devoted to new works.

15429. With regard to the question of rolling stock, the offer of the Treasury was made practically as soon as the line was opened, and evidently at that time the Board of Works must have been of opinion that the stock was rather inadequate. I presume they were, seeing they made that offer?—Yes; when the Board saw very soon after the line was opened that a three-train service would be necessary.

15430. And the only reason they did not carry it out was on account of what you call these preposterous claims?—At the time we did not know the claim would be so large.

15431. *Chairman.*—They made other claims?—We had the earlier claims.

15432. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Still, if at that time they thought the rolling stock was inadequate, it must be more so at the present time with a largely-increased passenger and traffic development?—The traffic was very great during the first year, or perhaps the first six months after the line was opened. I do not know that it has steadily increased.

15433. The traffic has not steadily increased?—No.

15434. At this time the line was doing well?—We are more aware of it now.

15435. Well, now, we can form an opinion from the very fact that the Board of Works were willing at the commencement, from the opening of the line, to increase the rolling stock that it must have been insufficient; therefore, unless somebody came forward, that insufficiency would still, and it seems does still, exist?—Yes.

15436. *Chairman.*—I understand that the rolling stock was sufficient for two trains a day; then they wanted three trains a day; that would require 50 per cent. more rolling stock?—They found they would require three trains a day soon after the line was opened. The rolling stock was quite sufficient for two trains per day.

15437. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At the time the line was opened. This was the beginning. I understood you to say that shortly after the line was opened the company said the rolling stock was insufficient?—Yes, if a three-train service was to be continued.

15438. Insufficient for a three-train service?—Yes.

15439. In May, 1905, the Board of Works had notice for the first time that the large claim for the sum of £70,000 was being made against them?—Yes, about two years and two months after the line was opened.

The claim for £70,000 only made more than two years after opening of line.

15440. That was after the contract which was undertaken with the contractors had expired, when it was manifestly impossible, even if the contractors had failed in their obligations, to call upon them to make these deficiencies good?—Quite so.

15441. Now, one or two questions with regard to the larger items in the schedule of claims; you spoke of the company claiming as for viaducts, £13,000, or in the alternative, that they should be given a capital sum calculated upon the annual cost of maintenance required for the upkeep of the steel girders. What does that amount to?—I have not calculated.

The larger items discussed.

15442. Is it actual expenditure on the keeping up of the steel work?—I think they have detailed it in the claim.

15443. *Chairman.*—It is in the claim?—I think they have counted upon renewing the girders every fifty years and have brought that sum down to an annual charge which they have capitalised. Then there is the annual charge for painting.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That cannot be a heavy one.

15444. *Chairman.*—Oh, no. (*Witness*).—It cannot be a very heavy sum.

15445. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—With regard to the tank engine, it is quite evident from Mr. Malcolm's report that he thought the tank engines not adequate for the Burtonport Extension, and that it would be more satisfactory if tender engines were supplied?—Yes; that I saw in the report. The tender engines were for running through the whole way from Burtonport to Londonderry.

Mr. Malcolm's report as to alleged inadequacy of tank engines,

15446. The whole way?—I agree with him that for the working of the whole line it would be the better system.

15447. What is the difference in the relative cost?—The tender engines cost about £400 more than the tank engines.

15448. Was it your regard to economy and to the specifications that made the Board of Works refuse to take the tender engines?—The Board were advised it was better to use the tank engine on the line from Letterkenny to Burtonport.

Suitability of tank engines for the Burtonport Railway explained

15449. On account of the gradients?—They had greater traction force, were more convenient to work, and did not have the additional weight of a tender. The tank saved that greater weight, and the engine could draw an entire carriage instead of a tender.

15450. Do the non-advantages counterbalance the advantages?—On a small line like Letterkenny to Burtonport the tank engine is the best.

15451. They have them, I think, on one of the Kerry lines to Valencia?—Here is a drawing of the engine supplied.

15452. I think it is the same kind of engine. Is this the only line they have them on in Ireland?—Oh, no. There are tank engines on the Donegal line, and on all the narrow gauge lines in Ireland.

Chairman.—They are becoming universal in England for suburban traffic.

15453. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Had you any plans from the company about the work on the Carndonagh line, any plans for the construction of that line by the company. That line was promoted and constructed by the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, it was

Promotion and construction of the Carndonagh line.

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promoted by the Company, but constructed by Pauling and Company under an agreement exactly similar to that prepared for the Burtonport line. In this case, however, the Company were parties to the agreement, and their engineer had charge of the construction.

15454. They constructed it?—The same contractors constructed the two lines.

Cost of construction of Carndonagh line.

15455. The cost of construction of that line, I presume, was very much less than of the Burtonport—the excavations and cuttings were very much lighter?—The excavations and cuttings were lighter, but the cost of the line was not very much lower. I think it was £6,200 per mile as compared with £6,340 for the Burtonport line.

15456. Was the specification practically on the same lines?—No. The promoting company were able to get a very much better line on the Carndonagh—a better class and much heavier work than they really intended in their Parliamentary plans. To give you an instance, the stations were only to cost £6,200 when they went before the investigators.

15457. How many stations?—About five. But when the stations were advertised for tenders it was found that the lowest tender was over £14,000 for the five stations on the Carndonagh line. Then again, for the main line, they specified that all the masonry should be built in cement mortar, instead of lime mortar. There is not an ounce of lime used in the construction of that line. A great deal of money has been wasted in unnecessary and extravagant work on that line. They acted as contractors for the stations, but the Board of Works, or the Treasury, paid the cost.

Alleged extravagant works.

15458. *Colonel Hutchèson Poë.*—The Board of Works had an opportunity of considering that specification and revising or cutting it down?—They had, but that was settled about a year before the specification of the Burtonport line was made.

15459. And the work that was contemplated and specified for on the Burtonport line was of a very much lighter nature?—Well, it was more in conformity with the requirements of the country, and was indeed what an ordinary railway company would do, if constructing the line at their own cost. As to the Carndonagh line, if the company had had to construct it themselves, at their own cost, they would never have spent the amount of money actually spent on that line.

15460. Does it in your opinion compare unfavourably as regards cost with other lines?—I think it does.

15461. Has it necessitated a larger expenditure of public money than was really justified by the requirements?—I think so.

Accuracy of Dr. Todd's statements *re* Burtonport Railway impugned.

15462. You say in your evidence that you would be prepared to answer any questions with reference to Dr. Todd's evidence, and as I had the pleasure of examining him, I will just ask you a few questions. I asked Dr. Todd—"They took it over, and had no idea of what would equip the line in a satisfactory manner?" and Dr. Todd stated—"No; they protested from the beginning, but I understood that the Board of Works said that if the traffic showed that more rolling stock was necessary they would provide it."

Witness.—Dr. Todd's statement is quite incorrect.

15463. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I also asked him—this, "I should have thought the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company would have been asked to see that everything was efficeint before they took it over?" Dr. Todd replied—"No; they were under a contract with the Treasury. The contractors have a year of maintenance, and the usual custom is that several things in lines that are not completed at the time of opening are made good during the year of opening. In this case it was undertaken that they should be made good during the year of maintenance, but the engineer had no chance of checking the works except during the time of inspection by the Board of Trade engineer, and they then called attention to various defects, and the deficiencies they then pointed out and others since observed are said to total up to £70,000." Now, is that a correct description of the situation as regards the opportunities which the engineer of the Lough Swilly Company had?—On the contrary, it is a very incorrect statement. The line was examined and inspected by the Lough Swilly Company's engineer and the Lough Swilly Company's chairman on several occasions, and shortly before the opening of the line it was minutely inspected by the company's engineer, and the company took it over with the reservation that the Board would provide the running shed, and do whatever the Board of Trade required.

15464. *Chairman.*—There was a letter to that effect?—There was a letter to that effect.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I may say that owing to the sharp controversy that has arisen on this subject that acting on the instructions I have received, I think it better not to cross-examine this witness. We will be in a position to present an independent witness who will give evidence on behalf of my clients. The company do not accept the view presented in the statement of the witness. When the company will have an opportunity of being heard they will call one of their officers. We have some letters to produce on the point. There is a letter in which we were warned off the line by the Board of Works. We have not that letter here to-day, but we can produce it. We actually commenced litigation to endeavour to compel the Board of Works to allow us to construct the line. If the Commission would give the company an opportunity at a later stage to call a witness on the subject, I think it would be the more desirable way of conducting the case.

Chairman.—We will give the opportunity, but I think it would be a benefit to us if it was given not at this, but the next sitting, which will be in about a month—I mean not to defer it longer than that.

Dr. Todd (Solicitor, Londonderry).—You don't mean to-morrow.

Chairman.—Oh, no, the next sitting in May.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Then there is this question about the tank engines—all these statements we controvert.

Mr. John M'Colgan examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. John M'Colgan, Representative of the Strabane Mercantile Association.

15465. You are from Strabane?—Yes, sir.

15466. And you are in business there?—Yes, sir.

15467. Are you here in any representative capacity?—I am here on behalf of the Strabane Mercantile Association.

15468. The Mercantile Association consists of the principal merchants and dealers of that place, I suppose?—Yes, sir.

15469. Just for my information—is Strabane a large place?—Yes, it is, sir.

15470. What is the population?—Considerably over five thousand—it is a fairly large provincial town.

15471. It is a market town?—Yes, a very important town.

15472. You are a member of the Committee of Management of that Association?—Yes, sir.

15473. And you have been connected with Strabane for many years?—Yes, upwards of twenty years.

15474. In business?—Yes, but not all the time for myself.

15475. Have you considered this question of railway management in Ireland at the Association?—Yes, it has been discussed.

15476. Do you appear before us complaining of the railways in your district?—Yes, sir; we have some complaints to make with regard to rates.

15477. Speaking generally first—we can go into detail afterwards—generally you are satisfied with the railways?—Generally we are satisfied with the railways as a means of transit, but we are not satisfied with the rates.

15478. But at any rate you have no particular grievance against the particular railways that serve your town except as regards rates?—And other facilities, such as cheap market trains.

15479. Then we will say cheap rates and fares?—Yes. With regard to the officials, I may say I have always received the utmost courtesy and attention from the Great Northern and Midland Railways.

15480. Just give me a typical case if you can of what you mean by unfair rates—take the rates for some of the articles in which you deal?—I will give you an instance of the boot trade.

15481. Boots and shoes from England to Strabane?—Yes, from England to Strabane as compared with Derry. The rate from Leeds to Derry is 47*s.* 6*d.*; to

Strabane, 50*s.* 10*d.*; from Leicester to Derry, 55*s.*; to Strabane, 59*s.* 2*d.*

15482. That is quite sufficient. I will put it shortly in this way—that from most of those places in England—Northampton, &c., the rates are lower to Derry than to Strabane, although the distance is greater?—Yes, fourteen miles further on.

15483. Of course you know as a sensible man why the rates are less in Derry?—I understand it is because it is a seaport town.

15484. Is that not a fair and reasonable explanation?—Well, we claim to have a water-way too—we have the Canal.

15485. You have not the steamer coming direct by sea?—No, but of course the small lighters can come up the Canal.

15486. I suppose you know that if they didn't charge a lower rate they would get no traffic, because the whole of the traffic would go by sea?—The sea rate is half-a-crown less even.

15487. It is a reasonable thing for the railway company to charge less to Derry than to any place inland, in consequence of the sea competition—that is a reasonable explanation?—Yes, but we cannot understand why they should carry goods past Strabane cheaper. Allow me to quote another instance. They get oil-cake from Belfast to Derry, and it is cheaper to book it to Derry and re-book on to Strabane than to Strabane direct—they save half-a-crown a ton.

15488. I can well understand that, because they come all the way by water. If there was no low rate they would see no traffic?—It is not by water but by rail.

15489. It is the water-way rules the rates?—Yes, I understand, sir, to a certain extent.

15490. Don't you know it?—I understand it is.

15491. Now, your particular business—boots and shoes—is not an industry that is cultivated in this country?—Well, unfortunately, at present it is not. That is why we complain of the high rates. I am not in favour of cheap inland through rates on any industry—on any article that can be produced in the country, but boots cannot apply except in a very small way.

15492. Would you like cheap rates for imported boots and shoes?—Yes, for everything we cannot produce at home.

15493. Why cannot you produce boots and shoes at home?—Well, the industry never developed properly. In the first place, tanning was abolished—was taken from us by Englishmen principally—with the result that our tanneries are all now closed, and there are only a few struggling boot factories.

15494. Then as a matter of fact nearly all the boots and shoes worn in Ireland are imported?—Yes.

15495. And you are in that business?—Yes.

15496. You have another business attached to these boots and shoes—I see you are an agent for Gilbey's?—Yes, sir.

15497. And of course you do a large trade in wines and spirits?—Yes.

15498. And their traffic is carried in cases?—Yes, in cases and casks.

15499. But where do you get them from?—From the Dublin depot.

15500. Not direct from England?—No.

15501. Give us what you consider your grievance is in connection with that traffic?—Just the rates. All the goods come in cases and casks, and the rates are on the higher scale in consequence of the supposed extra risk, but this is, however, purely a delusion, as Messrs. Gilbey have told me repeatedly that under no circumstances can they get a claim settled for breakages or damage, the custom being to compel carters to sign for the goods as being in good order and condition, while, of course, they know nothing whatever of the contents, and the plea then is, if there is any breakage or damage it must have occurred in the carting from the station to the consignee's place.

15502. I suppose the traffic is carried at owner's risk?—I don't think so, sir, in this case. The rate for whiskey, wine, and spirits, in casks or cases, from Dublin to Derry is 15*s.*; to Strabane, 20*s.*

15503. Well, then again, the traffic could go all the way from Dublin to Derry by water—couldn't it?—Yes.

15504. And wouldn't it if the railway company didn't charge a lower rate?—Yes.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—He is comparing the cartage rate with the station to station rate.

15505. *Chairman.*—Is the Strabane rate a collected and delivered rate?—Yes.

15506. And the Derry rate is station to station?—No, it is the same, I think—I think it is delivered in the same way in Derry.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I am told it is station to station.

15507. *Chairman.*—Well, there is a difference of 5*s.*?—Yes.

15508. Now then comes the instance of stout?—Yes, that is an important Irish industry. Well, stout——

Comparison of rates for Stout from Dublin to Strabane and Derry.

15509. From Dublin to Strabane?—It is the same as from Glasgow or Burton-on-Trent. The rate has been brought down from 20*s.* to 9*s.* 6*d.* from Dublin to Strabane, but even in this Derry has got a further preference of 2*s.*, for although the rate-book shows 12*s.* 6*d.*, I have been informed that the amount really charged is 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Healy, K.C.—That is a rate station to station—the other is delivered.

15510. *Chairman.*—That is the explanation?—I got these facts from Messrs. Gilbey. They have also got a depot in Derry and the same custom prevails. I think both are alike.

15511. Gilbey's is a big firm, and surely they are able to take care of themselves?—Oh, yes, sir, but I have to pay the rates.

15512. Let us go on now to what you have to say about the train service and passenger fares. What have you got to say about the train service from Strabane to any place—you have not sufficient market day trains?—The complaint is that Derry is getting greater facilities.

15513. What is the population of Derry compared with Strabane?—About 35,000.

Equal passenger train service and facilities to those afforded Derry advocated for Strabane.

15514. You don't expect the same train facilities at a place with 5,000 as you would get in a place of 35,000?—Well, Strabane by its geographical position, and the district in which it is situated, is duly entitled to just as good a train service as Derry. For instance, there are eleven cheap trains running to Derry in the week and to Strabane five.

15515. I should have thought that was a very good number—you don't want eleven, do you?—We would want the same facilities as Derry.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Strabane has a high opinion of itself.

15516. *Chairman.*—He has a high opinion of the place I don't see really that you have much to complain of. I don't think you have, except that you want to have the same facilities as a town with 35,000 inhabitants. Now, what about cheap trains. What do you want—two cheap trains?—Yes.

Extension of market ticket facilities urged.

15517. Do you mean by that on both systems?—On the Midland system and the Great Northern.

15518. Both of them run through your place?—Yes.

15519. Do they use the same station?—Yes.

15520. You want cheap trains every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday?—Yes.

15521. Why not every day?—It is three days, sir.

15522. You are making a suggestion there which seems to me to be most unreasonable—you would do away altogether with the ordinary fares and charge cheap tickets for every train?—Certainly not.

15523. Are these three days market days?—We have two markets.

15524. What is the general market day?—Tuesday. Wednesday is the flax market day. We give the names of the stations from which we would want them on both systems.

15525. I see you name nearly all the stations in the North of Ireland?—Not quite, sir.

15526. Now, the flax market—surely there are not many people attending the flax market?—Oh, there does. In the winter time it is well attended.

15527. Is there a Corporation in Strabane?—An Urban Council.

The advantage of the introduction of the Midland Railway into Strabane district.

15528. Now what have you got to say with reference to the subject that has been mentioned here several times about the introduction of the Midland Railway Company into your district. Do you think that has been of advantage?—Well, I don't think it has been any improvement, sir, up to the present. For the first five or six years, when the line was extended to Derry—from Strabane to Derry—there was competition in rates, with the result that the trade of the town improved very much—in fact for the past seven years the valuation went up over two thousand pounds—but now they have agreed to charge equal rates and fares and pool the traffic.

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Mr. John M'Colgan, Representative of the Strabane Mercantile Association.

15529. The Midland Company have not been there seven years?—No; it was the Donegal Company.

15530. I am asking you about the Midland?—This competition has now ceased, and the accommodation also with regard to porters on some of the stations has ceased. They have been economising to the dissatisfaction of the merchants and farmers. They have not the accommodation at the stations and they are doing away with some of the porters.

The advantage of the introduction of the Midland Railway into the Strabane district.

15531. On the Donegal line?—Yes, on the Midland now.

15532. Do you know this of your own knowledge?—Yes, I do. I got information from a reliable source. There was a gentleman told me the other day they were unloading a cargo of oil cake and he put his horses to it, but had to unloose them again. They had no accommodation and he had to take his horses back.

15533. *Mr. Sexton.*—Are you speaking of that part of the line that belongs to the Midland?—It is Strabane to Derry that belongs to the Midland.

15534. And the rest to the Joint Committee of the Donegal line?—Yes, sir, exactly.

Alleged excessive rates for small parcels.

15535. *Chairman.*—Now, small parcels. I see that you consider that the rates are too high there for small parcels?—Yes. I have a grievance in that.

15536. Of course in your particular business you send principally by parcels post?—We send a good deal by parcels post, but then there is a lot of business done in large parcels between 11 lbs. and 28 lbs.

15537. The minimum on the railway is 28 lbs.?—Yes.

15538. All up to 28 lbs. is charged for as 28 lbs.?—Yes.

15539. You know the same rule is in force in England?—I am told so.

15540. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—It is the general rule, I am told. *Witness.*—We want the scale to include parcels weighing 7 lbs. 14 lbs, and 21 lbs.—up to 14 lbs. anyway.

Increased lavatory accommodation for third class passengers recommended.

15541. What do you suggest with reference to third-class passengers. I see you want lavatory accommodation?—We want lavatory accommodation on all trains running between Derry and Belfast and Dublin. We consider that as a considerable portion of the revenue is derived from third-class passengers they are entitled to consideration.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—All through there is, except on the night mail.

15542. *Chairman.*—You don't want it on the stopping trains?—No, certainly not.

15543. It is only on the long distance?—Yes.

15544. Many of the trains have got this convenience and it will all come in time?—We hope so, sir.

Extension of Railway from Strabane to Cookstown advocated.

15545. I see your association is interested in a projected new railway from Strabane to Cookstown?—Yes; that is a new line projected.

15546. Who by?—It has not taken practical shape yet, and I think they are endeavouring to get part of it scheduled as a congested district. It would open up a wide district of country.

15547. It is an agricultural country?—Yes, and there are some quarries, and coal has been found in it, I am told.

15548. Are the quarries worked?—Some of the quarries are worked, but in a very crude state.

Industries awaiting development in the district.

15549. Is it good stone?—Yes, freestone and limestone.

15550. It is so far from the railway station that it is impossible to work it at a profit?—Yes and there is a lot of peat there.

15551. And a railway would be the means of developing these unworked industries?—Yes.

15552. Has the coal actually been proved?—It has been used in some cases.

15553. They have got it?—Yes, they have got it at Coalisland.

15554. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—We would like to know where that coal is?—In Coalisland.

15555. That is a railway station?—It is beyond the end of the line.

15556. How far beyond?—It is only a short distance beyond. In the district the line runs through there are also seams of coal.

15557. *Chairman.*—I see you also refer to an article in the "Nineteenth Century," but we will leave that to speak for itself.

Witness.—I want to show what the position of the township is with regard to the Post Office.

Importance of Strabane as a Post Office centre.

15558. *Chairman.*—You want to indicate the importance of the place by showing that there are several Post Office officials there. How many officials are there under the Postmaster of Strabane?—There are sixty-nine sub-offices under his control and management, and Strabane is also a distributing centre for the entire County of Donegal. At the head office in Strabane there are twenty-one officials and 163 rural postmen of various grades.

15559. Do you know that?—Yes.

15560. Are not there flax mills and other things there?—Yes; there is the largest and most flourishing flax-spinning concern there—the Zion mills, employing 1,400 or 1,500 operatives, we complain that their traffic is within two and a half miles of Strabane and should come to Strabane as a centre of distribution, but which is taken past Strabane owing to the action of the railway company in giving two cheap trains on Saturdays to Derry.

15561. People could walk to Strabane without going on the railway at all. It is only two miles distant?—Two miles and a half.

15562. *Mr. Sexton.*—Does the train stop at Strabane?

15563. *Chairman.*—Of course it does; and they can get to Strabane for 2½*d.* at any rate?—I don't know what the fare is, but it is cheap, at all events.

15564. I don't see why they should go to Derry unless there is some attraction?—The large place, you know, brings the people.

15565. You have told us very frankly about Strabane and its industries and railways, has your association formed any views as to what would remedy the grievances of which you complain?—They are unanimously in favour of State purchase, so far as I can make out, but they are not decided as to the shape it should take—how it should be brought about.

15566. How many members have you got in your association, about?—Thirty or forty members in it; perhaps fifty.

15567. And all the members are engaged in the trade and industry of Strabane and district?—Yes, they are identified with it.

15568. And you are deputed to give us that opinion of these particular traders?—Yes.

15569. That they prefer the whole of the railways of Ireland to be purchased by the State, but as to the mode of purchase they don't express any opinion?—They are undecided about that.

15570. Have you formed any opinion about that?—Yes; my own opinion is that they should be amalgamated and purchased by the State, and worked and controlled by the State, and subject to the control of an Irish Council of some description—the General Council of County Councils, or a Railway Council, and subject to the control of the Irish electors.

15571. Do you think if the railways belonged to the State, controlled by an Irish party of some sort, that it would tend to benefit the trade and industries of the country better than it is done at the present time?—I do.

15572. And do you think it would be the means of developing industries that do not now exist in the country, and that could exist, if what you suggest was carried out?—I do, sir; to adopt a paternal policy, promoting the industries of the country.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

15573. I will only ask you one question with regard to your last answers. You say you would be in favour of the amalgamation and purchase of the railways by the State, and that having been accomplished, you would put the railways under the management of an Irish Council or Board?—Yes, sir.

15574. Presumably of railway experts?—Yes.

15575. And you say that Board should be subject to, and responsible to, Irish public opinion?—Yes; the Irish electorate.

15576. Would you have that Railway Council a Board elected by the people of Ireland simply for railway purposes?—I would have them elected for the control of the railways, but not to manage them in detail.

15577. Who would manage them in detail?—I would entrust them to a small Board of railway experts.

15578. The Council you speak of would not consist of railway experts, it would be a Council in the nature of a central authority, such as we have reason to believe may be soon set up?—Quite so.

15579. And under that central Board would be a small committee of railway experts, who would manage the railways under the control of the central authority?—Exactly.

15580. You would not be in favour of the State—that is, the British Parliament—working the railways?—I would not, for this reason—that the British Parliament is dominated by the influence of the artisans and manufacturers of England, and their policy would be to foster their own manufactures and industries at the expense of ours.

15581. But if you contemplate that the State should purchase the railways, do you think it likely that they would submit to having the working of those railways entrusted to a purely Irish body, without having any voice in the matter?—You mean the British Treasury?

15582. Yes; if they find the money, would you not expect that they would want to have some voice in the allocation and spending of the money?—If they got security for the money they might not be concerned.

15583. What security would you give them?—The railways themselves, and the security of the land and buildings.

15584. Broadly speaking, then you agree with the resolution passed by the General Council of the County Councils, which was to that effect?—Yes.

15585. But that view is one simply held by yourself?—I am not giving that as the view of the association.

15586. The mode of purchase was not decided by them, but it was considered?—Yes; but there were different views as to the carrying it out.

15587. And they did not pass any resolution or express any decided views one way or another?—They did not.

15588. Would it be too much to ask you was the majority of the association more in favour of one view than of the other, might I ask that without trespassing unduly on your confidence?—They are unanimous on the question of State purchase; but with regard to the manner in which it is to take place they have no definite views; at least, they have not expressed any opinion as to the best method of carrying that out.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

15589. It has been pointed out to you that in the case of Derry, if the railway company did not accept a rate to compete with what the goods would be carried for there by water they would lose the traffic?—Yes.

15590. If they charge much more from Dublin to Derry than the consignor can get it carried for to Derry by sea the railway company would not get the traffic, it might go by sea?—Portion of it might.

15591. It all might, it all could?—That is possible.

15592. What do you say to that: do you say that a railway company is entitled to take note of that competition, and to endeavour to defeat it?—It is in their own interest to do so.

15593. But then you point out that the difference between the rates to Derry and to Strabane, which is fourteen miles nearer the point of despatch, are considerable—several shillings a ton. What remedy would you suggest? You appear to allow that they might fairly charge a low rate to Derry in order to save the traffic from going by sea; what remedy would you suggest for Strabane—would you say stations close to the point of sea competition ought to have a rate more near to that allowed to the competitive point?—Yes, that is my point—that the disparity is too great for a point so near.

15594. If the disparity is so great as to attract trade to Derry, and bring the inhabitants of the surrounding districts into Derry, that puts Strabane at a great disadvantage?—Yes; that has been contended time and again—that Derry is being built up at the expense of Strabane, although Strabane can give as good facilities every way.

15595. Supposing the railways were worked as a unit by public authority, should you think they would take note of such a consideration, and whilst they would fix the rate to Derry, so as to maintain the land traffic against the sea competition, would take care not to make the disparity between the competitive point and stations near it so great as to hamper or destroy the trade of the latter places?—I think so. I think they would endeavour to give every place a fair chance, according to its natural advantages and resources and geographical position.

15596. It does seem hard to justify a system by which a place only fourteen miles from Derry is deprived of what you call its reasonable local trade because the traffic to Derry could be carried on by sea?—Yes.

15597. And you think that from a public point of view a system of railways administered as a unit would do more justice—at least regard the claims of such places more than they are regarded at present?—Yes, I do, sir.

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Mr. John M'Colgan, Representative of the Strabane Mercantile Association. The disparity in the rates to Strabane and to Derry discussed.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning.

TWENTY-SEVENTH PUBLIC SITTING—TUESDAY, 23RD APRIL, 1907.

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary.)

Apr. 23, 1907.

J. T. NOBLE ANDERSON, B.E., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

J. T. Noble Anderson, B.E., M.I.C.E., Past President of the Institute of Engineers of Victoria, Australia.

15598. *Chairman*—Mr. Joshua T. Noble Anderson?—Yes, that is my name.

15599. You are a B.A.?—Yes; a B.A. of Melbourne University, and of the R.U.I.; a B.E. of the R.U.I.; a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers; a Member of the Society of Civil Engineers of America.

15600. Of America?—Yes, and Past-President of the Institute of Engineers of Victoria, in Melbourne.

15601. Australia?—Yes, I held the Presidential Chair twice, two succeeding years.

15602. And you were also member of the firm of Monash and Anderson?—Yes.

15603. Of Melbourne?—Yes.

15604. And you are generally acquainted, I believe, with the railways not only in Australia, but New Zealand?—Yes, directly as railway contractor and agent for railway contractors. Indirectly, of course, as a traveller. I suppose I have travelled over 100,000 miles of railway track, and over about two-thirds of the railway lines of the continent of Australia and the island of New Zealand.

Witness's experience as regards ownership and working of Australasian Railways.

15605. Am I justified in saying that you are well acquainted with the railways in Victoria, Queensland, in Tasmania, Western Australia, and New Zealand?—I am well acquainted with Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand. My acquaintance with Queensland, South Australia, West Australia, and Tasmania is not so direct or complete.

15606. Well, now, I think I am justified in saying that the Commission are very glad indeed to have you before us, because we are anxious to get the best information we can with reference to the ownership and working of the railways in Australia, and I believe you are in a position to give us that information?—I am much obliged for your appreciation. I would mention, of course, that in addition to a man's experience his qualifications to take advantage of these experiences are also important, and as far as his giving evidence is concerned, of course the most important thing is what his bias may be, because as you know, everybody sees facts from pre-conceived ideas of his own, so it is for you to find out what my bias is. Personally I think I come here, perhaps, more as an advertisement than anything else, but from a patriotic wish that I may see something in Ireland like what at present exists in the colonies.

Ninety-one per cent. of Australian Railways, and the New Zealand Railways with one exception state owned.

15607. I am going to test your knowledge and experience as far as I can. First of all will you tell us as to the railways in Australia—who are the owners of the railways in Australia?—Ninety-one per cent. of the railways in Australia are owned by the Governments of the various States in which they run. That is also so in New Zealand.

15608. Who are the owners of the railways in New Zealand?—The State are the owners of the railways in New Zealand, except Wellington to Manawatu, a line of ninety-four miles with a capital of £1,000,000.

15609. That is an independent undertaking?—That is an independent undertaking.

15610. With that exception all the railways belong to the State?—In New Zealand.

15611. Does the State work them?—Yes.

15612. In both countries?—In both countries the State works the railways.

15613. Can you tell us anything about the construction of the railways?—This is a very wide subject, indeed.

15614. Yes?—Taking a similar country to Ireland.

15615. Now, I think if you would be kind enough just to follow my questions directly, we will allow you to explain afterwards. The lines, the Government railways in Australia, for instance, do you know whether they were constructed by the Government or by private individuals and then taken over by the Government?—The majority of the lines at present in existence have been constructed by the Government directly.

15616. Yes?—I should qualify the word "directly," often by means of contractors. They have been constructed by the Government with the Government funds.

15617. Yes, that is the point I want?—The great majority, probably 80 per cent.

15618. The Government projected the railways, constructed them, and now they work them?—Yes.

15619. That is correct?—That is correct. There is this qualification, the very first railways in New South Wales and Victoria were projected and constructed by companies.

15620. Now, that is the point I want to make very clear on the notes. But originally some of the lines were constructed and worked by private companies?—Yes.

15621. And then subsequently taken over by the State?—Yes.

15622. But within recent years, am I right in assuming that all the railways in recent years have been constructed by the State?—Ninety-five per cent. of them in recent years. The balance are the private lines that have been constructed since 1885. Of these the Midland Railway of New Zealand has been taken over by the State. The Midland Railway of Western Australia is in negotiation to be taken over by the State, and the Wellington to Manawatu line will be taken over by the State as soon as arrangements can be made.

15623. Negotiations are pending?—Yes, negotiations are pending.

15624. Well, the Tasmanian railways within the last, shall I say ten years have been taken over by the State?—No. Unfortunately I have been a shareholder in some of them. I wish they had. They are not being worked at a profit in Tasmania. There is no incentive to the State to take them over. The Tasmanian railways are exceptional in that they have been run for the development of the mining of the west coast of the country. They are quite exceptional, owing to the mining being practically the only industry of the place. They have been run more or less in connection with mining companies—more or less because the relations are not always on the surface.

15625. But surely the Government purchased a railway there within the last fifty years?—Oh, yes. The Government have purchased, I think, two railways in Tasmania.

15626. That is what I was asking?—Yes. I thought you meant the railways started within the last few years.

15627. No, no. I am speaking of the old railway from Hobart?—Of course; that is one of the first, if not the first, in Tasmania.

15628. That has been taken over?—Yes, certainly.

15629. Yes?—I started by speaking of the railways constructed since 1885.

15630. Well, now, I see you suggest that a statement could be prepared showing the lines owned by the State and privately owned, and their dates of construction, and so on, but I don't think that is necessary for our purpose?—No. There are two or three of the lines that the recent figures for are not obtainable here. One successful line run on very parallel lines to the Victorian railways is the Deniliquin to Moama line, a line of forty-eight miles in extent, 3 ft. 3 in. gauge, which is run on very similar lines to Victoria, and its comparison might be interesting, but unfortunately its figures are not obtainable in this country. It is entirely owned parochially.

Witness.—May I open a letter, sir?

Chairman.—Certainly.

Witness.—It is a letter from Lord Pirrie, stating that owing to an accident he is unable to be present.

Chairman.—I ought to have mentioned that Lord Pirrie has had a slight accident, and is unable to be present either yesterday or to-day. He was rather anxious to be here when you were examined.

Witness.—Yes. He was kind enough to say so.

15631. *Chairman.*—Well, now, the railways in Australia in the beginning, projected as they were by the Government, went into districts where it was impossible for the railways *per se* to pay any interest on their outgoing?—That is so.

15632. Any other private enterprise could not have made these railways because of the want of traffic?—Many of the places—I am not certain whether I could on the spur of the moment give you the exact places.

15633. Generally?—Many places. Attempts were made to induce people to put railways by promises of large blocks of land on the American system and they failed to secure speculators, and they had to get them in spite of that—the railways.

15634. Had it not been for the action of the Government in making these railways miles of undeveloped country would still exist?—That is so. One of the finest examples of this sort of thing in recent years, within the last five or six years, has been the extension of the Victorian railways by a line 200 miles in extent to reach Mildura. Mildura was an irrigation settlement started by speculators some eighteen years ago on the River Murray. They depended for their transport on the navigation of the river. During years of drought, and during dry seasons of the year, the Murray is not navigable, with the result that the settlement containing about 3,000 inhabitants was languishing. They made a strong representation to the Government of the necessity from a national point of view of helping by putting a railway so that they could get their produce away at all times of the year, even though the railway could not run cheaper than the water transport, but the fact that the water was intermittent and the railway was always by made the railway a *sine qua non* of their existence. I was engineer in the settlement, so I know all the details. After three or four years of strenuous work they succeeded in persuading a majority of the House of the necessity of that, and though it was recognised that the grant must be a heavy incubus to the State, the line was put there, more than 200 miles of line, to serve a population of 3,000 of people. That was put there in 1902. The latest estimates of the population to about twelve months ago was 4,400 in the settlement, and some expansion has gone on alongside the line, so that the line has begun to justify itself, and the settlement has been saved. Last year, I understand, over £100,000 worth of fruit was carried away over that line.

15635. From the settlement?—From the settlement.

15636. And of course the line of intermediate land also must have been developed?—Yes.

15637. Alongside the line?—The land is more than desolate prairie—desert. It is a district where without irrigation you can do nothing. The average rainfall is only ten inches in the desert through which the line runs. About a third of that will, ultimately, be taken up and used when the irrigation proposals of the Government are completed.

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J. T. Noble Anderson, B.E., M.I.C.E., Past President of the Institute of Engineers, Victoria, Australia.

15638. In that case the State took the responsibility of making a railway so as to afford this particular district the opportunity of development and having their produce brought to the market?—Yes.

15639. Put shortly, that is what happened?—That is what happened.

15640. Now, I suppose that sort of thing has been going on in other directions besides the one you have mentioned in Australia?—Well, I think, at present there about 1,800 miles of railway surveyed, and the people who are interested along that are all clamouring. I can't speak of the details of the other Colonies. In Victoria alone about 1,800 miles of line have been surveyed, and the people interested in these districts are, of course, clamouring that their land is the most important; and what the State do is instructive, they insist on the promoters of the line guaranteeing that there will be no land claims. Before you go to Parliament to get the Select Committee on Railways to deal with your case you have to find guarantors, get the banks to guarantee that the land claims will be all met by the local people.

All land claims on projected new routes must be met locally in the case of extensions into the Bush.

15641. That is to say the land necessary for the construction of the railway and works?—Yes. Obviously, no matter where you go in new countries somebody has taken up some land, some of it has been alienated from the Crown, and, of course, these people will be benefited richly by the land so put to use, so that to that extent the betterment system is adopted in Victoria, that the people who are to benefit must make the guarantees that there would be no charges or that they will meet and bear the charges for land.

15642. In other words, that the State should be relieved?—From the land charges.

15643. From any charges upon the land?—Of course, I am talking of extensions into the prairie, into the bushes. Not town lands or lands in such districts.

15644. That we understand. Do you know, is it within your own knowledge, the number of lines of railway already constructed in Australia?—Including private lines, 17,500 miles.

Mileage of the Australasian Railways (State constructed) compared with the mileage of Railways in Great Britain.

15645. 17,000 miles?—Including private lines, and the lines run by the timber companies, such as the Jarra Timber Company of West Australia.

15646. Roughly, 16,000 lines made by the Government, 16,000?—That is including New Zealand, of course.

15647. Tasmania?—Tasmania, yes. All the Tasmanian lines only brought about 620 miles. Tasmania is almost a negligible factor. Most of the returns which you see and which give the number of people per mile neglect the private lines altogether. I got recently a copy of the Railway Year Book. That gave the return which I spoke of in my abstract as the number of people per mile of railway, population per mile of railway. The numbers are given in this Year Book, but unfortunately they omit to consider anything except the Government lines. They are taken from these annual Government Returns of the Commissioners of Railways, and these only record Government lines.

15648 Now do you know what number of miles of railway we have in England?—I believe it is about 15,000, in or about 15,000, England and Wales.

15649. And Scotland?—No, not Scotland. I should think Scotland would add to that, and bring it up to about 18,500.

15650. Practically the Government worked railways in Australia are almost equal to the mileage of the railways in Great Britain?—About 2,500 miles short.

15651. Roughly?—Yes. Say 88 per cent. or thereabouts, 87 or 88. The total population, of course, is just over 5,000,000 for Australia and New Zealand.

15652. About an eighth of the population of Great Britain?—Rather less than an eighth.

15653. Now it is not in your proof, I think, at least I have not seen it, but it would be very interesting, if you would tell us in your own words how these railways belonging to the State are managed?—Originally they were managed by the Government.

15654. First of all, I must ask you, you don't object to give us this information?—Certainly not.

History of the management of the Australasian State Railways.

15655. We should be very glad of it?—In the first instance in all the States the Government managed the railways directly. That gave rise to a great deal of jobbery. The result was many painful things happened. One example of the sort of thing due to political jobbery of that sort is constantly revulsions of the people—almost revolutions, practically revolutions

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J. T. Noble Anderson, B.E., M.I.C.E., Past President of the Institute of Engineers of Victoria, Australia. History of the Management of the Australasian State Railways.

in which numbers of people are discharged and private interests are set on one side in a ruthless way by the people, and the general result was an alternation between what you might call extreme puritanism and extreme political jobbery.

15656. How many years are you going back?—About 1877 was the year of what is known in Melbourne as the Berry Blight, that is the year in which all the public service was discharged.

15657. Can you bring us to the point where the States appointed Railway Commissioners?—About twenty years ago.

15658. That is far enough back to go. Twenty years ago the principal States appointed Railway Commissioners?—Yes.

15659. How many Commissioners were there?—Generally three, but that did not obtain from the start in all Colonies. In New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand there were three Commissioners, generally two men with local acquaintance, and one man appointed from elsewhere, who was chairman, and as chairman had a casting vote, consequently had almost supreme power.

Practically controlled for past twenty years by three Commissioners appointed by the Governments.

15660. The control of the railways and the working of the railways was practically in the hands of these three Commissioners appointed by the State?—Yes.

15661. Were they permanent appointments?—No. They were generally appointments for a tenure of five years.

15662. Do you know—take Victoria, do you know what the Chief Commissioner got in that State?—The Chief Commissioner at various times £3,000 and £4,000 a year.

15663. Yes?—And the other two Commissioners £1,500.

Constitution and emoluments of the Commission.

15664. The Chief Commissioner, as a rule, was selected for practical railway knowledge?—The Chief Commissioner was advertised for in Europe and America—England, of course—and was generally an English railway manager, chosen on account of his record.

15665. And the other two Commissioners?—Were chosen on account of their record in the Colony to which they belonged.

15666. And were they mechanics?—Men in touch with the railway working of the Colony, not necessarily mechanics, no; generally members of the Institute of Civil Engineers.

15667. That is what I mean?—Men of standing.

15668. Am I right in assuming that one was supposed to be an engineer?—Yes, and one a man with large commercial experience. In Victoria, to give a specific instance, Richard Spaight. He was, I think, traffic manager of the Midland Railway.

15669. No, he was not. He was with the Midland Railway?—Some appointment. He was chosen about 1888 or 1889, and his two assistants were Greene and Ford. Greene was an engineer. Ford, I forget exactly his record. I think he was a traffic manager. Greene was an engineer of very good standing indeed.

15670. Well, now, what date?—About 1888.

15671. 1888?—Yes.

15672. From 1888 to the present time has that system been continued in Victoria?—With slight and rather disastrous interruptions, it has.

15673. There are still three Commissioners?—Still three Commissioners. There have been interregnums and times of political disquiet when there have been acting Commissioners and when Parliament has interfered a good deal, but practically the position now is what it was when Richard Spaight was appointed. Unfortunately, Richard Spaight lent himself——

15674. We won't go into that?—He listened to politicians.

15675. I don't think we will go into that?—Very well.

Exception to the system of management by Commissioners as regards the Tasmanian and New Zealand Railways.

15676. At present the Victorian Railways and the other State Railways are managed by the Commissioners somewhat on the lines that were adopted twenty years ago?—Yes. With the two or three exceptions. I would like to mention the exceptions. Tasmania is an exception. Tasmanian Railways do not pay, and cannot be made to pay. New Zealand is an exception, and the New Zealand Railways do now pay.

15677. What?—New Zealand is an exception. It is not now managed by Commissioners.

15678. How is it managed?—By a Minister directly. The Minister up to now has been Sir Joseph Ward. Since Seddon, Prime Minister.

15679. He is now in England?—Yes. He is a man of exceptional experience in railways.

15680. He was a railway man?—Exactly, so that the exception in his case, I think, proves the rule. There is a very valuable article, I brought it in, from Sir Joseph Ward's pen in a New Zealand magazine published twelve months ago on the State Ownership of Railways. It is an interesting article, and was written in strong language.

15681. Would you mind letting us see it?—If you care to have it.

15682. I would like to read it?—I brought it in case the Commissioners would like (*handed in*).*

15683. May we have this?—Certainly.

15684. At any rate, Sir Joseph Ward originally was a railway man?—Yes.

15685. And from various occupations he got into their Parliament and was made Minister, and was until recently Minister of Railways, and under his management you say they have been a success?—Yes. In addition to his having been a railway man, he is a man of exceptional strength of character, and he has been associated with the strongest politician which we have had in the colony, Richard Seddon, in a way the strongest and probably the most honest.

15686. So much. This is all outside of your proof, but it is valuable information for us to know about the railways. Which are the most successfully-worked railways in Australia?—The railways of New South Wales and Victoria, I consider, are the most successfully worked.

15687. And in both of these cases?—I should add New Zealand, too.

15688. We will take the groups, then, Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand?—Yes.

15689. Sydney?—Eddy was the first Commissioner.

15690. Yes. He was out there. He had three Commissioners?—He had two associates, yes.

15691. Yes. Does the system, in your judgment, work satisfactorily?—Yes.

15692. Is it—do you think it satisfactory that the period of employment should be limited to five years?—No. In case of a good man or good men it ought to be a life appointment, and it certainly ought to be like a judge's appointment, beyond all interference by politicians.

15693. Certainly?—These men ought to be recognised by the public exactly as judges are—judges of the Supreme Court.

15694. In fact it should be an appointment subject only to efficiency and good behaviour?—Yes.

15695. The same as a judge?—Exactly the same as a judge, and he ought not to be interfered with by politicians.

15696. In practice, although the engagements have been for five years, the people have been continued?—Oh, yes, but there has been a great deal of difficulty from political interference.

15697. I am fully aware of all these difficulties in connection with two or three of them?—My friend Mr. Matheson could have told you a great deal about that.

15698. Matheson was at Queensland?—I think in Queensland and Victoria.

15699. He went to Victoria on my recommendation. I remember that?—He did; he was most successful in Victoria.

15700. Yes?—Because he was very firm, and would have no truck with politicians.

15701. Have you considered the question as to whether on the State railways the public are better served both in rates and facilities than they are upon private-owned railways?—In the colonies?

15702. Yes?—The private-owned do not compare favourably with the Government lines.

15703. In other words, these Commissioners on the State railways take into consideration the wants of any particular district, and fix rates and facilities to develop any industry that may be in that district, is that so?—That is so.

15704. Is that your view?—Yes, that is my view. I should like to state that in saying as I do, I don't wish to reflect on the companies. Obviously a concern with a capital of one million, and operating in a small way, cannot give the facilities or work as well as a concern with a capital of forty millions, as some of the State lines have. The facilities that the

* (See Appendix No. 19.)

Government have are much greater than any private company, so that they can give a much greater service.

15705. We understood you are not reflecting. You are giving us your views and opinions, which are valuable, upon the difference between State-owned and private-owned railways?—But I wanted to bring out one of the reasons, because the State can do things in a much larger way than a company.

15706. I want you to be as free as possible with your opinions. It is all information to us, without restriction. Never mind whether it is in your proof or not?—Thank you. With reference to the question of rates, I have brought what I think is the most expensive of the rates, with the exception, perhaps, of West Australia, where lines are exceedingly long. I brought in a time-table. Sir Joseph Ward gives a comparison between rates in Great Britain and rates in the colonies.

15707. In that article?—Yes. There is one thing he does. He compares second-class in the Colonies with second-class in Great Britain.

15708. Passenger fares?—Yes, passenger fares. He compares only passenger fares. I am not giving goods rates, they vary so tremendously, and the regulations are so complicated they would be little use. Comparing passenger fares in this article I have put in, Sir Joseph Ward compares second-class fares with second-class fares at home. That is hardly a fair comparison, because in all the Colonies they have the Midland system of having only two classes, so that the second-class is really the third-class. Generally speaking, you will find that a penny a mile rate practically obtains throughout the Colonies.

15709. Yes, that is to say, for what they call their second and what we call our third?—What the Midland Railway call third. I am alluding to the Midland Railway.

15710. In other words, the passenger fares, as far as they are concerned, are the same as in England?—Yes. In that respect Sir Joseph Ward's article might be a little misleading. He compares their second-class with second——

15711. In other words, there are only two classes, and therefore it is not fair to compare the second-class in England with the second-class in New Zealand?—No. Take any of the fares. The best idea I can give you is this. You can travel any amount in some of the Colonies on what are called coupon tickets, where you buy mile coupons. You buy 500 miles of tickets for £3 first-class and £2 second-class. That would correspond with single fares, of course. We use the coupons by single tickets, of course, always. This is slightly lower than the time-table rates, and consequently people who have much to travel invest largely in those coupon tickets.

16712. But surely we have the same in this country, Ireland and England as well, in the season tickets?—Oh, no, no. The coupon ticket is a different thing altogether. You get 500 miles, and you want to go fifty miles; you tear off fifty coupon tickets and pay for that fifty miles.

15713. What reduction is made in taking 500 above five miles?—You mean——

15714. Is there a reduction in the price?—A coupon ticket! You must invest just as you do in stamps; you must invest in miles, and you pay for your journey in miles like as if you paid for a thing in stamps instead of money.

15715. In other words, the wholesale price of tickets and retail tickets are the same?—The wholesale and retail differ very little.

15716. Little?—Little.

15717. What is the object—what is the use of having these 500 mile tickets if the rates are about the same?—The rates are about the same as the return rates, but by buying coupons you get the return concessions on single tickets—that is the point.

15718. Then you can go anywhere you like?—You need not return by the same route, you can take a circular route, or return by bicycle or coach.

15719. And they are not interchangeable to other States?—Oh, no.

15720. This is Victorian?—Victorian, and I believe New South Wales.

15721. In the railways of both States?—Yes. Another cheap way of travelling is to take a monthly ticket over the lines. A monthly ticket over the lines in New Zealand costs £8 first-class, £5 second-class.

15722. What is the mileage?—The mileage is 24,000. That enables you to travel everywhere on these lines for a month, as often as you like, and as you please, just like the annual ticket on the railway company.

15723. This sounds to me very cheap?—In addition to other concessions, school children are carried free up to twelve years of age.

15724. What is the first-class?—£8.

15725. Second?—£5. School children are allowed to travel free on the lines up to sixty miles.

15726. Up to—age?—Twelve years of age.

15727. Students?—High school children get concessions, roughly, about quarter of the fare. They are allowed to travel on concession; they are allowed to travel at quarter fares. Cadets, soldiers in uniform travel free—volunteers; so that there are a great number of concessions like that.

Special Travelling facilities for children, soldiers in uniform, workingmen, &c.

15728. In New Zealand?—Yes, and practically the same thing in Australia.

15729. Oh, of course, the State own the railways?—Yes. Then, of course, there are great concessions in the way of workingmen's tickets, as you have on the tramway tickets, certain hours of the day. There are certain arrangements for travelling. These are details hardly worth mentioning.

15730. You could not expect private owners to carry school children free?—No. It is part of the State contribution to the Education Department. In some of the States there is an amount charged to the Education Department on that account. I don't think that that is so in New Zealand.

15731. With all these concessions you told us that the railways in New Zealand are no loss to the State, but a profit?—Neither a loss nor a profit. They try to run them to just pay.

New Zealand Railways worked just to pay expenses not for profit.

15732. We will put it there is no loss?—There is no loss. This year they showed a balance after paying interest of £65,000. That was given as a concession to the staff.

15733. *Mr. Sexton.*—What rate of interest is paid?—3·4 per cent. I call attention to Sir Joseph Ward's concluding remarks, page five of his Annual Report, I have underlined his words.

15734. *Chairman.*—Would you mind reading it?—Talking of concessions to workingmen; this raised wages from 7*s.* to 8*s.* a day of the lower grade workingmen. "The cost of these concessions on the basis of the staff existing on the 1st November, 1905, was approximately £65,000 per annum, and it will, of course, increase proportionally with the growth of the staff. In view, however, of the enhanced cost of living, and labour conditions generally, I feel sure that the concessions made to the railway staff are fully justified, and are, further, of a character to commend themselves to everyone." That last remark I do not endorse, because I know myself that employers of labour and contractors especially view these concessions to the railway staff as an injury to themselves, because it raises by influence the rate of wages all over the Colony.

15735. But public opinion in the Colonies, is it favourable to the present system of State ownership?—Yes.

Colonial public opinion entirely favourable to the system of State ownership.

15736. Throughout the Colonies?—Yes.

15737. There is no agitation for a change?—No.

15738. Who is Professor Kernot?—He is the senior professor in the University of Melbourne, but his position is almost above the highest politician in the State. His position is an exceptional one, both in Melbourne and Sydney he is regarded as an authority especially in railway matters. I would mention that he has been Chairman of some of the most important inquiries in connection with the State Railways, for instance, on the removal of the Locomotive Superintendent. The same time as Mr. Spaight was removed. Professor Kernot was chosen to act as Chairman of the Railway Commission that inquired into it, and there was some disappointment that Mr. Spaight did not ask for a similar Commissioner to inquire into his case, because Professor Kernot is a man of such wide views and great moderation, he is respected by the whole community. As an example of how Professor Kernot is respected by the community, I remember in one case before the Supreme Court Professor Kernot was going to be called as a witness and when the judge, Sir Hartley Williams, heard that Professor Kernot was likely to be called as a witness he asked to have Professor Kernot sent for and put into

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the witness box before he had gone into the case, and Professor Kernot was asked, "Have you gone into the case for either of the litigants," and he said he had not as yet, and the judge asked both parties if they would abide by Professor Kernot's award, and they agreed to do so, and the matter was settled. I give that as an example of how much respected the man is.

15739. But, now, what is his opinion on the State ownership of railways?—He has expressed his opinion in a paper which he read before the annual conference of the Institute of Civil Engineers in Glasgow in 1901, in which he said, I think I quote his words here, "The system of State ownership and management is universally approved."

The system of State ownership and management approved.

15740. You concur in that opinion?—I endorse that statement.

15741. And you say that public opinion generally will endorse it as well?—Yes.

15742. In the Colonies?—Yes. In connection with the rebates both in passenger and in goods traffic, a thing is always happening in the Colonies which is the automatic continual reduction of rates, that is, new routes to places by less circuitous routes are being opened up. As an example of that sort of thing, one of the chief engineering centres of Victoria is Ballarat; about twelve years ago Ballarat was connected by a route which only took sixty-seven miles instead of the former 101 miles. The rates and freights are now, of course, calculated on the sixty-seven miles, though most of the goods continue to go by the old circuitous route, and whether you take your ticket by the short or by the long route, you can travel either way, you have all the facilities of the long route for the cost of the short route. That sort of thing is always happening.

15743. It is the same system as England?—Yes.

15744. I mean the short distances govern the rates?—Yes. So that the extensions are often in the way of concessions of freights. The railway extensions are not all paying on that account; they often reduced the payments.

15745. I should just like you to look at the notes and tell us in your own language briefly what are the advantages, in your judgment, of the railways being owned by the State?—On the question of lower initial cost would you like me to give my reasons at once.

Low initial cost of construction of Australasian State Railways explained.

15746. Shortly?—The chief reason of that is that they are not hampered by the same restrictions as if they were being carried out by companies. The Government have to take into consideration the type of railways suited to the district they go through and can vary their specifications in a way they could not do for the advantage to a concessionaire. In connection with that question I would mention that in West Australia lines have been laid down at as low a cost as £1,200 a mile with 40 lb. rails.

15747. Including sleepers?—Including sleepers.

15748. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—They had nothing to pay for land?

Witness.—Practically it was desert country.

Cost of construction per mile compared with Railways in Great Britain and Ireland.

15749. *Chairman.*—And level?—Level in Victoria. I could show you returns as low as £2,000, and lower. This is the annual report of 1906. I will give it as an exhibit.

15750. Light or otherwise?—Light as far as the rails are light, but they carry all the heavy traffic.

15751. Gauge?—5 feet 3 inches, Victoria, West Australia, 3 feet 6 inches. The gauge is not even. There is a great difference in open country.

15752. Cost of sleepers?—In forest countries sleepers are not so very expensive proportionately with the class of sleepers put in; they are hard wood; the sleepers are cheaper; average 1*s.* 6*d.* per cubic foot.

15753. First your suggestion is the State-owned railways can be made at lower initial cost than by private owners?—I hand in the Victorian annual report of the Commissioners of Railways, which will show that some of the recently constructed railways have cost less than £2,000 a mile, 5 feet 3 inch gauge. The average cost of the railways in Australasia in recent years has been less than £8,000 a mile.

15754. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—Do they pay for land?—No, not as a rule. When land payments come in it is, of course, much higher. But they generally construct lines at from £2,000 to £3,000 a mile, and these lines are strengthened and improved, and the lines, including the rolling stock, will ultimately be perhaps brought up to £8,000 per mile by the time it is in full use.

15755. When there is a traffic developed?—Yes. The high costs of many of the railways—your English records of Australian lines as far as cost of such are concerned are very variable on some lines, and differ in different returns, and there are different costs, but the high costs of many of the Australian lines is due to the fact that they were built at the time when wages were £1 a day for labourers. A line from Melbourne to Bendigo, 100 miles long, cost £5,000,000. They were paying £2 a day for masons and £1 a day for labourers. The inclusion of that increased the average costs of the whole country.

15756. As you say, the average cost of the railways in Australasia is about £8,000 per mile?—Not more.

15757. As against nearly £50,000 a mile in Great Britain?—I think the same sort of railways in Great Britain would probably cost about £12,000.

15758. The average cost in Great Britain is about £40,000 to £50,000?—That includes heavy land charges.

15759. Certainly London?—But take Ireland, which comes nearer to a comparison.

15760. I forgot I was in Ireland?—I don't think you would find the average cost is more than £12,000 or £15,000.

15761. In Great Britain it is £40,000?—Yes. I think you will find the construction costs in Ireland are not more than £12,000, excluding land. I am sure they are not so much.

15762. That is quite sufficient as to the first advantage you have mentioned. What is the second?—Greater facilities for accommodating the style of construction and methods of working to the changing requirements of the district served.

15763. I think you have enlarged upon that?—I would like to mention that at a Railway Commission in Melbourne about twelve years ago, where they were considering the break of gauge so as to serve several mountain districts, I strongly recommended 2 feet 6 inches gauge instead of any other narrow gauge from the point of view that if the country turned out well, as there was every likelihood it would, the narrow gauge could then be changed to the broad gauge and strengthened. Whereas if they made 3 feet or 3 feet 6 inches the chances are that the original gauge would remain for all time. It would be more expensive to put down a bigger and more satisfactory rolling stock; it would tend to a permanency and hamper the district served. A narrow gauge line of 2 feet 6 inches was put in that would never satisfy the district completely and for all time, and when the district did grow the 2 feet 6 inch necessitated strengthening and improving that would mean a 5 feet 3 inch there. My view was adopted by the Railway Commission, with the result that some eighty or eighty-one miles of this 2 feet 6 inches line have been constructed and are being run by the Victorian Railway at a profit.

15764. Am I right in stating that various States have various gauges?—Yes, unfortunately.

15765. There are no two alike?—No; there are no adjoining two alike.

15766. Therefore, they are not continuous?—No, not continuous.

15767. The Sydney and the Melbourne lines vary up to a foot?—Yes, up to 5 feet 3 inches from 4 feet 8½ inches.

15768. It is very unfortunate that should be so?—Very unfortunate.

15769. Now the State-owned system and the advantages?—One is greater promptitude in dealing with provision for national interests.

15770. I think you had better go on and give us them in order. No. 4 is?—Greater facilities for the encouragement of new industries. I will give an instance of that which seems to bear upon a question here. On the Victorian line, in the report you will find that the charge for coal in the coal district of Victoria up to the capital is one half-penny per ton per mile. The charge for coal from the sea ports for imported coal is a penny per ton per mile. That smaller charge is from the colliery district to the town. For the Victorian raised coal the charge is ½*d.* per ton per mile.

15771. For any distance?—Irrespective of distance.

15772. The other rate is double that?—For imported coal the rate is double. There is extra for that, placed on the imported coal.

15773. Are wagons supplied in that case?—Everything is found in each case. The private companies were not allowed to provide wagons.

15774. The conditions of transit are just the same in both cases?—Exactly the same.

15775. But the rate is double for imported traffic as compared with the locally-produced traffic?—There are some things we can do also. Though they were not allowed to have their own rolling stock; they are allowed to have their own colliery staithes and their own sidings. These sidings are paid for by a charge of 7 per cent. on the cost of the siding.

15776. That is the same as in England, only sometimes we get 10 per cent. Very well, now; go on with the others?—More general public interest in the construction of new lines, and the operation of the existing lines.

15777. No. 6?—As an extra to No. 5, I would put in some of the reports which show the progress of the system. Here is the report of the Select Committee on the minute of the railway auditor on appointments and promotions. The report of the Select Committee on the Railway Carriage Loan. These could be increased by a hundred-fold. Every one of these returns is a proof of the keen interest of the public in railway matters. They recognise that the railways are their own property. The amount of enquiry, suspicion and scrutiny, the public give to railway matters is quite surprising.

15778. They may be very interesting, but I would not like to have to read them. No. 6?—The educational value to the public, which looks upon them as a jealously-guarded public estate, and discourages cheating, &c., of which these reports give evidence. In connection with that I would mention the sale of return tickets as an example. That is very rare now. It was known as ticket scalping. That means that a man who has got a return ticket, and does not want to go back, went to an outsider and got him to take the ticket below its value, that is to say, he sells it to another person. The person who buys a return ticket from another man is looked upon as a cheat, and there is very little traffic in return tickets.

15779. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They are not transferable?—Not transferable, but they used to be transferred freely. Then there is a good deal of vandalism in railway carriages in this country.

15780. *Chairman.*—That is not general—don't mind that?—The public generally are much more jealous in guarding the railways, and regard them as their own property.

15781. May I ask you if in your opinion the prosperity of Australia and of New Zealand is in a measure attributable to the railways being owned by the State?—I think it is one of the largest factors in the prosperity of the country. Obviously the railways are the life blood of the country, the veins and arteries.

15782. Do you know anything about the railways in Ireland?—Not a great deal.

15783. Are you an Irishman?—Yes. The first railway I saw constructed was the Fermoy, Lismore and Dungarvan, "the Duke's Line" it was called. I must have been then a small child.

15784. You are aware of the conditions prevailing in Ireland, private ownership?—I cannot say I know much about it.

15785. Have you formed any opinion. We have to inquire into the question of the working of railways in Ireland? And what would be of benefit to this country in connection with railways?—I think State ownership would be a great boon to Ireland. Take the example of Dublin. If the railways are the veins and arteries of the country, the central railway station is the heart of the country. You have not a proper central railway station in Dublin. There are, I believe, four railways running into Dublin. If you had them State owned, I think the central railway offices would be about Trinity College, and this ground, and the whole of the ground between that and the river would be one large railway yard. The present termini would be only sorting yards. You could then run the railways with advantage. You would have something like what they have in Melbourne at present. I cannot conceive how a country can be run with advantage with a large number of small lines. For just the same reason as I took in the case of the private companies in Australia, they cannot on their small capital account borrow to the same advantage as the larger company can.

15786. Or give the same advantages to the members of the public?—No.

15787. Then you say they want concentrating into one railway system. Have you thought anything of who should own that one railway?—There is no question about it.

15788. Who?—The State, not the Imperial Government.

15789. No, not the Imperial Government, who then?—The State of Ireland.

15790. Would you suggest that in working the railways there should be the same sort of procedure adopted as in the Colonies?—I should strengthen the hands of the Commissioners of Railways in whose hands the railway companies should be vested. They should have a much stronger position than in the Colonies. That is my opinion.

15791. What you said just now was that they should not be of a temporary character, they should be like the judges?—I agree in that.

15792. I think the same thing. That is all the questions I have to ask you.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

15793. You have professional experience of railways in nearly all the Australian Colonies?—Of the construction of railways in the majority of the Colonies.

15794. And you have personal experience of the results?—Yes.

15795. Do you attribute the general progress of Australia and New Zealand in a great degree to the public ownership of railways?—Yes.

15796. Do you believe that if the railways of Australia had continued to be privately owned that the progress of these Colonies would be anything comparable to that which is now recorded?—No, it would not.

15797. That progress has been, I believe, very remarkable?—Yes.

15798. Those countries have grown to their present commercial magnitude in the course of about half a century?—Yes. I would call attention to a comparison—take the Victorian railways. On all New South Wales railways the mileage is about the same, and the returns somewhat the same. Take Victoria, 3,400 miles of railway, pretty roughly the same as Ireland. The population is one quarter that of Ireland, and yet the amount of gross revenue per mile of line open is very close to that of Ireland, namely about £1,000 against £1,200 in Ireland, showing by how much greater a proportion of the population is advantage taken of the railways in Victoria.

15799. *Chairman.*—Are you right about the population?—The population of Victoria is 1,200,000, and New South Wales 1½ millions.

15800. What do you take the population of Ireland to be?—About 4½ millions.

15801. What is the area?—The area of Victoria is 87,000 square miles, and Ireland 33,000.

15802. *Mr. Sexton.*—You have had set-backs and reverses in Australia, such as arose from financial crisis and from drought, but, on the whole, the progress has been continuous and very remarkable?—Yes. If you want to regard the railway returns—I should say last year's returns are more favourable than the average; just in the same way if you go back six years they were less favourable, because they had such a drought that three-fourths of all the sheep in New South Wales were lost.

15803. And you say the public ownership of the railways and the use of the railways primarily for the public benefit has been the principal factor in development?—I have said so.

15804. You called it, I think, the life-blood?—Yes.

15805. And you say they are the principal factor?—I say the railways are the veins that carry the blood throughout the body politic, just as the telegraphs and newspapers would be the nerves.

15806. Now, as to the scope of the example afforded by Australia. You pointed out that the mileage on the whole is about equal to that of England and Wales, and that the mileage in the individual Colonies, or the most advanced of them, is about equal to that of Ireland?—Yes.

15807. I have taken from one of the year books the mileage in the different Colonies—on 30th June, 1905. New South Wales, 3,280 miles Government lines, 81 miles private lines?—I have a corrected list given in the Railway Year Book.

15808. I take it from the Statesman's Year Book, 1906?—3,390 is the return I have got in the return of Railway Commissioners in New South Wales for 1906.

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State ownership of Irish Railways and control under an Irish authority advocated.

The progress of Australia and New Zealand largely attributable to their railways being State-owned.

Comparison of mileage and revenue of Victorian Railways with the Irish Railways in proportion to population.

Railway mileage of the Australian Colonies.

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That, of course, excludes private lines. They are only eighty-six miles.

15809. If this is approximately correct it will suffice?—I have got this corrected.

15810. Victoria, 3,429 miles, State; none private; Queensland, 3,092 miles of railway, nearly all in the hands of the Government?—3,197 miles, and including private lines, 3,391 miles.

15811. That is about 200 miles of private lines?—About 190 are private.

Mileage of Australasian State-owned and private Railways.

15812. South Australia?—1,925 miles, all Government lines and private. The Government lines are 1,746 miles.

15813. And the private about 200 miles. West Australia?—There you have very difficult returns to make up—including private lines, it is 2,487 miles, but that includes 200 miles of what might be called sidings, because there is no through traffic on them.

15814. Tasmania?—462 miles of Government railways, and about 160 of private.

15815. And New Zealand?—You have 2,391 miles of Government lines and 115 private.

15816. Making in all something over 1,000 miles of privately owned lines, and 16,000 of Government?—Yes, and 16,600 Government owned.

15817. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—All these figures are route miles?—All these are single track miles. Few lines are doubled. That is where there are discrepancies in the returns. Double lines are counted double. The figures are the total in miles of single lines.

Colonial Railway rolling stock and facilities for public alleged to be better than in Ireland.

15818. *Mr. Sexton.*—You have made in reply to the Chairman a substantially accurate comparison between about 1,000 miles of private lines and 16,000 miles of Government?—You will find there are very few double lines in the Colonies. Not like here, where double lines are almost the rule, in the Colonies they are very much the exception, but that does not affect the total figures more than two or three hundred miles. There is one point in connection with the running of the lines I would like to mention. They are run certainly better than the Great Northern line here as far as rolling stock is concerned. Generally speaking, the rolling stock and the facilities for the public are better than in Ireland, and not so good as in England.

15819. *Mr. Sexton.*—And the Great Northern is about the best here.

Witness.—I put in this return, and you can see from it the New Zealand returns, and what the heavy rolling stock is.

15820. *Mr. Sexton.*—There are four of the Colonies in which the State mileage nearly corresponds to the mileage of the railways in Ireland?—Yes, that is right.

Beneficial results of the system of allowing the officials a percentage of surplus revenues.

15821. And of course the successful management of the railways in these Colonies affords a very good example for guidance in the case of Ireland?—Yes. For instance, that matter of giving the staffs a percentage of the surpluses has had a very good effect. I have always in my dealings with the railway officials found them most keen and up-to-date to get the best of everything for the Department. As an example, I remember in connection with a railway accident where fingers were crushed with the slamming of a door, calling attention to the fact that a small slip taken out of the side of the door would very largely prevent fingers being jammed. Within a month from the time I gave the hint I saw it adopted—the rolling stock was in hand and it had got chamfered.

Rates and fares on Australian Railways.

15822. Are the rates on the State railways in Australia much lower than on the private railways?—The rates on freights on the private railways are on an average 25 per cent. higher than on the State railways.

15823. And those concessions which you have mentioned—time tickets, free students' travelling, and the very cheap workmen's tickets—are they given on the private lines?—There are concessions on the private lines, but not so liberal as on the others.

15824. Do these great concessions of the Government so far as their lines are concerned greatly reduce the incidence of the rates on the community?—Yes.

15825. I understand you to say that the tendency on the Government lines is as traffic is developed to reduce the rates?—Yes.

15826. Is that going on?—That is going on. I put in this annual return, and you can see the rates, two-thirds of the surplus is to assist in reducing the rates and one-third is for the concession to the employes.

15827. They reduce the rates in order to develop the traffic, and then they avail themselves of developing traffic to further reduce the rates?—Yes.

15828. You might call that the law of development of these railways?—The management of some of the private railways won't compare well with the State railways, but I know most of the managers, and I must say they are men who manage well for their companies. For instance, the Wellington-Manamatchu line has been paying 7 per cent. per annum. The ordinary shares there have been earning 7 per cent. per annum for some time—for at least three years, and the Silverton Tramway 20 per cent.

15829. In one respect the private company might not be so easy to manage as the State railway. The private management is constrained to keep up the rates in order to earn a dividend?—Yes; and there is one important point in the dealing of the State railways as compared with the private railways. It is a very difficult one. It has given rise to charges of dishonesty against the State, some of which, I have no doubt, could be sustained. Like Sidney Smith's corporation, the railways have no body to be kicked or soul to be saved, and the State does many things which would be inexcusable in the individual.

15830. Private companies are in the same situation, so far as body and soul are concerned?—I am talking about a private company dealing with the State. A private company dealing with an individual is in the same position as the State in dealing with a private company. The position of the latter is reversed.

15830A. The inference that might be drawn is that it is better to have one system or the other, as a whole, rather than a mixture of both? I think, from the point of view of the shareholders of Irish railways, it would be better that State ownership should take precedence of Home Rule.

15831. Very well. I suppose we must take them as they come. You told us that the private construction of railways had been dropped, and that the Government took over the privately constructed lines, and that it was the deliberate choice of the people. Is there any reason for supposing that the facilities thus obtained have not been a great benefit?—No reason whatever.

15832. The Government system of ownership is very much more likely than the private lines to give support to industries by means of branch lines to bring them into connection with the trunk lines?—Yes.

15833. I should like a comparison between the successful working of private lines and those publicly owned. The ordinary test of successful working of a private line is the rate of dividend paid?—Yes.

15834. But where railways are administered by the State they are primarily used to develop industry, whereas in the other case the leading idea is not the benefit of the community, but to get interest on the capital?—Yes. In a country where there are State-owned railways the railways dare not make too much profit from the public or other departments of the State. For example, the people regard the railways as the most important servants of the State, and they insist upon getting the best possible facilities. It is very difficult for a particular trade to get advantages. The public don't want to see a big dividend. They want it in railway concessions. They recognise that is the way to develop the country.

15835. You have given your evidence with excellent point and accuracy. Now, when these lower rates are granted they are looked upon as a contribution by the railways to the community?—Yes. In most of the States in Australia the Post Office pays for the services rendered to it. I suppose that is the same in every country. Originally the service of the railways to the Post Office was gratuitous. There are several of these small matters that ought to be borne in mind in making comparisons with twenty years ago, which was only the beginning of it.

15836. The real success of State railways is that they are an effective instrument in increasing the industry and commerce and wealth of the community which they serve?—Yes, and the question of profit is a subsidiary one.

15837. That is a secondary and minor question. At the same time it is a question of some interest.

I have here a book compiled by Mr. Coghlan, statistician to the South Wales Railways, showing the rates of interest earned on the capital, and they range from 2½ per cent. in the more backward Colonies to 4 and nearly 5 per cent. in the more advanced?—Yes; they pay £4 4*s.* per cent. on South Australia, and actually some have paid 5 per cent.

15838. As to the form of management of these State railways. That form is not the same in the different Colonies. You will find in some Colonies a Minister of Railways or Secretary for Railways who is a member of the Government. Does he go in and out with his colleagues?—I think there is always a Minister of Railways, whether there is a Commissioner or not. There is always one Minister of Railways in the Government.

15839. *Chairman.*—I think it is sometimes the Minister of Public Works?—That is for construction, which is classed as public works. There is a line drawn between construction and management.

15840. *Mr. Sexton.*—Some have a Minister or Secretary, and some have a Commissioner or Commissioners.

15841. *Chairman.*—These are in only one or two cases?—New Zealand and Tasmania.

15842. *Mr. Sexton.*—Does the Secretary go in and out with the Government?—I think not; he is a member of the permanent staff.

15843. That is, he is an expert?—Yes. There are cases where there is only one Commissioner; in others there are three.

15844. Do you say there is any substantial difference in the efficiency of the work for the public benefit whether the management of the lines is in one form or the other?—Very little. I have had a great deal of experience, and have been employed by the Government, and I think with regard to politics it is a very unimportant question on the development of the country. It is surprising how little the policy of one party differs from the policy of another.

15845. In a new country the main issue is material improvement. The people are pretty well agreed about that?—I believe the people value it at its true worth. They put no great weight on rhetoric. They see little difference between one Government and another.

15846. It would be interesting to know, and well to have it on your evidence, whether the director, whether Minister or Secretary, retires with the Administration?—The secretary does not retire. He is one of the permanent officers. It is not like America. In the Colonies the permanent officials do not retire.

15847. Not the expert staff; I mean the person responsible for the railways, whether Secretary or Minister, who is a member of the Legislature, does not he retire?—There is only one Secretary in the Colonies, who is like our Chief Secretary here. I misunderstood you.

15848. *Chairman.*—What you call a secretary is not a secretary in that sense?—No.

15849. *Mr. Sexton.*—The secretary for railways is the head of the expert staff?—Yes; he is a permanent official.

15850. I should like to ascertain whether this secretary is not really a member of the Administration?—He is, I think, in New Zealand.

15851. And the other Colonies?—I don't say. I am not aware of it.

15852. Do you think public opinion is capable of keeping the service right whatever the special form of direction may be?—Public opinion very soon rights what is wrong. Things may go wrong for a year or two, but generally things come right in the end.

15853. You have put it very strongly that where the lines are owned by the public, the public regard the lines as in a sense their own property?—In every sense.

15854. And take care that they are not misused. It is rather suggested here that public ownership of the lines in Ireland might result in an undue reduction of the rates?—If the public had to pay for it themselves in another way it would be very soon rectified.

15855. Exactly. If the railway rates were reduced too much some of the traders concerned would have the benefit, and you would have the public at large, in view of such reduction, and the loss of revenue, obliged to make it up out of the taxes?—Any community would regard this as open jobbery; and in Australia it is very difficult for one individual industry to get a concession from the Government on that account.

15856. You think public opinion would keep the management of railways, whatever the special form of direction might be, at a just mean between reduction of the rates and loss on the working?—Yes, if public opinion was kept in touch, as it is in Australia, by fierce political attacks and bright political daily papers.

Effect of public opinion on the management of the Australian State Railways.

15857. Public opinion would insist upon the railways being worked at a small profit: upon commercial principles to that extent?—Yes. So far as public newspapers are concerned, they take a closer interest than the railway officials appreciate, and it is rather instructive to see the notice they have in the railway carriages in Australia: "Passengers are requested to leave the newspapers in the train because they will be used for the benefit of the lunatic asylums."

The Legislature the final authority on Railway policy.

15858. I observe you give some evidence which shows that the Legislatures in Australia apply themselves directly to matters of detail in railway management. That is to say, they legislate upon such matters?—Certainly.

15859. You are of opinion that the persons entrusted with the immediate management of railways should have large powers of administration, and you would, of course, reserve the right of the Legislature as the final authority to take up and settle questions as to rates?—Yes, as in a private suit there is always above judges an appeal from the judge's decision.

15860. Your evidence is not to be taken as implying that the Commissioner should have the final power to judge of rates and fares?—It is a matter of detail; we might discuss these for a week.

15861. You don't mean that?—I speak generally, not particularly.

Question of the State as employers discussed

15862. It has been suggested that if the railways were popularly owned they would not pay an adequate salary to skilful agents?—That is not so.

15863. You think that the public as owners could be depended upon to pay skilful men as much as anyone else would pay them?—Yes; they are fair, not excessive. The engineer and agent in Victoria, when I left, four years ago, was getting £1,600 a year, and other officers in proportion.

15864. And the Chief Commissioner £3,000?—The Chief Commissioner up to £4,000. They are certainly not lavish in their salaries. You must always remember that these salaries, to compare with Great Britain, should be reduced by about 33 per cent., because though the cost of living and food is very much less; but still a man of means has to pay so much more for his servants.

15865. Are the officials pretty well satisfied with their salaries?—That is a very difficult question.

15866. As much as men ordinarily are?—The salaries sometimes are reduced, and occasionally raised. If there is a heavy loss on the railways, they have had occasionally to submit to a reduction of 10 per cent. or 15 per cent., just as in other cases they have an increase.

15867. Are the officials on the State lines paid as well as the officials on the private lines?—About the same, proportionately.

15868. Another objection taken to State ownership is that it would be inelastic, and would not accommodate itself to public needs—I see you believe exactly the contrary?—Yes; the Australian result is exactly contrary. It depends upon how intelligent the community is. In Australia we have an exceptionally intelligent community.

Allegation that State ownership would not accommodate itself to public needs denied.

15869. It seems to be obvious enough that an Administration responsible to public opinion would be more likely than a private body to respond eagerly, and even anxiously to public needs?—With respect to the comparison between Australia and Ireland, I would call attention to one fact in the Victorian Year Book, which is noteworthy since Ireland is spoken of as a most law-abiding country. It is given as an example to Great Britain inasmuch as the criminal record is very much better. In the Victorian Year Book you will find that of foreign-born criminals, those born in other Australian Colonies are proportionately to their population less criminal than the Irish. That is an example of the educative results of communism.

15870. An educated democracy allowed to rule it-

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self. You believe the main function of these State railways is to encourage industry?—Yes; in its widest sense.

15871. In all its forms?—Yes.

15872. You are an Irishman. I should like to put a case to you. There is a great colliery here in the County Kilkenny (Castlecomer), covering forty square miles and with a deposit of over 100 million tons?—That is not very large.

15873. It is a good deal for Ireland, at any rate. The output is only 60,000 tons a year. I put this to you—to bring a ton of coal from that place—100 miles from Dublin—and deliver it here costs about 12*s.* 6*d.*?—It would cost 4*s.* 2*d.* in Victoria.

Railways extended and industries encouraged under State ownership in the Colonies.

15874. Owing to the transit facilities in Wales, they can put Welsh coal into the seaport towns of Ireland, and they can occupy the market there to the exclusion of this colliery in Castlecomer, which cannot sell its coal except by cartage in a radius of fifteen miles about the pit. Could such a thing as that happen in Australia or any other country where the railways are owned by the State?—In the case of the Gippsland coalfields the cost is ½*d.* per ton per mile. They were developed about fifteen years ago, and until they got that concession, of course, they could do nothing, but the cost is ½*d.* per ton per mile, which comes to 4*s.* 2*d.* for 100 miles, as against 12*s.*

15875. Take it altogether between cartage and railway rates?—It is loaded on a siding on the railway. The company has to guarantee the cost of putting the siding in, and the company is charged seven per cent. on the cost of the siding.

Want of rail communication to Castlecomer Colliery instanced as a result of private ownership system.

15876. *Chairman.*—What about the railway to the colliery. What mines are you referring to?—Korumbrura Mines.

15877. But did the State make the railway to the colliery?—Yes.

15878. To benefit the colliery?—Not primarily, but to benefit the country. Most of the mining railways in Australia have been made by the miners themselves. Even in some of the coal-mining districts in New South Wales and in Tasmania the great bulk of the lines have been made by the companies and taken over by the States; and in the Colley district of Western Australia that is now being developed by the Government; the Government are making lines to develop the collieries; but where the Government does something of that sort they are most anxious to be the first to benefit by it. They won't do that to put money into the hands of private speculators. They won't help a private person. If you have a colliery or coal mine, and think you can make use of the Government to make a line for your benefit, you make a great mistake—the Australians are far too wide-awake for that. They must have a *quid pro quo* from the person holding the coal-mine.

15879. *Mr. Sexton.*—If the people of a State were using imported coal a local colliery would not be left long unused for want of railway accommodation?—There are some which are unused still in Queensland. A private individual, if he is the owner of a district of that sort, has to yield practically all the benefit before he can get any Government benefit. He takes about ten per cent. of his own outlay.

15880. I understand that the Government takes care that private speculators do not get any undue advantage from measures intended for the public interest?—That is so.

15881. In the case of this Irish colliery the people have been trying since 1805 to get a canal or a tramway or a railway. All their efforts up to the present have proved futile, and there they are just as they were at the time of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. How long would they be left without such communication in Australia?—It depends on themselves.

15882. I mean that the Government would take a more sympathetic view. You would hardly allow coal to come from another country to be sold in your principal towns whilst there was a great colliery in your own country ready for development?—Near a town called Mirboo there is a big colliery, larger than any in Victoria, and an Irishman happens to hold it, and won't give anything to get a railway line. He is a dog in the manger. People who have been reared, as many Irish people and people in Great Britain have, with the individualistic idea of the British, are not broad-minded enough to take advantage of a State railway. A State railway is not run for private individuals. A man here having a good property will not give up any of his rights—will not concede anything to let the public have the advantage of his property. In a case like Kilkenny I have no doubt that legislation would be passed in Victoria that would forfeit the property from the private individual. He would be paid at the agricultural value of his property, and the State would make arrangements to work it, as the State is doing at present in New Zealand on one of the best coal mines, because they had difficulties with big coal companies. The great drawback to helping a country like Ireland will be that your people are not an educated people as yet, and will only be educated by trials and failures up to the communistic spirit.

15883. If the railways of Ireland were owned by the representatives of the people in Ireland there would be a better prospect of having such railways constructed as are required for the development of natural resources like those of Castlecomer?—I have no doubt that in time the position would work out as it has done in Australia, but what I want to point out is that there must be—and will be eventually—a great deal of suffering and trouble before the people get educated up to the pitch that they are in Australia. People accept a great deal, of what would be considered confiscation in this country, as a necessity of government. They accept the fact that the individual must suffer rather than that the whole community should be at a loss.

15884. The objects which have been put before us by many of the witnesses are two—one to give the local producer access to markets in Ireland, and the exporter of food products a better chance in the English markets against his Continental competitor; and the second object is to provide further railway accommodation in districts that are not now served. Your opinion is clear that both these objects are not only not likely to be attained, but are unattainable at present, but could be attained under State ownership?—I could not do better than refer you to the article by Sir Joseph Ward, who puts his points much more plainly and attractively than I could. He puts the point that a State-owned railway can make concessions so as to give a light freight on goods from the interior to the ports, and, when necessary, a heavy return freight. The point is brought out very well by Sir Joseph Ward.

15885. The question referred to the Commission is, substantially, what system of working the Irish railways would be the most efficient, most economical, most harmonious, and would best tend to develop the trade and industry of the country. What is your answer to that?—There are no two questions about it—State ownership of all the lines.

15886. Under a domestic authority?—Yes, under an Irish authority.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

15887. I think you said that previous to a date which you gave as 1888, the railway system was managed directly by the Government?—Yes.

15888. Could you give us, roughly, any figures to show what results were obtained from the change of management?—I have the figures, but I have not got them at hand. You may take the general fact that the result has been entirely satisfactory. The returns are about fifty per cent. better than they were under the old management. I would instance a case in Tasmania, in which the railway is still under the old management, and in which the return is the lowest—1·7 per cent., as against an average of 3 per cent.

15889. With regard to the tenure of office of the Commissioners, are they subjected to political pressure—I presume in Australia, as in this country, the State is divided into political parties?—Yes, with the exception of New Zealand.

15890. They are a happy family?—Yes. I have heard the late Mr. Seddon, after the last election (1906), where he was returned with only one opponent in a Parliament of ninety-five, make a statement to show that there is no need of two parties in the State.

15891. I presume that occasionally, in the exercise of political influence, unpleasant incidents arise between the legislatures and the Railway Commissioners?—Yes.

15892. Has that resulted in the tenure of those Commissioners being considerably less than the appointed term of five years and to frequent changes of appoint-

ment?—There have been changes, some desirable, and some undesirable, in consequence of political interference. Where a man is taken from the old country to Australia, ignorant of all the details of the country, it is very much a chance whether he will be successful, so that the five years' tenure in Australia for the imported man is probably, in the first instance, a necessity. It is like as if one were to marry a wife without ever having seen her. Obviously where you have had no opportunities of seeing and knowing a man who has been chosen by agents in London you run a great risk. But when that kind of thing is done away with undoubtedly the life tenure ought to be adopted. Take the case of Eddy and Matheison, the tenure of the former would have been renewed if he had not died.

15893. They were such good men?—Exactly; and it is always the case with strong men who have had their own way. Several Commissioners lost public opinion from the fact that they did not stick to their own opinions.

15894. Have changes been made because such men mixed themselves up with politics?—Not necessarily with politics, but because they did not stick to their own opinions—adopted divided counsels.

15895. If they were removed from political influences it would be more satisfactory?—Yes. But I know an instance of where a Commissioner lost his position through his not giving an opinion between a question of two railway lines. He said there wasn't the toss of a penny between them. It meant an expenditure of more than half a million—about £700,000—and he refused to give any opinion on the matter as between two rival railway companies.

15896. *Chairman.*—Who was that?—Mr. Spaight.

15897. There would be some other reasons?—There were other reasons mentioned, but that was the main one.

15898. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—We may take it as your experience, that where the Commissioners exercise their duties efficiently, and in the interests of the community at large, political pressure on the part of the legislative body is very seldom brought to bear?—That is so. But obviously in the case of a censorious community, like the people of Australia, the position is not a sinecure. To hold the position a man has to work exceedingly hard.

15899. With regard to the power of these Railway Commissioners, do they exercise the powers which ordinarily devolve upon the directors of the different companies in a country like Ireland?—Their position would more correspond to that of president and vice-president of the American railways. It does not closely correspond to that of directors here.

15900. Does the extension and improvement of railway systems, and the question of reduction and increase of fares, rest with these Commissioners?—The question of the extension of railways does not rest with them. The Commissioners only make recommendations. I may say that the last word with regard to freights does not rest with the Commissioners either. The extensions are carried out by the Public Works Department.

15901. Proposals for modifications or extensions will come, in the first instance, from provincial Committees?—Yes.

15902. And laid before the Railway Commissioners?—Yes, and before Parliament.

15903. *Chairman.*—Don't the Commissioners report to the Houses of Parliament?—Yes.

15904. I have seen their reports over and over again?—Yes.

15905. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Are the Commissioners answerable to the Legislature, and is their tenure determinable by the Legislature?—No.

15906. *Chairman.*—They are engaged for five years certain.

15907. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Subject to good behaviour?—The Commissioners who have been too amenable to Parliament have not held their positions; they have failed. But where you have strong men, who know their business, there would be no question about their tenure.

15908. In New Zealand they are administered by the Government?—Yes.

15909. And so long as you have a strong man like the present Minister for Railways, that works well enough?—Yes; the present man is a very strong man.

15910. Which do you say is preferable—the system as administered by Ministers or by the Commissioners?—Administration through Commissioners is undoubtedly preferable.

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15911. You spoke about the Government giving a concession of ½*d.* or 1*d.* a ton on Colonially-raised coal, does that concession apply to other products as well?—Similar concessions are made in other matters too, and the matter of distance is taken into account, as the cost for 500 miles would be proportionately less than for 50.

Preferential rates given to Colonially-raised coal and other products.

15912. And does that apply to exported produce generally?—Yes.

15913. The concessions are much the same?—Yes.

15914. There is a modified form of protection in favour of Colonial products?—Yes. Of course, the policy of the country is strongly Protectionist.

15915. With regard to private railways comparing unfavourably with those worked by the State, naturally there must be some dissatisfaction that the rates on the private railways are about 25 per cent. higher than on the State railways?—Yes, and on some of them more.

15916. And they pay very large dividends?—Some of them have to knock under—the Midland Railway in New Zealand.

15917. Where such companies operate side by side—the private and the State-owned railways—how do you account for it, how is it, that public opinion has not been sufficiently strong to induce the Government to take over the private lines?—The Government is trying to take them over; but unfortunately the Government often adopts unfair means to take them over—to starve them out.

15918. *Chairman.*—Hasn't there been litigation over that Midland Railway in New Zealand for years?—Yes.

15919. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Have the Government no voice over these private railways as to how they are worked?—They have practically the same control over the private railways as the Board of Trade has over railways here; the Acts of Parliament are modelled on our Acts of Parliament here.

Extent of Government control over the Colonial private Railways.

15920. As regards complaints about State management, or mismanagement, of railways before whom would such complaints be made?—Before Parliament.

15921. *Chairman.*—And referred to the Commissioners?—Yes, but often questions are asked in Parliament.

15922. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Is there any independent tribunal, like the Railway and Canals Commission here, to investigate complaints of the kind?—In Victoria they have a State Railway Committee. In most of the other cases the Minister of Railways investigates them himself.

Tribunal for adjudicating between the public and the management of the State-owned Railways.

15923. Can you give us any idea of what the cost of getting such complaints investigated is to the private trader or other who makes the complaint?—It is practically *nil*; it is only the trouble of getting the evidence in the case.

15924. There is a great deal of cost involved in going before the railway tribunal in this country?—Yes.

15925. That would be one great argument in favour of State purchase in this country?—Yes.

15926. On the State-owned railways in the Colonies there is very little cause for incurring expenditure of this kind?—Yes. In connection with this matter I might say that I think the worst paid people in connection with railways in Australia are the members of Parliament who sit on the Railway Commission. All members of Parliament get £300 a year and a free pass on the railway; but for any time they sit on the Railway Commission they only get their travelling expenses. The only man who gets extra pay is the chairman, or any of them who have to leave Melbourne and travel in the country, and in that case he gets £1 a day. So you see that a man who sits on such a Commission does so at a dead loss to himself.

The Chairman.—So it is to us.

Witness.—They are in a better position than you are, as they get the £300 a year for being members of Parliament.

The Chairman.—We get nothing.

15927. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I take it, broadly speaking, that the object with which the railways in Australia have been worked is not with the view of earning dividends, but to promote, as far as possible, the interests of the public and the development of the industrial and agricultural resources of the country?—That is their primary test.

The promotion of the public interest the primary object of the State Railways' working.

15928. And, judging by the results which have attended these operations, you have formed the

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J. T. Noble Anderson, B.E., M.I.C.E., Past President of the Institute of Engineers, Victoria, Australia.

opinion that it would be to the interests of Ireland that something similar should take place with regard to our system?—Yes.

15929. As a matter of finance, I suppose you are aware that the capital of the Irish railways is forty-three millions?—Yes; it is practically the same as in Victoria.

Capital of Irish and Australasian Railways.

15930. In Victoria it is forty-one millions, in New South Wales forty-three millions, in Queensland twenty-one millions, and New Zealand twenty-three millions?—Yes; but it is very important to remark that for a comparison with Ireland New Zealand ought to be cut out altogether owing to the character of the country. It is something like Norway—900 miles long and 150 miles wide. A high mountain range, higher than in Norway, divides it, and there are eleven separate railway systems with inter-communication; while the population is under a million.

15931. And out of what is earned on the different railways, I suppose, a certain sum is set aside to pay a reasonable rate of interest on the initial cost?—Yes.

15932. And the balance would be dividends?—Yes.

Comparison of Irish and Australasian Railway dividends.

15933. The percentage paid on the Australia railways as a whole is something about the same as in Ireland?—Yes; a little more than 3 per cent. It is 3·44 for Victoria.

15934. And yet that small return enables these great concessions and reductions to be given?—Yes.

15935. And if the Irish railways were placed under State control, it is a reasonable inference to draw that such a result would also follow here?—Yes. I may mention as an interesting fact that a large number of the officials on the railways in the Colonies are Irish.

15936. I hope they are satisfied with their efficiency?—If the country were not satisfied with their efficiency they would not be there. I believe Sir Joseph Ward claims to be an Irishman, or of Irish extraction.

Colonial Railway policy as regards the development of industries.

15937. Now, as regards the coalfields, I suppose we may take it for granted that comparing Castlecomer with the Australian coalfields is comparing small things with great?—No. In Victoria and Tasmania the coalfields are very much like the Irish ones, having only two to four feet seams—like Castlecomer or Ballycastle; but the Irish coalfields are much smaller than those in New South Wales, New Zealand, or West Australia.

15938. But our coalfields here are undeveloped; and although I take it that a State-owned railway must act in the interests of the State rather than of the individual, in the case of a poor country and in the case of industries which could not be benefited under any other system, in such a case Australia would be prepared to grant facilities and to make connections?—Yes, if the people who hold the individual property are reasonable; they have to give concessions on their part. In New South Wales the Government can buy coal at 4*s.* or 5*s.* a ton.

15939. The Government would assist a private owner in developing what would be for the good of a whole district?—The Government would take care in such case that the benefit would be to the whole community, and that the man himself would get the smallest benefit from it.

Examined by Sir H. Jekyll.

Basis upon which the Colonial rates are compiled.

15940. In the rates that you spoke of, are the passenger and goods rates compiled on a strict mileage basis?—Not always.

15941. Does the element of competition come in at all?—Very largely.

15942. Between one railway and another?—Between a railway and a port. Warranambool is situate about 230 miles from Melbourne by rail. The carriage from Melbourne to Warranambool by sea is not more than 10*s.* a ton, and the railway carriage is the same. That is one example; but I could multiply instances.

Cross-examined by Mr. Healy, K.C.

15943. Could you give me any idea of the terms on which the State acquired the privately-owned lines in Australia?—Generally speaking, the terms for resumption have been embodied in the Acts creating the private lines. As a rule, the Government pay 10 per cent. over and above the actual cost of what they take over. Where land concessions have taken place the company retains the benefit of the land concessions. I think, speaking generally, that that is what takes place, and has taken place—that the actual expenditure has been increased by 10 per cent.

15944. That is, 10 per cent. for compulsory purchase?—Yes.

15945. With regard to the making of lines to undeveloped coalfields, would you think it reasonable that the State or the railway company should have the right to send in an expert to test the quality of the product?—Yes.

15946. And the quantity to be mined?—Yes. In Australia they have made very exhaustive tests.

15947. And if the colliery owner refused that right to the railway company an unfavourable conclusion would be drawn?—Yes. That brings out the want of education in the community.

15948. You think an Irish colliery owner who refused the right of a railway company to send in an expert would be an uneducated person?—Yes.

15949. *By the Chairman.*—Do you know anything about the purchase of the Tasmanian Railway some years ago?—No. That was before my connection with them.

15950. Do you know that the price of some of the lines have been fixed by arbitration?—I believe so; but I don't know of my own knowledge.

15951. At any rate, where there is a dispute between the railway company and the Government, arbitrators settle the price?—Yes.

15952. *Mr. Sexton.*—What do you say is the average cost of construction out there?—For construction and equipment, starting in a light way, from £2,000 to £3,000 a mile. They are stronger where there is traffic. Most of the lines in Victoria have got 80 lb. rails, and one has 100 lb. rails; and that brings up the cost.

15952A. *The Chairman.*—That is only in one or two places?—Yes. I should have said express lines.

15953. *Mr. Sexton.*—The cost of purchase is, by the State, a premium of 10 per cent. on the £3,000 a mile, or whatever the cost of construction might be?—Yes. All the cost of construction is audited by the Government, and every penny that legitimately goes into the construction is recorded, and they get 10 per cent. on that. That is the New Zealand method.

15954. *The Chairman.*—I think I am justified in saying that the Commission are very much obliged to you. We have received information of a very valuable character, and we are indebted to you for coming here to give your evidence.

Witness.—I thank you; and I am much indebted to you for the patient way in which you have listened to what I have had to say.

Mr. R. H. Prior-Wandesforde, D.L., examined by the Chairman.

Mr. R. H. Prior-Wandesforde, D.L., representative of the Kilkenny County Council.

15955. I think you are a Deputy Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace for the County Kilkenny?—Yes, sir.

15956. Are you a member of the County Council of Kilkenny?—I am not a member now.

15957. Have you been deputed by that body to give evidence?—I was, on the subject of the need for a connection of the Railway with Castlecomer, not on any subject of policy.

Extent of Castlecomer coalfields and transit facilities.

15958. Are you the proprietor of the Castlecomer collieries?—I am.

15959. What is the extent of the coalfields there?—It covers nearly 40 square miles. It is not all on my property, of course.

15960. What particular part of the County Kilkenny do you represent?—The northern part of the county.

15961. And what railways serve that part?—No railway serves that part at present; it is surrounded by railways, but there are no railways into that northern part nearer than Ballyragget.

15962. What railway runs through the county?—The G. S. & W. R.

15963. Is there any canal communication?—No, not in the county.

15964. Do you work the colliery at Castlecomer?—I do.

15965. To a limited extent, I suppose. What is the output?—The output at present is about 60,000 tons a year.

15966. What is the known or estimated extent of the coalfield?—40 square miles, and it is estimated to contain about 118 million tons; it has been variously estimated—that is about the average.

15967. How long has the colliery been worked?—The colliery has been worked there for nearly 300 years.

15968. Is the present output the largest?—No, at one time the output was over 80,000 tons a year, that, I think, was before the introduction of railways and the bringing in of sea-borne coal, English coal.

15969. Is it a good coal, house coal or steam coal?—Anthracite coal, similar to that of South Wales.

15970. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—Similar to?—Equal to.

15971. *Chairman.*—What distance are you from a railway station?—The collieries are about from 8 to 10 miles from a station.

15972. What is the nearest railway station?—Ballyragget is the nearest.

15973. How far is that from the colliery?—About 8 miles. One of the collieries is about equi-distant between Abbeyleix and Ballyragget (*shows on map*).

15974. Is that the only part of the field that is worked?—The only part that is worked at present, the only place where it is worked now is on my property.

15975. Five collieries?—Five collieries working at present.

15976. Just tell us first of all what does it cost to get a ton of coal to the nearest railway station?—From 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* a ton.

15977. For cartage?—For cartage.

15978. And do you send anywhere by rail?—Yes, only to a small extent, I may say, before 12 months ago there was none practically sent by rail, since that there has been a considerable increase in coal sent away by rail from Abbeyleix.

15979. Do you cart to Abbeyleix?—Yes, because that is nearest to the colliery that is being developed on the better seam.

15980. What distance is that?—Eight miles.

15981. In fact there is no colliery situated within about eight miles from a railway station?—About that.

15982. Is it a good road?—No, it is not a good road, it is a road you cannot put traction engines on, for instance.

15983. Why?—Because the bridges won't stand it, at Ballyragget there is a bridge that won't stand above six tons, and there are other bridges that won't stand a traction engine, and there is a boggy bit of road that, when the engines go over it the hedges jump up.

15984. When you get to the railway station, have you any complaint to make about the rates charged by the Railway Companies?—No, not on the whole. Do you know the charge per ton per mile?—Yes, I can give you that, from Abbeyleix to Dublin, six-ton lots, it works out 61 miles, ·985*d.* per ton per mile; from Abbeyleix to Cork, ·758*d.*; Abbeyleix to Wexford, ·93*d.*, and Abbeyleix to Limerick, ·91*d.* Also Abbeyleix to Limerick, eight-ton lots, ·782*d.*

15985. That includes the use of the wagons?—That includes the use of the wagons.

15986. Do you load the wagons?—Yes, my men load the wagons.

15987. And the consignee unloads?—I don't know, I suppose the customer unloads at the other end.

15988. What is your great competitor for your particular coal, is it the Welsh coal?—The Welsh coal for anthracite for such purposes as gas producers, the ordinary bituminous coal competes with our native coal for household purposes.

15989. Have you any figures with reference to the rates on Welsh coals?—I have.

15990. Can you give a figure as to the cost from a Welsh colliery to Swansea?—It would average about 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton, that would be f.o.b. less 2½ per cent. discount.

15991. That includes the cost of tipping at the port?—I have the rates from anthracite collieries from the Garnant and Pantyffynon district to Swansea for shipment in owners' and company's wagons, exclusive of tipping.

15992. First of all, what is the distance?—Taking a general average from 10 collieries, 27·22 miles. In owners' wagons 1/2·85, that is ·539*d.* per ton per mile. In company's wagons 1/5·4, which works out ·651*d.* per ton per mile.

Welsh coal rates.

15993. That is less than ¾*d.*?—Yes, those are reduced for export purpose. Coal for export is lower, of course, than the rates for internal.

15994. Probably in train loads?—I don't know that there are any train loads, they are in wagon loads anyway.

15995. I say probably coal going for shipment would be in train loads?—Those are wagon load rates.

15996. They compare favourably as regards the rates you have to pay in Ireland?—They do.

15997. But the quantity must be different to Swansea to what it is in your district?—The quantity, no doubt, is different.

15998. What do you send away in a week or in a day from any station you use?—From Castlecomer we have never sent a train load yet.

15999. It must go in small quantities?—It goes in small quantities, in wagon loads, 6 to 8 tons; I have the quantities sent away, in January last there were 253 tons sent over the railway.

Area of supply for the Castlecomer coal.

16000. From where?—From Abbeyleix to various stations such as Kingsbridge, Charleville, Clara, Limerick, Thurles, Roscrea, Banagher, Wexford, and so on. That, I may explain, was for coal almost entirely for gas producing purposes in gas engines, not for lighting gas, of course, but for power gas. I have the rates compared from Swansea to some of these competing places.

16001. Where do you reckon your principal markets would be?—All over Ireland.

Necessity for railway communication to render an extension of markets possible.

16002. Assuming a railway to the colliery, where would your principal markets be?—All over Ireland in the first place, and then I consider that an export trade could be established.

16003. In Waterford and Limerick?—Yes, if we got the same rates that are granted for export purposes in South Wales, not otherwise.

16004. Where would you export to?—France and Germany, principally—also to Great Britain, Channel Islands, etc.

16005. In competition with the Welsh coal?—In competition with the Welsh coal.

16006. Is the coal as good?—Yes, I have got a great many opinions on that, no doubt about it.

Market value of the coal compared with Welsh.

16007. That is to say, it is an excellent anthracite coal?—I am speaking of the deeper seam we are developing now, the shallower seam we have worked up to this is not so good, and would not compete, but the deeper seam would compete with the best Welsh.

Absence of shipping facilities at Waterford for dealing with coal traffic.

16008. Are the shipping facilities at Waterford good?—There are no shipping facilities at Waterford.

16009. None?—Nothing as compared with South Wales.

16010. In South Wales it would be impossible to ship the quantities produced there without proper tips?—There are no tips at Waterford.

16011. Do you think there would be if there was a proper coal traffic?—Yes.

Waterford Port dues compared with Swansea.

16012. What are the port dues chargeable at Waterford?—They are more than at Swansea by 5½*d.* on the rateable tonnage for places not in the United Kingdom.

16013. Is that on the ton of coals shipped at Swansea?—Yes.

16014. *Mr. Sexton.*—Rateable tonnage must refer to the ship?—Those (*produced*) are the figures I got from an expert in South Wales.

Chairman.—No, he is right.

Mr. Sexton.—It is per ton, nothing about rateable tonnage.

16015. *Chairman.*—The cost of tipping and filling in the holds, 7*d.* a ton, stevedore, 1*d.*, craneage, including tipping into truck, 5*d.* a ton?—Yes. We have no figures for putting into the ship.

16016. You say the cost of shipping coal in Waterford is considerably more than the Welsh coal pays when shipped at Swansea?—Considerably more.

Price of the Castlecomer coal at pit's mouth.

16017. You have not told us about the price of coal at the pit's mouth?—The price of coal at the pit's mouth averages 9*s.* 11*d.*

16018. That is largely in excess of the price of the Welsh collieries?—The average for the Welsh collieries for 1905 at the pit's mouth was 12*s.* 7*d.*, for 1906, 12*s.* 7¾*d*, anthracite. Anthracite commands a very much larger price than bituminous.

16019. Oh, yes, anthracite, I had forgotten that. just explain to the Commission, when you cart the

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coal to Abbeyleix what is the process there, what facilities are there there for loading it, how is the coal taken from the cart to the railway truck?—It is shovelled out into the railway truck, a man gets on the cart and shovels it out. We pay the carters so much a ton to take the coal to the railway station and load it into the railway trucks.

16020. Are there any weighing machines there?—No weighing machines, nothing to weigh the coals on.

16021. The coal wagon or the coal cart?—No, the consequence is it is very hard to tell if there is any leakage of coal on the way to the station, and we occasionally have complaints of short weight.

Absence of facilities at Abbeyleix Station for dealing with coal traffic.

16022. You weigh at the pits?—Yes.

16023. Do you allow what the Welsh collieries allow a certain percentage for leakage?—We give full weight.

16024. What do you call full weight?—20 cwt. to the ton?—Yes.

16025. Not more; in South Wales they give more than that?—For wastage?

16026. Yes?—This coal is mostly screened and sized, so there would not be much wastage.

16027. Then the railway company supply you with coal wagons?—They do. Oh, I wish to say that, in the draft you have there is a complaint about unsuitable wagons, that has since been put right, there is nothing to complain about that now.

Canal rates higher than railway rates for coal traffic.

16028. Do you send any by canal?—No. We send nothing by canal. The rates on the canal are higher than the rates on the railway.

16029. How far are you from the canal?—We are about ten miles from Carlow, some of the collieries and the others fourteen miles.

16030. Further than to the railway station?—Yes. I ought to mention with regard to the road bridge at Ballyragget that you asked me about, being insufficient to bear the weight of a traction engine, negotiations are going on with the railway company to give us a siding elsewhere.

16031. Nearer to the collieries?—Well, just as convenient as Ballyragget was.

16032. Was there anything else about the district to which you wished to refer?—Yes, it is a large agricultural district.

Fireclay available in district.

16033. I mean in the shape of minerals?—There is fireclay.

16034. Is there much fireclay?—Fireclay underlies the principal seam and of good quality, it is of no value at present for lack of transit facilities, it is not worth taking it up.

Thickness of the coal seams.

16035. You have not told us of what thickness are the seams?—The two principal seams are the Jarrow and the Skehana, the Jarrow is 24 to 36 inches thick, the deeper Skehana seam is 24 to 26. The Skehana seam is an easily worked seam, very little shot has to be used, it is clean coal above, underneath you have a soft culm which has to be raked out and the coal comes down.

16036. Have you to use many pit props?—No, it is very easily worked.

16036A. In a 2 feet seam the men must be always stooping?—Yes, they are. They work, as a rule, lying down on their side.

Increasing demand for anthracite coal.

16037. There is no question if you can produce anthracite coal of the same quality as the Welsh, the demand is almost unlimited?—The demand is almost unlimited at the present moment for anthracite coal and it is increasing. I can give the figures from South Wales.

16038. You might just tell us what was the production of anthracite in South Wales in 1894?—1,550,145 tons, and in 1905 the Welsh anthracite output was 2,789,178.

Output and prices of Welsh anthracite coal.

16039. And out of that total nearly two millions was exported?—Yes, 1,856,000 in 1906, the average price being 12*s.* 7¾*d.*, about 2*s.* 7*d.* higher than the Kilkenny anthracite. I gave you some figures there of the prices of the different qualities of Welsh anthracite, since I wrote that the prices have risen.

16040. You give a price but you don't say whether it is f.o.b. at Swansea or Llanelly. Do you mean to say f.o.b. is 20*s.* 6*d.* a ton?—Yes, 20*s.* 6*d.* to 21*s.* 6*d.*, machine made large cobbles, 19*s.* to 20*s.*, German nuts, 24*s.* to 25*s.* 6*d.*, Paris nuts, 24*s.* to 25*s.* 6*d.*, machine made large peas, 14*s.* 6*d.* to 15*s.*, culm, 7*s.* 3*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.*, duff, 5*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* 9*d.* f.o.b., less 2½ per cent. discount.

16041. In February, 1907, there was an unusual demand all round, coal jumped up; I don't think it is fair to take these as the average price, they seem to be abnormal?—The average price in 1905 is 12*s.* 7*d.* at the pit's mouth.

16042. But when you come to 21*s.* 6*d.* and the railway rate is only about 1*s.* 6*d.* there is an enormous increase, but they were abnormal figures in January, 1907?—They were.

16043. And they have all gone down since?—No, the figures I have just read out are from the 19th of April, they have gone up since January, the anthracite figures, those are the figures for the 19th of April, I have taken them from the "Iron and Coal Trade Review."

16044. *Mr. Sexton.*—What would be the price at the pit's mouth when the price at Swansea f.o.b. was 21*s.* 6*d.*?—It would be about 1*s.* 6*d.* less, the tendency is upwards, the introduction of gas producers and gas engines is one of the principal things that has stimulated a demand for anthracite on the Continent and in England.

16045. *Chairman.*—You have referred to the agricultural resources of your district, I don't know that we need go into details?—I might refer to another point about graphite, the coal of the Skehana seam is eminently suited for making the best class of graphite.

16046 What is graphite?—In America, at the Niagara Falls, a company make lead pencils and carbons for electric light out of it.

16047. You sent over 100 tons to Niagara Falls, in America?—Yes, it came to about £3 per ton by the time it arrived. There was nothing there to compete with it. This (*produced*) is a pencil that was made out of the Skehana coal.

16048. *Chairman.*—This pencil was made from Acheson Graphite manufactured in an electric furnace. Made from your production from this particular district. It was made in America, and you sent 100 tons?—Yes. They could have had more but the price killed it. They have declared it was the best they could obtain for the highest quality of graphite.

16049. This is your own leading?—It is the present means of transit, and typical of the rates unless we had the line.

16050. Do you state seriously that if the railway were constructed to your collieries this graphite, as you call it, would be a considerable source of traffic?—Very probably. I have only touched on the subject of the lack of transit.

16051. What is the quantity available?—About 100 million tons.

16052. Of the graphite?—The graphite is made from the coal. It is manufactured from the coal. It is a pure form of carbon. It has a percentage of 93 per cent of carbon. It is manufactured from that in an electric furnace.

16053. The coal is of such excellent quality that it can be used for this particular purpose, and has been used?—Yes, has been made and proved to be suitable.

16054. What proportion of the coal is suitable for making the graphite?—Practically the whole of one particular seam, viz., the Skehana seam. The coal is also suitable to be used in locomotives and was used formerly by the railway companies for mixing with other coal. I think at the time the Canal Company were working a colliery.

16055. Can you tell us, for our information, how the 100 tons was sent?—It was carted to Abbeyleix, and through Carlow, and went by rail to Dublin. It was put on board the ship there and went to America and then across to Niagara Falls. We had a repeat order for it but the freight finally killed it.

16056. What steps have been taken by the authorities or any of the people to get a railway or connection with these collieries?—A great many attempts have been made from time to time. In 1801 there was a grant made by the Directors of Inland Navigation to make a canal from Castlecomer, a public grant of £40,000 was offered, but probably through the failure of a working agreement with the Canal Company the grant was not availed of. That is the beginning of the history of the thing 100 years ago.

16057. The grant was made. Why the canal was not made you do not know. I think we had better come to more recent times?—1875 was the next thing.

16058. Is this to your own knowledge. I will assume that periodically there have been efforts made to get connection with the collieries. How long have you been engaged with the collieries, directly or indirectly?—Indirectly about fourteen years. Lately I have been directly concerned.

16059. What steps have you taken?—I have only worked the collieries for two years, barely two years. Before that time they were leased. The lease ran out and since that time I have taken them over and have been developing them as owner.

16060. If you will give us your history from the year 1875 it will go far enough back?—That was the scheme of a railway from Shillelagh through Tullow, Carlow, Castlecomer, to Ballybrophy joining the Great Southern. That was probably the best scheme. It would have opened up the country, and would have brought in competition.

16061. Was application made to Parliament?—I only find this in the records. I cannot tell you. In 1884 there was a scheme for a tramway from Castlecomer to Carlow and Castlecomer to Kilkenny. It depended upon a guarantee by the Grand Jury. They refused to guarantee that 1884 scheme. In 1884 there was also a scheme to make a tramway from Castlecomer to Athy.

16062. How far is that?—Fifteen miles.

16063. Is there a station at Athy?—Yes. The guarantee was granted but the Order in Council was rejected by the Privy Council.

16064. Have you traced the reason why that was rejected?—No. In 1888 there was a scheme to connect a railway with Carlow. The Great Southern and Western would not make the line, but they were willing to work it on their own terms. A memorial was sent to the Lord Lieutenant under the Act of 1889, asking him to give a grant, but it was not given, and the scheme accordingly lapsed. In 1893 there was a scheme to make a railway to Kilkenny. The Waterford and Central Ireland Railway offered to work it at a percentage of the receipts, 55 per cent. The Chief Secretary refused to recommend any grant or assistance and said the money was required for the congested districts, which he said needed it more.

16065. That was in 1893?—In 1896 a scheme to connect with the Waterford and Central Ireland Railway at Foulksrath, also a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant, and also in the same year there was a scheme for connecting Portarlington. The Great Southern and Western were unwilling to work this line on any terms, and the capital could not be raised. In 1901 the Great Southern and Western were again approached and a personal guarantee was offered if they would construct the railway.

16066. By whom was it made?—It was a personal guarantee by myself. I offered to guarantee the interest on the capital.

16067. What was the guarantee?—To secure the interest on the capital, the interest on the outlay. They refused to construct the railway, but if made to their satisfaction they would work it at cost price if a guarantee was given for the same.

16068. I understood you to say you offered a guarantee?—They refused to construct, but they would work it when constructed.

16069. *Mr Healy*, K.C.—Read the guarantee that was offered?—It was merely a personal letter written by me.

16070. Read the letter?

16071. *Chairman.*—Have you got a copy of the letter?—I have. I have here the reply from the railway company to the letter. It is dated September 10th, 1901. (*Reads*), "With reference to your letter of the 30th ultimo, asking the company's decision on your suggestion to give a personal money guarantee in the event of the company undertaking the construction of a railway from the town of Castlecomer to Ballyragget Station. The matter has been considered, and my Directors do not see their way to undertake the construction, but if the line is made on the ordinary gauge to the satisfaction of the engineer of the company they will be prepared to work it at cost price, on a guarantee being given for the payment of that sum. I would suggest your making inquiries as to the aerial railway which, of course, could be constructed for a comparatively small amount.—Yours truly, R. G. Colhoun, per E.C."

16072. *Chairman.*—That bears out what you say. That was in 1901?—Yes.

16073. What was the aerial railway?—The aerial railway means a rope railway, with buckets suspended from rope. It is used in a few places in Ireland. There is one at Durrow Brickworks.

16074. Is there any ten miles long?—I cannot say. There is one in Cork, a very much longer one, about four miles, and there are many in Spain.

16075. Was that the last effort you made?—No. In 1903 a grant was asked for under the Irish Development Grant, and a resolution was passed in public meetings and by the County Council and the Rural District Councils, but the Chief Secretary declined to recommend a grant. He gave no reasons.

16076. They do not usually give reasons?—That is so. They don't usually give reasons. In 1906 and 1907 certain negotiations were going on.

16077. With what company?—The Great Southern and Western.

16078. Can you tell us anything about it?—An offer was made that the capital would be found to build and equip a tramway if they on their part would grant certain rates and facilities. The company would not consent to work the tramway on a percentage of receipts or even for all the receipts, or a certain rate per mile per week. They would only consent to work it for what it would cost them. Up to date the concessions offered by the company were not sufficient to enable the capital to be raised.

Schemes for Railway communication and action of the Great Southern and Western Company in connection therewith.

16079. That covers, I think, the whole. You have brought it up to date?—I have.

16080. And there you are as you were 100 years ago?—As we were 300 years ago. I think we are in a worse position than we were before. Railways were not introduced then, and the railways now bring in competing coal. There were no railways to bring anything of the kind then.

Output of colliery less than before the advent of Railways.

16081. In other words the production is less than it was before the railways?—Yes

16082. Well, now, have you formed any opinion on the general subject, the general question of Irish railways?—This opinion, as you will understand, is personal entirely. I am not deputed by the County Council for that. I do not think any general opinion was discussed.

16083. I am asking your personal opinion as a landowner and a man interested in Ireland?—I think my opinion is that what we suffer from in the South of Ireland is lack of competition. I think if we had competition we would have several railway companies struggling to obtain the coal in a colliery district and not throwing discouragement upon the development of it.

The South suffering from lack of Railway competition.

16084. You are against the unification of the railway system?—I think it could be worker better by private companies if there was competition.

16085. You are in favour of more railways?—Yes.

16086. Who is to supply the money for them if private parties won't?—I am of opinion that the State should purchase the railways and canals in Ireland, and then——

16087. Stop a bit, I thought you were for competition?—They should then divide them into various systems, as I think is possible, and lease them to working companies afterwards.

16088. How would that make any difference?—You would have the element of competition introduced then. You would not have one railway controlling the whole of the South of Ireland. I don't think that is a good thing.

16089. How would it be obviated?—They ought to be handed to more companies. If the railways were now bought by the State they ought then to be put into the hands of several companies.

16090. If the State bought the railways; and sold them to somebody else?—Yes; sold them again.

16091. It would be a change of proprietors?—Leased or sold them again to working companies.

16092. I confess I don't exactly follow it, but I asked your private opinion, and you have given it, and I must accept it?—I see a great many objections to State control, but I confess I would rather have that than the present.

16093. You would rather have State control than the present system, as it is in the South of Ireland, in Ireland?—Yes. I am not an expert in railway matters, and these opinions are the result of my own observations and study.

State control of the Railways preferred to present system

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

16094. There are two or three points on which I want your views. I find you give the price of coal at the pit's mouth at Castlecomer as 9*s.* 11*d.*, and price at the pit's mouth in Wales as 12*s.* 7*d.* Were these prices taken at the same time?—Yes, at the same time.

Prices of Castlecomer and Welsh coals compared.

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16095. The cartage to the railway, Abbeyleix or Ballyragget, was 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*?—Exactly so. Kilkenny sometimes as high as 6*s.*

16096. The railway rate to Dublin is about 5*s.*?—I think that was the figure Abbeyleix to Dublin.

16097. Does the price at the pit's mouth in both cases include the owner's profit?—Oh, yes, that is the selling price.

16098. You get for 20*s.* to the railway terminus in Dublin. That is, to the railway in Dublin the rate is 5*s.*?—Correct.

16099. Welsh coal 12*s.* 7*d.* at the pit's mouth. It is taken from inland collieries thirty miles to Swansea for 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the rate across the sea to Dublin is 4*s.*?—Yes., 4*s.* in some cases—less in others.

Relative prices of Castlecomer and Welsh coals.

16100. They bring that Welsh coal back to Dublin for 18*s.*, whilst your coal at the same time stands at 20*s.* in Dublin, although the price at the pit's mouth was 2*s.* 6*d.* cheaper than the Welsh coal. Here we have a commodity produced in Ireland, and the cost of it at the pit's mouth to the owners, with their profit, is 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton less than the corresponding figure in Wales; yet the Welsh coal is brought from inland collieries twenty or thirty miles, and carried to Dublin, and the total comes to 2*s.* less than the corresponding figure for the Irish coal?—Yes.

16101. Have you noticed that the Government auditor has surcharged a Board of Guardians in Dublin for having bought Castlecomer coal at a higher price than Welsh coal could be bought for?—Yes, I have noticed that, but in that he is entirely wrong. He is assuming anthracite is of the same value as inferior bituminous coal. He can be very easily proved to be incorrect.

16102. It appears that the conditions of transit enable the Welsh coal-owner to sell an article which had cost him more to produce at the pit's mouth, and to sell in Dublin, to undersell you in the Dublin market by reaching that market more cheaply than you could?—I don't say that the Welsh coal always costs more to produce.

16103. I have given you the figures?—That is the average selling price at the pit's mouth.

16104. The cost of transit added to the price at the pit's mouth?—We can produce quite as cheaply on the average in Kilkenny as in Wales.

16105. If the transit conditions were as favourable, if you had complete railway connections, and corresponding freights to what they have in Wales, you could sell more cheaply than they at the Irish seaports?—That is entirely so. We could enter into competition.

Yearly output of and present market for Castlecomer coal.

16106. What is the output now?—60,000 tons a year on the average. Most of it is sold within a radius of fifteen miles of the collieries.

16107. Wales has increased the output in a few years from 1½ millions to about 3 millions. They are not able to overtake the market?—Yes, that is what has raised the price.

16108. You have a market for your coal; it is of equal quality, and costs less, but your market is within a cartage radius of fifteen miles?—That is our market. It is restricted. We are compelled every year to have restriction. We are the only colliery in the United Kingdom and perhaps in the world where there is that restriction. The colliers work half time in the summer. At the same time the datal and surface men remain on full time, and that increases the cost of production, and consequently the selling price.

16109. What opinion have you as to the quality of this anthracite coal from Castlecomer in comparison with anthracite coal in Wales?—It compares well with the best Welsh. I am not saying that from opinions—I have got proof of it.

Testimonials as to the quality and expert analyses of Castlecomer coal

16110. I want the names of the experts who have testified to that?—This is a letter from Mr. Behenna, of Thomas Williams, Son, and Behenna, who are large buyers and exporters of coal in Wales. We sent him a ton and this is his letter:—

Swansea, 8th February, 1907.

James Probert, Esq., Swansea.

Dear Sir,—Referring to our letter of the 16th November last, we have now made an analysis of the sample of anthracite coal you sent us, and we find the following results:—

			Average.
Ash,	1	1·3%	1·25%
"	2	1·2%	
Volatile,	1	8·3%	8·2%
"	2	8·1%	
Carbon,			90·55%
			100·00%

We have also carefully examined the fracture of the coal, and, from its appearance, we should think it would lend itself admirably to crushing into cobbles and other graduated sizes of nuts, assuming, of course, that this manipulation would be necessary apart from the trade to be done in large and cobbles—in a word, both from the analysis and from the appearance of the coal, we should say that it would compare with anything worked in the South Wales district. One feature is its remarkable cleanliness, which is a most important factor. There can be little hesitation in saying that, with the present demand for anthracite—and the world's requirements for this particular class of coal are daily increasing—its sale should be readily effected, provided, of course, as pointed out in our last letter, that adequate tipping arrangements are provided, and that steamers can be loaded in the same time as is usually occupied by freighters in the South Wales ports. You are yourself fairly conversant with this district, and you are well aware of what is, at present, transpiring. The demand for Welsh anthracite undoubtedly exceeds the supply, and this is due, in a very great measure, to the impetus given to the trade by the use of *gas suction plant*. Giving the usual facilities in loading, there is no reason why a large connection should not eventually be established in English ports for your Irish anthracite: this, of course, in addition to the Continental demand.

If your friends have any other questions to formulate on any point or points, I will endeavour to reply.

Yours faithfully,

E. L. Behanna.

16111. Is that from a firm trading largely in Welsh anthracite coal?—Yes, I have got the analysis, too, from Mr. Probert.

Witness handed in the following:—

10, Quay-parade, Swansea,

February 9th, 1907.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Behenna has been out of business through illness, and knowing him to be as well acquainted as anyone in the trade to give a straightforward opinion of the merits of the samples of coal, I delayed troubling others.

I have seen him to-day, and he has had an analysis of the coal made, and I enclose his further remarks.

I also had the sample inspected by the Managing Director (Mr. Griffith), and the Colliery Manager (Mr. Fisher), of the Gellyceidrim Anthracite Colliery, whose output is about 500 tons a day of the best coal in the district, and they pronounce the coal as excellent, fit, when crushed, for what is know in the trade as Cobbles, German Nuts, French Nuts, Small Beams, and Small Peas, and the demand for such grades is at present more than equal to the supply.

In case you should not know the sizes of the different coals for the Continental market, I give them below:—

Cobbles,	Over 2½ inches,
French Nuts,	1¾ inches to 2½ inches.
German Nuts,	1 inch to 1¾ inches.
Beams,	½ inch to 1 inch.
Small Peas,	⅜ inch to ½ inch.

I am advised to tell you that there would be no difficulty in finding a market for any of these sizes, and you will get to know from the daily papers the ruling value of them.

Yours faithfully,

J. Probert.

R. H. Prior Wandesforde, Esq., J.P.

16112. *Mr. Sexton.*—Will you put in any other testimonies?—Yes; I can put in a report by Pro

fessor Henry Louis, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who is Professor of Mining in the Durham University. He made a survey of the colliery on my estate.

16113. What is the effect of his testimony as to the comparative quality of the Irish and Welsh coal?—He did not make an analysis of the coal, but his opinion is that it is of a very high class of anthracite. I have also had an analysis made by Messrs. Pattison and Stead, of Middlesbrough, as follows:—

Carbon, ...	93·81
Hydrogen, ...	2·73
Oxygen, ...	0·86
Nitrogen, ...	0·85
Sulphur, ...	0·60
Ash, ...	1·15
	100·00

16114. *Chairman.*—Above 90 per cent. of carbon?—Over 90 per cent.

16115. *Mr. Sexton.*—What might the output of a forty-mile colliery be under favourable conditions, such as would enable the products of the colliery to reach the Irish markets?—The output might easily be quadrupled.

16116. What number do you employ now?—There are about 500 persons employed.

16117. There could be two thousand?—Oh, yes.

16118. Has Kilkenny suffered as much as the South of Ireland generally from emigration of the people?—I think it has. I have not the population figures, but they are obtainable. The population of the colliery district has fallen.

16119. It is very different from what it was at the time the first effort was made to get canal communication; can you throw any light on the circumstance of the canal rates being higher than the railway rates?—I cannot, except that the railways control the canals in some way. The canal rates are higher, and they did not appear to want to take the coal either.

16120. You have given a very interesting recital of the various efforts made to procure either a canal or a tramway or a railway communication extending over many years. Do you think it likely you will get what you want in that district unless there is some public authority dealing with the extension of Irish railways and having resources at its disposal—I mean some home authority?—I have hopes of the Great Southern and Western Railway still.

16121. You say the Great Southern and Western Railway take up the position that they will not construct a line and will not work a line unless they are indemnified against loss; you do not appear to be in a position to indemnify them against loss?—It is a great risk for a private individual to undertake.

16122. How can you hope then to have a line constructed; does not it seem more likely that if you had an authority which would consider Irish needs first and would have resources for the purpose of meeting them; you would be more likely to get the line in that way than in any other?—Possibly.

16123. Just one other matter: I think you have hardly succeeded in making your views quite clear as to the future disposition of the railways: have the Kilkenny County Council expressed any view on the general question?—On the general question of the management of the railways of Ireland?

16124. Yes; of the future management of them?—Not to my knowledge. There is another gentleman coming after me who wishes to give evidence.

16125. They sent delegates to the General Council, where there was a resolution carried?—They did, but nothing was given to me.

16126. You think that the railways and canals of Ireland should become public property; you have said that in your proof?—Yes.

16127. You appear to be of opinion that the State should examine into and arrive at a conclusion as to what further extensions of railways and canals are required. Am I right in drawing the inference that you are of opinion that it would be only the State or a public authority in Ireland that could deal with the question of the further extension of railways and subsidiary lines?—No, I think the experience of the United States shows that private companies, if they wish, can develop a country in an excellent manner, and very quickly.

16128. You cannot have read very much recently about what is taking place as to private ownership of railways there. You think that the State should arrive at conclusions as to what further extensions are necessary, and that the railways should not be leased until that has been done?—Yes.

16129. That would occupy a considerable time?—It would.

16130. Should you have any objection to this:—that during the period after the State had bought the railways, and while it was considering what extensions should be made—that during that period the State should work as well as own the railways, and that the efficiency and fitness of that method for the benefit of Ireland should be judged by the results?—No; I should have no objection to that. There is one point, perhaps, I should mention. A question was asked during the time the last witness was cross-examined by the Counsel for the railways, and the suggestion was conveyed to my mind, and, perhaps, also to those who heard him, that the railway company had offered to send an expert to the collieries to inquire as to whether the statement made by the proprietor as to the value of the collieries was correct or not. The imputation was that this offer was refused and that consequently the proprietor of the colliery was a person without education. I don't say anything as to the good taste with which that was put, but it does not represent the facts by any means. As a matter of fact, I offered some six months ago to allow the railway companies to send an expert, but advantage was not taken of that. Just lately they have acceded to my request, and I imposed certain conditions which I considered right; for instance, I don't know who the expert is, and I think that the report should be considered as a confidential one between myself and the railway company. I would not have mentioned the subject if the question had not been asked, because it conveyed the impression that I had refused a reasonable offer by the railway company.

16131. Have you any objection to a railway company or other promoters or a public authority making such an investigation and inspection of the colliery as would be necessary to determine the quality of the coal and the extent of the deposit?—By no means, but I should know who the expert is. There is a great difference of opinion as to what is an expert and as to who is an expert. A great many people call themselves experts who are not.

16132. The person should be competent to determine the question?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

16133. I think you said that there are three classes of coal sold respectively at 9*d.*, 7*d.*, and 3*d.* a cwt.?—Yes, several classes.

16134. In arriving at the average price at the pit mouth, is the cost of the culm included?—Yes, the culm is included.

16135. If the culm were excluded the price would be considerably higher?—It would. In competition perhaps with the Welsh coal it would not enter very largely. Culm is included in the price of the Welsh coal also. Large quantities of culm are sent down from the Welsh collieries and mixed with bituminous coal and made into briquettes. I have had several methods of briquetting the anthracite laid before me, but they are of no use owing to the lack of transit.

16136. The only point I want to get quite clearly is as to whether the comparison between your coal and the Welsh coal is a fair one as to price?—Yes.

16137. It is 9*s.* 11*d.* as against 12*s.* 7*d.*?—I have taken every care to verify that.

16138. You are charged to Dublin, which is a distance of 61 miles, at the rate per truck of ·98 of a penny?—Yes.

16139. You expect that a rate for 27 miles only would be considerably lower?—Yes, but the rate I calculate is from the Welsh colliery down to the port of export, and the railway companies are allowed to charge a lower rate for export coal. You cannot compare that with the rate to Dublin.

16140. With regard to the 200 tons of graphite, did they give you any lower rate than ·98 of a penny from the colliery to Dublin?—I don't think so, but I think I am right in saying that they did not. It was several years ago.

16141. Was it in large consignments?—It went in sacks; it did not go in truckloads.

16142. You never approached them to ask would they give you a lower rate?—The railway company

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State should work, as well as own, the Railways for a period.

Suggested investigation by a competent expert as to the quality of the Castlecomer coal and extent of the deposit.

Method of arriving at the comparative prices of the Castlecomer and Welsh coals.

Abbeyleix and Dublin coal rate.

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offered me a lower rate for export coal if we had a tramway, but it was not so low as I considered it should be, not so low as the rate they give in Wales but it was a low rate.

16143. You expected that it would bear the same proportion to the Welsh rate that your distance does to the Welsh distance?—Yes.

16144. Am I right in saying that the Skehana coal is peculiarly well adapted for malting purposes—it is free from sulphur?—We have not experimented much in that direction, but it has a very low percentage of sulphur.

Value of Castlecomer coal for malting purposes.

16145. I think I am right in saying that formerly a considerable quantity of your coal was used by Messrs. Guinness for malting purposes?—Yes.

16146. Something like 800 tons a year?—I believe it was from the Skehana seam.

16147. And the reason they gave up using it was owing to some idea that the carters did not take care to get the best coal, but took some that had a mixture of sulphur?—Yes, it was open to the possibility of the men being dishonest and mixing the coal.

16148. Assuming that your Skehana colliery was developed and that you were in a position to deal directly with a consumer for malting purposes, you have every reason to believe that a large proportion of your coal would be used for that purpose?—I think it would.

Proposed tramway from Athy to Castlecomer and estimated cost of construction.

16149. Then with regard to the different proposals you made from time to time: am I right in assuming that in 1885, when the proposal of a tramway from Castlecomer to Athy was made, am I right in assuming that the colliers themselves were so anxious to get the line that they offered to contribute one day's pay all round towards the promotion expenses?—I have not heard that.

16150. It was given in evidence before the Allport Commission that that was so, and that the colliers actually offered to contribute a day's pay.

16151. *Chairman.*—Do you mean the working men?

16152. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The working men. (*To the Witness*).—Have you any idea of what the cost would be for making a line from Castlecomer to Athy or to Ballyragget?—It could be made for thirty-five or forty thousand pounds, a broad-gauge tramway line.

16153. To Ballyragget?—Or to a point between Ballyragget or Kilkenny.

16154. Have you considered which would be the preferable route?—I think the preferable route would be to a point between Ballyragget and Kilkenny.

16155. I think in 1887 or 1888 the proposal was to construct a tramway along the road from Castlecomer to Athy?—Yes.

16156. And that it would cost £3,500 a mile, roughly?—I think it could be done for what I say, £35,000 to £40,000.

Excessive cost of upkeep of Queen's County and Kilkenny roads caused by coal traffic, and estimated saving if the traffic were transferred to rail.

16157. Is it not a fact that owing to the heavy traffic along the roads in Queen's County and Kilkenny the expenditure on the roads is very high?—Yes, some roads cost as much as eight shillings a perch.

16158. Principally from their being cut up by heavy coal traffic?—Yes, and the method of keeping them

16159. One effect of making the railway would be that a great deal of that traffic would disappear and a great saving would be effected in the repair of the county roads?—Yes, it would effect a saving undoubtedly. The County Surveyor of Kilkenny estimates that a saving of £400 a year would be effected on one road alone.

16160. And if the line cost £40,000, as you have said, that amount would practically represent the interest in respect of one road alone, which would be a very good return for the capital?—Yes.

16161. In addition, a saving in connection with the roads in the adjoining counties would be effected?—The principal roads are the Carlow, Kilkenny, and Ballyraggett roads, and the Abbeyleix road.

16162. Have you any reason to believe that the County of Kilkenny would raise any objection, such as they did when the Castlecomer and Athy tramway was proposed, to the construction of such a railway now?—They refused the rate then.

16163. They refused to strike a rate because they considered that such a line would be injurious to the prospects of their county. Have you any reason to expect that anything of that kind will occur at present?—I do not think so.

16164. Do you know that an offer was made to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to work the line at 50 per cent. of the gross receipts?—Oh, yes, the proposal was made to them, but they considered they could not do it. They considered they would not be justified in risking it.

16165. One other question: with regard to amalgamation under the State, I understand you are opposed to the State managing the railways. Would you have the same objection to an amalgamated system of railways being controlled by a central Irish authority provided that authority was satisfactory in other respects?—No, I would not.

16166. Such a body would be more responsible to the opinion of the country?—More responsive to the commercial needs of the district.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

16167. The town of Kilkenny is the largest inland town in Ireland, is it not?—It is one of the largest.

16168. What do you charge for coal in Kilkenny?—It depends on the class of coal used.

16169. I want to see how much Welsh coal comes in and why you don't drive it out. What is your charge for coal in Kilkenny?—We charge exactly the same price as is charged at the pit's mouth, plus the cost of carriage.

16170. Kindly give me the figures?—It is sixpence per cwt. on an average, plus 5*s.* or 6*s.* cartage. You should understand that we don't retail the coal at all. It is bought at the pit's mouth by carters.

16171. The charge for Welsh coal is, from Swansea, 4*s.*, freight from Waterford to Kilkenny 3*s.* 7*d.*, and fivepence for unloading. That makes 8*s.*, so that Welsh coal comes handicapped by at least 8*s.* a ton?—Up to 8*s.*

16172. What is Welsh coal sold for in Kilkenny?—I am sure I could not tell you.

16173. Are you aware that the Railway Company carry to Kilkenny every year something like twenty thousand tons of Welsh coal? You are then two or three hours' cartage from the town of Kilkenny; why can't you compete in the town of Kilkenny with the Welsh coal?—We do compete.

16174. Why don't you keep it out? Why are the Welsh people able to sell, although handicapped by eight or nine shillings?—It is a very different class of coal. Our coal is anthracite. The coal you talk about is bituminous.

16175. You say your coal is equal to the best Welsh coal?—It is, to the best Welsh anthracite.

16176. I understand you to have suggested that some Dublin public institutions use your coal as household coal?—Yes.

16177. Therefore you ought to be able to compete in Kilkenny with the Welsh coal for household purposes?—Well, we do.

16178. Why does any of it come in?—The majority of the people prefer a bituminous coal for their fires; you will find the same thing in South Wales in the anthracite districts; you will find the people prefer a bituminous coal, as it is easier for servants to light; but bituminous coal will not give the same heat.

16179. I think you said in reply to Mr. Sexton that even for household purposes the Local Government Board were quite wrong in the surcharge that they made?—It was wrong in surcharging the whole amount of the difference in price.

16180. Do the local institutions in Kilkenny, the workhouse and others, use the local coal?—To a large extent.

16181. Why is it not used exclusively?—I could not answer that question.

16182. What is the depth of the Welsh seams?—They vary very much.

16183. Is there any such thing in Wales as an 18-inch seam?—Oh, undoubtedly.

16184. *Chairman.*—I never heard of an 18-inch seam in South Wales?—I don't know the South Wales district very well, but I think I am right in my statements. Now, the seam I have told you of is underlaid by soft culm and is very easy to work, so that an 18-inch seam in such conditions is equal to a three or four-foot seam in other places perhaps.

16185. *Chairman.*—I never heard of a seam so narrow in Wales?—You should understand that thickness of seam is not the only thing that makes it easy to work. There are parts of the Jarrow seam in which explosives have to be used, which make it more costly to work. In the case of Skehana coal the underlying soft matter reduces the cost of working. Eighteen inches is the lowest. The Skehana seam goes up to 26 inches—average about 22 inches.

16186. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—When was the new seam discovered?—It has been known for a very long time.

16187. When did you begin to work it?—Two years ago.

16188. The Great Southern and Western only came into the district since the amalgamation in 1901?—Yes, our train service is much better since they came in.

16189. They only ran to Maryborough until the amalgamation?—I believe that is the case.

16190. Have not they offered to put in a siding at Ballyraggett if you would give them 200 tons a week?—Not at Ballyraggett; between Ballyraggett and Kilkenny.

16191. Is that to avoid a bridge?—Yes.

16192. Did you consent?—No, I preferred to make the siding myself.

16193. They offered it to you?—Yes.

16194. If your coal is as good as you suggest, would not it pay the railway company to stack the coal at Ballyraggett and use it for their own engines?—I think it would.

16195. Why don't they use it?—That is known to themselves.

16196. There must be a cause for everything?—Well, they used it when the Queen's County mine was worked.

16197. Why did they give it up?—The mine ceased working. I think they came on a bad fault. They were working near the outcrop in a faulted area.

16198. Do you suggest that there is a prejudice on the part of an Irish company in favour of Welsh coal that prevents them from using yours?—I would not say what the reason is; it is best known to themselves.

16199. Your coal is as good and is within seven or eight miles of Ballyragget?—I cannot say what they might do or might not do.

16200. The only other question I want to ask you is, do you think the railway company, which is a commercial concern, ought to their own loss run a line for your profit?—I think that as a commercial business they ought to construct a line.

16201. For your profit?—Oh, not for my profit.

16202. Why should they do for you what you will not do for yourself?—I did not offer them fifty per cent.; that was a number of years before my time.

16203. If this line would pay anyone to make, it would pay you as a colliery proprietor?—Undoubtedly.

16204. Why do not you run a tramway on the high road?—I have offered to do it.

16205. Why don't you?—I want to have a reasonable rate to enable me to compete.

16206. What rate to Waterford did they offer you?—They offered me a rate from the proposed junction to Waterford.

16207. Did they offer you a cheaper rate for your Irish produce?—But you are comparing two very different things—import coal brought in over the line with export coal. The railways are allowed a cheaper rate for export purposes.

16208. Supposing you were to say to the railway company, "I will build a line of railway if you can give a fair rate from Ballyragget to Waterford," what rate would you have in your mind?—I would have a rate equal to the rate charged from South Wales for export coal, that is ·539*d.* per ton per mile in owner's wagons, or ·657*d.* per ton per mile in company's wagons.

16209. In Wales a thousand tons of coal would be sent in sixty hours. The whole of your consumption would be dealt with in that time?—I have nothing to do with that. I am of opinion that the Great Southern and Western Railway could carry wagon-loads of coal for export at the same rates as in South Wales. They are running trains not fully loaded to Waterford constantly, and their gradients are easy and in favour of load.

16210. Would you compare the South Wales colliery traffic to the port of Swansea with the Skehane traffic to Waterford?—In magnitude?

16211. Yes?—No, undoubtedly not.

16212. You have never shipped?—How could we when we have to pay five shillings a ton as a beginning to get to the railway?

16213. You say you will build a railway if they will give you a fair rate from Ballyragget to Waterford?—Yes, and one or two other things. To deal with these I would have to go into the whole correspondence.

16214. But if you get a fair rate from Ballyragget to Waterford, would you build a railway?—That would be the principal condition.

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Mr. R. H. Prior-Wandesforde, D.L., representative of the Kilkenny County Council.

Recent negotiations with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company as to construction of rail connection.

Mr. James G. Dooley examined by the Chairman.

16215. Mr. Dooley, you are a member of the Kilkenny County Council?—Yes.

16216. And have been deputed by that Council to come here to-day—Yes.

16217. Just tell us in your own language what you want to bring under our notice?—I want to bring under your notice the different charges—shall I read what is in my statement?

16218. I want you to read us what you wish personally to bring under our notice at the request of the Kilkenny County Council?—The different charges on the Great Southern.

16219. For goods or passengers?—For goods. Two lines are working in opposition.

16220. Which two lines?—The Great Southern and the South-Eastern.

16221. That is, that the one doesn't work with the other—that is, when you get out of one you have to wait for the connecting train of the other company?—Yes.

16222. And you complain that the delay is unreasonable?—Yes.

16223. Just mention the junctions?—In going to Kilkenny I leave New Ross at nine o'clock.

16224. How far is it from Kilkenny?—Only eighteen miles.

16225. You go from New Ross on what railway?—On the South-Eastern.

16226. You want to get to Kilkenny on the Great Southern and Western?—Yes. It goes to Palace East, which is only seven miles off. I go on the South-Eastern and reach there at fifteen minutes after nine o'clock. There is a connection there with the Great Southern and Western, but I have to wait until thirty minutes after ten in a country station, and I reach Kilkenny at twelve o'clock noon. It takes me from nine o'clock or ten minutes to nine until twelve o'clock to go eighteen miles, which is the distance if I went in a straight direction, but by rail it is close on forty miles.

16227. That is, you are three hours going forty miles?—Three hours going forty miles.

16228. And you are detained at the junction?—I am detained at Palace East, where the junction is between the Great Southern and the South-Eastern.

16229. You think the trains should come together and that the delay should be avoided?—Yes; and the same applies to all the Irish companies in a great measure.

16230. I see you make a grievance of there being no refreshment room at this junction?—Yes, and in winter time very little fire.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Ask him why he doesn't travel by Waterford.

16230A. *Chairman.*—Answer the question?—If I go *via* Waterford I come back in the evening from Kilkenny and have no connection with the South-Eastern; and then I have to pay a car from Waterford to New Ross. The South-Eastern train leaves Waterford before the down train from Kilkenny reaches it.

16231. What about the goods traffic?—Where there is not competition they charge us prohibitive prices. Where there is competition between the different lines they charge us very fair charges. I can give you a case in point. If I want to get oil-cake from Liverpool *via* the South-Eastern it is 12*s.* 6*d.* to 13*s.* 6*d.* per ton from Liverpool to New Ross coming

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Alleged insufficient provision for comfort of travellers at Palace East Junction.

Anomalies in goods rates between Liverpool and New Ross.

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Mr. James G. Dooley, Representative of the Kilkenny County Council.

via Dublin. If I tell them take it some other way they make the rate 11*s.*

16232. Which other way?—That is, if I take it *via* Waterford from Liverpool or *via* Wexford.

16233. From Liverpool to Waterford by steam?—And by rail to New Ross.

16234. Then you get it at 11*s.*?—I get it at 11*s.*; but lately, when the Wexford line began to compete with the Waterford Steamship Company, they took my goods at 9*s.* a ton from Liverpool to New Ross.

16235. You got a substantial advantage?—Yes, a reduction of 3*s.* a ton.

16236. You don't complain of that, do you?—No. That is only to show where there is competition.

16237. But for that competition——?—I would have to pay 12*s.* 6*d.* or 13*s.*

Alleged excessive rates charged in absence of competition.

16238. But since the competition route has been opened you get it for 9*s.*?—For 9*s.* in six-ton lots.

16239. What inference do you wish us to draw from that? You don't want us to do away with competition?—The inference I wish you to draw is that the railway companies, except when there is opposition between them, charge us too much, and the small trader must pay 4*s.* to 5*s.* per ton extra for one to five-ton lots.

16240. You don't suggest that they charge more than their maximum powers?—They don't charge more, but we consider that it is too much.

16241. Have you formed any opinion as to a remedy for these things?—If I want to get goods from Dublin to New Ross, for lots under six tons it is 10*s.*, and for lots over six tons seven shillings. If I want to send goods from New Ross to Dublin, where the water can compete—then they take them from New Ross to Dublin for 4*s.* 6*d.* a ton. They won't give me goods by wagon-loads at less than 7*s.* a ton from Dublin to New Ross, saying that there is so much wear and tear on their line; but here again competition brings them down.

16242. Are you objecting to this competition?—No.

16243. What remedy do you suggest?—My suggestion is that all the railways should be amalgamated.

16244. You have formed that opinion?—I have formed that opinion.

State ownership of the Irish Railways and control by Irish central authority advocated.

16245. And you would do away with competition?—I don't speak of competition in that sense. What I mean is that the railways should be taken out of the hands of the present companies, who are not developing the country. In places where there is no competition they are blocking the trade. I wish to see the railways in the hands of a central body and worked for the good of the country.

16246. Is that the view of your County Council?—It is.

16247. And you are authorised to say that?—I am authorised to say that.

16248. That your Council is in favour of the State-purchase of the railways, and that they should be managed by a central authority in Ireland for the benefit of the people of the country?—For the benefit of the people of the country.

16249. What more have you to say?—The majority of those whom I represent wish to have the railways bought out at their value. Their earnings for the last five or six years——

16250. Now you are going into detail?—Yes.

16251-2. You had better leave that alone. The general principle you advocate is State purchase, and that the railways should be worked by a central authority in this country?—By a central authority which should represent or be elected by the Councils, and with a Government Inspector; the money to be lent by the Government at reasonable interest; and if there should be any profit on the railways it should go for the benefit of the country.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

16253. The only question I have to ask you is with regard to Section 7 in your brief of evidence with reference to the want of facilities given by the railway companies for exhibition purposes?—Yes.

16254. Do I understand from that evidence that you are obliged to send your cattle at this rather prohibitive rate the day before the exhibition?—Yes; the cattle must be sent the day before the exhibition. If not, they would not be in their proper place.

16255. You say then that if you could wait until the next day, it would be only half-fare?—Yes.

16256. But the cattle would not be in time for the show?—They would not be in time for the show.

16257. How would you remedy that?—The same thing should apply to the day before the show as to the day of the show, and also that the men going with the cattle should be taken free.

16258. Is there any considerable number of cattle, or other animals for show purposes, coming from your district in Kilkenny?—There is a very good number—a large number.

16259. Have not the railway companies been giving exceptional rates for cattle?—They do, if the cattle are not sold. They then bring them back free.

16260. Well, that is something?—It is, of course.

16261. Besides that, don't they give you a special rate for show purposes lower than the rate you would have to pay on other occasions?—No, I am quite certain of it. For three cattle they charge 33*s.* 6*d.* from New Ross.

16262. For show purposes?—Yes.

16263. And that is what you would have to pay if you sent them for any other purpose?—Yes.

Mr. Edward Fennessy examined by the Chairman.

Mr. Edward Fennessy, representative of the Kilkenny Corporation.

16264. You reside in Kilkenny?—Yes.

16265. You don't come as representing the County Council, but the Town Council?—The Corporation.

16266. Kilkenny is a corporate town?—Yes.

16267. Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors—is that so?—Yes.

16268. And are you in the Council?—No. I am not, but I have been chairman of a committee with reference to this matter, and I have been asked to come and give evidence.

16269. Have the Council considered the subject as a Council?—They have.

16270. Have they passed any resolution?—They have. I have got copies of two resolutions which I will read to you.

Two resolutions of Kilkenny Corporation as to Railway extensions.

16271. Read them?—(*Witness.*)—Copy of a resolution passed by a quarterly meeting of the Kilkenny Corporation held on Wednesday, 23rd January, 1907. Proposed by Alderman Cantwell, seconded by Councillor Tynan, and resolved unanimously:—"That we, the members of the Kilkenny Corporation, consider it our duty to strongly recommend to the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways presently sitting in Dublin to favour the construction of railway communication between Kilkenny and Castlecomer, the seat of the great coal fields of the county, believing firmly that it would be the means of finding a market on a large scale of such a fine article. Again, outside the development of the coal fields, we are strongly convinced that a big general traffic would result from the construction of such a connection, and a great benefit would result for the City of Kilkenny, down to Castlecomer and the adjacent districts. That this resolution be sealed with the seal of the Council, and that it be presented personally to the Viceregal Commission by the Town Clerk on the day that the evidence will be taken on the question. Signed, Otway Cuffe, Mayor; Edward O'Connell, Town Clerk."

16272. Read the second one?—(*Witness reads.*)—"Copy of a second resolution passed at a meeting of the Kilkenny Corporation, held on Tuesday, 5th February, 1907. Proposed by Councillor P. J. Kennedy, B.A., seconded by Councillor John Morris, and resolved:—'That we, the Kilkenny Corporation, entirely approve of the project that a railway connection be made between Castlecomer *via* Kilkenny to Callan, Mullinahone, and to Carrick-on-Suir, and that we shall be very pleased to give the Callan executive all the possible assistance we can in the matter, and that we authorise the Town Clerk to communicate with the secretaries of the Callan Committee on the question, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to all the public Boards of the city and county.' Signed, Otway Cuffe, Mayor; Edward O'Connor, Town Clerk."

16273. You concurred in this resolution?—Certainly, sir.

16274. I see you have some personal grievances, but I don't think they are worth mentioning?—Well, sir, this is not a personal grievance at all. It is the feeling of the people.

16275. Mention them if you wish?—We feel it to be a great grievance that Kilkenny has to pay more rates than other portions of the line, and where it strikes us hardest is that a great portion of Kilkenny County on the Callan side gets its supplies through Clonmel to the great injury of Kilkenny County. Clonmel is the same distance from the port of Waterford, Clonmel being 28 miles and Kilkenny 31 miles, but there is an enormous difference in the railway charges for the two distances. It would not be such a great hardship but for the fact that one half of the county is supplied from Clonmel.

16276-7. It is nearer to the port than Kilkenny?—It is three miles nearer, and there is a difference of 30 to 40 per cent. in the railway rates.

16278. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—There is a navigable river.

16279. *Chairman (to Witness)*.—Have you brought this under the notice of the railway company?—It was, at the time of the amalgamation.

16280. The question was raised?—Yes.

16281. Did your Council support the amalgamation?—We were against the amalgamation—we opposed it.

16282. What do you mean by opposing—did you appear in Parliament?—Yes; it was opposed in Parliament.

16283. By the Kilkenny Corporation?—No; it was a subscription got up to oppose it.

16284. In the town of Kilkenny?—Yes.

16285. Were prohibitive clauses inserted in the Bill?—I do not know that there were any.

16286. At any rate the question was raised?—It was.

16287. Before the Committee of the House?—It was raised before Mr. Colhoun, the manager of the railway.

16288. He is dead now?—He was alive at this time.

16289. Clonmel has direct water communication all the way up?—It has.

16290. And Kilkenny has not?—It has not. We thought when the amalgamation was carried we should get some advantages, but we don't think we got any advantages, but rather the reverse. We don't think the service is good. There are very general complaints about the goods traffic. I made a complaint myself, not long ago.

16291. *Mr. Healy*, K.C., (*interposing*).—There is a far better service now than there was?

Witness.—There is for passenger traffic, but not for goods.

16292. *Chairman*.—The goods cannot complain?—No, but the owners can.

16293. As long as the goods get away at night, what more do you want?—But there are delays.

16294. Have you brought this under the notice of the railway company?—I complained about it to Mr. Neale, the traffic manager at Kingsbridge. What I complain of is that if it is inconvenient for the railway company to bring the wagons into the store, they should have a portable platform from which the goods could be lifted from the wagons.

16295. Surely this must be exceptional? You don't say it occurs with every ton of cake you get?—It occurs very often.

16296. Is not it exceptional?—I don't agree that it is exceptional, or that it is a proper way to unload any article like cake. It is a proper way to unload anything that can be thrown about, but as to bags of cake it is a ridiculous way. Sometimes we get them all shattered, and the stuff is waste.

16297. Will the railway company hear what you have got to say?—We have complained about goods lying at the station.

16298. That is a neglect of duty on the part of the local staff?—I think the fact is, that before the amalgamation we had two stationmasters and two sets of servants. I believe there is a very insufficient staff at present, and that traders are suffering by it, and the inconvenience is very great.

16299. You are not in favour of the existing railway system in this country—of the present management?—My idea is simply that there should be uniform rates—that there ought to be a wagon-load rate, and I think it a monstrous thing that a shilling has not the same carrying value everywhere. At present a shilling will carry goods further from Dublin than from Kilkenny. The rate for porter from Dublin to Waterford is 7*s.* 6*d.* for 110 miles, and the rate for porter from Kilkenny to Dublin is 11*s.* 11*d.*, which is nearly double for carrying it 30 miles less. I don't think that is fair. We think that there ought to be a wagon-load rate—a mileage rate, on the basis of sixpence per wagon per mile.

Uniform system of mileage rates recommended.

16300. If you put that into operation to-day there would be a growl all over the country to-morrow. It could not possibly work to the satisfaction of the trading public. Such mileage rates are an impossibility?—Why should they give cheaper rates to Clonmel?

16301. Because of the water competition. If the railways did not, they would not carry the traffic at all. (*To Witness.*)—You are not a railway shareholder?—No, I am not.

16302. But you are a merchant?—Precisely. I don't see why they should carry cheaper to the people of one town than to those of another.

Effect of water competition on railway rates discussed.

16303. You gave an instance just now. Suppose they charged the Kilkenny rate from Dublin to Waterford, don't you think that every ton of the porter would go by water?—I know it. I know that the rates are assessed by expediency.

16304. Suppose the railway carried it for nothing, how would you be injured?—If I were in the trade I would be injured.

16305. You would not be benefited by it?—If I were a manufacturer in Kilkenny, I would be benefited if I got it for nothing; but there are manufacturers of porter in Kilkenny, but they cannot send it as cheaply to Dublin as others can send it down.

16306. I want you to see there are two sides to the question. There may be inequalities, and, no doubt, there are, but when you compare the rate applicable to a place wholly served by water, to another place wholly served by rail, the comparison is not a fair one. Take Kilkenny. Take the rate as between Kilkenny and some inland place, and point out any instance of unfairness?—If the trade of half a county is cut off by cheaper rates to an adjoining town, I think it is a manifest hardship.

16307. You say it is a hardship to Kilkenny?—Decidedly. It is the general opinion.

16308. Well, the general opinion is not always right you know. Have you considered the question of the State purchase of railways?—Well, to some extent.

16309. Have you formed any opinion on the question?—Well, I think they should be managed in Ireland, for the expense of going to London is too great. That is about as far as I go upon it.

16310. But they are managed in Ireland now?—I agree with you, but what I think is that there should be uniformity. I think there should be one system.

Unification of the railways recommended.

16311. That is to say, that there should be unification of all the railways into one?—I think so. And the Board of Control should exercise more authority than it does, so that we would get nearer to a union rating. Practically the railway rates seem to me to be regulated so as to get just as much as they can possibly grab. They are not regulated by the mode of expenditure, or of earning power, but by how much they can get from the unfortunate trader, because he has no other means of transit.

16312. Every railway company is limited in its powers with regard to rates?—I am afraid the limit is too loose. Its power of charging rates is too great.

16313. I think it is reasonable, and besides it has been revised within the last two years in this country?—What we ask is considerably above the limit that they carry some things for. We think there should be a wagon load rate.

16314. If such a rate were operative to-morrow there would be an outcry against it, and it would have to be cancelled the next day. You think there are too many railway companies?—I do.

16315. And that there should be unification?—We have certainly lost by the amalgamation. Our wants were better attended to, and our goods more punctually delivered before the amalgamation, and the service was infinitely better. On Thursday evening last, I returned to Kilkenny by the 6.25 train. There was a gentleman in the carriage with me, and when he stopped to get out at Kilkenny he had some Gladstone bags with him. He looked for a porter, but there was none there. I said I would carry his bags to the car-stand, and he said he would be obliged if I did, because he had some more luggage he wanted out of the van.

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I took his bags up the platform; I met the gentleman coming down, and pointed out the car. He came with me and saw the bags, and I said, "Where is the remainder of your luggage?" and he said, "Up in the van, but I could not get a porter to carry down," and I said I will go back and help you. The remainder happened to be a square hamper which was lying in front of an open goods' van. There was no porter there, and we took the hamper and carried it between us, and put it on the car. That would not have happened before the amalgamation.

Complaint as to insufficient staff at Kilkenny Station.

16316. Did you call the attention of the stationmaster to that?—No.

16317. Was not he there?—I saw no stationmaster, no porter, no anybody. The gentleman was a Doctor of Divinity.

16318. What was the station?—Kilkenny station. It was last Thursday evening. If that gentleman had not had somebody to carry his things, in a few minutes the cars would all have left, and he could not have got away his luggage.

16319. But was not that exceptional?—I call it one of the results of amalgamation. I don't travel very often, but I know that people are dissatisfied with the attendance which, I believe, is not half of what it used to be.

State ownership of the Railways and control by an Irish central authority advocated.

16320. You are in favour of State purchase of the railways?—I am, sir.

16321. Of the whole of the railways?—Yes.

16322. To be managed by some central authority in this country?—Certainly, sir. I think it would be like other public departments, the Telegraph and Post Office.

16323. And you think that if that were brought about, this colliery district would be supplied by the State with a railway to develop it?—I do certainly. Many years ago we passed a resolution at the City Grand Jury in favour of guaranteeing an indemnity for a line to Castlecomer, because the keep of the roads to Castlecomer was 7*s.* 6*d.* a perch, which was an enormous sum, and the guarantee would never come to more on the rates than we would save on the keep of the roads. The City Grand Jury passed that resolution, but the County Grand Jury threw it out.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

16324. You say that you suffered by the amalgamation?—Yes.

16325. Can you give any actual instance in respect of rates?—I cannot as regards rates, but our goods were very much better handled before the amalgamation.

16326. That is from the staff being insufficient?—The staff is insufficient.

16327. Have you any complaints to make as to the rates now charged being higher than they were?—I don't think they are.

16328. Then with regard to the rates to Clonmel being lower than the rates to Kilkenny, you know that that is because the land rate is governed by the sea or river competition?—I quite agree with you, sir, but our argument is that if the two lines to Clonmel and Waterford were in the hands of two separate companies the thing would be different. We think it a monstrous thing that they should be charging these different rates.

16329. If they did not charge the rates that they do, the traffic that is now carried by railway would not go at all?—I do not know that.

16330. You said, I think, that the rates from Waterford to Kilkenny are 30 per cent. higher than the other?—About 30 per cent.

Cross-examined by Mr. Healy, K.C.

16331. What do you pay for Welsh coal in Kilkenny?—I don't buy any.

16332. Do you know the price of it?—I don't know the price.

16333. Can you tell the price of the Irish coal?—I generally pay 1*s.* 2*d.* a cwt. for the best that is sold.

16334. What is the price of the Welsh coal?—I don't know. I don't use any Welsh coal.

16335. Why are 20,000 tons of Welsh coal sold there every year?—I think it is used for lighting the other coal. The Welsh coal is much softer, and more easily lighted. The Kilkenny coal is more difficult to light, but much more lasting.

16336. But the ignition of the other is more lasting?—Yes.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning.

TWENTY-EIGHTH PUBLIC SITTING—WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH, 1907.

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. P. J. KENNEDY, B.A., examined by The CHAIRMAN.

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Mr. P. J. Kennedy, B.A. representative of the Kilkenny Corporation

16337. Mr. P. J. Kennedy?—Yes, that is my name.

16338. You are a Bachelor of Arts?—I am a Bachelor of Arts.

16339. And a Town Councillor?—Yes.

16340. For the Corporation of Kilkenny?—Yes, sir, for the Corporation of Kilkenny.

16341. What Railway Company is it that serves Kilkenny?—The Great Southern and Western Railway Company.

16342. Well, now, I see in your proof you follow very nearly the same lines as were given yesterday by a witness from Kilkenny?—That is quite so, sir. Only I have given a number of instances with figures worked out.

16343. I will look at that just to see?—I should like to be allowed to correct one point on the matter, Mr. Chairman. The distance from Waterford to Clonmel was put at twenty-eight miles. I believe it is thirty-one miles by rail, exactly the same distance as Waterford to Kilkenny. I verified that matter since. It makes the disparity in treatment of Kilkenny still greater than it appeared before.

16344. There is no other railway verging upon Kilkenny?—No, sir. The Dublin and South-Eastern does not come into the County Kilkenny at all, does not come within twelve or fourteen miles of the City of Kilkenny.

16345. What is your general complaint as to the rates charged by the Great Southern and Western?—There is a feeling that the rates from Waterford to Kilkenny are rather higher than they should be. We found that not merely by a comparison of the rates between Waterford and Clonmel the same distance, but there is a kind of feeling that wherever a railway company is forced to reduce its rates, either by sea competition or sea freight or a navigable river, they are inclined to make up for it on those towns where they enjoy an internal monopoly.

16346. In other words, you suggest that if the railway company can carry traffic from Waterford to Clonmel at a certain rate that they should carry from Waterford to Kilkenny, being the same distance, at the same rate?—No, not quite so far as that.

16347. You don't go as far as that?—No, not quite so far.

16348. Well, then, how far?—I should say that the disparity that exists—over thirty per cent.—between the rates is a little too high, somewhat too high.

16349. Then you recognise the fact that if the Great Southern and Western don't charge a low rate between Waterford and Clonmel, that the whole of the traffic would be taken from them and sent by water?—I recognise that.

16350. You do?—I do.

16351. Now, if they put the rates there to Clonmel the same as Kilkenny, would that meet your case?—No, sir. We don't want Clonmel to suffer at all. I don't think the Railway Company could afford to do it against the river competition. What we ask is that if they have to lose by river or sea competition elsewhere that Kilkenny should not be compelled to make up for that.

16352. Well, it all resolves itself into the question as to whether the rates from Waterford to Kilkenny are fair and reasonable—are they fair and reasonable in themselves?—They are somewhat too high.

16353. What is your comparison?—I have compared the rates per ton per mile both from Waterford to Clonmel and Waterford to Kilkenny, and Kingsbridge to Waterford and Kingsbridge to Kilkenny. There are two tables in my evidence. The figures are given.

16354. May I ask are you interested in any particular trade or industry?—I am, sir. I am interested in the furniture trade and also in the woollen business.

16355. Of Kilkenny?—Of Kilkenny.

16356. Well, then, give us two or three instances?—One or two.

Complaint as to excessive porter and wheat rates from Kilkenny to Waterford.

16357. Well, take any you like?—Take the instance of porter. We have two large breweries in Kilkenny giving a large amount of employment; they had or used to have a much larger trade in Waterford. The rate per ton——

Mr. Healy, K.C.—That is the sea again.

Witness.—If you hear me out, there is another point. The rate per ton from Kilkenny to Waterford for porter is 7*s.* 8*d.*, a distance of thirty-one miles. The rate per ton for porter from Dublin to Waterford is 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Healy, K.C.—He is comparing the carted rates with the station to station—the carted and non-carted rate.

Witness.—I am not. They are both station to station, and, as a matter of fact, I believe porter goes to Waterford cheaper than 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—That is true on account of the sea competition.

16358. *Chairman.*—At any rate you say the rates you mention are station-to-station rates and not collected and delivered?—Yes, and the comparison is perfectly fair as far as that is concerned, and I think Mr. Healy admits himself that the carriage is often lower than that. The point I want to bring before the Commission is that it makes it impossible for Kilkenny manufacturers of stout or porter in Kilkenny to compete with the Dublin manufacturers of stout and porter in a town much nearer to Kilkenny than Dublin, to, say, Waterford.

16359. On account of the rate?—On account of the rate. Any advantage we might have from a geographical point of view is taken away by a rate of that sort.

16360. Give us another instance. You can select any you like. I don't think it is necessary to go through the whole of them—give us typical instances dealing with the grain, flour, wheat, and so on?—Take wheat; I think that covers most of the corn trade.

16361. Is wheat produced in the district?—It is not to a very large extent; barley is produced to a large extent.

16362. Take barley?—Wheat is the same. Waterford to Clonmel the rate is 3*s.* 3*d.* a ton. Kilkenny to Waterford, 4*s.* 10*d.* a ton.

16363. The distance being the same?—Yes, the distance being the same.

16364. That doesn't seem at all proportionate?—Well, we hold that it makes Clonmel the centre for the barley markets in that portion of the county as compared with Kilkenny.

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16365. The barley being imported into Waterford and carried to Clonmel and distributed at Clonmel?—The barley is produced in the county, and there is a big district there between Clonmel and Kilkenny. The big barley producing districts are nearer to Kilkenny than Clonmel and a better road to get it; and the fact that the rates are cheaper on barley from Waterford to Clonmel enables the Clonmel buyer to give a higher price than the Kilkenny buyer, and diverts the market from Kilkenny to Clonmel.

16366. I think that is perfectly clear. Just give us one instance with reference to the general traffic—groceries and draperies?—I am afraid I can't give these.

16367. Yes, you have got tea and drapery goods in your proof?—Tea, Waterford to Clonmel, 10*s.* 6*d.* a ton.

16368. Do you know whether that is collected and delivered?—I am not quite sure. I know that the two figures are the same.

16369. If it is collected and delivered at Clonmel, it is also collected at Kilkenny?—Tea, Waterford to Kilkenny, 13*s.* 2*d.* I have been asked also to point out——

Alleged disparity in the rates between Waterford and Kilkenny and Waterford and Clonmel.

16370. Well, these rates, if they include collection and delivery, don't appear to me to be excessive?—There is a considerable disparity between the two towns at the same distance.

16371. I know your point, between the two towns, but you appear to admit there should be a difference?—It may be admitted that there should be a difference, but I think the difference is too great.

16372. It is only thirteen per cent.?—It runs to a good deal more than that. I should have handed in my corrected form. It runs to about, I think, twenty-five per cent.

16373. I see you have corrected this?—The distance makes the difference. Thirty-one miles is the distance from Waterford to Clonmel; not twenty-eight, as I wrote—isn't it?

16374. We had it yesterday twenty-eight. We may clear it up at once. Is it?

Mr. Neale.—Twenty-eight and thirty-one. Clonmel is twenty-eight; Kilkenny is thirty-one.

Witness.—I found in Thom's Directory thirty-one from Waterford to Clonmel.

Chairman.—That is a matter that may be cleared up at once.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Kilkenny is three miles further from Waterford than Clonmel by rail.

Witness.—I was right in the original figure.

Chairman.—Then the percentage difference.

Witness.—Thirteen is what was originally supplied.

16375. Then you have nothing to say against that, now?—On that point I don't think I have much to say. I may mention that of course railway companies, like every other company, have a right to live, and money invested in a railway company has the right to earn a dividend. At the same time railways have been given compulsory rights, and constituted by special Acts of Parliament, and whether that exactly gives them the power to trade as private companies with regard to penalising one portion of the country as against another is another question. I don't think that, admittedly, their public powers are given like that by Parliament—to a public carrying company—it was ever intended that they should ever penalise one portion of the country as against another.

16376. It depends on whether the particular place is penalised. Looking at these rates they appear to me to be fair and reasonable?—They may from the point of view of the railway, but not from the point of view of merchants and others who have invested money in Kilkenny to see the trade diverted to Clonmel.

16377. Supposing the rates to Clonmel were all advanced to the same as Kilkenny, and the railway company never carried a ton of traffic between Waterford and Clonmel, it was all sent by water by the boat lower than the rate of the railway company; now, what is your position then?—That won't improve us one bit.

16378. Of course it won't?—Not one bit. It might just to a limited extent only: if the river navigation was able to meet the wants of Clonmel in that way it would not improve us one bit. But then the question arises, have the railway companies the right to divert the trade from one place to another.

16379. They don't?—If it does not pay them to carry the goods from Waterford to Kilkenny at the same rate, why do they carry the goods at all? Is it as a public benefactor quite apart from dividend-earning powers they do it?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It is a quarrel with geography.

16380. *Chairman.*—I think you had better give us one more instance out of your list of, say, something that is produced in your district. I suppose potatoes are produced there, are they?—Yes.

16381. In the district?—Yes.

16382. And exported?—Yes.

16383. I mean sent to Waterford?—Yes.

16384. Give us the rate?—Waterford to Clonmel, 3*s.* 3*d.*, to Kilkenny 3*s.* 9*d.* There is no quarrel with that.

16385. That you consider reasonable to both places?—Taking the general average of the different classes of these goods the difference is too great. I may tell you——

16386. You state the difference is about thirty per cent?—Something about that.

16387. According to these figures in your proof the difference comes down to four or five per cent.?—That would be a single instance. Taking the general average, the difference would be twenty-five to thirty per cent. It is very unreliable.

16388. The general average—why?—Because the tonnage may be different in the various classes of goods.

16389. Coal?—Coal is very fair. There is no quarrel about coal.

16390. That is coal from Waterford to Clonmel?—And Kilkenny. There is no quarrel with that.

16391. Was there any difference recently with regard to the rates between Waterford and Clonmel and Waterford and Kilkenny?—I think the differences are of some standing. There has been no disparity made quite recently in the matter.

16392. You have got something to say with reference to secret rebates?—Of course I can't give personal evidence of that, but evidence was given before the Railway and Canal Commissioners in the Four Courts showing a system of secret rebates, a regular war of secret rebates between the Dublin and South-Eastern Company and the Great Southern and Western Company with regard to Waterford.

16393. Did they affect Kilkenny?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It was said on both sides; counsel on both sides said these rebates would be abandoned after that inquiry. A vicious system undoubtedly had existed. It has been abandoned by both sides.

Chairman.—It has been abandoned.

Witness.—It affected Clonmel. It reduced the rates considerably; interfered with particular traders.

16394. You are of the same opinion as your colleague from Kilkenny yesterday. You suggest that there should be a fixed wagon rate, equal mileage rate?—That is a question that Mr. Fennessy made his own. I am not qualified to speak on the matter at all.

16395. Very well, we will leave it?—There is another point. Some statements were made yesterday by Mr. Fennessy with regard to complaints against the local officials. I must say generally that the committee of which I am a member, and the Corporation, do not share these views. We always find the officials in Kilkenny very courteous.

15396. I am very glad to hear that, because the evidence was very strong.

Witness.—I am quite sure if the matters were brought before the officials in Kilkenny itself that all their grievances would be removed.

16397. Then you agree with what I ventured to suggest yesterday that if there were no porters, nobody in attendance, that it was quite exceptional?—That probably is the case, sir.

16398. Probably is the case?—That, probably, is the case. The only grievance I heard suggested was that in the corn buying time sometimes they don't get sufficient wagon accommodation there, and have to wait for days before they can get their corn off.

16399. That is when there is, no doubt, pressure?—I daresay there is pressure all over the country at the time, but those who buy on commission complain, the prices varying from day to day, that it interferes very much with their market if they can't get the corn off immediately.

16400. That is the experience of railway companies throughout the world at certain seasons of the year. There is a pressure of traffic which causes a shortage of wagons?—That is quite true. This particular season

occurs regularly, and is one that can be foreseen. It doesn't come suddenly upon them. A sudden emergency one can understand. But where pressure can be foreseen a great system like the Great Southern and Western should be in a position to meet it.

16401. What have you got to say with regard to the goods from Kingsbridge to Kilkenny. First of all what is the distance?—Eighty-one miles—eighty or eighty-one miles, sir.

16402. What is the difference to Waterford—the distance?—One hundred and ten miles.

16403. Well, now, give us just a typical case of the rates?—I have given you the worst case—the porter case.

16404. Give us the best case?—In favour of the railway?

16405. Yes?—The best case is coal.

16406. From Waterford to Kingsbridge?—Seven shillings and fivepence per ton. It is the same from Kilkenny to Kingsbridge, 7*s.* 5*d.* per ton.

16407. The distance, of course, being different?—The distance is considerably larger—a difference of thirty miles.

16408. There again, I suppose, the Waterford to Kingsbridge rate is governed by sea competition?—I expect it is, sir. Yes, and maybe the competition of the Dublin and South Eastern Company.. We should like, however, if the railway company could make an exception in favour of coal in order to give Castlecomer a chance of developing their coal mines. They are already heavily handicapped by being such a long distance from any railway station.

16409. That is the coal district we heard about yesterday?—Yes.

16410. Castlecomer?—Yes. Castlecomer, as to which Mr. Wandesforde gave evidence yesterday. Dealing with that point, I would like to suggest that I think it was put to Mr. Wandesforde yesterday by the counsel for the railways that he alone would make a big profit if a railway were constructed connecting the collieries with the railway system. I think it was put somewhat in that contention. May I suggest, also, that the whole district round about would be served materially by it, and also that the railway company would be served by it.

16411. That goes without saying, it would be of general benefit?—General benefit.

16412. To the district?—Yes.

16413. Did you hear Mr. Wandesforde suggest that he was prepared to make a tramway?—Yes.

16414. If he had favourable rates. granted?—Yes, I heard him state that.

16415. Where is the town of Callan?—Ten miles south-west of Kilkenny City.

16416. Does the railway serve it?—No; the nearest railway station is Kilkenny railway station.

16417. Would a tramway or a line to Castlecomer to a point on the Great Southern and Western Railway serve that point?—I don't know that it would serve it very materially, but the suggestion, I think, was made, and there was a movement being made at the time by the Callan people if they could get a branch either to Ballyhale or Kilkenny City.

16418. Have your Corporation made any representation to the Board of Works in Ireland with reference to additional railways in that district?—No, sir.

16419. Is the particular part of the county there, is it sparsely populated?—Callan district is fairly populous. It is entirely an agricultural district—it is not manufacturing or mining.

16420. They cart their produce, I suppose, to the nearest railway station?—Yes, as a rule to Carrick-on-Suir.

16421. Is it a District Council?—No, sir, Town Commissioners.

16422. Have you considered, or your Corporation had before them, the question of the purchase of the Irish railways by the State?—They have.

16423. They have not?—Yes, they have.

16424. And discussed it?—Yes, and discussed it.

16425. Did they pass any resolution on the subject?—I am not quite sure whether they have done so. Any resolutions that were passed were brought by Mr. Fennessy on the point. The matter has been discussed by them several times.

16426. Tell me first of all what is your opinion about the purchase of the railways by the State—your own opinion?—I think personally that is about the only solution of the difficulties which I am sure the railway companies themselves must meet, and certainly the commercial public in Ireland have to complain of. The railway companies have a big property in which they have invested a large amount of capital and the population of the country is diminishing and the trade in the country is diminishing. The number of people in the country to whom they bring in goods, from whom they carry out goods, and between whom they carry goods is constantly diminishing. Consequently the volume of trade conveyed by the railway companies must be steadily decreasing too, and with that their earning powers, and still the original capital put into these railways remains the same, and the working expenses largely the same, so that they too must feel the pinch as well as everybody else. In order to try to keep up their dividends they have to have resort to means they would not otherwise adopt in order to in every instance keep up high rates, where perhaps they might be able to give lower ones. A railway business is like everything else, a commercial commodity. Supposing, therefore, we think in justice both to the people of Ireland themselves and the railway shareholders that the only solution for it would be some means by which the railways could be brought under one control, for the unification of the system of railways, it would bring about a good deal of economy in the working and a good deal of efficiency, and we think that no single railway company or companies would be able to bring about this. They have not got the powers to do it, and there would be considerable difficulty in acting without unification; and we consider that the only power that could possibly do this is the State itself, and in doing this it would be doing a good thing for the railway companies and a good thing for the country, and, furthermore, I fancy it would be in a position to develop the more backward portions of the country. The State working the railway system doesn't work it for immediate dividend, year by year; it has not got to meet shareholders, and can afford in good years to put away something for use in bad years, and in that way we think the only effective solution of it would be by the State purchase of the railways.

Unification of the Railways under State control advocated.

16427. That is your own opinion?—Yes.

16428. Are they the opinions of your Corporation?—It has been argued both by the Railway Committee appointed by the Corporation and all the members of the Corporation as well.

16429. They are pretty unanimous?—Absolutely unanimous.

16430. Kilkenny?—Kilkenny City.

16431. Is that the general feeling in the town?—Yes, and largely shared in the county. I should like to refer to one or two points. There is another—a point Colonel Poë raised with Mr. Ennis, of Wexford County Council, with regard to the representation of the minority on public Boards in Ireland, I would like to make a remark on that.

Kilkenny Corporation unanimously in favour of this solution of the Railway difficulty.

Chairman.—Colonel Poë will probably ask you a question on that.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

16432. I am sorry to have missed the opening of your examination. Have you any means of ascertaining the disposition of railway shareholders on this question?—Well, I have not very much myself. My acquaintance with railway shareholders is very limited.

Probable attitude of Railway shareholders towards the question of State purchase discussed.

16433. Have you any reason to think that railway shareholders would be indisposed to purchase, indisposed to the policy of purchase upon any other ground but the question of price—I mean if fair terms were arranged?—No; I don't think so, if fair terms were arranged.

16434. Do you think the railway shareholders would be willing to fall in with what might be regarded as the public interest?—I think so, so far as I know. I know some shareholders of the different railway companies who are very strongly in favour of State purchase on any kind of fair terms, but my acquaintance I can't say is very much extended.

16435. You have spoken of a declining population and a diminishing trade. In view of these conditions might not railway shareholders in general be very willing to accept, and consider themselves fortunate in being able to accept, purchase on fair terms on the present basis without facing the chances of the future?—If I was a railway shareholder myself I would.

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Mr P. J. Kennedy, B.A., representative of the Kilkenny Corporation.

Possibilities of reductions in rates and economies in working under State ownership.

16436. The main object in view is reduction of rates?—Certainly, and the extensions of line in portions of the country where the natural resources have not a fair chance to develop.

16437. And where private capital would not be employed?—Where it is impossible to get private capital on such a scale as would enable them to be developed.

16438. If we can assume that the railways may be purchased on such terms by the use of public credit as to leave a substantial residue of the present net revenue, we supply a considerable fund out of which to make reductions?—Certainly you would.

16439. That is a means of making reductions beyond the reach of the existing companies no matter how good may be their disposition?—Entirely beyond them. I am not finding fault with the present management of Irish railways. I am quite sure the officials and directors do the best they can. With such a number of different systems and such a number of officials and directors there must be a considerable amount of expenditure that would be done away with by a system of unification, and that in itself would be a fund which would enable some reductions to be carried out.

16440. Does it occur to you that this is very far from being merely a case of complaint and reply?—It is a big national question. Furthermore, I think that the commercial and industrial future of the country depends very largely on any action that the Government will take in this very important matter.

Commercial system of railways unsuitable for Ireland apart from any question of whether the Companies were doing best for the public interest.

16441. Suppose there was not one word to be said against any railway company. Suppose it was admitted that they were doing the best for the public interest as well as their own, regard being had to the conditions that are constraining them, would there not be still a public question of the first magnitude, whether, looking to the examples of the world, and looking to the experience gained all over the world, this purely commercial system suits Ireland at all?—I certainly think so even if you admit, and I largely do admit, that the railway companies are doing the very best with the powers they have and the means at their disposal. The present system in Ireland is hurtful to the general interests of Ireland, and there remains still a very big national question with regard to the experience of other countries. I know nothing except at second hand. We are told the State system succeeds in other places. I am glad to hear from expert evidence yesterday it succeeds in developing industry.

16442. If you look to any country in the world except two or three you will find in every country the Government is buying or making railways, and in no country is the Government transferring them to private companies. Isn't that a very significant fact?—And a very hopeful one.

16443. You have spoken of one great economy which might be effected; is there not a second and greater, namely, the economy exercised through the concentration of so many varying administrations, varying in size and circumstances, into one great administration?—Yes. That would be the greatest and biggest economy.

The economy of concentrated administration.

16444. I think too much weight is thrown upon the direct saving by concentration of official staffs. I would submit to you that the chief economies are not to be effected in that matter which, in my opinion, is comparatively small, but under the main heads of expenditure—permanent way, locomotive charges, carriages and wagons, traffic charges, and general charges—that each one of these removed from the hands of small administrations and placed in the hands of one board of experts, which would be a more able administration than any single railway has at its command at present, should necessarily result in economies ranging from a quarter to half a million?—I quite agree with that opinion.

16445. Would it not be a lamentable thing if because of any difference between the railways and the public, where there is no real difference of interest, such vast economies as that which might be rendered available for the public service should be left out of reach?—I think it would be a disaster for Ireland and disastrous for the railway shareholders themselves.

16446. When I say that there is no real difference of interest, what I submit to you is this, that provided people who had invested in the railways, and who are entitled to every consideration, receive a fairly liberal return for their investment, or are allowed the option of transferring their investment from those private lines, many of which are more or less in an insecure condition, into either a State Stock or the Stock of a unified system of railways, would they have cause to complain, would they not have a better security?—They would have a much better security. There might be one or two systems, perhaps, on which the shareholders might think it was better as a private company, but if they had a fair price, even if they are not satisfied with the State system, I don't see the cause of complaint.

16447. The directors and officers are nearly all Irishmen, like ourselves, and many of them able Irishmen, of whom we are proud; they are not all Irishmen, but the bulk of them are, and the gentlemen who are not Irishmen, we know, have vindicated their position by their ability, and if we show there is no intention to deal inequitably with any of them, surely that ought to go far to bring about a state of feeling in which this question could be settled by agreement?—I hope it will—I think it is most devoutly to be wished, for a friendly agreement would be the best way to settle the matter.

16448. No matter what may be the feeling of individuals, is it not tolerably certain that when this question comes to an issue the dominant bulk of opinion amongst the shareholders will be governed by the question of price?—Certainly.

16449. Well, now, has any reason been given to-day for the differences between the rates from Waterford to Clonmel and to Kilkenny?—The reason suggested to me is that the competition with the navigable river, the Suir, regulates the rates to Clonmel. I admit myself that competition does exist. The railway company is in a different position there than where it enjoys a practical monopoly. I am rather inclined to suggest that the difference between the rates is entirely unfair to Kilkenny, much too great. I admit there may be a difference. The competition might make a difference. It is all one, for if the railway company don't carry these goods to Clonmel, the river navigation will, and it makes no difference to us in Kilkenny. I suggest if it pays the railway company to carry from Waterford to Clonmel at that rate it would certainly pay from Waterford to Kilkenny on that rate, or a merely raised rate. I also suggest that if they are carrying without a profit or at a loss I am afraid they are making up for the want of profit or for loss by charging Kilkenny.

16450. You admit that the railway may be constrained by sea or by river carriage to reduce its rates to a certain point?—I do.

16451. But then you say the effect of that is the imposition of what you consider excessive rates on towns which have no resources in the way of competition?—Precisely.

16452. Well, some of the differences here are very great. I see that in feeding stuffs, an important article, the difference is 24 per cent.?—24·6.

16453. 24·5?—Yes, in bran and pollard, the difference runs as high as 6*s.* 9*d.*

16454. Wheat, oats, hay, manure, 34?—Each is a staple article in this district.

16455. Would you say a private undertaking constrained by competition to give these low rates in certain cases finds a difficulty in maintaining itself without imposing what appear to be high rates in other cases, but a public authority would be in a better position to take note of the claims and circumstances of different districts?—I hold that a public carrying body like a railway company given certain definite powers by Parliament, and having acquired certain definite statutory rights, never acquired these powers, and it was never contemplated by Parliament when granting them that they should penalise one portion of the country for the benefit of another, and that appears the main objection.

16456. I am rather on the relative freedom of action as between a private company and a public authority. You have shown that you clearly understand the limits within which railway companies work in regard to their dividends and their obligations to the shareholders, but a public authority working

the railways as a unit, and acting under the influence of public opinion would be more likely in measuring its rates to consider what you have stated —namely, that no district should be unduly penalised for the benefit of another?—I certainly think that it is only a public or State authority that could afford to do that very well.

16457. These are questions of arrangement and degree?—Precisely.

16458. And therefore would be properly the subject of judicious administration?—Certainly.

16459. Did you give any evidence upon a suggestion in your proof as to a fixed rate per wagon per mile?—Nothing. I have made no suggestion.

16460. I shall not ask you anything about it. As to the second list of rates—comparison between Kingsbridge and Waterford and Kilkenny, there again you recognise that competition exists in a still more effective form?—Yes.

16461-2. Of course you will admit that a seaport has a natural advantage, of which even the railways cannot deprive it?—I am aware of that. My only regret is that Kilkenny is not a seaport town.

16463. And perhaps you would say that the Railway Company in dealing with a seaport are entitled upon a fair view of their own interests to charge such rates as will not allow the traffic, or the bulk of it, between two points the subject of competition to go by sea and not by land?—Yes, I would be inclined to agree they should be entitled to go a certain distance, the exact point I don't define.

16464. I say again it is a question of degree?—Yes.

16465. You show here that although Kilkenny is thirty miles nearer to Dublin——?—Eighty.

16466. Thirty miles nearer to Dublin than Waterford, although Kilkenny is thirty miles nearer, all the articles included in your statement pay a higher rate?—Almost every one. Every one I believe. All pay a higher rate except coal alone.

16467. For instance, porter is sold both at Kilkenny and Waterford?—It is.

16468. And there are middlemen in the trade, no doubt, who sell the porter to people in the district between?—There are.

16469. Well, if the trader in Waterford can get his porter at 7*s.* 6*d.*, and the trader in Kilkenny has to pay 11*s.* 11*d.*—it is pretty obvious, whatever may be obscure in the matter, that the middleman in Kilkenny, in disposing of that article, stands at a great disadvantage compared with the trader in Waterford, especially in regard to districts between the two?—Yes, and not even the tariff on the old Waterford bridge affected it—the middleman in Waterford having to pay 4*s.* 5*d.* less in the ton on stout was always able to undersell all those middlemen in Kilkenny who dealt with customers that lived in the district between Waterford and Kilkenny, and not even the tariff payable in crossing the old bridge in Waterford was able to give any preference to Kilkenny.

16470. The question, Mr. Kennedy, is one of great difficulty?—Of great difficulty, and one that one would hesitate to give an absolute opinion upon unless one had very full information. In the general line of the thing one can see where certain districts are hit, and hit very hard, by the policy pursued by the railways.

16471. I could anticipate that the railways would say that if they were obliged, or if they agreed to lower the rate to Kilkenny in proportion to the mileage, that the next town behind Kilkenny—between Kilkenny and Dublin—would say that it was prejudiced by the treatment of Kilkenny?—Yes.

16472. And so all the way back to Dublin?—Yes.

16473. And then the railway company would be expected to measure their rates pretty much all the way from Dublin to Kilkenny by the circumstance that there was water competition to Waterford?—I daresay they would. I think that that claim would be made against them whether they would admit it or not.

16474. It would become a question whether they could maintain their solvency under such conditions: but one may go this far, that the circumstance that there is water competition to a certain point, whilst it entitles the railway to protect itself by rates not much higher than the sea rates, yet there should not be created between the competitive point and trading districts near it, such a disparity as amounts to a derangement of trade by the act of a public carrier?—I perfectly agree.

16475. Do you think that consideration would be likely to receive more attention from a public authority dealing with the railways as a whole than it will or can receive from private companies?—From the public authority dealing with the railways as a whole that consideration would be treated with much greater justice.

State ownership and control of Railways the apparent remedy for existing anomalies in rates.

16476. A public authority would be bound to recognise that different districts and different communities have claims to live and thrive, and no doubt they would endeavour, at any rate, in a spirit of sincerity to measure the rates so as to have regard to the circumstances?—I think it is only a public authority that would be able to do that —would be able to take in the claims of the country as a whole and that would be in a position to show it would treat every district fairly. A public authority would not necessarily look for dividends—nothing like for a very high dividend. A public authority, acting as a great company—carrying company—if it is able to pay its working expenses, could make something over and above that to enable them to keep up the railway communication, or, at any rate, to make new lines. I don't think a public authority would act in the same way at all as a private company. A private company is bound by the dividend: a public authority is not.

16477. A railway manager is confronted with the fact that he has had in his last year or half-year a certain net revenue?—Yes.

16478. Capable of providing a certain dividend, and if that railway manager—say, a man of great ability—did attempt to reduce his scale of rates in the hope that after a period more or less indefinite there might be traffic to recoup the loss, do you consider he would be allowed to do it by his board of directors?—I don't think that railway manager would survive very long.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Comparison of rate for porter Waterford and Clonmel and Waterford and Kilkenny.

16479. I should just like to mention a matter in order to get it right on the notes. In regard to the figures on the first page of your evidence you made a slight mistake. However, it may be a clerical error. With regard to the rates for porter carried between Waterford and Clonmel and Waterford and Kilkenny you will find by your figures that instead of there being an increase of 4·72 per cent. on the carriage to Kilkenny, it is really a decrease in the mileage percentage. 3·10 pence per mile from Waterford to Clonmel, and according to your figure it is 2·96 pence to Kilkenny?—I am afraid it is a clerical error.

16480. It should be really 4·51?—4·51.

16481. It is a decrease in favour of Kilkenny, and similarly with regard to coal, that is a clerical error. It should be ·78 instead of 7·81?—Yes.

Effect of sea competition in determining rates.

16482. It is a small error; but it is better get it right on the notes. With regard to the disparity of the rate between Kilkenny and Kingsbridge and Waterford and Kingsbridge, while you admit, as I take it you do, that there must be a difference where sea competition enters into the case you consider that an increase of 120 per cent. in the case of porter and in the case of other goods an increase of 70 and 40 per cent. is unduly high?—Well, I daresay the actual increase is determined by the competition prices of the sea freights and the rates charged by the South-Eastern Railway. Everybody must see that as between merchants in the City of Kilkenny and merchants in the City of Waterford who are dealing with a certain portion of the population existing between these two cities—the merchant in the City of Kilkenny is hit very hard by these rates.

16483. You have a brewing industry of considerable extent?—Two large breweries, which are being extended.

16484. Do they make porter as well as beer?—Yes.

16485. An increase of 120 per cent. must hit them very hard?—It hits them very hard.

16486. You spoke of the declining trade and population of your county; and it is natural that a declining trade and population must affect the earning powers of the railways?—Certainly.

16487. In order that that trade should be developed

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and that the decrease in the population should be arrested, I understood you to say that you considered that it was absolutely essential that there should be some appreciable reduction in the rates and charges at present in force on the Irish railways?—I should say generally, sir, that the local rates in Ireland as compared with the through rates look very high, and as a matter of fact they act as a preference in favour of the producers in outside countries. While the producers and manufacturers in the country inside are hit by these incoming rates, at the same time it is difficult for, say, a manufacturer in Kilkenny or the Queen's County to get a through rate on a complete system of Irish railways up to the North of Ireland. While I recognise that until trade is established the railways themselves may not see their way to give a through rate at the same time if there was a little more pliability, a little more elasticity, a little more consideration for the efforts that have been made in the inland cities to develop manufactures, it would have a very large effect in increasing manufactures.

Necessity for reduced rates to foster industries and arrest decrease in the population.

16488. But the great effect would be obtained by a reduction of the charges?—The great effect would be obtained by a general system that would reduce the charges.

16489. Seeing that the return yielded on all classes of capital in Ireland is under 4 per cent., is it in your opinion reasonable to expect, much less to try and insist, that the railway companies should make such an appreciable reduction as would, on the one hand, benefit the traders, but would probably for some time, for a greater or less period of time, entail considerable loss on the earning powers of the lines, and consequently on the dividends returned to the shareholders?—We have never claimed that, sir.

The obligation of earning reasonable dividends prevents reduction in rates.

16490. You could hardly expect it?—We think, on the contrary, that it would be rather unfair to those who have their money invested in Irish railways that they should be hit so hard for the general benefit without some form of compensation.

16491. Assuming that it is impossible for the railways under their existing system to make these reductions, is not the time approaching when the trade, which has already declined, with the population decreasing as we all know, will still further decline, and when the earning power of the railways, which at present is small, will be still further reduced?—I think we are very close to that time.

16492. Under such circumstances, is not that the strongest argument for the advocacy of some system of State ownership?—It is.

State ownership and control of railways the apparent remedy for existing defects.

16493. A system which could afford to make these reductions, even though for some time it might entail considerable loss?—It is the only solution of the difficulty that I see. I do not see how any private companies or even any leasing out of the railways to private companies—I do not see at all any possibility of their being able to meet that point.

16494. And in addition to the advantages and economies which Mr. Sexton pointed out to you would probably result from a system of State purchase or control, would not the great disparity which you pointed out exists in this very case between Clonmel and Waterford, and Kilkenny and Waterford, owing to the sea competition—would not that disparity practically cease, because in such a case the railway companies being in one hand, while the goods to Clonmel might still go by water, it would not matter so much whether the railway between Clonmel and Waterford carried anything, as it would be practically within the same management as that between Kilkenny and Waterford, and being under one management it would not affect the issue?—Under a system of State management a state of things could never arise by which one portion of the country would be injured for the benefit of another, or by which one portion of the country would be injured in order to make up for the losses that arise from competition in another portion of the country. Take, for instance, the railway between Waterford and Clonmel, they have to meet river competition, and they lower the prices in order to keep the traffic on their own trains. Whether it pays them or not on those figures I cannot say. The railway company are better judges than I can be. I assume at all events that it cannot pay them as well as the rates they charge from Waterford to Kilkenny. Therefore they are making a bigger profit out of the Kilkenny people than they are out of the Clonmel people, and that too although it diverts trade considerably from Kilkenny to Clonmel. Such a system as that in the case of State-owned railways could not arise because it would be the same for them whether they got the traffic by rail or river. I would not affect the question at all.

16495. I think you said you wished to say something with regard to the representation of the minorities on any public authority which might be set up for managing these railways?—Not exactly that, but generally as regards the representation of the minority on the public boards in Ireland. I think the question was raised before by you, sir, in the examination of Mr. Ennis, who represented the Wexford County Council, and if the Chairman has no objection I would like to say one or two words.

16496. *Chairman.*—Say one or two words, but do not be long?—If the matter was correctly reported in the Press, I gathered, at all events, from the Press that Colonel Hutcheson Poë was under the impression that no members of the minority—or at least members of the minority generally in the South of Ireland—have any chance of being elected on the public boards by the other side.

16497. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That was not quite my point. I only said that it was the experience of the country gentlemen of Ireland that since the Local Government Act was passed they had practically been excluded from participation in the public work of their respective counties. I think no one disputes that point. It was in consequence of the evidence given by Mr. Ennis, his direct evidence, where he said that it was perfectly certain that in the event of a Central Authority being set up every class of Irishmen would receive fair representation—it was in consequence of that statement that I ventured to suggest whether the experience of the past few years justified the minority in anticipating that they would receive better treatment for the future; and I was glad to hear that so far as his own opinion was concerned, and he had spoken to other County Councillors, he was quite sure that whatever might have occurred in the past a better state of things would prevail in the future. That was my point?—I can only say that my own experience, whatever it is worth, in the county neighbouring to your own, is that all the county gentlemen of the minority, who have shown an active or warm interest in local matters, and have done a fair share of work for it—that all these men if they care for it, have always found representation on the public boards; and I do not think there is any kind of feeling nowadays on the local boards between class and class as that would seem to suggest. But may I point out that behind all that there is a portion of the minority in Ireland—not the country gentlemen who are all well-educated men and men of the world; there is another class of the minority in Ireland who look upon everything in Ireland and everything done by the majority of the people more or less in a hostile way; they never give credit for anything good that is done; they always take care to point out anything defective or faulty. As long as that attitude remains it will prevent the two classes from coming together and understanding one another. And where they do come together, they learn to understand one another and each discovers that the other is not as bad as he is painted, and they discover that they have a lot of common interests to bring them together. If they can be brought together—and it is going on very much more rapidly than, perhaps, the Press would lead us to suppose—it would be a very good thing for Ireland. There is another question. I understand that there are only two companies in Ireland that manufacture their own rolling stock and locomotives—the Great Southern and Western, and the Great Northern. I am not sure, am I quite correct?

16498. *Mr. Sexton.*—Does not the Midland do something?—They may do something. I am not quite sure. The point I want to get at is that they are prevented by Act of Parliament from manufacturing for other railways, they are confined to manufacturing for themselves.

16499. *Chairman.*—That is not confined to Ireland. Every railway company in England is the same. One railway cannot manufacture for another company. Each can only manufacture for itself?—Yes. This is by Act of Parliament. The circumstances that prevail in England are not always on all fours with those that prevail in Ireland. Here in Ireland we are suffering from a constant and increasing drain of emigration. We have set up a system of technical

schools, trade preparatory schools in which a lot of young Irishmen are being trained as mechanics, and when we have them trained we find a great deal of difficulty in providing employment for them in Ireland, and the consequence is that we are going to a lot of trouble and expense to provide trained workers for other countries. That is a great national loss in many ways. And I believe that large companies like the Great Northern and the Great Southern and Western, in which there is a big capital invested, should get more extended powers in the way of manufacturing for other railway companies in Ireland. It would lead to considerably more employment and help to provide for the products of those technical schools. I cannot believe that the railway companies would object to see an increase of Irish industry of that kind. I am sure they would not.

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Mr. P. J. Kennedy B.A., representative of the Kilkenny Corporation.

16500. *Mr. Sexton.*—That would be one of the questions that would be settled by a public administration of a unified system?—Quite so, sir.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

16501. Do you think it would be fair to treat Kilkenny as a seaport?—I think it would be very generous, Mr. Healy.

Well, then, that is all I ask you.

Chairman.—We are much obliged to you, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. MICHAEL M'NELIS, J.P., examined by THE CHAIRMAN.

16502. You are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

16503. And Clerk to the Rural District Council of Glenties, Co. Donegal?—Yes.

16504. Are you a solicitor?—No.

16505. Are you in business in Glenties?—No, in Ardra.

16506. What business?—General business—grocery and hosiery, and general business.

16507. Do you appear before us in your individual capacity or as Clerk of the Rural District Council?—In my individual capacity.

16508. Have you been authorised by the District Council?—Well, I was authorised since I sent in my evidence. I was not authorised before I sent in my evidence.

16509. Do you speak for the District Council, or speak for yourself?—I speak for myself.

16510. What railway serves your district?—It used to be the Donegal Railway, but it is now the Joint Committee of the Great Northern of Ireland, and the Midland of England.

16511. We have had evidence that that combination has done a great deal of good for your district. Do you agree with that?—They do not seem to have done a great deal of good up to the present.

16512. What have you to complain of?—Well, they have not reduced the rates.

16513. Have they increased them?—Well, they have increased one rate for goods.

16514. Tell us in your own words what have you got to complain of?—There used to be a rate of 6*s.* 8*d.* per ton for herrings from Glenties to Derry, and that rate has been increased to 10*s.* per ton.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—That is not so, sir. That will be cleared up. He is quite mistaken.

Witness.—No; I have paid it myself, and I have asked for a refund and I have not got it.

16515. *Chairman.*—Perhaps it is coming?—I hope so.

16516. When did this transaction take place?—It took place in the beginning of January or the end of December.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—If the gentleman has been overcharged, he will get his money back.

16517. *Chairman (to Witness).*—You hear that?—Yes.

16518. Then you don't want to say another word about it. You are perfectly satisfied now with all your arrangements in the County Donegal?—Yes; we complain of want of through rates.

16519. From where to where?—From Glenties to the principal stations in England, that is, for live stock.

16520. Did you apply for them?—We applied for them under the old Donegal Railway.

Chairman.—The Joint Committee must have been at work now for twelve months.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—This is the reason—we are trying to arrange with the English companies, and in a short time we hope to have the matter completed. We have only recently taken over the line.

16521. *Chairman.*—I need not ask that question. You heard that, and you don't want to say anything further about that?—No.

16522. You are quite satisfied?—Yes, quite satisfied.

16523. You have a long proof with reference to a subject that we have discussed over and over again. I will ask you about it very shortly. Have you considered the question of the purchase of the Irish railways by the State?—Yes.

Mr. Michael M'Nelis, J.P., Clerk of the Glenties Rural District Council.

16524. And do you agree with it?—Yes, I think that it would be for the mutual benefit of the people of Ireland that the railways should be vested in the State.

16525. Have your Council considered the subject?—They have.

16526. Is that their opinion too?—Yes.

16527. Is it pretty generally the view of the district with which you are acquainted?—The district that I am acquainted with is the Rural District of Glenties, which represents a population of about 34,000, and there are fifty-seven representatives on the Board, and I can safely say that we are all of one opinion—that the railways of Ireland should be vested in the State, and should be managed by a committee representative of trade and commerce in Ireland.

State ownership of Irish Railways under an Irish Committee advocated.

16528. And you think that that would tend to the development of industry in Ireland and promote the welfare of the country?—That is the general feeling. There is another matter. I want to mention about the rates. There is a service for fresh fish from Glenties to Glasgow, direct, at 35*s.* per ton. There is a better service from Glenties *via* Belfast and Ardrossan to Glasgow, which would catch the market earlier, and would be very valuable to our part of the country. The people in our part of the country almost entirely depend upon the fishing industry, and if we could get a rate of about 35*s.* or even 37*s.* 6*d.* per ton, we would be quite willing to pay the difference between the two in order to get a better service.

Need of improved facilities for fish traffic to Scotland.

16529. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—That statement is well founded. The fault is not ours. It rests with the steamship companies. We are trying to get Messrs. Burns to agree. There is a long correspondence in progress.

Witness.—It would be an immense boon to the fresh fish industry in our part of the country.

16530. *Chairman.*—Can you give us any idea what amount of fish is sent from Glenties?—I can give you an idea of the amount of money that is paid out for fish in our part of the country—the amount of cash that is paid for herrings. I cannot give you the exact tonnage.

Value of Glenties herring trade and duration of fishing season.

16531. Do they catch anything but herrings?—Chiefly herrings.

16532. Is there a special rate for herrings from Glenties to Glasgow?—Yes.

16533. Not for general fish?—Principally herrings.

16534. That is only a season traffic. Herrings are not caught all the year round?—They are practically caught all the year round along the Donegal coast, because they start in May, and they are caught up to the end of January. There is practically only a close season from January to March.

16535. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—It is only a few months' fishing?—No; it is four months of heavy winter fishing. At present they are being caught in large quantities at Killybegs, and shipped over the Donegal Railway.

Chairman.—That is in course of correspondence, and will probably be arranged.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—We will be very glad to arrange it if Messrs. Burns will come to an understanding with us.

The District Council and the Glenties District in favour of State purchase.

16536. *Chairman (to Witness).*—I asked you your views on State purchase. You say that not only you, but the whole of your district represented on the District Council are in favour of State purchase?—Yes. There is another matter with regard to the

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Donegal railways. The carriages are very badly lighted during the winter, and it is very inconvenient for passengers to have to sit long weary hours on winter nights in darkness.

Chairman.—Surely that is a little matter that can be dealt with by the railway company.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—There is some ground of complaint. We have only just taken the line over. We admit that these things will be arranged after a little time.

Complaint as to rate for hosiery, Glenties to Dublin.

Witness.—There used to be a rate for hosiery *via* Derry, Heysham, and Dublin of 30*s.* per ton; and the rate direct to Dublin *via* Strabane is 38*s.* 9*d.* There seems to be a certain amount of disparity between these two rates.

16537. *Chairman.*—Is that a book rate?—It is a rate that we have paid ourselves. We think that the Great Northern of Ireland and the Joint Committee should be in a position to give us a rate equal to the rate *via* Derry and Heysham to Dublin *via* their direct service.

16538. Have you brought it under their notice?—It has been under their notice in this way that they have given a rebate of 3*s.* 9*d.*

16539. And you have had a rebate?—I didn't get it. Others got it.

16540. Do you mean to say that the rebate is not given to all the people who have that traffic?—No.

16541. Do some people pay more than others?—So it would appear.

16542. Are you speaking from your own knowledge? Yes.

16543. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—Give an instance, Mr. M'Nelis. I am told it is inaccurate?—At any rate the fact remains that the rate *via* Heysham and Derry to Dublin is 30*s.* The rate has been raised since the Joint Committee came in.

16544. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—That is a steamer rate?—It is part railway and part steamer, and the direct rate from Glenties to Dublin is 38*s.* 9*d.*

Chairman.—I don't see the connection between the two.

16545. *Mr. Sexton.*—The route from Glenties to Dublin *via* Derry and Heysham is almost wholly a sea route?—It is.

16546. And the other is entirely a land route?—It is entirely a land route.

16547. Looking at it as a whole you say that the rate to Dublin is too high compared with the other taking into account the different circumstances?—Yes, I think they should give an equal rate of 30*s.* per ton direct.

16548. *Chairman.*—Have you asked the railway company to consider that. Have you brought it under the notice of the railway company?—No, I have not.

16548A. Then we must leave it there.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I don't propose to ask this gentleman anything, seeing that this system has only been recently taken over by the Midland and Great Northern, and that they are now trying to remedy the state of things that he complains of.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

Suggested constitution of the Controlling Body under a system of State ownership.

16549. Would you develop a little your view upon State purchase. I think you said you would like some sort of committee representative of Irish interests?—Yes.

16550. Suppose there was an authority established in Ireland—an elective authority with financial functions and powers, do you think that that would be the proper authority in the case?—Yes, it would; but it would be useful to have some representative of Irish trade and commerce on that committee of management.

16551. Well, it would be a matter of arrangement?—Yes.

16552. It would be within the power of the elective body to associate the representatives of the different interests?—Yes.

16553. And you would be quite satisfied with that?—Yes, quite satisfied with that.

16554. You speak of rates given to some and not to others. Have you any evidence?—No, I have not.

16555. Of course no real weight can be given to statements unless they are sustained by facts. What do you say here about owner's risk?—We find a difficulty in getting any claims from the railway companies for goods sent under the owner's risk rate. I sent some large quantities of salmon to England some two years ago, and I had considerable claims, and I put them before the then Donegal Railway Company, and they refused.

16556. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—This has nothing to do with the present state of facts.

Witness.—They refused on the ground that I had sent them at owner's risk rate, and that consequently they were not liable.

16557. *Mr. Sexton.*—What was the nature of the damage of which you complained?—The fish were not iced.

16558. Had you given instructions on the forwarding note?—Yes, marked on each forwarding note, "to be iced."

16559. Was it because of the want of through booking that the thing was not done?—There was through booking for fish—for salmon; but they held that inasmuch as I had sent at owner's risk rate they were not liable. Of course they say that they gave no undertaking to ice, that it was the Great Northern Company and the Northern Counties Committee and the Midland Railway Company who had given the undertakings to ice. I approached both companies, and the Great Northern agreed to pay portion of their claim, and the Midland didn't pay anything.

16560. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—Are your claims now fairly met?—The Midland portion of it is not met.

16561. *Mr. Sexton.*—What the owner's risk rate note does is to exonerate the company from the results of anything except wilful misconduct on the part of their servants. In this case you say you gave instructions that the salmon should be iced?—Yes.

16562. It seems to be difficult to understand how the owner's risk arrangement could be brought to bear upon the failure to carry out that instruction?—It is their plea of justification.

16563. Do you know that there is a Bill reported from the Grand Committee of the House of Commons to substitute for the words "wilful misconduct" the words "gross negligence" in the owner's risk note. What do you say about canals?—The canal from Strabane to Derry has been very useful in our part of the country.

16564. You found the canal a useful help?—Yes; in getting reduced rates.

16565. You would say, generally, about the canals that even if the railways were unified and managed by the public, the canals would still be very useful for cheap heavy traffic not requiring quick transit?—Yes, certainly.

16566. At lower rates?—At lower rates.

16567. You say the passenger fares are too high?—Yes, they seem to be rather high.

16568. Do you consider that if there was a substantial reduction in the passenger fares there would be a remunerative increase in the passenger traffic in the country?—Oh, yes, I think so.

16569. This goods rate that was raised from Derry to Glenties; was it an increase upon a single kind of goods or upon a whole class?—It was a single class—Donegal herrings—cured herrings.

16570. And we are given to understand that it is now under consideration?—Yes.

16571. Do the railway companies claim the right to give or withhold through rates in any case? Are through rates given or withheld as the railway companies think convenient without reason assigned?—They do not assign any reason for not giving us through rates on live stock, or at least they did not assign any reasons.

16572. Do you consider that there is any reason why through rates should be withheld?—No, I don't. There is a considerable amount of traffic.

16573. Is there a considerable amount of traffic for which you ask a through rate?—Yes.

16574. And where there is a substantial amount of traffic you think a through rate should be given, as a matter of course?—Yes.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The witness is under a mistake with regard to a few points. We will have a few points cleared up.

Mr. W. T. GREEN examined by the CHAIRMAN.

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Mr. W. T. Green, President of the Incorporated Chamber of Shipping and Commerce, Cork, and Harbour Commissioner.

16575. Mr. Green, I think you are connected with the Incorporated Chamber of Shipping and Commerce of Cork?—Yes, sir. I am President for this year of that body. I have also been President twice previously, and before that I was Honorary Secretary for ten years; so I have some acquaintance with the subject.

16576. Are you a Harbour Commissioner?—I am also a Cork Harbour Commissioner.

16577. Then you are identified generally with the trade and commerce of Cork?—That is so, and personally also.

16578. Now, your Council have had under consideration the question of the working of the Irish railways?—Yes.

16579. They have passed a resolution on the subject?—Yes; they have considered the matter carefully. I have not brought the text of the resolution, but I can give you the complete substance of it. The Council of this Chamber, as a body, have become quite convinced on the point on which we believe that the Commission has already had sufficient evidence. We do not wish to take up their time by repeating the evidence that has been given by other witnesses, or giving exactly similar cases. But we take it that the Commission must be convinced as we are that the cost of moving Irish produce to the seaboard for export, and from one part of the country to another, as also the cost of moving from the ports to the interior the grain, flour, coal, and other necessaries, are, on the whole and on the average so high, as to constitute a serious impediment to the prosperity of the country. Our Council have considered the matter as carefully as possible before they have arrived at that conclusion.

16580. Would you tell us just for information what does your Council consist of?—Our Council consists of twenty-six members of the Chamber of Commerce, including an honorary secretary and an honorary treasurer. Our Council consists of representatives of all the important wholesale firms in Cork and the district immediately surrounding it—the usual constitution of a Chamber of Commerce.

16581. In other words, they are identified practically with trade themselves?—Entirely. They represent every branch of any importance in the country. They have become so strongly convinced on this point that although they know that there are a great number of special grievances under the existing system such as have been brought up by other bodies, they really consider all these of small importance in comparison with the great question of how that general excess of rates can be rectified. They think they are reasonable business men with some knowledge of the country and the railways, and they are convinced that under the present system of individual railways, or even under one joint company, as long as that was worked solely or chiefly for profit, as it would be, it would be impossible to make much improvement. To develop traffic properly in this country we think such reductions are necessary, as no company could afford to make in justice to its shareholders, but which, we think, the State might very fairly make, in the belief that an absence of adequate profit, or even, if necessary, a small loss, at the beginning would be compensated for afterwards, not only in increased prosperity for the country, but probably also, as happened in other places, in increased railway receipts. The more my Council have considered the matter, the more certain have they felt that any remedy short of State purchase would be merely tinkering with the question. We assume that you have already had quite sufficient evidence that the movement of traffic in Ireland is hampered by excessive rates, and that the rates in Ireland, on the whole, are unduly high as compared with those of other countries, with whose produce Irish produce has to compete in the markets of England, and sometimes even in our own markets. We do not want to waste the time of the Commission by repeating instances brought forward by other witnesses, nor by producing just similar instances; neither do we think it necessary to furnish to a Commission of railway experts, like you, gentlemen, particulars with which you are doubtless better acquainted than we are, as to the cheaper rates and greater facilities enjoyed in various countries with State-managed railways, like Belgium, Sweden, Austria-Hungary, the Indian Empire, and many others. We merely wish to say that we have not arrived at our opinion as regards Ireland without considering as much evidence as we were able to procure as to what happened in countries comparing, or competing in any way, with Ireland. We hear it said of Belgium that the Government always treated the question of earning a profit as a measure for lowering rates and fares and increasing facilities for trading. You cannot expect private companies, nor an amalgamation of private companies, to look at it in that light. Of course, we know, but you know better than we do, that the passenger rates in Ireland are most excessive in comparison with other countries, and all traders know that the man who cannot move about freely at reasonable rates can neither dispose of his produce to the best advantage, nor procure what he must buy on advantageous terms. These statements seem like platitudes, but such platitudes seem to require a great deal of repetition. As to the question of savings that might be effected under State ownership in the immense number of directors, officials, and multiplication of management expenses, I am sure the Commission have already had plenty of evidence. These savings no doubt would enable reductions to be made, but, as we think, not nearly sufficient. That is why we think an amalgamation of all the companies would be only a small improvement on the present system. Such an amalgamation would still work to make all the immediate profit it could for its shareholders. Its general manager would still look upon all traffic from the point of view of how much the traffic would bear, that is, how much may be squeezed out of it without killing it. altogether. This is the principle upon which, we believe, speaking generally, the railways have always been worked, and it is a natural and inevitable principle.

State ownership of the Irish railways to develop the industries of the country urged on behalf of the Chamber.

16582. I understood you to make a remark about the company's maximum powers, beyond which they could not go?—I don't think that maximum rate is a fair rate, but we do not wish by any means to make a general indictment against the Irish railway companies. The same state of things exists in England, and the people there we know suffer greatly from what they in some parts consider high railway rates, and the action of the companies. But England generally is so rich and prosperous that she can bear up against and even prosper under conditions which weigh so heavily upon Ireland, a poor country with no coal or iron, and in the South at all events depending upon agriculture and a few little manufactures.

The maximum rates as authorised by the Act considered unfair.

16583. May I ask this. You have impresed this upon us very clearly. Do you represent in that evidence the opinion of the Council, or are they your views; do their views correspond to yours?—Yes, my views and the views of the Council are these, and we are practically unanimous. They considered this evidence at various meetings, and having discussed it fully, we were practically unanimous.

16584. You have, of course, noticed that in recent years English railway companies have taken an interest in certain districts in Ireland?—Quite so.

16585. Do you look upon that with favour?—No, sir. On the whole we don't look upon it with favour, and in Cork more especially. In Cork perhaps we have more reason to come to the conclusion, and we do feel the need of one broad and general impartial management such as we think might be expected under State ownership, more perhaps than it is felt elsewhere, owing to our peculiar position. We are down there, in the South of Ireland, in a corner of Ireland with practically one connection with the rest of the world, that is the Great Southern and Western. Two or three times there seemed a prospect of an effective competing route, but since the Dungarvan and Waterford line was acquired by the Great Southern this chance has gone. But even if there were competing companies I am afraid these competing companies would probably soon come to an agreement about the traffic. Still competition would have been welcome in Cork as possibly they might in some instances have been better served as regards a matter that has long been ventilated—the want of wagons for traffic. In some periods of the year Cork has suffered extremely from this. We have often had to point out to the Great Southern and Western the serious want of wagons. Orders have been cancelled from this cause,

The influence of English railway companies in the management of Irish railways considered a disadvantage to Ireland.

Frequent scarcity of wagons at Cork a source of loss to traders.

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Mr W. T. Green, President of the Incorporated Chamber of Shipping and Commerce, Cork, and Harbour Commissioner.

and steamers would not charter to Cork, except at excessive freights. The company has replied that it is doing its best with the resources at its command, and we have no reason to doubt that it is the fact, but it is not much satisfaction for the loss of our small trade. Also there is a strong feeling in Cork that Cork is not fairly treated in regard to traffic as compared for instance with Dublin. Here I would like to say that a witness who had this matter in hand cannot be here. I have some instances of it, and there were others, which he intended to bring forward, and which were put down upon the precis of the evidence which was to have been given by Alderman Dale on behalf of the Chamber. Unfortunately he is ill, and unable to come up to-day.

16586. *Mr. Sexton.*—Will he come later?—He is willing to come later if you require it, and he is also willing that I should mention these points which he was to make; they are not very numerous; in addition to those I was asked to bring forward originally. The reason I mention it at this point is that these are bearing upon the question of favouring Dublin as compared with Cork, which were to have been brought forward by him.

16587. *Chairman.*—Supposing we begin with your own proof, some of the rates included in that relate to that question?—Not on that point.

Complaint as to preferential cross-Channel through rates.

16588. Well, on that point can you just give a few instances to explain what you want to bring forward?—Quite so. We also considered that as the result of the increasing influence of the English companies in Irish railway affairs there is an unreasonable and unfair disproportion in favour of through rates as against local rates. That is one point on which there is a general and strong feeling in Cork, although, in some cases, there is a certain justification on the part of the railway company. Take, for instance, the rates for flour from Liverpool to Tralee compared with Cork.

Flour rate, Liverpool and Tralee, instanced.

16589. *Chairman.*—That is an old story?—It has a great deal of effect upon the traffic. Although an old story it is a very hard story on behalf of those Irish millers who have kept the industry going there under very great disadvantages. They have to bring wheat into Cork, and grind wheat in Cork, and send flour on to Tralee. They have to pay more for the wheat, a great deal more than Liverpool, and if the industry is to have a chance in the South of Ireland the rates from Cork should be sufficiently low to give it a chance. The rate from Cork is not a fair one, and in justice to Cork and to the Irish milling trade they should have a fair rate to a place like Tralee.

16590. Will you mention the figures?—Liverpool to Tralee for flour, 10*s.* a ton. That is 365 miles, and works out at ·33*d.* per mile.

16591. That is all by water, is it?—Oh, no; Liverpool to Tralee, *via* Cork. Cork to Tralee, 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton, 82 miles, 1·1*d.* per mile.

16592. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—The steamer carries it for 8*s.* a ton the whole way?—Of course we are quite aware the steamer carries it, and that accounts for so low a rate. But it is very low, and we have considered that we must bring it forward as a great hardship upon Cork. Another of these is Liverpool and Fermoy, 16*s.* 6*d.* a ton; Cork and Fermoy, 4*s.* 2*d.* Liverpool to Charleville is 15*s.* 10*d.*; Cork to Charleville, 5*s.*

Private arrangements between railway and shipping companies as to certain fixed rates condemned.

16593. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—That is the differential?—My impression of this, and it is the experience of the Council, that it is owing to some private arrangement between the railway and shipping companies by which traders are deprived to some extent of the advantages they would otherwise gain by competitive rates. It was brought forward by one of our members, Mr. Dynan, who is managing director of Eustace and Company, one of the largest timber merchants outside of Dublin.

16594. *Chairman.*—This bears upon the particular point. You had better read that. Do you know the date of that?—I don't know the date, but it came into my possession within the last couple of months.

16595. Then we will take it as recent?—(*Reads*). "There is also another grievance which I think most materially affects the trade of Cork, that is a combination of fixed rates which undoubtedly exists between the Great Southern and Western and the Clyde Shipping Company. Take Waterford, which is within easy reach of cross-Channel ports, from which its supplies are largely had. Quite recently my firm had an order for 100 tons of goods for delivery there."

16596. From Cork?—From Cork he meant. (*Reads*). "The rail freight is 10*s.*, and by the Clyde steamer 8*s.* After considerable negotiation they simultaneously reduced their rates by 12½ per cent. The 8*s.* Clyde rates, when you add the loading and unloading charges, etc., is about equal to the rail freight. If genuine competition existed between these two companies a larger trade might be secured to Cork, with a corresponding increase of traffic to the carrying companies."

16597. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—They complain that we reduced our rates?—I think that owing to the recent railway amalgamations in the South of Ireland, Cork is, under the present arrangement, permanently deprived of any prospect of lower rates through any system competing with the Great Southern Company whatever chance they had previously. That, of course is another strong reason in favour of State ownership in Ireland.

16598. *Chairman.*—Surely, in the interests of trade, granting that the Great Southern Company does make an arrangement with these carrying companies, these rates being fixed, put the whole of the parties in the same position—one is not unduly favoured at the expense of another?—We should not advocate that any of the parties should be unduly favoured. We fancy that if there was free competition, without an arrangement previously made between the railway company and the shipping company, we, that is the traders, might get some benefit out of that competition.

16599. All the traders; some traders might. Would it not be better for the trade of the district if an arrangement is made whereby rates are fixed?—I am speaking of reasonable rates.

16600. Would it not be better that the traders should really know what the rates are? That must be an advantage. The only thing is whether the rates are reasonable?—That is my point. It would if they were low enough. We think they are too high. We want them fixed generally.

16601. I don't think they could put them too low for you?—

16602. *Mr. Sexton.*—He says the rates are too high?—They have agreed upon a rate to suit themselves, not for the benefit of the trader.

16603. *Chairman.*—Maximum powers are fixed, and the company has to fix reasonable rates within the maximum?—If we were all agreed that the rates fixed by Parliament are fair and reasonable, it appears to me very little use for any of us coming to this Commission.

16604. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—You asked for a Commission to fix the rates. We fought for the Cork differential for you, and we succeeded?—Of course, that is quite right.

16605. *Chairman.*—At any rate, you don't come here to put forward any particular grievance?—We don't come here to attack them.

16606. What you did say, very emphatically and clearly, was this—In your judgment and the judgment of your Council representing the principal merchants of Cork, you are all strongly in favour of the railway companies being purchased by the State?—That is so.

16607. And being under State control?—Yes.

16608. The details of which, I suppose, you have not gone into?—Yes. On the complaints of rates I have some more instances. These refer to the general question of rates. I personally am a member of a firm engaged in the importation of foreign grain into Cork and its distribution into the districts naturally supplied from Cork. A short time ago we wanted to send some maize from Cork to Kilrush.

16609. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—Sea competition again?—Maize is the cheapest feeding grain, and is used largely in Ireland for feeding cattle and pigs. We inquired from the Great Southern and Western Company what it would cost to send it from Cork, and this was the reply. (*Reads*)—"March 13, 1907.—Dear Sir,—In reply to yours of this date, our rate for above in wagon loads at owner's risk, loading and unloading, *via* Ennis, is 12*s.* 11*d.* per ton. There is no through rate *via* Limerick and steamer to Kilrush in force, but if consignment is handed to us, and no particular steamship company mentioned to Kilrush, we will forward *via* Limerick, and only charge at rate in operation *via* Ennis." They would send it first by rail to Limerick, and then by the small boat to Kilrush, but we were only charged at

the same rate by either of these two high-class competitive routes which you may see on this map. This maize had just come to us from the Danube, and on getting this letter I sent for the bill of lading for the steamer, and I found the freight from the Danube to Cork was 8*s.* per ton. I recognise that this rate is by water. Still, is it not absurd.

16610. What are the distances?—One way it is about 80 miles—the other 60 miles or so.

16611. Is there not a change to a narrow gauge line?—By rail it is a good way round. The railway company by this arrangement would have made use of the little boat from Limerick. They would have taken it all round the country, and charged it on the narrow gauge at 12*s.* 11*d.* a ton. But because they felt obliged to charge that they have cornered, so to speak, this little boat, have taken Limerick into competition, and still charge 12*s.* 10*d.* a ton.

16612. What is the Clyde Shipping Company's charge for taking it round?—They don't go by steamer from Cork to Kilrush.

16613. What is the local rate to Limerick?—5*s.* a ton for 50 ton loads.

16614. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—What was the amount of tonnage from the Danube?—4,000 tons. Of course, every trader is aware that the steamer rate is not a fair test of competition. But I simply mention this to the Commission to show that it is discouraging to find this extreme discrepancy. I say it is very startling—8*s.* from the Danube and 12*s.* for a little bit of Ireland.

16615. *Chairman.*—Was it 4,000 tons landed at Cork?—Yes; the whole of the cargo. Something like 100,000 tons of maize are landed per year in Cork on the average.

16616. It is the principal port for maize—Cork?—It is brought into all the ports. Cork is one of a number of ports for maize.

16617. The date is 13th March this year?—Yes, the other day.

16618. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—You paid £1,300 for the freight. I think it was a very good thing for them?—The other case was this—flour milling.

16619. *Chairman.*—Flour milling has been brought before us, and we thought it was rather successful?—It has survived in spite of competition with American flour and English flour, and there has been made in the ports, more especially about Cork, a brave stand, and is carried on with fair success at present, but the small mills in the interior of the country have had to shut up everywhere. They depended upon a local supply of wheat which it no longer pays the farmer to grow in Ireland, and they could not afford to bring all their wheat from the ports. Well, a small mill of this kind existed at Croom, on the way from Cork to Limerick. Lately an enterprising trader in Limerick took up this mill again, seeing some chance of working it successfully. To do so he would have to draw some of his wheat supplies from Cork. The railway rate from Cork to Limerick, passing Croom on the way, is 5*s.* per ton in 50 ton lots. He asked for a rate from Cork to Croom of 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*, which would have been fair in proportion. He came to Dublin, saw Mr. Neale specially upon the point, but the company would not grant him a lower rate than 5*s.* 9*d.* to Croom.

16620. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—We would be charged with giving an undue preference to Limerick as against Cork?—It is not giving him a fair chance. It is not the way to revive the languishnig industries of the country.

16621. *Chairman.*—What is the distance?—About 50 miles; Limerick is 62 miles. It must be ten or twelve miles outside Limerick.

16622. That is, ten or twelve miles shorter than Limerick?—It is about that. I believe, although for this case there may be some reasons, that if there was a general State authority which wanted to try and revive the industries, as it undoubtedly would try, it would give a chance in such a case. I may say this, if you will allow me, that I am personally acquainted with the business, and it struck me as it did persons acquainted with other Irish industries in the neighbourhood of Cork in this way, because in other cases the management of the Great Southern and Western, the goods manager, has undoubtedly done everything possible that he could for these industries to give them a fair chance, and has given them fair rates in connection with other industries coming in.

16623. About this particular case, if he was able to get a rate of 4*s.* 6*d.* could this mill have been re-established?—It depended a good deal on that whether it could be successfully re-established. I think it would have had a better chance of progressing. There is no chance without a large import of wheat and competitive rates from the ports to the mills. This man has been partly induced to take it up on account of the movement in favour of home industry, and through that he might get a little better price.

16624. Where a mill is successful is where the work is carried on near the ports?—Broadly. But there are other cases.

16625. In Belfast it is very prosperous—what about Belfast?—I think you will find that the industry in Cork is better than in any other part of Ireland, and on the whole better than Belfast.

16626. *Mr. Healy, K.C.*—Maize goes into Limerick practically by the same rate as Cork. It is twelve miles from Limerick to Croom. We charge 2*s.* 3*d.* If we give Croom a cheaper rate from Cork than Limerick they would take us before the Commission. They have in another case?—We don't suggest a cheaper rate. We suggest 4*s.* 6*d.* against 2*s.* 3*d.* The rates must be proportionate to be fair. I think that would be considered fair, on the basis of the 5*s.* from Limerick to Cork.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The sea—Waterford competition.

16627. *Chairman.*—I think you have anticipated what you intended to say upon the great general question, and you have explained why you wished to bring before us these details of rates?—We really do not regard these details as part of the great question, because we think that any reduction they could possibly make would do nothing compared with the general question.

The majority of Cork traders in favour of State purchase of the railways.

16628. Independent of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce, can you tell us whether there is a general feeling in your district in favour of what you have been advocating—State purchase?—I think so. It was brought before the Council of twenty-six members, and the resolution was passed in favour of this Chamber appearing before the Commission to give evidence in favour of State purchase. It was brought forward in a general meeting, at which most of the representative traders of Cork attended, and there was not a dissentient voice. And I think there would be very few dissentients in the country if you take the people who have troubled to look into it. Outside of these there are many personally interested, for some reason or other, who object to it. But there are very few who won't be in favour of it there, and those who have not had time or inclination to consider its effect upon the conditions of the country and its requirements.

16629. The people with commercial interests are all in favour of it?—Certainly.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

The relation of maximum rates to the actual rates charged.

16630. You have been asked as to the maximum rates, whether they are fair and reasonable. We must ask ourselves what they were meant for. Were they meant for application to ordinary circumstances? You can hardly answer the other question without considering what they were meant for, can you?—No.

16631. We know that the companies, or some of them, endeavoured in 1893 to raise the actual rates to the maximum, and they were restrained by statute?—Yes.

16632. And we know that a rate, even if it is below the maximum rate, can be impeached before the Railway Commission if it is higher than the rate was in 1892——

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I am instructed that the Irish companies made no such attempt.

Mr. Sexton.—I did not say the Irish companies made any such attempt.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—This is an Irish inquiry.

Mr. Sexton.—The maximum rates apply to the two countries.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I thought we were in Ireland. We have sins enough of our own to answer for without bearing the sins of others.

Mr. Sexton.—The system of maximum rates applies to both countries, and they form part of the same system in English and Irish legislation.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—But this is an Irish inquiry.

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16633. *Mr. Sexton.*—At any rate, it bears upon the question in this way, that the companies, whether British or Irish, were not allowed to raise the rates to the maximum rates, and that proves that these rates were not intended for ordinary use. I was passing on to say that a rate may be impeached before the Railway Commission, even though it is below the maximum, if it is higher than it was in 1892. Are you aware of that?—I believe so.

16634. Well, then, these maximum rates in England or in Ireland were devised after long inquiry and investigation, and enacted by a very elaborate system of statutes, and we would infer from that that they were intended to continue for a long time in force—not to be soon or easily altered?—I have not considered that question.

16635. At any rate, would you say they are intended to include a margin of charge so that they might continue to be applicable under extreme circumstances?—Yes.

16636. Suppose there was a coal famine, or a great strike of workmen, or anything which would put the railway companies in straits; you said you thought these maximum rates would be intended to apply in such cases, because they could not be exceeded. Hence they could not have been intended for use in ordinary circumstances?—That is the view usually taken by traders.

16637. You, I believe, attribute the unfavourable effect upon Irish industries of the proportion between through rates into Ireland and local rates in Ireland to the influence of the English companies?—Partly.

Disapproval of the acquisition of Irish lines by English railway companies.

16638. Are you opposed to the purchase of Irish lines by the English companies?—Yes.

16639. An English company not owning an Irish line has, in a through rate, an interest, limited, of course, by the proportion of its mileage; it is not receiving revenue from the Irish mileage. An English company which buys an Irish line, testing the matter on ordinary commercial principles, would have an additional motive for desiring to limit the growth of Irish industry. It would have both the English and Irish mileage upon such goods as it might import into Ireland from England?—That is so.

16640. We have seen that when an English company buys an Irish line it not only endeavours to stimulate the traffic from England into Ireland, but to direct the traffic by its own particular Irish line?—Certainly.

16641. And if the purchase of Irish lines by English companies continued, and by the operation of commercial principles the import of English goods into this country was stimulated, the production of Irish goods must be discouraged—do you think that would leave any real chance for the development of Irish industries?—No.

16642. Would you say that one effect of a number of private railways existing is to lead to the enactment of a number of statutes, public and private, containing clauses for the protection of interests, which complicate the law?—Undoubtedly.

Private lines burdened with heavy Parliamentary and legal costs under present system.

16643. You have seen a case lately in which a tribunal was occupied for weeks at great cost in the investigation of questions between companies, which the judges confessed to be of extreme difficulty?—Yes; I said that in some cases it leads to the increase of the burden of Parliamentary costs on small Irish lines which, perhaps, eventually must be added to the capital and require extra rates in some cases to pay for this extra large amount of costs for which no permanent value is received.

16644. Under public ownership the railway legislation would be a matter that would be conducted by public Bills without expense?—Yes.

16645. In the case to which I have referred it has been necessary, after elaborate argument by the ablest counsel, to reserve judgment for a month?—So I have seen.

16646. In order that the questions at issue might be considered?—Yes.

Advantages arising from uniformity in rates and facilities under State control

16647. I see a note in your reference to public administration to the effect that the questions involved in the management of transit are comparatively simple?—Yes; they could be easily carried on on fixed principles like the Post Office in these countries.

16648. A public authority knows what it may do, and the trader knows what he may claim or expect. That would be a great advantage?—Certainly.

16649. You have said that having regard to the economic condition of Ireland, the lowest possible rates of transit are essential?—Yes.

16650. And your Chamber consider that the effect upon the staple industries of Ireland, the agriculturaland pastoral industries, is really one of comparison of through rates outward to Great Britain and the rates from competing countries on the Continent?—They have taken that into consideration.

16551. The exports from those countries to Great Britain have enormously increased in recent years, and those of Ireland have in some cases declined?—Yes.

16652. Is it not vital to Ireland, and, looking at her position in regard to England, has she not a right to expect to be able to retain a share of that supply to England?—That is our strong opinion.

16653. Essential to her interest that she should?—We think so.

16654. If this country could supply England even with a minor share of what is now supplied by these Continental competitors, would it not contribute greatly to make this a prosperous country?—Undoubtedly.

16655. We have heard from a witness that these outward rates require in many cases to be reduced by from one-third to one-half. That applies to many rates from different parts of Ireland. Would you infer that the financial scope of the question is large?—I think that applies almost to the whole, and on the average.

16656. Does the staple traffic from Ireland outward to England supply a large part of the revenue of the Irish railways?—I should say so. I don't know what proportion.

16657. Nor I. It would be a large proportion. The requisite reductions upon so large a part of the revenue would have to be a large sum?—Yes.

16658. Then the effect of the through rates inward from England cobined with the higher local rates has been to repress the development of home industry?—Undoubtedly.

16659. It is not so much the amount of the rate, whether inward or outward, but the comparison between the rate and what it competes with—between the outward rate and the rate from the Continent, and the inward rate and the local Irish rate. If we consider that the amount of the imports into Ireland is over fifty millions a year, and that these low through rates—low relatively to the inland rates—apply to the rest of that traffic. It is perfectly obvious that the required reduction would mean a very large sum per annum. So that in order to meet the claims of public opinion, as expressed in the evidence here, it would be necessary, for a time at least, to devote a very considerable part of the present Irish railway revenue to effecting these reductions?—I think so.

16660. Now, Mr. Green, will you consider for a moment the finances of the railway companies. Their annual net revenue, speaking broadly, is something over one and a half millions per annum. We know that the ordinary capital is about fourteen millions, and we know the average rate of dividend upon it, and it follows that the ordinary dividends take about half a million of the net revenue. Do you think that any adequate impression could be made upon the system of rates by a less reduction than about half a million. Their total traffic receipts are four millions. Do you think that this question of the rates outward and the high inland rates could be amended in any sufficient manner by the concession of less than half a million off the rates?—Half a million off four millions would hardly be an adequate concession.

16661. Of course the through rates inward would require no reduction. It is the through rates outward and the inland rates that repress the development of industry and would require reduction. That is only part, and half a million would make a good beginning?—Probably.

16662. In order to make that beginning the railway companies would have, for a time, and pending the development, broadly speaking, to sacrifice the ordinary dividends?—Yes.

16663. Could they be expected to do anything of the kind?—Certainly not.

16664. Would it be a practicable proposal to suggest that they should be obliged to anything of the kind?—Quite impracticable.

16665. Does it not seem, therefore, that this question is determinable upon large considerations?—These are the views I gave.

16666. Not upon minute points of argument?—Entirely so.

16667. If the railway companies cannot do it, how is it to be done?—It may be said by means of a subvention from public funds to the railway companies, but do you think that in the present development of local government such a proposal as that would be entertained?—I think not.

16668. You may pay money away, but the return would be questionable; for instance, there would be nothing to prevent a further reduction of the through rates inward which might counteract the effect of the subvention you were giving for reduction of local rates?—Quite so.

16669. Would you say that the only practicable system would be to buy the lines, and instead of laying a burden upon the public taxes for the purpose of making the reduction, procure it by the savings through purchase, and the great and various economies of working which would be thereby secured?—Very well secured.

16670. In one case there would have to be a subvention from the public purse. In the other case the economies would produce the necessary fund?—The economies would perhaps be sufficient to make a beginning. It is the only practicable means to try. It is quite possible that the State at the outset should be willing, in view of the state of the country, to work the railways without a profit for a short time, if it were convinced that there might be some hope of recoupment. In Austro-Hungary the State set out expecting to make a loss, but the first year they were agreeably disappointed. I wish we were warranted in making a similar estimate. But we would be warranted in hoping that the proportion of the loss would be turned into an adequate profit in time.

16671. Let the saving by purchase be what it may, there would be a large saving, certainly, from the economy of working and the relief from such charges as Parliamentary costs. You would at the outset have provided a fund, even if it might be inadequate, a substantial fund by which the policy of the reduction of rates could be at least initiated. Then the public might judge by experience what would be the proper measure of reductions?—Yes.

16672. I mean they could judge by results, whether they would be content merely to allow the economy to operate in reduction, or make the larger venture, and look to the future to repay?—That would be a good idea.

16673. As to the form of management, considering the circumstances which you have detailed in your evidence, do you think an Imperial Department could really be expected to deal with this question as it requires?—I think they might at first, at all events. Our idea is that the original purchase ought to be by the British or Imperial State, inasmuch as it might be reasonably expected that they could buy the railways on more economical terms on account of their stronger financial position. But, this matter has not been gone into by my Chamber, and personally I see no reason when the arrangements have been made, why they might not devolve it on a local authority, provided always, that there were railway experts at the head of it, with full powers responsible to Parliament, or some Parliament, for the rates that they were to make. We presume that if the Government bought these railways that they would have the most careful inquiries made into the various systems of management of State-owned railways in foreign countries, as well as India and the British Colonies, and that they would apply to Ireland the system which they found best calculated to develop the traffic of a poor country, taking broad and liberal views as to the necessity for an immediate return on the capital invested. We are convinced that in that way it might result in great benefit to this country. Beyond that we have not thought it within our province to discuss the details or management, or how it might be done.

16674. So far as the question of the efficient working of the system is concerned I think there is no dispute that it should be committed to the hands of a body of practical experts?—That is our idea.

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Constitution of the Irish Controlling Body under State ownership.

16675. Beyond and above that, having regard to the nature of the grievances and needs that require attention and amendment, would you say the most hopeful form of control would be one amenable to Irish public interest and opinion?—I should think it should be amenable to Irish public opinion and interest, but whether the working should be entirely committed to a local Irish body to start with I am not in a position to say.

16676. Well, if you assume that an Irish authority is established with financial resources and that much of the work now done by Imperial departments were committed to that authority, would it not be anomalous that the work of the Irish railways should remain in extern hands, if so much of the work of the country were confided to the Home authority?—Well, it might, but I think we are almost bound to see the work of the country confided largely to the Home authority before we say that the work of the railways should be committed to a similar authority. I don't like to give my individual opinions on any of these matters, for I may say that everything I have said so far expresses, I know, the opinion of the body that I am here to represent, and this body has never considered the matter so far from the point of view of State purchase and of subsequently examining into the question of the exact control of these railways. I go so far with you as to say that it would be impossible to have a management that would properly develop the traffic of Ireland without its being worked by people who were not only experts, but who either of themselves or by instructions were also disposed to be entirely sympathetic as to the needs of the country.

16677. Of course the most effective operation of the opinion of the country would be found in an elective body responsible to the country?—No doubt.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

16678. It has been urged as an argument against State ownership of railways that as a consequence of it all competition would cease, and that traders would be injuriously affected by the absence of competition. Is it your experience that owing to the understanding or agreements which are more or less arrived at by the carrying companies of this country that competition, even where it is supposed to exist is really more apparent than real?—I think that that is so, undoubtedly. I think that the argument that there would be an absence of competition if the railway companies were owned and managed by the State is of no weight whatever, because I think that it would be the business of the State to make such rates as they consider would develop the traffic of the country, and to make them in an impartial manner which we consider an important matter for all parts of the country, and I see no more reason why the absence of competition should be urged by traders as an argument against State purchase than I see why the absence of competition should be used by traders against the working of the Post Office, for instance, by the Government.

16679. In other words, where the State owns the railway lines presumably the first and primary object would be to develop the country by largely reducing the rates and charges, and the necessity for competition would cease?—Undoubtedly. Whatever body were to control the railways would certainly be amenable to the public opinion of this country, and possibly also to England, and I think that that would be sufficient, as it is sufficient in the case of the Post Office. I think that that is an absolutely parallel case so far as competition goes. Nobody says there should be competition with the Post Office in order to get cheaper postage or telegrams because they feel that sufficient public opinion can be brought to bear on the Post Office authorities, so that they are bound if they have a revenue to reduce the rates sufficiently, and to give sufficient facilities, and it seems to me that the same argument would apply to railways.

The absence of competition not an objection to State purchase in the matter of rates.

16680. Your Chamber of Commerce did not entertain any objection to State purchase on these grounds?—We think these grounds have no weight.

16681. I understood you to say that the Chamber of Commerce did not consider the exact form that the

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administration of the State railways, assuming that they are purchased by the State, should take?—No, we don't consider that we have a machinery to deal with and consider that properly, and we think that the proper people to consider it, assuming that there is State purchase, are the Government of the country.

16682. Do I understand that they contemplated, after State purchase, an administration by an Irish Government department somewhat analogous to one of the departments at present n the country?—They consider the management might be made similar to, or modelled on some of the various systems of State railways of which they have seen accounts as to the working in other countries. In Germany, I understand, there is one head of a department over each, and a body of twenty-one experts to arrange the traffic in the different parts of the country, and they have seen the systems in Belgium, Switzerland, and India, and the places where railways are satisfactorily managed by the States, and they would assume that whatever Government arranged to purchase the railways would endeavour to get the best possible means of management, and they don't think that a body like ourselves should be called on to put forward any scheme.

16683. But, at the same time, what I wish to ascertain is whether your Chamber of Commerce had excluded the possibility of the State being prepared to hand over the administration of the railways, assuming that some radical change is brought about as the result of this Commission, whether it would exclude the possibility of the State being prepared to hand them over to some local or national authority?—I can't say that my Chamber of Commerce has considered the subject at all.

16684. They have not taken up the position that they would only be satisfied if the administration was in the hands of a Government department?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

16685. Is there any difficulty about giving us the text of the resolution?—None whatever.

16686. You were asked if you object to the purchase of railways in Ireland by English companies: can you point to any outburst in the Press or Parliament in reference to the recent purchase by the Midland Company of England of a large Irish railway company?—No. I am afraid my knowledge is extremely local, and I am not concerned myself with what happens in the North of Ireland.

Alderman B. COLLERY, of Sligo, examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Alderman B. Collery, High Sheriff, County Sligo, and representative of the Sligo County Council.

16687. I believe you are the High Sheriff of the County of Sligo?—Yes, sir.

16688. And you appear on behalf of the Sligo County Council?—Yes.

16689. Are you a member of the County Council?—I am.

16690. And you are thoroughly acquainted, at any rate, with the railway accommodation at Sligo?—Well, pretty thoroughly acquainted with it, sir.

16691. Now, do you appear here to make any general complaint against the railway company?—Not exactly, sir; not exactly to make complaints, but to give evidence that I think myself there is room for improvement in the railway system in connection with Sligo, and in connection with the country altogether. As to railway extension, of course——

16692. That is another question. Speaking of the existing railway and the accommodation afforded by that railway?—Yes.

Complaint as to rates for "smalls."

16693. You are of opinion, I think, that for small consignments of goods the rates are excessive?—That is one of the complaints, of course, in connection with the railway system; the charges upon small goods to small traders are excessive.

16694. Excessive as compared with what?—Well, what I mean by that is as compared with the larger quantities, for instance, taken altogether that the charges upon goods in small quantities that small traders have to buy are excessive. No doubt the larger traders, particularly in Sligo. We have, I am glad to say, competing railways. We have two or three railways coming into Sligo, and those engaged largely in trade are able to make better terms, and the result is, of course, that the small traders cannot make those terms.

16695. Are you acquainted with what we call the small parcels scale rate for small parcels up to 300 lbs.?—Not exactly as to the actual rate.

16696. Do you know that the same scale is in operation in England as well as in Ireland?—I think it is all the worse, because I think the rate in England is equally excessive for small goods. Perhaps I am digressing in making a reference to a bill which I received for a small quantity of goods from Northampton. I can tell you the rate, but I think the gentleman sent me the railway bill or note. It was a very extraordinary charge, and small traders suffer considerably owing to the excessive rates. This (*produced*) is the one that he sent me, I think. There are boots, say, for instance, from Northampton, and for three quarters and twenty-one pounds the charge is 5*s.* 3*d.*

16697. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—How much a boot, Alderman, would that be?—That is put on by the English company and of course they charge a proportion of it, I suppose, to the Irish company.

16698. Is it a penny for every boot?—Yes; I think so.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—A pair of boots does not weigh two pounds.

16699. *Chairman.*—That is under the small parcels scale. You say the trade of your particular district is done in such small quantities that it would be an immense advantage to the small traders if the small parcels scheme was reduced?—Well, as a matter of course, don't you think that is an excessive rate, 5*s.* 3*d.* for three quarters of a cwt. That is the way to look at it. If you calculate that per ton——

16700. But you must not do that. You have admitted that the rate for ton lots is not unreasonable?—It is not necessary to give the exact tonnage.

16701. You are acquainted with the district around Sligo?—Take, for instance, the case from Leeds, 63*s.* 9*d.* per ton by the steamer *via* Liverpool.

16702. Yes. The rate from Leeds per steamer from Liverpool is 63*s.* 9*d.* per ton; that is steamer from Liverpool into Dublin?—No, direct to Sligo, *via* Liverpool to Sligo. We have a direct steamer between Liverpool and Sligo.

16703. Well, if that is the rate by sea, 63*s.* 9*d.*, I see the steamer rate from Liverpool to Sligo is 37*s.* 8*d.* per ton?—No.

16704. It says so on the document?—That includes the railway rate above, without the steamship rate.

16705. No. Liverpool to Sligo 37*s.* 8*d.* per ton?—I daresay it is.

16706. That seems a very excessive rate?—It is. I equally complain of it, but it is not your province to inquire into it.

16707. Now have you anything to suggest with reference to the district round Sligo which has not yet been served by any railway?—Oh, yes, we have. Of course I do not come here to blame the railway companies, particularly the Midland Railway, who practically serve Sligo. The Midland Railway is hardly capable of raising funds to extend her communications, and it is a great pity she would not, and on any occasion I got into communication with any of the Midland Railway people, I more than once conveyed to them the necessity, for instance, to extend the railway to Rosses Point, only five miles from Sligo, one of the most beautiful bathing places perhaps on the West Coast of Ireland, or any part of the United Kingdom, a most beautiful shore, a level shore practically a mile long.

16708. You don't suggest that a railway to that place *per se* would pay?—Most decidedly I do. I say that the Midland Railway Company, if they had the capital, I daresay they would have been inclined to extend the railway down to Ross's Point. People who know the place like it, and we want to have it better known. It has improved and increased enormously within the last twenty years, and there are now golf links at it, and it is largely resorted to from the different parts of the country, and to give

you an idea of that, as soon as the railway communication was run from Enniskillen to Bundoran we got less people at Ross's Point because they have got no railway communication to it.

16709. What is the distance?—Five miles.

16710. You brought that under the notice of the Midland Great Western Company?—Yes.

16711. They favour the scheme, but cannot raise the money?—I daresay they would be inclined, but it would not be easy for the company now, I suppose, to raise the money unless the Government came in and advanced it at a cheap rate. Of course there are other districts about Sligo that need improvement.

16712. Is there any other district near Sligo needing improvements of the kind?—There is a line proposed at present, and the promoting company are actually in existence, to make a line from Arigna by Riverstown and Collooney, and there is a new project for a line from Collooney to Belmullet.

16713. Are these independent schemes?—They are independent of each other, one from Arigna, which would connect Sligo with the coal mines there *via* Riverstown and Collooney, and there is a promoting company formed for the last two or three years of which I am a member, but I don't see much prospect of succeeding with it.

16714. Is not that the district where some parts of the county want a railway in one way and some in another?—Such a dispute arose.

16715. Did not that stop the scheme?—It did to a certain extent. They were trying to make a railway, I think, from Arigna to Dromahaire.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—Yes. The Cavan and Leitrim Councils threw it out.

16716. *Chairman.*—It is in abeyance because of the dispute with the County Council?—No, that is the line from Arigna to Leitrim running to Dromahaire.

16717. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And the coal mines?—But the one I am speaking of to Arigna by Riverstown and Coollooney and Ballyfarnam, that is a different line, and was taken up as a new project to make a line from Sligo to Ballina and thence to Belmullet. The object of that line was for the introduction of transatlantic steamers into Belmullet Harbour, to run on to Collooney *via* Enniskillen, Belfast, and Larne, across to Stranraer, and then the best and shortest route to London.

16718. *Chairman.*—That is a big scheme?—Yes, a very big scheme. As to the contemplated line from Arigna *via* Riverstown and Coollooney, they were going to oppose the scheme, as they wanted the Belmullet Company to make their line to go *via* Arigna and Belturbet.

16719. There is a squabble amongst the Councils about it?—Yes, but they are not persevering about it.

16720. Have you anything to say with reference to the present management of the Irish railways?—I think the management of them could be largely improved. There is no doubt about it, but at the same time I am not at all in favour of taking the railways out of the hands of the present management, because I think that when the railways are kept in the hands of various companies we would have an open door. If you put the management of the railways into, say, one whole system we have no appeal from it, but supposing the Government took up the railway system in Ireland I am greatly afraid that they would manage it on the principle they do the Post Office, and that is rather a beggarly principle, for they both starve the system and starve their officials.

16721. That is a rather strong view?—You may think I am making use of strong language, but you need not be surprised when I tell you, perhaps I am digressing, when I tell you that at the present moment the carriage of the mails from Sligo to Rosses Point is carried on a donkey with two creels across his back.

16722. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—You evidently live there, Alderman?—Yes, if that is not a beggarly system I don't know what it is. That is a fact. The poor man should carry it on his back, and they have given him a concession by allowing him to hire a donkey. Public carriers are running to the place, but they would not allow them to carry the mails.

16723. *Chairman.*—What have you to say with reference to the combination amongst railway companies?—There is no combination amongst traders.

16724. But I am looking at your draft?—I did not say traders, I said railway companies.

16725. That is what I say?—I thought you meant traders.

16726. Oh, no, traders may combine, what do you say about railways?—I say that it is very injurious to the trade of the country.

16727. What is?—That they are capable of combining to charge certain rates.

16728. Let me have your views upon it: what do you mean by it?—My view is this, that railway companies combine together to charge certain rates in many instances, I don't say in all instances, but both railways and steamboat companies have combined to charge certain rates.

Combination of railway and shipping companies in fixing rates condemned.

16729. Is that wrong?—I say that the combination is injurious to the general trade of the country, or, in other words, it prevents the open principle being carried with free and open competition.

16730. Would you have rates varying from day to day or week to week?—No, I would not. I don't say varying, but I would have the railway companies to have the same opportunity that every other trader in the country has to push his wares, and I would not allow them to be able to combine to put on an excessive rate.

16731. Do you know the point of the railway companies is that they do not combine to put on an excessive rate, but that the rates that you call excessive are fair and reasonable?—Well, that may be, but have not the railway companies a fixed rate for certain goods.

16732. Certainly. Is not that an advantage to the public, is not it an advantage that the public should know what the rates are?—That may be, but if the public were capable of making them take a lower rate it would be better for the public.

16733. Even that the railways should carry at a loss?—Oh, no; but the railways are capable of taking care of themselves. Traders very often have to trade at a loss, but what privileges should railway companies have any more than individuals.

16734. I don't know that we need carry that any further?—I am not prejudiced against the railway companies at all; on the contrary, I don't wish to see the railway system even taken out of their hands.

A central authority in Dublin with limited control of all Irish railways recommended.

16735. But you approve of a central body in this country becoming the owners of the railways?—I would approve of a central body not having absolute control of the railways, nor the management of the railways, but I would approve of their having a certain control and regulation. For instance, instead of the present crude system of applying to the Railway Commission if you have a complaint, I think if you had a central body in Dublin, as I hope we may have sometime, I would give that body a certain control over the railway system.

16736. Without having any monetary interest in them?—Oh, yes; with no money interest in them whatever.

16737. Would you like that central body, whatever it is, to become the owners of the railways in this country?—No, not the owners of the railways, but I think they might have a certain control over them, and regulate them under certain conditions in the same way as Parliament now makes Railway Bills, for instance, or passes Railway Bills. What I mean is by a central body that they could decide matters in connection with the railway company without appealing to Parliament or anything of that kind, and also would decide disputes between the railway companies themselves, and between the public and the railway companies instead of the present system. If, you appeal at present to get redress from the Railway Commission you will grow considerably older before you get a decision, to begin with.

Complaints as to high rates for cattle, Sligo to Dublin

16738. Are there any local industries in Sligo?—Oh, yes. Very few local manufactures, but, of course, there is local industry to a considerable extent, and then you have a very large agricultural country surrounding it and that is a point that I think I should have mentioned—the traffic of live stock, I think, is exceptional. You have in Dublin the best market in the United Kingdom for cattle, but it is a prohibitive rate to send cattle to Dublin from Sligo. I sent some from there, and I found it took the cream off them at the rate to Dublin.

Local industries described.

16739. The local manufacturing industries are not considerable?—well, we have local manufacturers in Coollooney, and we have a very small manufactory—a shirt factory—in Sligo. It is very little. Of course we have extensive milling operations in Sligo—very extensive.

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16740. Such as they are, are they developing or going back?—Oh, no; they are improving and developing, and the harbour of Sligo is improving.

16741. There has been evidence here to the effect of the Great Northern rates from Belfast to places in the vicinity of Sligo crippled the import trade of Sligo?—Well, it did that for a short time, but I think it curtailed the importation of corn, either less or more, but I don't see any reason why if the public at large are benefited and if cheaper rates and better fares are to be had by competition, I don't see any reason why we should complain of that competition.

Effect of the railway rates on the development of local industries and the traffic of Sligo Port.

16742. Well, of course, you might have such a thing as a temporary establishment of very low rates in order to get rid of an opponent, and when the opponent is got rid of you return to the high rates—you get rid of the competition?—That sometimes occurs, but it did not occur in that case with us. There is no doubt that there was some temporary cutting of rates between Belfast and Sligo, but I think they found it did not pay, and I think there is as much corn now being imported as ever.

16743. Is it not a dangerous thing to allow such a system of railway rates as might extinguish sea competition. Is it not very important to Ireland that sea competition should be maintained?—I do not think that the railway rates in a case of that kind would extinguish sea competition.

16744. Or embarrass it—cripple it?—It might more or less affect, but don't you see that all companies are subject to fluctuations in their profits just in the same way as the railways themselves are. Companies have no more reason to complain than anyone else of a change either in the times or circumstances that surround them.

16745. It appears to be a question of degree. Of course there is a limit beyond which if railway rates are reduced in the vicinity of a port, the port may be destroyed. You think a limit should be observed within which a port would be allowed to have a trade?—Well, of course, if it was carried to a very large extent it might affect the port. There is no doubt, for last year it did affect the port of Sligo, less or more. I daresay there was eight or ten thousand tons less of corn brought in than in other years, but that has its benefits in other directions. Suppose that competition cut in that way, but that competition brought flour and other articles into Sligo cheaper for the general public at large, though the individual merchants may have suffered, the public at large were the gainers.

16746. But if competition went so far as to cause a loss and caused steamers to cease coming into Sligo, the consumer would be at the mercy of the railway?—I do not think there is any chance of that so far as the importation of grain or corn is concerned, because we could not get the grain by railway communication. I am not a bit afraid of Sligo Harbour that any competition of railway systems will affect it. One article may be down one year and another will be up. We may not have such large shipments of cattle one day and more another, but the harbour of Sligo is still going on, and I don't think railway competition in the end will affect it.

16747. I am very glad to hear you say so. Do you think it would be desirable that there should be fair play between one port and another on the part of the railway companies?—I think there should be. I do not think railway companies should give any preference.

16748. To one port above another?—No, I should think not.

"Smalls" rates discussed.

16749. You have been asked about the small parcels scale. I would ask you about that, whether you think that the mere facts that a scale suits England, or is in force there, proves at all that it would be suitable to this country. Does it prove it would be suitable here because it is in force in England? For instance, small parcels rates exist equally in both—might not Ireland require some different treatment?—I think Ireland would, because she is a poorer country than England, and has a smaller population to contribute towards the support of the railways.

Railway combinations objected to.

16750. About your remarks on railway combinations—you object to it. I understood your meaning to be that you like competition in transit and other things, and that in proportion as combination between companies proves effective in the settlement of rates, in that proportion the public lose the benefit of the competition?—That the companies try to settle the rates—that is what I mean.

16751. You know the country very well. Do you think that a large reduction, a well-judged reduction, of rates and fares would bring about such a development of traffic as might pay for itself or even give a profit in course of time?—Not alone that, but I believe a reduction of the rates and fares would be the making of the railways in Ireland and largely improve them. It is a very extraordinary anomaly when I tell you that I travelled—I don't know if there is a gentleman here knows it—by Bianconi's coach from Sligo to Dublin before we had railway communication—not direct to Dublin. I came to Mullingar on the old coach, and from there by tram; and you could get from Sligo to Dublin at the same rate I have to pay to-day in the railway carriage—enclosed behind four spanking horses in a decent coach. For five-and-twenty shillings you would get to Dublin, and if you want to travel first class to-day on the railway you pay the same money.

16752. How long ago is that?—I would rather you would not ask me that.

16753. *Chairman.*—How long did the journey take?—Well, only twelve hours. It left Dawson-street in Dublin at eight o'clock in the morning, and arrived in Sligo at ten at night, and changed horses ten times on the journey.

16754. That is fourteen hours?—You could get an inside seat if you wished for £1 5*s.*, and if you want an inside seat in a first class carriage to-day you will pay the same money to Sligo.

16755. But you can get an inside seat in a third class carriage?—What I mean is if the railway systems reduced their fares they would have twice as many people travelling as they have, on the principle of the penny postage stamp. For instance, there are fifty times as many letters posted now as when we had to pay 2½*d.* or 3*d.* for a stamp.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

16756. Do you think a reduction of rates on food products would stimulate and extend our exports to England?—I think it would. Of course the only export trade in a great measure we have is to England. The principal things we export all go to England, and the charges on them are very excessive.

16757. Looking at the state of the country as a whole, and the fact that the land is passing into the hands of the tenants, and that industry will be thereby stimulated, do you think that if they were assisted at this crisis by a reduction of rates there would be a development of trade in the country?—I think that is exactly what they want. I believe a reduction of the rates would largely stimulate industry in the country and encourage tillage in the country.

16758. And might pay for itself and leave a profit before many years had passed?—And pay the railway companies also.

16759. When a railway company comes to a certain point, when it makes a certain profit and pays a certain dividend—do you see a very great difficulty in the administration of the railway in the way of running any risk? Suppose they had to wait five years or ten years for a profit, what board of directors could stand before their shareholders for that time?—Well, but don't you see an individual trader in the country meets with the same disaster occasionally, and after a time he recovers himself. Take last year, we had less corn coming in and this year we have a great deal more. Everything like that finds its own level, and if a railway company goes down I have no more pity for it than an individual.

16760. They have pity for themselves. You do not expect them to be indifferent to their own fate?—They do their best to stem the torrent.

16761. Would you expect them to expose themselves to risk?—But if the circumstances compelled them.

16762. But no circumstances can compel them to reduce the rates unless they wish?—But circumstances may compel them not to pay a dividend.

16763. What I submit is they are not likely to bring about that state of affairs of their own motion?—I quite agree not if they can avoid it, but by lowering the rates and giving greater privileges and greater facilities to the agricultural people of the country and to the agricultural produce that has to be exported to England they would not create that state of things for themselves. On the contrary, they would improve their position.

16764. They would apprehend, rightly or wrongly, that the time they would have to wait for the recoupment of the loss might be too long. I think, from your remarks about the Post Office and mails to Rosse's Point, you were driving at the Imperial Government?—I was as a matter of course. Because the suggestion made by various witnesses here was that the Imperial Government should buy over the Irish railways, and I maintain that if they did they would do the same thing that they have done with the Post Office.

16765. You think there should be an Irish authority over Irish railways?—I would have an Irish authority with some control over them.

16766. Of course it must be the Imperial or the Irish—which would you have?—I think you need hardly ask me.

16767. I would like your answer?—I am after stating I would like to see an Irish authority that we are likely to have constituted have control over Irish railways—not the management exactly.

16768. But the policy. A control analogous to that which the Imperial Parliament now exercises by legislation?—I would give the Irish authority more control over the Irish railways. All the Imperial Parliament at present does is to pass Acts of Parliament and let the railway companies do what they like in a great measure.

16769. Your object would be that the controlling authority should be one that would respond to the opinion and the needs of this country?—The controlling authority, as I take it—I may as well speak broadly. We anticipate a Devolution scheme. If that authority is established in Dublin it should have a certain control over the railways, not exactly to be injurious to the railway system nor to prevent the present owners of the railways from managing them in the best way they possibly could, but I would have control over them in the interests of the Irish public, so that no injustice could be done to the public, and that no excessive rates should be charged that would be injurious to the general interests of the country.

16770. But if the financial question could be arranged, would you not be in favour of allowing the central authority in Ireland to become owners of the railways?—It is a question I would hardly like to commit myself to.

16771. You say here, "I would approve of the central body becoming owners of the railways"?—I think that was a mistake. I did not intend to say that they should become the owners. I meant that they should have control. I would not give any central body the power to become owners, because I am entirely against what is called municipalisation. That is a misprint.

16772. That is nationalisation?—Not that they would become the owners, but that they would to a certain extent be the controllers. If they became the owners they would have to invest funds as a matter of course in it?—I don't mean that.

16773. They would not have to invest any funds; they would borrow them?—That is a mistake; if you say so, I accept it.

16774. In order to reduce rates and fares you have to make some economy that the existing companies are not able to effect. But if you allow the railways to become the property of a national authority, the economy due to single working will be available as a fund to enable reduction of rates and fares?—It is very problematical that the central body would be so able to manage the railways as that they could do that without calling upon the ratepayers of the country. If the central body had possession of the whole of the Irish finances, then they might buy up the railways, and, of course, if they would have the power to tax the people and all that sort of thing, they could manage the railways then to advantage. But if the central body had to work the railway system in the same way as in a measure they are worked now, without any aid from any extra funds, it is very problematical whether they would work them to greater advantage than the present companies.

16775. We assume the case of a central authority which would have financial resources?—I am assuming that it would have financial resources, but these financial resources could not be used for the purpose of aiding the railway companies.

16776. Certainly not. No doubt, you are aware that the net profits of the railways at present will be more than sufficient to transact purchase upon the basis of State credit. Assuming, then, that State purchase would leave a margin out of the present profit of the railways, and also assuming that single management would make great economy in working, with one central board instead of twenty-five or thirty, would you be in favour of using the fund so saved for the purpose of reducing rates and fares?—Most decidedly.

16777. Then, as to the working of the railways (apart from policy), would you be in favour of handing over the actual working of the system to a body of the best practical experts that could be found—say, for instance, the most capable present railway managers and experts—handing over the management of the railways to them under the direction of the superior body?—I think that would be a very good idea. I would not like to do away with the whole of the Irish railways as a body. You must recollect that the great individual railway companies give a lot of employment; and if you narrow the area of management of all these companies you do away with a vast amount of employment—not alone labour, but clerks and officials of every kind. I think the more money that is diffused through the country among officials of every kind the better.

16778. Yes, but if this diffusion of money causes the crippling of the industry and trade of the country, don't you think that the development of them is the first consideration that ought to appeal to every citizen?—Of course, that is another view to take of it.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

16779. Am I correct in saying that when you speak of a controlling body over the railways you mean that the railways should be carried on as at present, subject to the appointment of this controlling body as a sort of Railway and Canals Commission for the purpose of settling disputes, and for initiating reductions in rates and fares in such directions as this controlling body may think desirable?—Yes, but with extended powers.

16780. I understood that you meant that?—Yes, in a great measure.

16781. Do you think that such a system of control would conduce to the harmonious working of the railway systems in this country? Do you not think that the directors, who are subject to the opinion of a large number of shareholders who are interested in looking for their dividends—do you not think that they would resent the establishment of such a controlling body, that they would not object to have the rates and fares reduced at the beck and call—I will not say of some political body—but of a body not in sympathy with the shareholders, and whose object would be to cut down rates and fares to vanishing point—do you think that would conduce to harmonious working, or would such a system be tolerated at all by the railway companies or the shareholders?—Well, I suppose, the shareholders and the railway companies would resent it, less or more, unless they saw it was to their own advantage.

16782. How could it be to their own advantage?—It might be, because anything that would develop the resources of the country must benefit the railway companies.

16783. That is problematical?—Everything is problematical.

16784. I put it to you, do you think it at all desirable or possible—believing, as you do, that the railways should exist as at present—that the State should call in this external authority and entrust them with the very drastic powers of compelling a reduction of rates and fares?—I would not say that the controlling body should compel the reduction of rates and fares, but this controlling body should have power to make the companies have equitable charges, and it should also have power to regulate the general management to a large extent. I do not say that the controlling authority should go to such and such a railway and say "You must fix such and such a rate for this article"; but the body should have power to control any differences that might arise between the railway companies and manufacturing bodies.

16785. If you confined the powers or functions of the controlling body to those of the Railway and Canals Commission, there might be some advantages, but I understood you to go further than that?—I would give them extended powers. What good would

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Suggestion to place the existing railways under the control of an authority, with powers to regulate their general management.

Functions and powers of the controlling authority.

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it be for a trader in Sligo, say, to go before the Railway and Canals Commission at present with a complaint?—He would get no redress.

16786. I think we are all satisfied on that point about the Railway and Canals Commission, and we need not follow it any further. Now, I have another question to ask you; it is about the Arigna Extension. Isn't it a fact that two years ago a grant of £24,000 was actually sanctioned, and the consent of the Treasury obtained by the Chief Secretary, for the extension, subject only to the proviso that, in the event of the grant not being sufficient to provide for the contemplated extension, the County Council would guarantee to find whatever difference was required?—That was in Leitrim, sir; not in Sligo.

Grant for the proposed Arigna extension of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway: Action of the County Council which prevented expenditure of the money.

16787. Yes, in Leitrim; and consequently, through the disinclination of the County Council to give such a guarantee, the whole matter has been hung up?—I am not an authority upon Leitrim matters; but I think it arose in this way—that the County Council was called upon to provide a certain amount provided the grant of £24,000 was given.

16788. They were called upon to guarantee the remainder if the grant was not sufficient?—Yes, and the grant fell through; but that is not in connection with the railway system as far as Sligo is concerned.

16789. But the terminus of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway is at Arigna?—Yes, I think so.

16790. Where do you start the line you are now advocating?—The contemplated line I was dealing with would start from Arigna and would go in a different direction.

16791. Wouldn't it go to the coal mines in the first instance?—It would go from Ballyfarnon.

16792. The other is a line that runs from Arigna to connect with the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway, connecting the coal mine?—Yes.

16793. Was there to be no through connection with the Cavan and Leitrim Railway on the east?—They could come on to Collooney.

16794. It is the other direction I am talking about?—Yes, at Enniskillen.

16795. It would be a continuation of the Cavan and Leitrim system—we appear to be discussing the same point in only different ways?—Perhaps so.

Chairman.—Alderman Collery, we are very much obliged to you for your evidence.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning.

TWENTY-NINTH PUBLIC SITTING—THURSDAY, 25TH APRIL, 1907,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners Present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary.)

Chairman.—Perhaps it is better to announce that the Commission have decided this morning that the next sitting of the Commission will be in London on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 13th, 14th, and 15th of May. It may be convenient for parties to know it. *Apr.* 25, 1907.

Alderman MATTHEW A. BALLANTINE, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Alderman Matthew A. Ballantine, J.P., ex-Mayor of Derry, and representative of the Londonderry Corporation.

16796. Mr. Matthew A. Ballantine, you are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

16797. And an Alderman of Londonderry Corporation?—That is so.

16797A. And I think you are an ex-Mayor of Derry?—I was Mayor, and am now ex-Mayor of Derry.

16798. Have you any connection with the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce?—Yes; I am a member of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce.

16799. And one of the Vice-Presidents?—One of the Vice-Presidents.

16799A. Do you appear before us at the request of the Corporation?—At the request of the Corporation.

16800. I think we were to have had the honour of the presence of the Mayor, but he is not able to attend?—The Mayor is not able to attend.

16801. Now, will you tell us what particular business you are personally interested in?—I am in the milling business and grain trade.

16802. Have you been long in that business?—Oh, for forty years.

16803. Forty years. I suppose that your Corporation feel that the prosperity and the welfare of the city is bound up with the welfare of the port?—Yes, altogether bound up with the welfare of the port. It is essential.

16804. Yes; now tell us, first of all, what railways serve Londonderry?—The Great Northern Railway and the Northern Counties Committee of the Midland Railway are the two principal lines. We have the Donegal Railway now, which has been bought over by the Northern Counties Committee.

16805. They have a station in Londonderry?—Yes, and also the Lough Swilly Company.

16806. Three railways?—Yes, three railway companies.

16807. Three?—Yes.

16808. What is the population of Londonderry?—Forty-two thousand.

16809. Then with regard to traffic to and from England, of course you have a direct sea route?—We have a daily sailing to a Lancashire port, two in the week to Liverpool, two to Heysham, two to Fleetwood. That works out a steamer daily.

16809A. You have a sailing every day in the week?—Yes.

16810. Heysham, the new Midland port?—Yes.

16811. Practically you have a daily sailing by sea to and from England?—Yes, a daily service.

16812. Well, now, have you anything to tell us with reference to the rates in operation by the various railway companies?—Well, there is a system of through rates throughout all Ireland to England, which the Derry Corporation, my Corporation, and the Harbour Board consider that we should have, and I might say say that we opposed the sale of the Donegal Railway Company to the Great Northern Railway Company and the Midland Railway Company, and went in for special terms and special rates. We consider that from the long sea voyage, and from the short railway carriage by this route, that we should get a differential rate of 2*s.* 6*d.* per ton, and also 10*s.* a wagon on cattle.

Claims for differential rates on cross-Channel traffic *via* Derry.

16813. From where and to?—From the North of Ireland, from the County Donegal. We went in for that protection in the sale of the Donegal Railway, and I may say we got that protection from the House of Commons in 1905, and the railway company refused to take the bill.

16814. That was the first Bill?—The first Bill.

16815. Very well, then. The Midland Railway have refused to take the Bill?—The Great Northern Railway and the Midland both refused to take that Bill.

16816. Were the Great Northern Railway in that first Bill?—Yes. The Great Northern Railway and the Midland went together for powers to acquire the Donegal Railway, and we opposed them.

16817. One minute, Colonel Plews, I was under the impression the Midland had the first Bill. It was in my mind.

Colonel Plews.—No, it was a combined Bill from the first.

Witness.—I may say that the Midland went in for their own Bill to acquire the Belfast and Northern Counties when they came in first.

Chairman.—Yes, that was what I am confounding.

Colonel Plews.—They are separate lines.

Witness.—We got from the Midland Railway, too, all we asked, the protection of 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton, and also a protection in the cattle the same as we asked from the Donegal Railway Company from the Midland. They granted that.

Differential clause inserted in the Great Northern and Midland Companies Bill, which was dropped in consequence.

16818. *Chairman.*—In the House of Commons when the Bill was first in you got a clause, but in consequence of that clause the promoters withdrew the Bill?—Yes.

16819. What took place in the next session?—They promoted a new Bill.

16820. Next session?—Yes, in the House of Lords.

16821. The Bill began in the House of Lords?—First in the Commons, and we got all the protection we asked for from the Commons. The Great Northern Railway and the Midland refused to take the Bill; then they promoted a new Bill next session in the House of Lords.

Fresh Bill promoted following year.

16822. Well, I mean sometimes these private Bills begin in one House and sometimes in another?—The second Bill began in the Lords.

16823. Yes; did you get a clause in the Lords?—No; we did not succeed there.

16824. Then did you oppose in the Commons?—We opposed again in the Commons.

16825. You did not get it there?—No.

16826. And you have not got it?—We got a small clause in. We made the best bargain we could.

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16827. You got a clause which satisfied you?—Well, we were not satisfied. We made the best bargain we could.

Colonel Plews.—The clause they got was a clause voluntarily given by the company, not imposed by the committee.

Witness.—It was not voluntarily given by the company, because the company agreed to give us more, and I must correct Colonel Plews. He drew back in his promise, and we had to take what we got. We got a protection from Strabane, some miles from the city.

Amended differential clause inserted as a compromise.

16828. *Chairman.*—Not the protection clause you got in the Belfast and Northern Counties Bill?—Not that. We have not got what we got over the whole Donegal system.

16829. I am quite aware of that. You have not got that?—We never got that.

16830. Well, now, have you anything to say with reference to the local rates from and to Londonderry in Ireland?—Confined to Ireland?

16831. Yes, local rates?—We complain that we have no through rates from the North of Ireland to the South of Ireland. We have no through local rates.

Through interior Irish rates with Derry alleged to be excessive and a handicap to trade.

16832. Just give an illustration of what you mean—no through rates from Londonderry to Cork, for instance?—No local through rates that we could accept. The staple trade of the city is the shirt trade.

16833. Yes?—Well, the freight in bale goods such as shirts to Cork is 66*s.* per ton; to Waterford it is 51*s.* 3*d.* a ton; to Limerick it is 53*s.* 6*d.* a ton; for the same goods to London it is 43*s.* 4*d.*; to Edinburgh, 27*s.* 6*d.*

16834. Yes. What you say is that the local rates, I suppose, *pro rata*, are considerably higher than the through rates for towns in England?—Yes, and we say that if the railway company could give us a cheap local rate through not only to Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, but to the inland towns in the South, it would be so much money in the pockets of the railway company, and I believe trade would develop that would pay the railway company.

16835. Turn your attention to your own particular business, the milling business—what have you to say about that—the rates for your traffic?—We have very little trade in the grain trade between the South and North of Ireland.

16836. Oh, yes. I quite understand that. The South would supply the South, the North the North?—In some cases.

16837. But I mean the rates—where do you mill, Londonderry?—Londonderry.

16838. Then you send your traffic, flour and so on, at any rate within a reasonable distance from Londonderry inland?—Yes. I am not in the flour trade, though.

16839. What is included in the milling trade?—Oatmeal and Indian meal, and feeding stuffs.

16840. Yes, maize, for instance?—Yes.

16841. Into Londonderry?—Yes.

16842. And you send it to inland stations in Ireland?—Yes.

Local rates generally alleged to be excessive.

16843. Are the rates in your judgment satisfactory?—Well, I think the rates are rather heavy.

16844. Rather heavy?—Yes.

16845. You have not any particular rate in your mind that you consider heavy?—I have not.

16846. On the whole?—On the whole.

16847. You have not much to say against these particular rates?—There is not much, but I think it would be for the benefit of the port if there was a slight reduction. We are pretty well handicapped to go to Enniskillen. We have Sligo to contend with; Belfast to contend with; Newry to contend with.

16848. Is there milling industry at Sligo?—Yes.

16849. Just the same as at Londonderry?—Yes.

16850. And at Belfast?—Yes.

16851. But that particular industry is rather prosperous in Ireland?—Well, on the whole it is.

16852. Yes; then it has not been retarded by any action of the railway companies?—I don't believe it has.

16853. It goes without saying that whatever your rate is you would like some reduction, and any reduction would be of so much benefit to yourself?—And the country.

16854. Primarily to yourself?—Primarily to myself.

16855. And then generally to the country?—Generally to the country.

16856. Do you consider that any undue preference is given by the Great Northern Railway Company, who are both at Londonderry and Belfast, to Belfast?—I have not the slightest doubt that there is a preference given to Belfast merchants. They can send their goods further away from Belfast than we possibly can from Londonderry, and we buy them on as good terms in Londonderry.

16857. Is it because the railway company put lower rates in operation from Belfast than from Londonderry?—I believe they give lower rates, that they give rebates that we cannot get at from Belfast.

16858. Do you know this of your own knowledge?—Well, I thought that you would take the evidence given some time ago by Mr. Heyn, of Belfast. He said that in his own office, without leaving his own office, by telephone, he could get a special rate from Belfast to anywhere in Ireland.

16859. Could you not if you had a special quantity?—If we wanted any special rate we would require to write to Belfast or Dublin and wait for a week.

16860. Because you have no telephonic communication?—We have, but no one in the City of Londonderry has any power to do anything.

16861. That is the official responsible for quoting these rates is at Belfast, and not Londonderry?—Or Dublin.

16862. They can't have chief officials at all places?—Well, I think we should have the same power in Londonderry as they have in Dublin or Belfast. I think Londonderry is the third best feeder of their system on the Great Northern Railway.

16863. Yes, of course they can't have what we call chief officials in every town on their system?—Well, so far as the Corporation I represent, all merchants of Londonderry, and my own feeling is concerned, I believe his evidence. I believe in Belfast they get draw-backs. We can't get them.

16864. Yes?—We can't fathom it. It can't be done unless some Commission of some kind, as a Railway Commission, is appointed to have access to the Clearing House and the audit office of the railway company, and to see that these undue preferences are not given to one place over another.

16865. You can give us no particular instance of what you call undue preference given to Belfast?—It would be impossible to get them, for us to get them.

16866. Have you raised that question direct with the Railway Company, with the General Manager of the Railway Company?—Raised what?

16867. This question of undue preference?—It has been raised often, but we can make nothing out of it.

16868. Recently?—Yes, for years. We could make nothing out of it. We cannot get at the bottom of it. The fact remains that the Belfast merchants can go further away from Belfast and send their goods where we cannot touch.

16869. Is it probably due to the traffic, whatever it may be, being brought at a less cost into Belfast than into Londonderry?—I don't think that would affect it; that would not affect it. We can get goods into the city and port of Londonderry by our own cross-Channel steamers as cheap as they can.

16870. But maize doesn't come by the cross-Channel steamer?—We import the maize direct from America and the Argentine and the Black Sea.

16871. Is the rate the same?—We buy on the same terms through London. The grain is brought from the Baltic in London.

16872. The Derry merchants can buy maize in London as cheap as the Belfast merchant?—Maize is a fluctuating article. You may be safe to-day and away to-morrow, or the price may be over.

16873. I assume that the *modus operandi* of your business is, a ship arrives off the coast of Ireland, and it is telegraphed your buyer has bought it?—We generally buy the ships in direct to Derry.

16874. Do you take a full cargo to Londonderry?—Yes, 4,000 tons. We have a splendid harbour, a splendid river; a vessel can come up and discharge 4,000 tons.

16875. Deep water?—Yes. The rebates I complain about are more in the grocery line of business.

16876. Oh?—Not in my business. The fat of that trade in Londonderry is being got at by the Belfast merchants. They give an undue preference.

16877. You can't give an instance?—No.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The gentleman's surmise is quite incorrect.

Witness.—We can't get at them.

16878. *Chairman.*—At any rate we have no proof of it. Have you anything to suggest as a remedy for this sort of thing? First of all, do you agree that it is in the interests of the country that railways should be privately owned, and that there should be a large number of different railway companies in the country?—The feeling in the Corporation of the City of Londonderry is that such railways as the Great Northern and Midland should remain as they are. We are well served with the railways.

16879. You are well served?—Yes. I believe that all the leading lines should remain as they are: such lines as the Sligo and Leitrim, I think, it would be an improvement if it were bought by the Great Northern Railway; but I believe all the large railways, the Great Northern Railway, the Great Southern and Western Railway, and the Midland should remain as they are.

16880. You think that there should be three or four or five main systems in the country?—Yes.

16881. And that the large railways should absorb the small?—Yes.

16882. How would the Great Northern Railway absorb the Lough Swilly Railway if the Lough Swilly objected? How do you suggest that would be done?—Well, so far as the Lough Swilly Railway is concerned——

16883. I mention it as an instance?—I don't think we would touch the Lough Swilly. It is a railway which has no connection with any other railway in Ireland: it goes right down through Inishowen, and it is practically a Londonderry railway. It brings all its goods into the port.

16884. In your judgment, it would be better for Ireland if there were three or four main line systems in the country?—Yes, for instance, the Belfast and Northern Counties. I mean the Midland Committee. I think that they work all the railways put into their system in the Counties Antrim and Londonderry. They work all the railways.

16885. You think it has been an advantage to Ireland the introduction of the Midland Railway Company of England to Ireland?—I believe it has been an advantage to Derry.

16886. And the district?—I do. I believe it has been an advantage to the district. I am in a position to say it has been an advantage to the City of Londonderry. The Midland has treated Londonderry well, both as regards exports and imports since they took over the line.

16887. Do you think the absorption of the Donegal Railway has rendered any benefit to that district by the Great Northern Railway and Midland? Do you think it has benefited the district?—On that question we believe it won't be a benefit to the City of Londonderry.

16888. I would ask you as to the district served by the railway, do you think it has been a benefit to the district served by the railway, which, if I remember rightly, was in the hands of two original companies?—We found that the Government were anxious for the two original companies to take over the Donegal Railway.

16889. I put it——?—I believe it will be in the long run a benefit: it will not be a benefit to the port of Londonderry.

16890. Do they favour any other port?—No, but we had a differential rate—2*s.* 6*d.* a ton—over the whole system which we have lost.

16891. You enjoyed that?—We enjoyed that from the Donegal Railway Company.

16892. And you don't enjoy it now?—No.

16893. And to that extent it has not been a benefit to Londonderry?—No: our cross-Channel trade to England: we have a sailing every night: and they have a miserable fight for their existence.

16894. Then I gather from your evidence that you are against the State purchase of railways?—Yes.

16895. And is that the view of your Corporation?—That is the view of the Corporation and leading citizens of Londonderry at present.

16896. Has it been before the Corporation?—Well, I have spoken to all the leading members.

16897. Has it been formally brought before them?—It has not been formally brought.

16898. By resolution?—No, it has not; but I know it is the feeling of the Corporation and merchants of Londonderry that we are better as we are. We look upon the two railways that we have in the north as being well managed. Nothing could be better.

16899. I gather——?—To put it into a nutshell, the only thing we complain about in Londonderry is that we don't get fair play from the Great Northern Railway Company with the heavy goods traffic to the port of Londonderry for England. We don't want, nor we don't expect, the perishable goods through the port of Londonderry. We don't want them.

Complaint as to unfair treatment of Derry by the Great Northern Railway Company.

16900. It is the bulk?—The bulk. We are entitled to the heavy traffic, for instance, goods shipped from Enniskillen to Liverpool, by sea to England, or ports in England, would require to be loaded in Enniskillen the night before. The Great Northern Railway Company will take goods every day in the week by passenger trains to the seaports—Larne, Belfast, Greenore, and North Wall at goods rates.

16901. And they don't do the same to Londonderry?—They don't.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I think the witness is incorrect—he is not correct.

16902. *Chairman.*—We will just take the evidence for what it is worth. The railway companies will answer it. Then in that respect you think Londonderry is slightly handicapped as compared with those other ports?—As compared with other ports. I might just say that we get the best of fair play from the Great Northern Railway with the Scotch traffic.

No complaint as regards Scotch traffic from the Great Northern Railway.

16903. Yes?—We have nothing to complain about our Scotch traffic, but we have to complain about the English traffic.

16904. Well, but the senders of that traffic, say, from Enniskillen, don't they direct the route by which the traffic should go?—It is very hard to direct the route when they have plenty of canvassers looking after them, when they give facilities.

16905. Supposing I am at Enniskillen, and I have goods for England, don't I put on my consignment note which way they are to go?—Yes, you can do that if you wish.

16906. Don't you in Londonderry?—I think they can for through rates.

16907. There are through rates from all the ports?—All that we have got to complain about is, we are not getting fair play for the English traffic.

16908. And that is confined only to what you call miscellaneous traffic, not to the bulk traffic?—To the heavy traffic.

16909. The undue preference you say is in connection with the smaller traffic?—No; we don't want to compete for the smaller traffic. The Great Northern Railway Company have the best system that could possibly be got *via* Greenore, for perishable goods and small parcels. That we don't want to interfere with.

16910. A daily service?—Yes. That we don't want to interfere with.

Necessity for a cheaper and more convenient tribunal in lieu of the Railway and Canal Commission Court urged.

16911. A little further with regard to State purchase, have you formed any opinion as to whether there should be some control by any central body in Ireland over the railways?—I think we should have some board which the grievances could be put before. For instance, supposing we go to the Railway and Canal Commission. There is no private individual could go there, and if a public body go there it is fraught with a great deal of expense.

16912. There is no expense going to the Board of Trade?—We don't consider the matter at all satisfactory. We believe that there should be some central establishment or tribunal.

16913. An Irish body?—An Irish body in London, with full power to go into the Clearing House in London and see what portion of the through rates the railway company gets, and also be able to go into the Audit Office.

16914. They could go into the Clearing House in Dublin?—Well, in Dublin or London, I don't know. I thought the Clearing House was in London altogether.

16915. No, no?—Also to have full power to go into the railway audit offices and see as to the rebates for undue preferences are given in Ireland.

16916. Have you formed any opinion as to what that body should be, how it should be elected?—I should say a few experts and one or two leading merchants with an experience of railway business.

16917. A permanent body?—I think so.

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16918. Paid by the State?—I should think so. I think it would be a very satisfactory thing both for the merchants and railways if we had a cheap tribunal of that kind, then all those things would be adjusted.

16919. Well, now, I suppose, to put it in short language, what you mean is that there should be some easy, cheap tribunal in Ireland itself where complaints of the traders could be adjusted or inquired into?—That is what I mean—exactly what I mean.

16920. Without the intervention of lawyers?—If possible, without lawyers.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It is impossible.

16921. *Chairman.*—What have you got to say about Letterkenny Railway?—Sir Henry Miller will give evidence on that.

Thank you, Alderman.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

Present system of reference to the Board of Trade under the present law as well as the Railway and Canal Commission Court considered unsatisfactory.

16922. You consider that the reference to the Board of Trade under the present law is of no practical use to Irish traders?—I don't think it is.

16923. And you think that the Court of the Railway Commission, although the fees of the Court are low, yet in the incidents of a trial before it is so expensive as to be out of the reach of the traders?—Yes. I think we had some experience of that in Londonderry.

16924. These matters have been under consideration for the past fifty years, and various efforts have been made to adjust the system to the satisfaction of the public, but the reference to the Board of Trade and the Railway Commission is all that has been devised up to the present?—That is all.

16925. That seems to indicate that the application of effectual remedies of the grievances of traders is slow?—Yes, it is very slow; and if you put the machinery in force once it will be a long time before you go to use it again.

16926. The experience after so long a time of these means to secure redress is not encouraging?—No.

16927. Not encouraging?—No; it is not.

16928. After so long a time, to have been able to do so little effectual, is not encouraging?—No; it is not.

Powers to be conferred on the suggested Board of Control.

16929. Well, you propose to establish a Board of Control—a permanent Board of Control?—Yes. With full powers to control and regulate the railway rates so far as they can, to be approached by merchants or any public body. I think it would be satisfactory to the public and to the merchants.

16930. Would you give them power to reduce the railway rates where they cut away the profit?—Well, I would give them certain power to arrange with the directors.

16931. The power must rest somewhere. Would you give them power to reduce the rates where you think it requisite?—I don't think I would. The only thing we want is the power to give us redress if we believe anywhere undue preference is given in carrying goods at undue rates to places in Ireland at a higher sum than from their own port. Through rates are always cheaper. The railway companies get less money than they would charge for the same goods coming from London to Enniskillen than from Enniskillen to Belfast.

The inequality between cross-Channel through rates and local rates discussed.

16932. You entertain a strong view that the inland rates in Ireland ought to be reduced, so that the railways would accept the same remuneration for services to local traffic that they accept out of the through rate for similar traffic?—Certainly.

16933. That would involve considerable reductions on large masses of rates?—They carry the goods in any case.

16934. I know; but in order to reform the local rates as you think requisite, many of them would have to be greatly reduced?—Yes, down to the same level as through rates.

16935. To the corresponding charge for the same service in through rates?—Yes.

16936. That would be a very large reform. Would you give your Board of control power to effect that reform?—Certainly in that case I would.

16937. You say that the prosperity of Derry (and the fact is apparent indeed) depends upon its port?—Certainly.

16938. Situated as Derry is can it give the principal companies as long a haulage upon traffic outward from Ireland as some of the eastern ports can give them?—No, shorter.

16939. Then there are several railway ports also on the east coast?—There are—small ports.

16940. Well, judging the matter by ordinary commercial principles is it not inherent in the system of private companies that they should favour the ports which gave them the longest haulage?—That railway companies should.

16941. According to ordinary commercial principles should you expect that they would be disposed to favour the ports that give them the longest haulage, that is, the largest share of the through rates?—I don't think it is fair to the smaller ports in Ireland. I don't think it is giving fair play to the smaller ports in Ireland. If you want to make congested ports of all the smaller ports the railway company might do that.

16942. I am putting it to you—would you think it likely to do this, or is it what in fact they do?—The railway companies at present try to carry all the traffic they can for these two ports.

16943. They try to get the longest haulage?—Yes, all the English traffic for these two ports.

16944. Does that involve a preference to the ports which give the longest haulage; the companies try to get the longest haulage?—They do.

16945. That prefers the port which gives the longest haulage?—Quite so, because they go with the interests of the system.

16946. Yes, but your view, as strongly expressed here, is that so far as possible each port, whether small or large, or no matter where situated, ought to be secured as far as possible in the traffic of the surrounding districts?—Yes, the heavy traffic.

16947. The heavy traffic?—Yes, we don't want to go in for it, because it would not be fair to go in for perishable goods. We don't want to interfere with them in any way.

16948. How are you to get the interests of the different ports served in that way under a system which makes it in the interest of each private company to give the traffic, to attract the traffic, to draw the traffic to the port which gives it the largest haulage?—I don't understand your question.

16949. I understand from you that you are of opinion that the eastern ports afford the railways the longest haulage?—Certainly, from the North of Ireland. Take, for instance, from Enniskillen. I would say from Enniskillen to Belfast would be about ninety miles.

16950. It is obvious from a glance at the map that a port situated as Derry is cannot give these railways as long a haul as a port on the eastern shore for the bulk of their traffic?—No.

16951. Is it not inherent in the present system of private companies and divided ownership that Derry cannot have as good a chance of light or heavy traffic as the ports that give a longer haulage to the companies?—I don't think it is fair for the companies not to encourage every port on their system. I don't think it is fair for the Great Northern Company to put their foot down on the English traffic to the port of Londonderry. I think it would be in the interests of the Great Northern Company to try to develop the city of Londonderry. The more that we can increase in population and business, so much the better for the Great Northern Company.

16952. I gather from you that you are of opinion that it is not for the good of the country that there should be concentration in two, or three ports, and that the other ports on the Northern, Southern, and Western coasts should be starved in consequence?—Certainly.

16953. I agree with you. How do you propose to get what you want?—I suppose that is for the Railway Commission to try and devise for us.

16954. But if you had a united system of railways in Ireland under public management there would be no temptation then to favour the ports that give the longest haulage. The management would have no temptation?—That is to nationalise the railways?

16955. Well, owned by the public and managed on the part of the public?—I think it is very far off. I doubt that it is desirable.

16956. I know; but I am putting a limited question to you. If there were a united system of railways under public management, would there not be a better chance for a port like Derry of getting the traffic of the surrounding district—the heavy traffic of the surrounding district—would the direction of such a system be to give inducements to prefer a

port—say, an eastern port, because it gave a longer haulage—would not such a direction impartially consider the claims of the port of Derry?—To some extend it would; but I believe if you nationalise the Irish railways, and don't nationalise the whole of the railways of Great Britain, you won't have the whole of it affected at all, for I don't see why we should have the Irish railways nationalised, and not the railways on the other side.

16957. That transaction would be of very great magnitude. You are aware of the capital of British railways—£1,200,000,000?—I know.

16958. The transaction of nationalising such a colossal mass of capital is one that, perhaps, the British people, wealthy as they are, would hesitate to undertake?—I suppose they would. It would be a very hard job.

16959. But then in Ireland the capital is only about £40,000,000, smaller than the capital of any one of several of the English railways; the circumstances and demands are also very different; and why then, supposing the thing were good in itself, why should Ireland for a transaction of manageable size wait until the trend of opinion and state of circumstances led England to adopt the same principle? Why should not Ireland be served upon the Irish merits?—I think we could be served better by establishing this Board of Control in Ireland and keep the railways as they are. That is my answer to the question. So far as I know about the management of the Belgian railways, I don't think people here would put up with it. I believe they are slow and unsatisfactory. It is too large a question for me to go into. I am not an expert.

16960. It is too large a question? Would you allow me to ask you whether your study of the system in railways in other countries has led you to arrive at the opinion that they cause dissatisfaction to the people in these countries?—From what I have read I believe the Belgian railways are very slow in the transit of goods.

16961. Do you think the Belgian people would allow of a reversion to the system of private railways?—No.

16962. You have no reason to think they would?—No; I have never been there.

16963. What is your view about the export rates—the rates to Great Britain on our staple products—agricultural and pastoral products. There is a body of evidence here to show that Irish exporters suffer in the British markets as against Continental exporters by reason of transit disadvantages; that the latter are more favoured. Would you be in favour of revision of those rates in the interests of Irish agriculture and the cattle trade?—To some extent I would. We have a very good system of through rates from Ireland to England; but I think they might in some cases be reduced to the advantage of the railway company, where it could be pointed out that they would get a return. They would get the benefit of increased traffic.

16964. When you find that the exports from Denmark, Belgium, and other Continental countries to English markets have vastly increased in the last thirty years, although Ireland is much more advantageously situated for supplying England, and when you find transit conditions in this country unfavourable, don't you think a case has arisen for trying to put the Irish agriculturist upon an equal footing with the Continental?—I am afraid the Irish agriculturists to a great extent are to blame themselves. They have not the same butter as the Danish butter, and there are many things in which they are behind. There are a great many things connected with agriculture before you take into consideration a matter of the kind.

16965. They are doing their best, I suppose, to improve. Would you consider that, even though their products may not be as thoroughly finished as those of other countries, that would be any reason for imposing unequal transit conditions? Would it not be a reason for trying to give them an equal footing, so far as transit is concerned?—I really can't go into that. I have not the statistics.

16966. You think that no local rate in Ireland should be in excess of the rate for which the company is prepared to give the same service to through traffic?—I think that that should be adopted.

16967. The revenue of the railways from the inland traffic of Ireland forms a very large part of their whole revenue. What you ask could not be done without for a time, at any rate, causing a very heavy reduction in the revenues and profits of the railways. Would you propose that the rates should be reduced at the risk of the railways?—I would not go so far as that. It could be met in one way. The companies could get extra traffic by allowing local rates from different places, all to be on the same law. They are carrying the goods now.

16968. An eminent railway manager has expressed himself very strongly on the subject?—For instance, you can only go into cases such as flour, tea, or some of these kinds of things conveyed to the market; but there are other articles not carried from the other side, such as meat and other products, that are never brought over at all, that there are no through rates on. All we want is to get the reductions on these articles on which the rates are charged that interfere with the local merchants.

16969. You think that the local rates in Ireland should be reduced?—To local industries.

16970. The rates in these cases in which a relatively low through rate from England competes with goods which are produced, or could be produced, in Ireland?—Yes.

Problem of how to meet the deficit which reduced rates would entail.

16971. That would involve a considerable reduction of revenue?—They would get the goods all the same. They are carrying the flour, and the local flour mills are doing nothing.

16972. But it might be hoped that after a time the traffic would be so increased by the establishment and development of industries—a slow task, necessarily—that they would be recouped for the reduction, but in the meantime would not the railway companies pass through a very troubled and difficult period whilst they were endeavouring to make up the profit they at present have?—I don't think that it would involve a very great outlay for the railway companies—a very large amount.

16973. Have you formed any idea of the reduction that would be required?—I have not. We can't form any idea of what they get of the through rates. We have no way of finding out what portion of the through rates the Great Northern Railway Company or any railway company in Ireland get.

16974. Do you think that proportion ought to be shown?—I think it would be well to be known.

16975. But the evidence here before us, the evidence of many witnesses, is that there is a much less proportion available to the Irish Company out of the through rate than the amount of the local rate?—That we don't know.

16976. You dislike the idea of public ownership of the railways, but may I ask you whether in case public purchase of the railways by the use of State credit left a large balance out of the present profits, and if the economy of working caused also a further large saving, would it not be very important to the public that there should be that fund for the purpose of giving the reduction in local rates which you think essential to the welfare of the country?—I don't know; I can't give you an answer to that. We are pretty well served at present as we are, and we think that the large railway companies we have in the North of Ireland are a benefit to the country.

Board of Control for the settlement of grievances against the Railway Companies suggested.

16977. Do you think the railway companies would agree to a Board of Control, which would have power to reduce their rates?—Oh, I don't want the Board of Control to have full power to reduce all their rates.

16978. To reduce their rates as might be thought requisite. You must have some means of reducing them?—I want a Board of Control before which we could bring our grievances and have them agreed upon. There is no going before the Board of Trade or the Canal Commission; it is too expensive.

16979. I understand you to have expressed very clearly the view that the local rates in Ireland require to be reduced so as to put them on a level with the corresponding charges in the through rates. I suppose you would provide some means of reducing them?—Yes; that is what I mean.

16980. By this Board of Control?—Yes.

16981. But do you think that the railway companies would assent to a proposal to reduce their rates without any indemnity to them—to throw the risk of the reduction upon them?—Oh, I don't know that. That is a question for the railway companies. I think the railway companies should look after their own interests in that way.

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Alderman Matthew A. Ballantine, J.P., ex-Mayor of Derry, and representative of the Londonderry Corporation.

16982. I think you may depend upon them to do that. Now, may I ask you this. Assuming that the public purchase and public management of the railways in Ireland were to produce a large surplus out of which reductions in rates could be guaranteed, would you rather go on under the present system without reductions in rates than obtain them by means of the public ownership of the railways?—Well, as I have answered you before, we are perfectly satisfied in the North of Ireland with the railway system that we have at present, if we could get those two or three items of grievances that I have put before you remedied. We are perfectly satisfied with the present railway system. The railways are well managed in the North of Ireland; they could not be better. I don't know much about the Southern railways.

16983. Is there any probability that a proposal to make large and general reductions in railway rates in Ireland without indemnity to the railways, is likely to be carried into law?—We don't want to go into very large reductions, only what is an actual grievance to the manufacturers of Ireland.

16984. You know there are a large number of through rates from England to Irish stations in general, which do send in goods that are produced or might be produced in Ireland at a lower charge for transit than the corresponding charge for the Irish local service?—Well, then, if we had these goods produced in Ireland the railway companies would lose nothing by it. They could give the same rate.

16985. But they insist upon charging a higher rate for the carriage of the local goods?—I don't think it is fair to the Irish manufacturers.

Suggestion that the country is not ripe for State ownership.

16985A. Assuming that you cannot get adequate reductions under the present system, would you rather go on as you are than accept a general reduction of rates under a system of State ownership?—Well, I don't think the country is ripe for State ownership.

16986. Very well. Thank you.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

16986A. With regard to the question of the through rates, there is a great difficulty in determining what portion of the through rate is obtained by the Irish carrying company?—We cannot say what portion.

Method of of remedying the disparity between through and local rates.

16987. Yesterday we had a highly interesting example. In the case of flour carried from Liverpool to Tralee *via* Cork, the through rate on it was 10*s.*—the local rate on flour from Cork to Tralee was 7*s.* 6*d.* Mr. Healy informed me that although the through rate was 10s., 8*s.* represented the sea carriage. If that is a correct representation, that only left 2*s.* for the carriage of the flour from Cork to Tralee, as against 7*s.* 6*d.* That, I presume, is a great disparity, out of all proportion to the merits of the case. I understood you to say that the Board of Control to which you propose to give powers of enforcing lower rates on the railway companies, so as to bring them more into conformity with these through rates, would have the effect in such a case of bringing down the local rate of 7*s.* 6*d.* to something more nearly approaching a few shillings. Would that be your view?—Oh, no, because in point of fact I think two shillings too small.

16988. But the railway company carries it at 2*s.* They would presumably not make much out of it; but they must make something. You are dissatisfied with the disparity between the local rate and the through rate, and you would give this Board of Control power to bring the two rates into conformity?—Yes.

16989. Probably that 2*s.* was an extremely low rate. But your proposition would have the effect of compelling the railway company to bring their local rates down to some figure somewhat approaching it?—Well, I don't think you could get any other place in Ireland where it would vary so much as that. I don't think that that is a case that you could take up. There must be something radically wrong in that.

16990. No doubt it is an exceptional case, I presume; otherwise the railway company could not live at all. At any rate, from your point of view you say that the through rates compare very unfavourably with the local rates?—Yes, but not to such a large extent as that. There might be a difference of 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*, but I don't think more, if you take all the rates together.

16991. At any rate, you would give the Board of Control power to force some reduction upon the railway companies?—I would give the Board of Control power to put local industries almost on the same footing.

16992. That would be by a reduction of rates?—Yes.

16993. The Railway and Canal Commissioners have no power to bring about any reduction of rates. In the event of any complaint of an increase of rates they have power to determine and lower the rates; but while they have power to prevent a rate from being increased—they have no power to enforce a reduction of rates. You are aware of that?—Yes; I am aware of that.

16994. So that this Board which you propose should be given this power would have to get powers from Parliament to carry out these reductions of rates. And, as Mr. Sexton pointed out, do you think it at all probable that the railway companies would quietly acquiesce in such powers being given, powers greater than are at present given to the Railway and Canal Commissioners, or to any other authority?—I am not prepared to answer that question, because I don't know how it would affect the companies as a whole.

16995. You know that the dividends that they return are very small, under 4 per cent., and any appreciable reduction which would sensibly benefit the country would involve certain loss to the railway companies?—Well, I would hope that there would not be a loss to the railway companies. I think they would get local traffic where they are not getting local traffic now. I think the traffic would increase.

16996. Where is the local traffic going now?—The flour trade is nothing in this country.

16997. It would lead to a development of the flour trade?—Probably.

16998. At any rate, the development would be gradual, and probably for some years it would entail a loss upon the revenue of the railway companies?—Well, that is so.

16999. You admit that?—I do; and I think the Railways Commission here should go in for some Board of Control, not giving them full power, but giving them power to arrange with the railway company as far as possible to meet those things.

17000. No matter what powers you gave them you admit that it would entail some loss for a greater or lesser period on the railway companies. And do you think it reasonable to expect that the shareholders would quietly acquiesce in such a loss?—I don't think it is probable.

17001. Under such circumstances, then, do you consider that reduction should be obtained by some other means? You say that you are tolerably well satisfied with the Port of Derry under the present circumstances?—Yes, with the exception of certain grievances that I put before you here to-day.

17002. But looking at it from the broader point of view of the whole country, and not from your own, perhaps rather narrow standpoint—you are a man of business experience, and have travelled probably through the country—do you think that there is general satisfaction with the rates or fares throughout Ireland; is it the general view that they are satisfactory so far as that no reduction is essential to the development of the country?—My opinion is that they will reduce the goods fares if they see that they can increase the traffic to meet the reduction.

17003. Assuming that the railway companies are animated by the most beneficent intentions, which, I think, all the evidence here before us shows that they are, is it in their power, with the small volume of trade in the country, to submit to a probable loss for a longer or lesser period on the assumption, under present conditions, that it would develop trade. They are only human beings; they have to earn dividends, to look to their shareholders, to answer to them. Is it likely that under existing conditions a railway company, however anxious it might be to promote the trade of the country, can make such reductions experimentally as will involve it in some loss?—I don't think it would be fair to ask the directors to do so.

17004. I quite agree with you. How, then, do you propose to get it?—What I propose is to get up this Board of Control, so that we might have some cheap way of getting at those grievances that we complain of. I don't want to give them full power to insist upon what would not be right.

Alderman Matthew A. Ballantine J.P., ex-Mayor of Derry and representative of the Londonderry Corporation.

17005. I think you might put a Board of Control out of the question, because nobody would recommend it so long as the railways are in their present state. If you recommend an amalgamation of the railways, with Government subsidies to indemnify the shareholders against loss, such a Board might be established. But I submit to you, as a man of business, that, under existing circumstances, to propose such a Board would be absolutely futile?—I think such a Board would be of service to the country even if you didn't give them full powers to reduce rates.

17006. You mean a Board with absolutely no power over the rates, but with powers to inquire into grievances?—Yes.

17007. That would be a step in the right direction. I think you went further. I understood you to say that a general appreciable reduction of rates was desirable?—I don't think I gave that evidence.

17008. You said you thought that, though satisfied as a whole in Derry, in other parts of the country the rates did press heavily on them, and could be reduced with great benefit?—Well, I don't know that they could be reduced very much. I say that we have a very good system of through booking to England. There may be some cases where the railway companies should reduce their rates and recoup themselves by getting back extra traffic.

17009. I understood you to say that the Midland Company, since they took over the Northern Counties have benefited the Port of Derry?—I have seen some of the statistics for the Port of Derry, and they have done so.

17010. And the Great Northern?—The Great Northern Company treat us well with regard to the Scotch traffic; and if we got the same treatment with regard to our English traffic we have nothing to complain of.

17011. You get the bulk of the heavy traffic?—All the heavy Scotch traffic, or the great portion of it.

17012. And the English traffic?—We would like to have our share of it.

17013. You spoke of Enniskillen and the traffic for that direction. Would not the port of Sligo be entitled to it. It is nearer to Enniskillen than Derry?—They have no facilities there.

17014. If they had?—They would not have the traffic.

17015. It is the much shorter carrying distance, and the nearest?—They are carrying it away west.

17016. It is the longer route by sea; but that would not affect the question?—Derry would be the natural port for them.

17017. They get none of the bulk of the traffic at present?—They get the local traffic.

17018. Then, does the bulk of the traffic from Enniskillen go around to Belfast by the Great Northern?—The English traffic.

17019. Does any portion of the bulk of the traffic of the County Derry come to Derry by the Midland?—All that they could expect to get they are getting. We could not expect to go to the other side of the Bann, because Coleraine is an established port. We get it from a radius of about twenty miles around Derry.

17020. You get the bulk of the traffic for a radius of fifteen or twenty miles?—Yes.

17021. You spoke of the Lough Swilly Railway as not affecting the question of amalgamation very much. Is there any considerable danger, when this new connection is made from Strabane to Letterkenny, that any considerable portion of the traffic which now goes over the Lough Swilly line to Derry will be diverted and go by Strabane to Dublin and other parts?—There is considerable feeling to that effect.

17022. Do you entertain that feeling?—Yes.

17023. Would not that affect the Lough Swilly Co. very seriously?—It will affect the Letterkenny Railway Company.

17024. And naturally if it affects the Letterkenny Co. it will affect the Lough Swilly Co?—Certainly, to some extent.

17025. Would not that be an argument in favour of some kind of amalgamation of the Lough Swilly Co. with the Midland or the Great Northern?—I don't think so.

17026. If such a state of things as we assume goes on, the Company will be starved out of existence?—You may starve them out of the Letterkenny traffic.

17027. It is a very important traffic. The traffic of the Burtonport Extension is very much the heaviest portion?—To a very great extent it is a traffic in perishable goods, and we cannot ask for facilities as regards that. It goes right through by Greenore and Larne. We do not want to touch that traffic. We are too slow for doing that. Our sea passage is too long. Our sea passage is something like fifteen or sixteen hours to Liverpool.

17028. Is it your opinion that the tendency of the policy of these large systems in the North of Ireland is to divert traffic, from your port for instance, to perhaps other ports—to the port of Belfast?—Not only to Belfast, but to Greenore and Larne, and the North Wall over their own system—that is, their English trade.

17029. The policy of those two companies is in that direction?—Decidedly so; yes.

17030. Is it in the interest not only of Derry, but in the interests of the whole country generally that the traffic should be diverted from the natural output to the unnatural output, that is, the more distant one?—It is against the interests of the port of Derry. That is all the answer I can give you.

17031. Don't you think that if the railways were put under one central administration, under some form of State or National control that such a diversion of traffic would not take place, and that the interests of your port and other ports, would all be considered impartially and fairly, and would benefit you accordingly?—That is State purchase?

17032. State or National purchase?—Well, the feeling in Derry is that we are just as well as we are; and I don't think we are ripe yet for State purchase. I have not gone into that.

Country not ripe for State purchase.

Examined by Sir HERBERT JEKYLL.

17033. I should like to know more clearly what kind of authority you have in your mind, Alderman. I anticipate that you do not contemplate that your Board of Control should be invested with statutory powers to fix rates and impose them upon the railway companies. That is not your idea?—No; I would not go so far as that. We would like to have a cheap tribunal where they could investigate those grievances and see what could be done.

An inexpensive Board of Arbitration suggested to replace existing Court of the Railway and Canal Commissioners.

17034. Is it only to investigate and negotiate with the railway companies?—Yes.

17035. Don't you know that the Board of Trade can do that now?—If you can set the machinery in motion; but it is very hard.

17036. Have you ever tried?—I think we have tried in Derry the Railway and Canal Commission. It cost a lot of money.

17037. That is a legal tribunal. But would this be a legal tribunal which would be empowered to settle disputes between traders and the railway companies?—I think so—a Board of Arbitration, as it were, that we would come to without any expense.

17038. A Board of Arbitration to arbitrate between traders and the railway companies?—Yes.

17039. You would exclude counsel?—I think so. Counsel is too costly.

17040. Would the Board of Arbitration have power to impose its decision upon the parties?—On both parties?

17041. On both parties?—I don't know whether I would give them full power.

17042. We often hear about the need for a cheap tribunal, but a cheap tribunal is not an easy thing to devise?—I cannot devise a cheap tribunal.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

17043. Are you aware, Alderman, that the traffic from Enniskillen is all consigned traffic?—Consigned by the Enniskillen merchants.

Routing of Enniskillen cross-Channel traffic.

17044. Yes?—I don't know as to that.

17045. And that it is the consignees who select the route and the port?—I don't know much about Enniskillen now. For thirty years I had gone there every day. But for the last twenty years I was not there.

17046. You selected Enniskillen?—Yes, I did, for one of the places.

17047. Do you think Derry would be the natural port for live stock from Enniskillen. Is it the longer sea carriage to Liverpool?—My answer to that is that I have been speaking to a great number of cattle dealers, and to a very great extent they would prefer the short railway carriage. They don't object to their cattle being on board the steamer for twelve or fourteen hours.

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Alderman Matthew A. Ballantine, J.P., ex-Mayor of Derry and representative of the Londonderry Corporation.

17048. Why don't they consign their cattle *via* Derry?—I don't know. I cannot answer you that question. The only reason I can give you is that all the railway companies have canvassers in all the provincial towns——

17049. And kissing goes by favour?—I suppose so, to a great extent.

17050. You have spoken about preferential rates. Didn't the Derry authority take the Great Northern Company before the Railway and Canal Commission?—Well, I believe they did.

17051. What was the result?—I cannot tell you. If you ask Dr. Reid, who will be examined afterwards.

17052. The matter was threshed out, and a decision given?—I believe it was; but I don't know. Dr. Reid will give you information upon that. I cannot do it.

Sir F. Henry Miller examined by The Chairman.

Sir F. Henry Miller, Town Clerk and ex-Mayor of Londonderry.

17053. You are Town Clerk of Londonderry?—Yes.

17054. Before being appointed Town Clerk were you a member of the Corporation?—I was, sir.

17055. Have you been Mayor of the City?—For two years—1900 and 1901.

17056. I think your object in coming here this morning was to bring some facts in connection with the Letterkenny Railway under our notice?—That is so, sir.

Promotion of the Letterkenny Railway.

17057. Before reading the resolution passed by the Corporation will you just give us a few facts and figures in connection with the railway?—Well, sir, I think you have heard the history of the origin of that railway, and, with your permission, I will just deal with the finance of it as it affects my city and my Corporation. The railway was originally promoted by shareholders in the County Donegal.

17058. I think we had all this before?—And I don't wish to repeat it. If you take that in evidence I adopt it so far as it appertains to the Letterkenny Railway.

17059. It will shorten the proceedings. Do you agree with the evidence given by Dr. Todd with reference to the Letterkenny Railway?—So far as it refers to the Letterkenny Railway I agree with him. I adopt his evidence and Mr. Hanna's.

Earnings of the Letterkenny line since 1890.

17060. Give us some figures in connection with the working of that railway?—Very well, sir. I will give you the earnings of that railway from the year 1890 down to last year, as returned in the accounts. Of course, you know that the railway is in the hands of the Board of Works as mortgagees, and it is worked on lease by the Lough Swilly Railway Company. They get so much for the working of it. In the year 1890 the gross receipts of the Letterkenny Railway were £5,593 15*s.* 1*d.*; the working company were paid out of that £3,747 16*s.* 3*d.*, leaving a net balance of £1,845 18*s.* 10*d.* And under Section 6 of the Letterkenny Act of 1876 those net earnings were to be applied in payment of the interest in the first instance of the first mortgage, and, if a balance was left, secondly, of the second mortgage, and so on.

Amounts of first and second mortgages on line.

17061. I think you had better tell us what was the amount of the first mortgage?—£50,000.

17062. And of the second?—£35,000.

17063. The surplus revenue was to go in reduction of the interest?—In reduction of the interest on those mortgages.

17064. I think we might jump from 1890 to 1900?—Yes. In 1900 the gross receipts amounted to £6,952 2*s.* 4*d.*; the working company were paid out of that £4,479 13*s.* 10*d.*, leaving a balance of £2,472 8*s.* 6*d.*

Agreement with Lough Swilly Company, who work line for a percentage of the receipts.

17065. May I ask just to get it on the notes, do the working company work the line for a percentage? I think it is—I am not quite sure—but I believe it is about £3 10*s.*

17066. It is a fixed sum per mile?—I would not like to say definitely.

17067. *Mr. Sexton.*—A sliding scale on the receipts—60 to 67 per cent.?—Yes, I believe that is correct, Mr. Sexton.

17068. *Chairman.*—Those figures that you have already given—1890 and 1900—show that there has been—I won't say a considerable—but that there has been an appreciable increase?—It is considerably above what had been earned previously on the working of the line.

17069. Would you go to last year?—The gross earnings returned for 1906 were £8,566 6*s.* 9*d.*; the working company were paid £5,396 15*s.* 9*d.*, leaving a net surplus of £3,169 11*s.* 0*d.*

17070. That is an increase of the net result of £1,845 in 1890?—Quite so, sir.

17071. So that there again it is nearly double?—Very nearly double.

17072. Now, then, perhaps you had better explain in your own words about the loans. How were the loans to be paid. I suppose the money was advanced by the Board of Works?—By the Treasury through the Board of Works. And the first mortgage was a mortgage of £50,000. The interest originally was five per cent. That was subsequently reduced to four per cent. The second mortgage was a mortgage of £35,000 advanced again by the Treasury through the Board of Works repayable in forty yearly instalments of, roughly speaking, £1,750. The payment of those instalments was guaranteed at the rate of four per cent. interest and one per cent. sinking fund by the City of Derry, and certain portions of the County Donegal through which the railway passed and that it would serve. Provision was made under the Act for recoupment of any sums paid by the ratepayers when the line became a paying concern.

17073. Let us go by steps. The revenue of the line, I suppose, has been insufficient to pay the working expenses and the interest on the first mortgage?—Yes, that is so.

17074. The arrears of interest have had to be paid by the City of Derry?—The City of Derry have not to pay arrears of interest, but they suffer by having to continue the payments of the yearly instalments until the arrears of interest that had accumulated on the first mortgage were discharged out of the surplus earnings.

17075. How much have they paid under that?—The arrears of interest at one period, I believe, amounted to a sum of over £8,000. But on the 30th of June last year the arrears of interest on the first mortgage amounted to the sum of £7,348 16*s.* 2*d.* The result of that, I would like to point out, is that of course from the start down to the present day the City of Derry and that portion of the County of Donegal have had to meet the whole liability in respect of the yearly instalments on the second charge, and the result is that the City of Derry has up to the present paid a sum of £24,538, and we remain liable to pay £19,397. The County of Donegal has paid £19,397 and remain liable to pay £10,856.

17076. The Corporation that you represent consider that their portion is considerably altered by some new line being authorised to be constructed as a competitive line to this Letterkenny line?—That is so, sir.

17077. What is that line?—It is a line in the course of construction at the present time, running from Strabane to Letterkenny.

17078. Was that line authorised by Act of Parliament or by your Council?—It was authorised by Act of Parliament. In the year 1903 the line was promoted.

17079. Who promoted that line?—Well, sir, I had the honour to be the solicitor who promoted it. It was promoted by some landowners and some merchants principally in the County Donegal.

17080. Did the Corporation of Londonderry oppose it?—They didn't oppose it in the first or second year. They didn't oppose that line directly.

17081. Although they were seriously affected by it?—It was opposed by the Derry Harbour Trust.

17082. And the Corporation, notwithstanding their liability under the arrangement, allowed the Bill to pass without opposition?—Well, sir, they were satisfied to come in under the opposition of the Harbour Trust, with a view to economy, I take it.

17083. Are the Harbour Commissioners members of the Corporation?—Well, there are some.

17084. It is an independent body?—It is an independent body.

17085. A Councillor or Alderman might be a member of the Harbour Board?—Yes, they are separate bodies.

17086. At any rate, the Corporation didn't oppose it?—That is so.

17087. Why do they object to it now. You are in a different position now?—Yes, sir, I come here as Town Clerk.

17088. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—He was solicitor for the Bill?—I stated so, Mr. Healy.

17089. *Chairman.*—Now he is advising the Corporation?—That is so, sir.

17090. What have you got to say on behalf of the City of Derry against this particular line?—I hand in, sir, a copy of the resolution passed by the Corporation at their last Council meeting on the 18th of April. The resolution was as follows:—"Whereas this city has already paid the sum of £24,538 1*s.* 11*d.* on foot of its guarantee for the repayment of the loan of £35,000 advanced by the Commissioners of Public Works for railway development in the County Donegal by means of the Letterkenny Railway Company, and still remains liable for the payment of a further sum of £19,397 on foot thereof; and whereas the City of Derry was requested to join in this guarantee, and did so join, on the grounds that the traffic from the districts served by the railway would flow through the City of Derry; and whereas the recent returns of the Letterkenny Railway have held out hopes, not only of relief to the city from further payments on foot of their liability, but of ultimate recoupment in respect of the sums already paid; and whereas in the Parliamentary Session of 1904 an Act was passed sanctioning the construction of a line from Letterkenny to Convoy connecting with Strabane, which railway when constructed must divert a large proportion of the traffic at present passing over the Letterkenny Railway, thereby destroying any chance of future relief to the City of Derry; and whereas the Government of the day, as represented by the then Chief Secretary of Ireland, appeared before the Committees of both Houses to advocate the construction of this railway in the interest of the further development of the County Donegal. Now, we, the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the City of Londonderry, hereby resolve that the policy of the Government in Ireland, as hereinbefore referred to, in assisting in promoting a competing line to the Letterkenny Railway (of which they were at the time mortgagees in possession) justifies us in now requesting the Government to relieve us from all further liability on foot of our guarantee, in respect of the second mortgage debt of the Letterkenny Railway; and we respectfully request the Commissioners of Public Works to take such steps as may be necessary to obtain such relief. And we direct a copy of this resolution to be forwarded to the said Commissioners; and we further direct the Town Clerk to appear before the 'Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways,' and submit this resolution for their consideration, and to give evidence as to the facts involved, and invoke their assistance in obtaining the relief sought."

17091. What action do your Corporation want us to take in reference to this line?—It is set out in the resolution.

17092. Read the clause, if you please?—The resolution recites the financial position and the operative part of it, and proceeds—"Now, we, the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the City of Londonderry, hereby resolve that the policy of the Government in Ireland, as hereinbefore referred to, in assisting in promoting a competing line to the Letterkenny Railway (of which they were at the time mortgagees in possession) justifies us in now requesting the Government to relieve us from all further liability on foot of our guarantee, in respect of the second mortgage debt of the Letterkenny Railway; and we respectfully request the Commissioners of Public Works to take such steps as may be necessary to obtain such relief. And we direct a copy of this resolution to be forwarded to the said Commissioners; and we further direct the Town Clerk to appear before the 'Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways,' and submit this resolution for their consideration, and to give evidence as to the facts involved, and invoke their assistance in obtaining the relief sought."

17093. It appears to me that it is rather late in the day?—Well, sir, of course it is expected now that the line will be opened for working some time in the coming summer. It is perfectly true that opposition was offered to the acquisition of the Donegal line by the joint companies—the Great Northern and the Midland—that you have already heard of during the past few years—joint opposition by the Harbour Commissioners and the Corporation. There was a joint petition to both Houses of Parliament.

17094. What I want to know is why didn't the City of Derry take action, which they now suggest should be taken, when the Bill was before Parliament?—The Harbour Trust did take action.

17095. Not the Corporation. The Harbour Trust has nothing to do with this guarantee?—Well, not directly as a body. They were satisfied, I presume, that their interests would be put forward by the Harbour Trust.

17096. *Mr. Sexton.*—Might they have supposed that the House of Lords would again limit the line to Convoy, as they did the previous year?—Yes.

Bill for construction of Strabane and Letterkenny Railway opposed by Harbour Trust, who also voiced the opposition of the Corporation.

17097. The Corporation were willing to have their work done by the Harbour Board?—The interests of the Corporation were directly represented by the Lough Swilly Company who opposed the promotion of the line. They succeeded in their opposition the first year in limiting it to Convoy.

17098. The Corporation perhaps thought that their interests would be subserved by the other opponents?—Yes; the Lough Swilly opposition was identical with ours. You see we are a small community and do not wish to put up our rates by more financial obligations than we can avoid. It cost us £2,000 the last two years opposing the promotion of other lines.

17099. *Chairman.*—Of course, looking at it on the map I think probably you have serious grounds for your apprehensions as to the diversion of the traffic?—Of course, sir, there is no doubt that the opposition of the Lough Swilly Company and the Harbour Trust in the first year that the Strabane and Letterkenny line was promoted, succeeded in stopping the promotion of that line at a place called Convoy—a place half way through. An Act was granted for the promotion of the line from Strabane to Convoy. That was on the opposition of the Lough Swilly Company.

Only a section of the line authorised the first year, but the remainder approved in the following session.

17100. If the line was stopped there, there would be no danger to Derry?—No.

17101. It is the extension from Convoy to Letterkenny that makes it a competitive line?—Yes; that is so, sir.

17102. Then your Corporation thinks that under the special circumstances the Board of Works or whoever arranges these matters should give you some relief?—Yes. The Chief Secretary in the year 1904, Mr. Wyndham gave evidence on behalf of the promoters that he thought it was in the interest of the County of Donegal that a link should be made between Convoy and Letterkenny. And what the Corporation feel is that if in the interests of the large County of Donegal that that link should be granted as it was granted, that at least the Government should relieve the City of Derry from the liability they are incurring for several years. They consider that they should not be asked to continue to pay for the benefit of the County of Donegal as they thought originally that the promotion of the Letterkenny line would bring traffic through the City of Derry.

Evidence in support of whole scheme given by Mr. Wyndham, the late Chief Secretary.

17103. From what I have heard since I have been here in Dublin, it seems to me that the County of Donegal has been very highly favoured all round?—There is no doubt that the promotion of those lines has been of incalculable benefit to the district.

17104. You have explained it in a manner that we fairly understand?—I would like to say, if there is an impression on your mind that the Corporation should have taken direct action the first year in opposing the promotion of the line, or perhaps that has passed from your mind——

17105. It has passed from my mind. I merely asked the question because it occurred to me that if they were so deeply interested they ought to have appeared in opposition to the Bill?—What I was going to say is—I did mention it casually—I said the interests of the Lough Swilly Company who worked the line were identical with the Corporation interests.

17106. And you relied upon them?—The Corporation did rely on them and on the opposition of the Harbour Commissioners.

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17107. Did the Corporation subscribe to the expense?—No; they didn't. The Harbour Commissioners have a very strong financial position in the City of Derry. It is a small community dependent more or less on one industry, and we try to economise as much as we possibly can. The expenses of the City in connection with railway matters have been very excessive in recent years. I take it that that was one of their reasons for not opposing it.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

17108. What was the date of the Treasury advance?—It was the year 1883.

17109. About the year 1883?—I think that was the year the first re-payment instalment was due.

17110. Of course, the advance was made before that?—Yes.

Conditions under which the Treasury loans were advanced for Letterkenny line.

17111. For the first mortgage the Treasury was content to take simply the security of the line?—That is so.

17112. And in case the surplus of the line should fall below the interest on the first mortgage the Treasury would be the loser?—No, sir. If the line eventually became a paying concern, and in case the arrears of interest had accumulated, the Treasury would be entitled to any surplus towards the arrears before the second mortgagees could obtain any relief.

17113. For the time, at least, they would suffer?—That is so.

17114. And if the surplus did not reach an amount sufficient to meet the interest due to the Treasury, the Treasury would lose part of the interest on the first mortgage?—That is so.

17115. It appears that the Board of Works and the Chief Secretary directly supported the competing line against the traffic interest of the line of which they were mortgagees?—They did in the general interest of Donegal.

Guarantee given in expectation of increased traffic through Derry.

17116. What was the interest for which the City of Derry gave the guarantee—what was the consideration?—The City of Derry believed, and I hope they will be justified, that the ordinary traffic would pass through the City of Derry, hence the reason for giving the undertaking they did.

17117. Yes. The Burtonport line did not exist at that time?—It did not.

17118. The idea was to get the traffic on this Letterkenny line—the traffic from the westward—or from any further line that might be constructed?—Oh, no. I think you will find in that traffic there is a great proportion at present of it coming over the Burtonport line even up to Letterkenny, and that prospect is increasing as the line is being made. There is a very large proportion.

17119. In your reading of it, the consideration, when the guarantee was contemplated, was a flow into Derry of the traffic brought by the Letterkenny line?—Yes, to my mind. We understand such was the intention when it was promoted and constructed.

17120. Upon your understanding of the consideration existing at the time the guarantee was given, did that understanding include traffic from any line westward, or was it limited to the traffic on the Letterkenny line itself?—Oh, no. It took in the district behind Letterkenny. A large proportion of that traffic would naturally find its way across Channel, but the other would pass through Letterkenny and be sent through the city of Derry.

17121. Does the construction of the Burtonport Railway alter the equitable claim you make to have the traffic from westward of Letterkenny?—We were entitled to any accruing benefits coming into the district.

17122. The second guarantee was £35,000. That was on a different plan?—Yes.

17123. It was secured upon the rates?—Yes.

17124. It includes a provision for the repayment of the principal?—Yes.

17125. Is there any provision for the repayment of the principal on the first mortgage?—Not that I am aware of.

17126. It may remain a debt for ever?—So far as I am cognisant of the Act.

Present position of Derry with respect to the mortgages.

17127. How much remains due at the present time?—We are liable, the city itself is, liable for £19,397.

17128. I look at it from the point of view of the creditor. There is owing to the creditor the whole principal sum of the first guarantee and £2,000 arrears of interest?—There is more than that—about £6,000. There is the arrears of interest on the first mortgage.

17129. And the sinking fund of the second mortgage has paid off about £13,000 of principal?—Yes.

17129A. The debt remaining amounts to £78,000 including arrears of interest. That is to say, £50,000 on the first mortgage; £6,000 arrears of interest; and £22,000 the principal of the second mortgage. That is £78,000?—Yes.

17130. They charged 5 per cent. on the first mortgage of £50,000, for how long, for some years?—Yes.

17131. And 4 per cent. since?—Yes.

17132. And there is 4 per cent. interest on the second mortgage?—Yes.

17133. They were able to borrow at 3 per cent. all that time?—Yes.

17134. They have had a profit of £800 a year, or £20,000, by way of excess interest up to the present time?—That would be so.

17135. That would entitle you under the circumstances to lenient treatment from the Treasury?—We thought so, and did make application to the Treasury on the subject, but without avail.

17136. Did you remind them of that profit they had made?—I was not on the deputation.

17137. Perhaps you thought is was more judicious to keep clear of that part of the subject?—Well, if we had got the advantageous terms since given for land purchase, and such like, if we had been treated in a similar way, there would not have been a penny of liability left on the foot of the second charge.

17138. Your claim is that this expenditure is closely connected with the schemes for developing those poorer districts?—On that consideration, among others, we thought ourselves justified in going to the Board.

17139. Now, with respect to the diversion of the traffic, a good deal of the traffic from the Western Peninsula would be perishable and would find its way by the shortest sea possible, and would be diverted from the port of Londonderry?—That is conceded on all sides, and it was said in the Houses of Parliament when the Bill was going through.

17140. The significance of this return you have handed in is shown in the fact that the gross receipts within the period increased by £3,000 a year, and the working expenses only increased by £1,600, so that the net increase in the surplus is about £1,400 a year. That is an increase of from £1,800 to over £3,000?—If interest had been charged at the rate I have mentioned we would have been nearly recouped by this time.

17141. If the Treasury had been content to lend the money in 1883 at about the same rate as they borrowed it this debt would have disappeared by now?—I think it would have been repaid by this time. If the rate of interest had been reduced, even to what it has been reduced in recent times for land purchase, when the money was advanced at 3¼ per cent. per annum, or so, I think we would be in the same happy position.

17142. If the Treasury had charged 3 per cent. interest the surplus last year would have been sufficient to pay the interest on the first mortgage and the interest on the second mortgage, and to leave a balance. You would add £800 to the amount of £3,169. I consider you have a strong equitable claim, and that the Treasury had no right to make a substantial profit out of such a transaction?—I am very glad to hear you say so, sir.

17143. Now, the construction of this new line alters the position in which you stood when you gave the guarantee. That position has been altered by the direct influence of the Government. You say there is no chance of any surplus arising beyond the interest on the first mortgage?—Obviously, taking all these figures.

17144. And you pray to be relieved of the balance of liability?—We ask this Commission to say whether it could see its way to adopt our view and make an interim representation in connection with it. This new line will be working in the summer, and I don't know how long this Commission may be sitting before it is able to report, and in the meantime the city of Derry will be paying that charge, and there is also the proportion from the County Donegal. If it is possible, I would ask you to consider whether you could not do so.

17145. What is the amount of the two balances added together—the city of Derry and the county of Donegal?—About £30,000. If you take into account the £20,000 profit, it is only £10,000.

17146. On this question of the recoupment clause. it provides that after you had fully discharged your liability under the mortgages, principal and interest, if at any time there was a surplus the annual payments from the first would have to be given back to you. I have the section here?—That is so.

17147. In that case would not the line really remain in a state of very embarrassing liability for a long time. The capital of the line, I think, was £50,000?—Yes; you should add to that what was borrowed from the State.

17148. As to the £70,000, has the mortgage provision the effect of doubling the amount borrowed?—The mortgage clause has that effect. Assuming we have paid the £35,000, plus interest, that is £70,000, we come into the position of the Board of Works; we will, instead of the Board of Works, be entitled to be repaid our £70,000.

17149. That is the full amount of the annual payments?—Precisely.

17150. However, if you think the line will not pay interest on the second mortgage, there is really very little prospect of the recoupment clause turning out of any practical advantage?—Afterwards there is a possibility that the line may be acquired by a larger line, and if that should be so, I fancy the Houses of Parliament will take into consideration any amount outstanding, and what the liabilities against the line really are.

17151. It ought to be remembered, of course, that the original offer to construct this line was made by a number of people in Derry and Donegal, who raised a sum of £50,000—the capital?—They were doing then what the Government is doing now. That was done, and it ought to be remembered.

17152. Did the Corporation favour the offer made by the Lough Swilly Company to purchase this line from the Board of Works?—They did at the time. I have a resolution referring to it.

17153. I just wanted to know why they were in favour of it; have you any correspondence?—It was before my time, and I would have to refresh my memory. Here is an extract I will give you from a report made in the year 1899. There was a Committee appointed to approach the Treasury with a view of getting a reduction on the interest, and it was unanimously agreed by those present—"That it was extremely desirable that vigorous and combined action should be taken by your Corporation and the bodies named"—the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce and the Donegal County Council, these were the bodies—"for the purpose of having the taxpayers of Derry and Donegal relieved of the burden of this tax at the earliest possible moment, and of securing, if possible, a better railway service between Derry, Letterkenny, and Burtonport. It appeared to your Committee as well as to the representatives of the bodies named that the best, if not the only feasible means of attaining this object would be to request Her Majesty's Treasury and the Chief Secretary to sell the Treasury mortgages on the Letterkenny Railway to the Lough Swilly Railway Company; to accept the price thereof, or such lesser sum as the Treasury can be induced to accept in full discharge of these mortgages, and to release the taxpayers of Derry and Donegal from any further payments on foot of the second mortgage. Your Committee is of opinion that the Treasury should consent to the moneys received by the Treasury on the sale of the Letterkenny Railway being apportioned between the Treasury and the contributing areas in proportion to the debts due to them respectively."

17154. What Committee is that?—It is the Committee of the Joint Committee of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, the Londonderry Corporation, and the County Council of Donegal.

17155. And fully representative of local opinion?—Absolutely so.

17156. Considering that the balance due to the Treasury, with arrears of interest, amounts to a total of £78,000, was it not rather a good offer to say: "We will give you a lump sum of £70,000, and if you do not accept that we will agree to a valuation by expert engineers, and pay the amount of the valuation"?—It looked like it.

17157. Of course, the entire transaction being viewed, they would lose nothing?—They did not agree.

17158. *Chairman.*—Who was "they"?—The Treasury.

17159. *Mr. Sexton.*—They conceded something in other cases. On the sale of the Limavady line to the Midland Company I think there was a balance remitted. The annual report of the Board of Works shows a number of cases in which the Treasury remitted a part of the balance due?—Mr. Stevenson, who gave evidence before the Commission, expressed himself to the effect that the rate of interest was too high. They did not go quite so far as we asked.

Concessions by the Treasury in the case of mortgages on lines sold to other companies

17160. Did this offer include that the line would be so relaid so as to give a service equal to the Lough Swilly line?—That was only one of them. It was costing the ratepayers of the city of Derry 3*d.* in the pound, which we could devote to more necessary things in the city.

17161. And the Lough Swilly Company are willing to give any guarantee which the Government may require for a satisfactory service on the whole system?—I think that was so.

Possibility of the acquisition of the Letterkenny line by a larger company and a recoupment to Derry of the monies paid under guarantee.

17162. Does it occur to you that this offer might afford a satisfactory way out of this very ugly difficulty?—Yes, sir. Certainly if I were advising the Corporation, in view of the remark I made about the possible acquisition of this line at some future date by a larger company, I would not like to see the city of Derry sacrificing the prospect of an arrangement in which all the moneys that have been paid should be repaid. However, it does seem that if your suggestion were adopted and the Lough Swilly got it for that money they would not get consideration for more than they paid.

17163. Looking to this diversion of traffic, and the probability that it may increase even in the near future, would not the Corporation of Derry be wise to accept the cancellation of the liability and say nothing about the recoupment?—I would sooner wait and see what in a couple of years will be the result of the competition.

17164. Have you finished your answer?—It just occurred to me that, having regard to the remark that Mr. Stevenson made, that he has really admitted to the Commission that the rate of interest is high, at least at the present time——

17165. *Chairman.*—What is the rate?—4 per cent. We thought that one of the reasons why we should ask the Commission if it could see its way in the near future to make some recommendation. We must go on paying in the meantime.

Purchase proposal of the Lough Swilly Company not before the Corporations since 1899.

17166. *Mr. Sexton.*—If you go on claiming and reserving the right to this possible recoupment, and are not willing to take things as they stand and accept relief from your liability, you complicate the question?—That is the position of the Corporation to-day. I do not think this purchase scheme has been before my Corporation since 1899, and that is a reason why I hesitate to give any expression of opinion or appear to bind them by any expression.

17167. Being in an official position, and having to submit this question to the Corporation, you do not care to give an expression of opinion?—That is the case.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Rates of interest on Treasury loans.

17168. With regard to this four per cent. interest. You are aware the Board of Works is prohibited from lending money at any lower rate of interest to railways, and yet they are not prohibited, they are permitted, to lend money on the security of other undertakings at 3 per cent. and a sliding scale. Does it not seem to be rather incongruous; lending money on the security of undertakings of hardly equal value at a lower rate; and prohibited by Act of Parliament from lending to railways at the same rate?—That is what we said. We think the Board of Works or the Treasury might have power to lend the money at least at the same rate.

17169. To lend money at the same rate to you as to other undertakings?—Yes.

Arrears of interest due on first Letterkenny Railway loan.

17170. I think you said that a sum of £7,000 was due as arrears of interest on the first mortgage, and I think the net earnings after payment of the interest on the first mortgage charge would admit of the redemption of those arrears at the rate of about £1,000 a year?—There is the charge as well.

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Sir F. Henry Miller, Town Clerk and ex-Mayor of Londonderry.

17171. It would seem from that that it would be seven years before the arrears of interest on the first mortgage are liquidated?—It would appear so from that. You can see what has been done. If you look at the figures in our resolution you will see that from the year 1899 there has been a steadily increasing surplus. Now, under a section of the Act of 1876, when that mortgage was secured that surplus should have gone to the reduction of our liability. That has not been done, and the amount has been placed in a suspense account. We have only discovered this recently ourselves. Personally I am only three years in office as Town Clerk, and we have only discovered this. You will see that for the last four years there has been a surplus of £1,000 a year, and under this section we believe we are entitled to claim that that £4,000 should have gone towards the reduction of the liability on the second loan. I say that to the best of my knowledge.

Arrears of interest due on first Letterkenny Railway loan.

17172. To relieve the second loan. That is a rather important point, Mr. Chairman. The profits for the last four years, the surplus of £1,000 a year, should go towards the payment of the second loan; it should be placed to their credit under the first mortgage, and should be allocated towards the reduction of the interest and instalment on the second loan; and that has never been done?—It has been placed in a suspense account, and we have had no benefit therefrom. The arrears have not been reduced, as would appear from the account. Of course pending what may happen here we are not moving in the matter at the present.

No prospect of relief to guarantors under the second loan under existing circumstances.

17173. However, even upon that estimate there is still very little prospect of any relief to the county or to your city of the burden under the second loan under existing circumstances?—Oh, no. On the assumption that on the surplus for the past four years, it should be decided we were entitled to get credit for £1,000 each year, there would be £4,000 standing to our credit. If there were lower terms of interest during the next three years the arrears would be wiped out and we would be entitled to relief.

17174. But in any probability, it is very unlikely in view of the Strabane connection that the net earnings, the present surplus of the earnings of the Letterkenny line will be maintained?—I fear so.

17175. In these circumstances the chances are that the guarantors will remain liable for an indefinite period of time?—There is no doubt of that unless something else turns up.

17176. It might be thought a well-advised course for the Corporation, as Mr. Sexton suggested, provided you could get relief under this second mortgage to forego the claim that you have in regard to the sum payable in respect of any future recoupment. It would be a simpler problem if you abandoned that claim?—Yes, sir, but I am simply here as an official. I don't like to say anything that might bind the body I represent hereafter.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

17177. Do you agree with other witnesses, with the last witness, that the management of the Great Northern and Midland Companies is satisfactory?—As an official of the Corporation I have its interests to represent, but personally, I have no hesitation in saying that the management of these companies in the interest of the shareholders could not be better.

Mr. JOHN KELSO REID, LL.D., was examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. John Kelso Reid, LL.D., representative of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners.

17178. You are solicitor of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners?—Yes.

17179. How long solicitor to that body?—About nineteen years.

17180. Do you appear before us by any resolution of the Commissioners?—I do; but in the first place I wish to say that the Chairman, Mr. Cooke, has instructed me to apologise for not being able to attend personally. He met with a severe accident sometime ago and the doctor does not allow him to go out of the house yet. Mr. Cooke was expected to attend, but in view of this I was appointed by resolution on the 12th instant to attend and give evidence in his stead.

17181. Very well. You appear to speak on behalf of the Harbour Commissioners?—Yes.

17182. Would you mention the several points you wish to give evidence upon. First, as to the port of Londonderry. Of course you are directly interested in the sea traffic to and from Londonderry?—Yes.

Complaint of diversion of traffic to Eastern ports from Derry route.

17183. Is it your opinion, or the opinion of the Commissioners, that the port of Londonderry is under a disadvantage as compared with other ports in Ireland?—We have always found it so, as compared with the different ports on the east coast, such as Larne, Belfast, Greenore, and, to a lesser extent, Dublin.

17184. This disadvantage you attribute in some degree to the action of the railway companies?—We do.

17185. Why do you think the railway companies should favour Belfast, for instance, any more than Londonderry?—Of course from the geographical situation of Londonderry, lying so much to the westward of Ireland, the railway companies get a longer haulage for themselves on the traffic in our neighbourhood of the north-west by taking it through the east coast ports. They get a longer haul that way than by taking it through the more accessible ports.

17186. If they get a longer haul and a larger proportion of the through rates it is an inducement to them to take traffic to the eastern ports as against Londonderry?—We think so. That influences their action in doing so.

17187. The rates in most cases through any port to England are practically the same?—Practically the same.

17188. Say from inland places in Ireland near Londonderry to London?—Take Strabane. The case of Strabane is a special one.

17189. These are the Greenore and Liverpool rates?—In practice I believe these rates are the same, but I don't know if it is so to-day. Up to a short time ago there was a differential rate shown in the rate books of the company by which the route *via* Derry was slightly cheaper than the route *via* east coast ports.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Strabane is one of the places that has a differential by statute.

Colonel Plews.—It was given voluntarily.

Witness.—I don't want to come to a discussion on the matter with Mr. Plews. It was a matter of terms.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It was given voluntarily.

Colonel Plews.—It was not imposed by the Parliamentary Committee. It was offered on going into Committee. That is the 2*s.* 6*d.* differential on Strabane traffic.

17190. *Chairman.*—That was a clause submitted in some Bill in Parliament?—Yes, 2*s.* 6*d.* It appeared on the books of the company long before the clause was given, and had been given for a great many years.

17191. At any rate the Bill was in Parliament and that clause was inserted?—Yes.

17192. With regard to Scotland. I suppose the arrangements there are more favourable to Derry than to other ports?—They are satisfactory. Of course, the same geographical question does not arise.

17193. There is a service of steamers from Derry to Scotland?—Yes, a daily service.

17194. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—They are the shortest route to Scotland, and they command the traffic?—Yes.

17195. *Chairman.*—In addition to the daily service to Scotland what steamer services are there between Derry and England?—We have a daily service to England also; twice in the week *via* Heysham, twice in the week *via* Fleetwood, and twice in the week to Liverpool.

17196. I think we had that evidence this morning. Of course you have no personal knowledge of the rates to and from Derry and places in the interior of Ireland?—No, sir, I have no personal knowledge of the actual figures.

17197. Have you any personal knowledge of any particular complaint from the Harbour Board as to the service or as to railway conditions generally?—Except with regard to the question as to the comparative

amount of the through rates through English ports as compared with the port of Londonderry.

17198. The question of a differential rate through Londonderry has often been raised by the Harbour Board?—It has often been a question of discussion.

17199. But speaking generally, you are not here to complain of either the rates or facilities granted by the railway companies to Londonderry?—I have no specific instructions on that point.

17200. You are not here to complain about it?—I have no instructions upon that. There are certain minor details I know there is dissatisfaction on.

17201. Nothing of a substantial character?—Nothing that my Commissioners thought it necessary to bring before you to-day.

17202. In other words, they do not think they were of sufficient importance to trouble us with them?—The main trouble about it arises from the scarcity of wagons, the difficulty the merchants have in getting a sufficient supply of wagons to deal with the cargoes that are being discharged at the quays.

17203. I suppose that is exceptional?—Well, I believe it is considered usual about this time of the year, and is not confined to any one particular railway company. There seems to be a general deficiency of wagons to cope with the spring traffic.

17204. In all ports, not only in Ireland, everywhere now and then there are gluts of traffic from the abnormal arrival of ships?—I understand this is more or less chronic in the spring.

17205. Can you give us any details?—I cannot speak from personal knowledge. Generally the traffic over the railways in the spring is larger than at other times of the year. It is a busy time with farmers and others for seed and so on.

17206. Have you any specific instances to bring under our notice even of that?—No, I have not any details. I produce no details, only the general statement that there is a deficiency. It is not individuals; there is a general complaint that there is a scarcity of wagons at Derry, that the railway stock is not sufficient to cope with the traffic in the spring.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It is practically caused by the detention of our wagons at the ports, the needless detention of our wagons. They are ordered to wait for vessels coming in—particularly at Derry, too.

17207. *Chairman.*—It must occur. Have you or your Commissioners considered the question of the amalgamation of these Irish railways?—Our Commissioners did.

17208. Are the Commissioners an elective body?—They are.

17209. Are they elected by the ratepayers of the town?—Yes, with a certain rating qualification.

17210. I assume that the Commissioners are interested in the traffic of the port and the city?—Very largely. They comprise nearly all the principal merchants in the town.

17211. They considered this question of the amalgamation of the railway system in this country into three or four large companies. They have considered that question?—They did.

17212. Are they in favour of it?—No, sir.

17213. Are they in favour of the purchase of the railways by the State?—They are not, sir. May I explain.

17214. Oh, yes, I want you to explain?—Their view is that with the railways under private ownership, as it is to the interest of the companies, there is a certain amount of competition, and they fear that that benefit would be lost in case of State ownership. The only benefits they consider that could come from State ownership would be any such economy resulting as would enable them to make a general reduction of rates, or that if the State ownership would so manage the railways as not to run them to the greatest commercial benefit but with a due regard to the interests of each different locality, preserving the local interests and safeguarding them.

17215. Do I understand you to mean, the Commissioners to mean, that if these private railways were worked for the general interest of the country, and the surplus profits were used for the reduction of rates, you and your Commissioners would be in favour of the State purchasing the railways?—I don't think that is quite accurate. They don't believe any economies would be effected to such an extent as would give us the amount of the rates conceded to afford a reduction. If such a reduction could be effected and if local interests were all safeguarded I think the Commissioners would be in favour of State amalgamation.

17216. I accept your statement. This subject has been discussed and considered, and that is the conclusion which you have gathered they have arrived at?—That is so. *Apr.* 25, 1907. —— Mr. John Kelso Reid, LL.D., representative of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners.

17217. Now, I suppose, several witnesses have objected to the present constitution of the Railway Commissioners' Court. Are your Commissioners in favour of that Court?—No, sir.

17218. They have had some experience of it?—They had.

17219. How long ago?—In the year 1886.

17220. In 1886, twenty-one years ago, were you engaged with it then?—Not personally.

17221. Do you know anything about it, what the action was?—I do, something.

17222. Was it against the railway company?—It was against them. Petitions were instituted by the Harbour Commissioners against the Great Northern and the London and North-Western and a small company that owns the connecting line between Greenore and the Great Northern main line—I forget the name. Dissatisfaction with the Railway and Canal Commission Court expressed.

17223. *Colonel Plews.*—The Dundalk, Newry and Greenore line?—Yes.

17224. *Chairman.*—Well?—It was bought to seek relief from what the Harbour Commissioners contended was undue preference by these companies to the port of Greenore over the port of Londonderry.

17225. What was the cost to the Harbour Board?—Approximately £4,000.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Because they had to pay our costs. Action instituted by the Derry Harbour Commissioners instanced.

17226. *Chairman.*—Had you to pay the costs of both sides?—Part of the costs of both sides was what we had to pay.

17227. In other words, you failed in the action?—We failed in part and succeeded in part. The general costs of the action were borne by us; the costs of one portion of the action on both sides had to be paid by us; but not the entire costs.

17228. Was it tried in Dublin?—No, partly in Londonderry and partly in London.

17229. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—A day there and two or three days here?—Yes.

17230. *Colonel Plews.*—The major portion was in Londonderry, five days. And then one day's sitting in London?—Yes, I think that was it.

17231. *Chairman.*—From the experience of those who have gone to the Court we may say it is not a satisfactory way of dealing with disputes between traders and railway companies. Have you any opinion about the substitute that would be applicable?—They would be very anxious to find a cheap tribunal that would easily deal with them.

17232. I remember when that Commission was agreed to it was considered cheap. That was one of the advantages claimed for it?—It has not proved to be so.

17233. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—Take it to the Agricultural Board and conduct it at the public expense?—If it was a public case.

17234. *Chairman.*—There must be a public case. Have you formed any idea about the tribunal. First, it should be in Dublin?—Yes, it should be a permanent tribunal sitting in Dublin. Suggestions as to another tribunal.

17235. The Railway Commissioners' Court is a permanent tribunal in England?—But that is one of the elements that makes it so expensive.

17236. The expenses of the Court are very trifling. The expenses are in connection with the witnesses and counsel and so on, and the preparation of a good case. Would it be a court without counsel or lawyers?—I don't think it would be practicable.

17237. As a solicitor I thought you would say that. What is a cheap tribunal?—I would say a tribunal composed of a representative of the railway interest and a representative of the general trade interest, with possibly a lawyer at the head of it, sitting here in Dublin as a permanent tribunal, like one of the Courts of Justice.

17238. Are they to be paid?—The officials would be paid by the State.

17239. The persons forming the tribunal, are they to be paid?—Paid by the State.

17240. The same as the Railway Commissioners?—Yes.

17241. Where does the cheapness come in?—The cheapness comes in in this way. First of all, this court should have at their command, I would suggest, a staff of inspectors who would be available as a preliminary. If any *prima facie* case were made or any complaint made against the railways these would be available to investigate the facts and ascertain them, and report them to both parties, both the railway company and the complainant.

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Mr. Healy, K.C.—This is the body that was so anxious upon bringing Sir Ralph Littler at great expense. A cheap tribunal!

Witness.—In the majority of cases the report of the inspector would settle the matter one way or the other.

17242. *Chairman.*—That can be done to-day by communication with the Board of Trade?—I don't think they have power to investigate the facts.

17243. Certainly, they have power. They do investigate. They communicate with representatives from both sides?—My Commissioners think it is desirable there should be inspectors with powers such as the railway companies themselves voluntarily give to inspectors at their own conference to enable them to trace out railway transactions, with full powers of inspection, to see how traffic is worked, to inspect books and follow out charges through the different companies.

Suggestions as to a tribunal to replace the Railway and Canal Commissioners Court.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—To hold an inquisition.

Witness.—They should be in a position to ascertain the rates and what are actually charged, whether the rates in the rate books were strictly or were not strictly adhered to. Further, that the railway companies should disclose in the rate book the full details of how their rates were composed, and what the receipts in respect to them were, both through rates and local rates.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

Necessity for fuller information in railway rates books.

17244. What particulars of the rates do you say should be given in the rate-book?—With regard to local rates a full analysis showing the rates for conveyance, and the station, terminal charges, and the different component items of which they are made up.

17245. How much for conveyance, how much for station accommodation, and how much for station services?—Yes, loading or unloading, and so on.

17246. And collection and delivery, would you say?—I would.

17247. In the case of a through rate you would show the portion of the rate received by each of the carrying companies parties to the rate?—Quite so, sir.

17248. Also any temporary rate or rebate, or allowance, if any whatever?—Yes, sir.

17249. So that the amount paid by the customer should exactly correspond to the entry in the book, and that nobody should pay anything different to the payment by anybody else for the same service?—Yes.

17250. No doubt such information would tell the public much more than they know at present, but after all the main question is that the rates themselves should be suitable to the circumstances of the country?—Yes.

17251. I doubt whether your objection to the Board of Trade has been made quite clear. I understood, however, that you think the fault of the Board of Trade is that it has no power?—Quite so, sir; the Board of Trade is very useful in bringing about a friendly agreement in some cases, but it has no power to enforce a decision.

17252. *Chairman.*—To enforce a decision?—Yes.

17253. *Mr. Sexton.*—Their function is to persuade?—Yes.

Chairman.—That is right.

Inability of the Board of Trade to enforce its decisions a drawback to its utility.

17254. *Mr. Sexton.*—They are very far away; take a trader or a body of traders going to London. They may be fated to find that the Board of Trade has no power to help them. That reduces the influence of the Board of Trade to a nullity in the minds of the those who are concerned with railway transit in Ireland?—It is a tribunal my Commissioners don't make use of on account of its lack of power to enforce any decision that it thought right.

17255. Then you believe that the tribunal which has power to enforce its views is in effect and practice too costly for use?—Quite so.

Cost of appearing before the Railway and Canal Commission Court excessive.

17256. We have often heard in the course of this inquiry that the fees of that court are light, but the fees are a negligible item in the cost of the proceedings?—If any side, any party to any litigation before the Railway Commissioners wanted their case to get a full hearing, I think they would find it necessary to employ some of the counsel who are in a certain sense specialists in that court?—(No answer).

17257. The railway companies are wealthy corporations, or, at any rate, corporations which for purposes of this kind, in defence of their interests, have practically unlimited funds for engaging the most eminent special assistance. Does that impose on the other party the practical obligation of securing assistance equally efficient?—It does.

17258. And the net result is, no matter how low the court fees may be, that the litigation before this tribunal is most expensive, perhaps as expensive as any in the country?—That is so.

17259. What do you think of the suggestion that a tribunal could be so constituted as to interpret the application of statutes on this complicated matter of railway traffic, that a tribunal could be constituted of laymen depending simply on lay assistance, and that the railway companies should be prohibited from engaging legal assistance if they desired to do so; is that a practical suggestion?—In my own individual opinion it would not be.

17260. I fear you must invent something else. Does it occur to you that the only way out of this sort of difficulty, and of the expense in litigation between the railway corporations and individuals would be to try to bring about a state of affairs in which there would be less necessity for resorting to law?—I would not despair that a tribunal might be so established here in Dublin, at which the average Irish barrister would be the usual practitioner which could not be and would not be more expensive than any other tribunal in this country.

17261. But the railway company can make the pace; if they insist on engaging the most eminent men at the Bar, you will feel yourself ill-equipped before that tribunal unless you have a man of equal position?—Well, speaking as a lawyer, I would say that I would like to have a barrister accustomed to practice before the court in which the case was coming on for hearing.

17262. If one litigant is willing to engage an expensive Bar the other litigant will feel that he is taking a risk if he has not equally efficient advocates. How can you keep down the standard; so long as there is a system in force which necessitates resort to a legal tribunal—how can you prevent that from being expensive?—Unfortunately the fees at the Bar in Ireland do not rank at anything like such a good or large scale as the fees in England, and once you eliminate the enormous special fees that have to be paid to specialists in England you would very much reduce the cost of the tribunal, and bring it down possibly from thousands to hundreds.

17263. But for a trial of any considerable length, I imagine that the cost, even in Ireland, would run to a considerable amount—into four figures, at any rate?—That, of course, would depend very much on the nature of the case.

17264. Do you share the views of Alderman Ballantine as to the desirability of reducing the local rates in Ireland, so as to have the service performed for the same amount that the company take for similar service in the case of imported goods?—I think, roughly speaking, that they should be brought into some close parity, that there should not be such a wide discrepancy as there is in some cases.

17265. Would you give the Board of Control power to reduce the rates?—I would.

17266. That would apply to a very great part of the internal traffic of Ireland, to everything except the through traffic from Great Britain, and would, or might, involve a very heavy reduction for the time of the revenue of the railway companies if applied to all the cases in which high local rates, as compared with relatively low through rates from England, impede the development and establishment of industries in this country?—I have not considered the figures at all.

17267. Taking a general view of the subject, I think you will admit that the reduction of those rates on the principle stated by Alderman Ballantine and by yourself would cause such a diminution of the revenue and still more of the profit of the railway companies as might leave most of them without any ordinary dividend?—I am afraid I can only repeat my answer. I have not studied the figures, and don't know what amount of money would be involved at all.

17268. Do you think there would be any practical use in making a proposition that any tribunal be instructed to make such reductions without any indemnity to the companies?—I would not propose to

lay down any hard and fast line to the tribunal as to what the rate should be. I think each rate probably would be considered in its own special circumstances.

17269. With a general view to reduction?—We hope that it would tend to reduce the rates.

17270. The object would be to reduce the local rates to a parity with the through rates?—Well, you can hardly carry that out—in all strictness you can hardly carry that out—it would not be practicable.

17271. No, but approximately?—What is running through my mind is the case mentioned in evidence this morning of the rate to Tralee. I don't think it would be reasonable to reduce the local rates to the share that the railway company actually received out of the through rate there.

17272. That is the suggested share—the share suggested?—I understood 2*s.* was the rate that the railway company got in the Tralee case.

17273. I doubt if they admit that?—It was only from what I heard in this room that I mentioned the case.

17274. Well, but do you think it practicable to establish any tribunal with such large functions as a general revision of rates, and to impose the result of the revision upon the railway companies?—I see no reason why it should not be so.

17275. In the first place they would not accept it?

17276. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—That would be 90 per cent. of the rates. Through traffic represents only ten per cent.?—Naturally I would expect that the railway companies would not voluntarily accept it.

17277. *Mr. Sexton.*—They would resist it?—They would resist it.

17278. What do you think would be the prospects of such a proposal?—I take it that that would be a question for Parliament to consider.

17279. I ask you for your opinion, so that we may be able to consider it, and in connection with our report obtain the best available guidance?—I think it would be fair to have some such tribunal to adjudicate on the fairness and the reasonableness of the rates.

17280. Well, in the present financial position of the Irish railways there is a profit of a million and a half a year, about half a million of which goes to the payment of the ordinary dividends. Do you think that you can make a proposition to take away perhaps that half million, or the greater part of it and let the railway companies wait for a future in which those reductions might be partly or wholly recouped by development of traffic—is that a practicable proposition?—I think so. I think if the Irish railway companies can make out the case that the present rates are fair and reasonable, that these rates should be maintained, and it is only in cases where the plaintiffs make out the case that they are unfair or unreasonable that they should be interfered with.

17281. Our whole case is proceeding on the hypothesis in which, as I understand, you agree with Alderman Ballantine that the local rates should be reduced to the proportion of the Irish share of the through rates on goods which might be or are produced in Ireland—is not that your general position?—Roughly speaking, that is so.

17282. But that involves a large interference with the revenue?—As I said before, I cannot give you the figures.

17283. Well, you have stated that fairly. Now, as to the long haulage, does it appear to you that the favour given by a particular railway to a particular port is inherent in the system of private companies—that a railway with an interest limited to its own revenue will, as a matter of fact, favour the port which gives the longest haulage?—I think that unless it is restrained in some way a railway company will always work for what will give it the largest return in money. It is only natural and reasonable that it should do so.

17284. Therefore, under the present system a port like Derry, or any other port with a short railway mileage to the place of destination or point of despatch, will not attract the railway company so much as a port that affords a longer haulage?—Not unless the question of the comparative cost of the route is to be an element in the settlement of the amount of the rate. While the law stands as it does now I don't see that ports like Derry and other western and southern ports can expect——

17285. What do you say would be the effect on that state of things of a united system of railways worked from the public point of view—what effect would it have on that particular part of the question?—I presume if there was a State Department that the State Department would want to make it as profitable as possible.

17286. Not necessarily. I should say the first object of a State Department would be to develop industry and trade, and that profit, or rather avoidance of loss, would arise only in the second place?—If the State managed the railways, having regard to local interests in the first instance, rather than with regard to pecuniary advantage, I think there would be some benefit from that.

17287. You realise that a private railway company has, almost necessarily, a special interest in some particular port, that is to say, in the port that gives the longest haulage to the traffic?—That is so.

17288. That is adverse to your interest in Derry?—Yes.

17289. But a public department managing the railways of the whole country could regard impartially the different ports and districts?—I am afraid the pecuniary interest would be the same. Whether the pecuniary interest would come first would be a different question.

17290. The tendency of a State Department would be to send the traffic by the shortest route, and not by the longest. While there are private companies the longest and the most circuitous route will be selected, as the divisions of the through rate are proportionate to the mileage?—That is so; but so far as the money interest is concerned, it seems to me to be the same whether it is a State-owned railway or privately owned. There is a possibility that the State might put some other interest in front of the pecuniary interest, but the pecuniary interest would always be the same.

17291. You see the working of the traffic of a number of railways along routes some of which are long and circuitous, is on the whole a costly service compared with a service under a system whereby the traffic would be brought by the shortest and most convenient route. There would be that set off against any loss of revenue due to the despatch of the traffic by the shortest route. Traffic could e dispatched by the short route more cheaply than by the long one; the working expenses are less?—That is so.

17292. And if there were resources in the hands of a public authority, that authority might be disposed to use them on this principle, that it is not well for the country as a whole that particular places should be fostered at the expense of other communities, not so important perhaps, but having an equal claim upon the attention of those who act for the country as a whole?—I am afraid I don't quite follow your question.

17293. Well, let us suppose that the administration of the railways was in the hands of an authority with some financial resources, and with economies effected, and able to surrender a part of the revenue in what they might consider the public interest, they would be in a position, to which no private company could ever attain, to allow advantages to the smaller ports in the country, advantages which the present system denies; first, they would have no prejudice in favour of any port?—They would have no prejudice.

17294. And then they would have by economy resources which the private companies have not, and they could surrender a part of their revenue for the sake of impartial treatment of the different ports and districts?—If they were prepared to surrender part of their pecuniary advantages of course they would be in a position to give the smaller and more distant ports the protection that they now want.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Protection.

17295. *Mr. Sexton.*—You are in favour of public ownership on two conditions: first, that a general reduction should be made in local rates, and the second that the local traffic should be conserved to each district. You will admit, at any rate, that the public administration of the railways would have no disposition to favour one port at the expense of another?—Apart from the pecuniary interest, they would not.

17296. And that the pecuniary interest would be somewhat narrowed by the fact that the despatch of

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traffic by the shorter route would reduce the expenses of working?—Well, I really cannot say that there would be any difference in that respect between the present ownership and State ownership.

17297. If a certain bulk of traffic, instead of being despatched in each case by the shortest route, is being despatched without regard to convenience by long circuitous routes, because particular companies favour particular ports, I think the amount of the working expenses at the end of the year must be much larger than in a case where all the traffic was sent by the shortest and most convenient routes?—I cannot see that there is any reason why the railway companies should not send the traffic by the shortest route instead of by the longest.

17298. Because the company that has the longer route wants to use it?—Take both routes in the possession of the same company.

Suggested economies under State working by forwarding goods by the shortest routes.

17299. No; I am thinking of the case where there is a competing route in the possession of one company?—Then I misunderstood you. The case I was referring to was a case like what we were just talking about, from any point on either the Great Northern or the Midland system near Derry. I cannot see why the State should have any pecuniary inducement to send or derive any benefit from sending traffic through Derry that the present companies do not have. One motive that the State might have that the present companies have not would be that it might put the general interests of the country above the amount of the earnings from the railways.

17300. You seem not to agree with the suggestion which I will only mention once again, that a united system of management whereby traffic was despatched by the most convenient and shortest routes would, upon the whole, at the end of the year, entail much less working expenses than a system of a number of private companies each taking as much traffic as it could by its own route no matter how long or how circuitous?—I think that would be so.

17301. That is what I was suggesting?—But the community would lose the benefit of competition.

Question of the loss of competition if railways were State owned.

17302. Oh, competition. Well, what is the competition now? Is there any competition now as to rates?—No.

17303. Let us look for a moment at the elements of competition as they exist. You have competition by sea?—Yes.

17304. That would continue to exist, of course?—That would be a common factor.

17305. Precisely. Where two companies run between two towns, you have also competition, and that settles itself by the rule which is invariably or almost invariably, adopted, that the rate by the shorter route is accepted by the longer?—That is so.

17306. What competition as to rates is there outside these two?—I think that competitions as to rates is almost a negligible quantity.

17307. I thought you would say so?—But there is competition in other respects—competition of facilities and services.

17308. There is competition of facilities and services. But if a system were in force whereby traffic were sent as a rule by the shortest route, do you not think that a united management, tending to bring the whole service up to a level of efficiency, coupled with the despatch by the shortest route, would be a very good equivalent?—I don't think that anything would ever make up to the trader for the benefit of having an alternative company to deal with, so that if he was dissatisfied with his treatment by one company he has another string to his bow. I think it is the most effective weapon he can have.

17309. You cannot have everything under any one system. But is there anything in the experience of those countries served by a public system of railways which would lead you to think that public control is less efficient in the despatch of traffic than private control?—Personally I know nothing of the railway systems abroad; but I have heard great complaints of delay in some of them.

17310. Well, we have complaints of delay ourselves. Do you think that an administration of the Irish railways, subject to be influenced by public opinion, and to be censured by public opinion, would not be really a very effective agency for such a matter as the working of the traffic of the railways?—Other things being equal, I should prefer competition between the railway companies themselves.

17311. Competition simply as to facilities?—That is all we have at present.

17312. Well, if you put that competition as to facilities, which is all you have at present, against a general reduction of rates which a State Department would be established to obtain, which would you prefer—the former or the latter?—If a general reduction of rates was secured, and if fair treatment was secured, I think State ownership would make up then for the loss of the advantages that we have at present from competition.

17313. Well, assuming now that the application of public credit to the finance of the question, to the capital of the Irish railways, were to lead to a substantial balance out of the present net revenue, have you any doubt that that substantial balance could be further greatly increased by the economic working of the Irish railway systems as one?—I have never gone into or studied the amount of saving that would be effected by such an amalgamation.

17314. Well, I shall not press you on the point. But, assuming that the saving were such as to provide a fund which would enable a good beginning to be made upon a reduction of rates so as to put the Irish agriculturist on an equal footing with the Continental one in Great Britain, and to give the Irish manufacturer at home a chance of reaching the Irish markets, would you consider that a conclusive reason for establishing public ownership of the lines on that assumption?—Well, not conclusive; but certainly it would go a long way.

Mr. Sexton.—Very well. I accept that answer. Thank you very much.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

17315. With regard to the tribunal which you would like to see substituted for the Railway and Canal Commission, it would be largely composed of laymen?—Yes, with a lawyer.

17316. That is because of your legal training?—I suppose it is to some extent because of my legal training; but I think it would be difficult to get coherence in the judgments given by such a body unless they were subject to legal influence.

17317. I have a great admiration for the legal profession so long as it does not involve any law costs; but would not a tribunal composed of one railway expert and two men of acknowledged business and commercial experience be capable of dealing with nine-tenths of the complaints that come before the Railway and Canal Commission at present—isn't it possible to imagine that such a tribunal would naturally be inclined (leaving out the legal aspects of the case) to consider the general bearing the case might have on the country; that they would regard the equities of the case rather than the legalities; that those are the considerations which would operate in the minds of a lay tribunal, and that they would be able to deal with a great number of the cases that come before the Railway and Canal Commission in a quicker manner, not being tied down by legal rules, but acting in a purely administrative capacity?—I think if the actual facts could be ascertained before a tribunal of that shape, that in four cases out of five a decision would be arrived at without the aid of lawyers at all. It would be only in one case out of five that legal assistance would be necessary. But the difficulty is to ascertain the facts; and that is the difficulty traders have in getting local rates reduced.

17318. In this case you would have the advice of the railway expert, who would be able to meet the railway people on their own ground, and who would act in the interest of the complainant, so to speak?—I think the Commission should have power, through their inspectors, to get all information as to the facts.

17319. You are aware that it is in the power of any trader receiving goods on through rates to obtain the items from the railway company—he can do so now if he asks for it?—There is a very great difficulty at present in ascertaining an analysis of the rates.

17320. Have your Commissioners applied for an analysis of the rates?—Yes.

17321. With what result?—They were refused, on the ground that they were not interested in the rates.

17322. *Chairman.*—Quite so, if they were not interested.

Witness.—The difficulty is that when a trader applies for an analysis of the rates in which he is interested, he does not get the information that he wants. Take, for instance, the case of a trader in

Belfast and a trader in Derry competing for business in a town like Enniskillen—what the trader in Derry requires is not merely an analysis of the rate between Derry and Enniskillen, but also an analysis of the rate between Belfast and Enniskillen, and the same is the case with the Belfast trader; and at present there is no machinery by which the trader can get that information.

17323. The railway company will not, I presume, give an analysis of the competitive rate?—Well, my opinion is that the Belfast and the Derry trader ought to be put in the same position as competitors.

17324. If a trader has any reason to feel aggrieved he can bring his complaint before the Railway and Canal Commission?—The difficulty is to get at the facts.

17325. Have you had any experience of the Department of Agriculture taking any action with regard to complaints of this kind?—So far as I am aware they have not been approached locally, in Derry.

17326. Don't you think that is possibly because the fact that the Department has this power is not appreciated or is not well known?—I think it is well known; but there is the expense.

17327. There is no expense in the case of the Department dealing with such a complaint?—There is a feeling that they would be very slow in taking up any small case.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They intervened successfully in Kerry against the Great Southern Railway.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That was a large and important case.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Yes; it is about three years ago.

17328. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë*.—You are opposed to State purchase and control because you don't anticipate that economies could be effected which would give a reduction in rates. I don't know if you are aware that a great railway expert, Sir George Finlay, considered that at least 20 per cent. reduction in working expenses would be effected by a united management, to say nothing of the economies that might be effected in other directions?—I didn't express the opinion that no economies could be effected, but I did not think that such economies could be made as would enable a general reduction of rates to be effected.

17329. If you got a reduction in the staff and in working expenses and in management—would not these go a considerable way towards effecting a reduction in rates, which would be desirable if brought about?—I think a reduction of rates would be desirable.

17330. If the railways were under one control, with the purpose not of earning dividends, but of developing the industries and trade of the country, there would be no reason why the east coast ports should be favoured at the expense of the west or south or north coast ports—it would be a matter of indifference to them which way the traffic went—and, again, they would only want to pay a fair interest on the actual cost and anything beyond that would go to reduce rates?—That might be.

17331. Unless the effect of a change would be to secure reductions in rates, I suppose we would all be content to go on as we are; but if it is taken for granted that a reduction in rates would necessarily follow single control of the railways, you would then be satisfied with some system of State, or national, control?—Provided it gave us the two advantages that were mentioned.

17332. Did I understand you to say that you had nothing to complain of with regard to the existing railways that are connected with Londonderry—one point I want to ask you about is in relation to Sir Henry Miller's evidence with regard to the projected route between Letterkenny and Strabane; did your Commissioners take any action in connection with that?—Yes, we did apply to Parliament for protective clauses in the second year that the Bill came before Parliament—not the first year.

17333. And are the Commissioners satisfied with the existing state of things and of the possible effect of the line that is about to be opened?—They are much dissatisfied with the whole system of rates between Derry and the east coast ports.

17334. But are they satisfied that the opening of this Strabane and Letterkenny branch may possibly divert traffic from Londonderry?—I think it will divert traffic from it.

17335. Are your Harbour Commissioners satisfied about it?—They appeared before Parliament and asked for a protective clause in the same way as in the case of the purchase by the Midland Railway of the Donegal Railway; but they did not succeed in getting the clause.

17336. You think you will lose a good deal of traffic?—We will undoubtedly.

17337. Are your Commissioners interested as a body in the matter of the mortgage on the line?—Individually the members are largely, but not as a body.

17338. You think some relief is very desirable if it can be obtained?—Yes, we are suffering a great injustice.

17339. On that point you hold the same views as expressed by Sir Henry Miller?—Yes.

Apr. 25, 1907.

Mr. John Kelso Reid, LL.D., representative of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners.

Relief sought in respect of mortgage on Letterkenny line.

Examined by Sir HERBERT JEKYLL.

17340. What powers would you confer upon the proposed tribunal?—I would give it the power to adjust rates, to hear complaints, and to raise or lower rates, according to what it might consider reasonable.

17341. You would invest them with a statutory power to fix rates?—Yes.

17342. Are you in favour of conferring powers on the statutory body to fix the price of commodities?—Yes, I think so. I think in the case of bodies like the railway companies, who have a monopoly and get a monopoly from the State, that the State has a right to interfere and to control them, and to see that the powers which are given to them are reasonably exercised.

Powers to be conferred on the proposed new tribunal discussed.

17343. You would go far beyond the powers now exercised by the Railway and Canal Commission?—Yes.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

17344. Are you aware that the Great Northern line is worked at a smaller figure than that given by Sir George Finlay?—I have no knowledge of it whatever.

17345. Is the Great Northern traffic at the port of Derry increasing and has it increased year by year?—Yes; the great bulk is the Scotch traffic.

17346. Because being the nearest route to Scotland it commands the Scotch traffic, and being one of the most distant ports from England it cannot command the English traffic; the nearer ports command the latter—doesn't that explain the matter?—Not altogether, because although further away from the English ports, the port of Derry is a cheaper port, and should have a cheaper rate.

Question of Derry's claim to differential rates on through traffic with England discussed.

17347. Aren't all rates the same—where is the cheapness?—It is cheaper for the companies to work.

17347A. As the traffic is a consigned traffic, why don't people consign their English traffic through the port—why is 98 per cent. of it sent through other ports?—I suppose, the prices being equal, the goods will be sent by the quickest route.

17348. As soon as you are able to provide as good a route you will get the service?—What we complain of is that the route which is cheaper to work is made as expensive to the trader as the alternative route.

17349. Isn't the case that the men who consign the goods labels them with the name of the route by which they are to be sent—isn't that so?—That may be; but the railway company will not point out to them the route that would be cheaper than the route chosen by the party consigning the goods.

17350. In fact, you want a preferential rate for Derry?—We want a cheaper rate for a port where the traffic can be worked cheaper by the carrying companies.

17351. From time to time now, how do you suggest that Derry would be the cheapest route?—I could give you distances.

17352. Take any English town—London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool—and take any other port in Ireland and show me that Derry would be the cheapest?—I would say from Strabane to Leeds, *via* Derry, goods could be carried cheaper that way than by any other route.

17353. You have got half a crown differentiation?—Yes.

17354. And you are not satisfied?—Omagh is the same thing.

17354A. Look at the map—do you say from Omagh to Leeds is the same?—I would say it would be cheaper to work the traffic from Omagh *via* Derry than *via* Greenore.

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Mr. John Kelso Reid, LL.D., representative of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners.

17355. The foolish Omagh people didn't think so, and they have it in their power to route the traffic as they like?—I say they should get a cheaper route *via* Derry.

17356. You want us to give you the preference?—Yes.

17357. As to wagons, haven't there been considerable complaints by us against you for storing up our wagons time after time when other people were crying out for them?—I believe there were a great many complaints as to wagons from the railway company and against the railway company; but I cannot give you the details.

17358. Haven't you been in the habit of getting wagons a week or a fortnight in advance of a ship being due to arrive in the port, and keeping the wagons lying there?—I never heard of it.

17359. You are the solicitor to the Commissioners?—I am; I don't think that has happened.

17360. I think we have been too indulgent with you about demurrage—that is possibly the reason.

Mr. William H. M'Cowen, Tralee, examined by the Chairman.

Mr. William H. M'Cowen, representative of the Tralee Urban District Council and Harbour Board.

17361. You live at Tralee?—Yes.

17361A. You are a member of the Urban District Council?—No, but of the Harbour Board.

17362. What is the local authority in Tralee?—The Urban Council.

17363. Do you appear here on their behalf?—I do.

17364. You are engaged in business in Tralee?—Yes. It is a general business—we have fifteen different departments.

17365. What is your general trade?—Millers and general merchants.

17366. I think you have been Chairman of the Tralee Harbour Board?—Yes, for the two previous years.

Extent of witness's traffic.

17367. Do your firm carry on a large business at Tralee?—Yes; we imported about 35,000 tons last year by sea and rail.

17368. Through the port of Tralee?—Through the port at Fenit, which is connected with Tralee by rail of eight miles.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They are practically the largest merchants in Kerry.

Chairman.—So I would imagine from the large tonnage they deal with.

17369. I suppose Tralee is a distributing centre for that part of Kerry?—Yes.

Extent of the accommodation for ships at Fenit Pier.

17370. And your port is Fenit?—Yes; it is a deep-water port.

17371. You can bring large ships there?—Yes, 5,000 tons. There is twenty-three feet of water.

17372. Is there any other industry at Fenit?—Yes; mackerel fishing.

17373. That is only a season traffic?—Yes, for two months of the year.

17374. There is the fishing industry as well as the general traffic?—Yes.

17375. Of course, the whole of the traffic from this place (Fenit) is worked by the Great Southern and Western Company?—Portion is worked up to the canal basin by lighters and small ships; but the bulk of the traffic is worked by the Great Southern Railway.

Present satisfactory working of traffic from Fenit to Tralee by railway company.

17376. Speaking generally, are you satisfied with the way the Great Southern work the traffic?—Yes, very well satisfied. Before 1900 the railway to Fenit was worked by the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company.

17377. It was then an independent company?—Yes.

17378. And it was taken over by the Great Southern Railway Co.?—Yes. In the old days I saw 1,000 tons of corn piled up on the pier with no shelter, waiting for wagons, and I have seen uncleansed cattle trucks used for the conveyance of fresh fish; but since the Great Southern and Western took over the line we have had nothing to complain of—everything has been satisfactorily worked. The Joint Committee of the Harbour Board and the Urban District Council consider that they had a complaint in the matter of rates, but they had no complaint to make as to the working of the line.

17379. You are the most exceptional witness we have had before us?—We are exceptionally situated in Kerry. Before the amalgamation the railways were cutting rates, and by the Amalgamation Bill the old rates were maintained, so that is how we are situated.

17380. To put it shortly, you haven't the least complaint to make against the Great Southern Railway about rates or facilities?—Not about management or facilities, but we have a few complaints to make about rates that are not governed by the Amalgamation Bill.

Rates from Fenit to inland towns considered excessive as compared with other ports.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—No rose without a thorn.

17381. *Chairman.*—Is there any particular rate that you object to?—We object to rates from Fenit to some inland towns when compared with Waterford, Cork, and Limerick.

17382. Have you raised this question with the railway company?—We have.

17383. What was their answer?—That owing to the long distance they could not reduce the rates.

17384. And you are not satisfied with that answer?—We are not.

17385. Why?—We considered that under the amalgamation we should get the same advantages as Waterford, Limerick, and Cork enjoy.

17386. Although a longer distance?—A proportionate rate is what we want.

17387. Give one or two examples?—The rate for coal from Waterford to Newcastle West—104 miles—is ·6761 of 1*d.* per ton. From Fenit to Newcastle West—fifty-seven miles, or half the distance—it is 1·0769*d.* per ton.

17388. Practically a penny?—Yes.

17389. Give us an instance of a town where the distance is about the same in both cases?—Under the Act we were to have been treated in the same way as the harbours that were likely to enter into competition with us.

17390. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—That is not the phrase. What the Act says is, "All reasonable facilities as to rates." The Waterford rate is stereotyped and we could not alter it.

Witness.—We want you to alter the Fenit rate.

17391. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—They are all on a scale. Give us a comparison in a place that is 104 miles from Waterford?

Chairman.—I asked for that. I don't think it is fair to give us one place 104 miles and compare it with another that is fifty-two miles?—I have similar distances. From Cork to Abbeyfeale (eighty-nine miles), the rate for coal is ·8977*d.*; from Fenit (thirty-seven miles), 1·2162*d.*

17392. Give us the rate from Cork to a place thirty-seven or thirty-eight miles away?—I haven't got that. I expect they are on a scale. Limerick to Abbeyfeale (forty-one miles), the rate for coal is 1·0869*d.*; from Fenit to Abbeyfeale (four miles less), practically 1½*d.*

17393. What you ask for is that you think under the Amalgamation Act you are entitled to the same mileage rate as from Limerick?—Yes.

17394. That is your contention?—Yes.

17395. You have been in communication with the railway company on the subject?—Yes. From Cork to Killarney (sixty miles), the rate for coal is about 1*d.*; and from Fenit to Killarney (for half the distance), it is over 1½*d.*

17396. Mr. M'Cowen is taking the double rate, and working it out on a mileage basis, whereas you and I would deduct the terminals, then the percentage would not be unfair. Mr. M'Cowen, do you follow what I said? If you take threepence off each end for terminals and then work out your mileage, you will find these figures will show very different results?—I suppose the terminals would count in the short case.

17397. Yes, but terminals in a short distance and in a long distance would seriously affect the result?—Oh, yes—the Mallow rate——

17398. What is that?—That is a special rate that is in existence between Mallow and Killarney, Killorglin, and Castleisland— a special rate of 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton for breadstuffs.

17399. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the distance?—The distance from Mallow to Killarney is forty miles; Mallow to Killorglin 58 miles; Mallow to Castleisland 58 miles.

17400. Then, Tralee to Killarney?—Tralee to Killarney 21 miles; Tralee to Killorglin 19 miles; Tralee to Castleisland 12 miles. There is a uniform rate from Mallow to these three towns of 4*s.* 6*d.* The

rate from Tralee to Killarney for the same article is 4*s.* It is 3*s.* 6*d.* to Killorglin and 2*s.* 3*d.* to Castleisland.

17401. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—The Railway Commissioners would not allow them to be altered. We made rates at the time to keep the Irish merchants on their legs, and when they came before the recent Commission the Agricultural Board interfered, as Mr. M'Cowen knows, and these rates are now stereotyped, and cannot be altered.

Chairman.—They cannot be advanced.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—We tried to advance them, and the Agricultural Board interfered by counsel. I was counsel against the company at the time.

17402. *Chairman.*—You know that, Mr. M'Cowen?

Witness.—I do, sir; but we want to get a reduction against these rates, because we consider it a very unfair rate coming into our county from another county.

17403. Now, what about this Tralee and Dingle Light Railway. It is between Tralee and Dingle, I suppose?—That runs through the Dingle promontory from Tralee.

17404. Is it an independent concern?—No. It is one of the Government narrow-gauge railways. The management has been taken over by the County Council.

17405. Recently?—Within the last four or five years.

17406. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—State management?—Not State management.

17407. *Chairman.*—Not State management?—Under the County Council. It is County Council management.

17408. There has been money advanced, I believe, to put it right?—There is an annual claim of £5,000 a year on the county for that railway. It is not able to pay the working expenses. While on taxation, I may mention Kerry is notorious for being the heaviest taxed county in Ireland for railways. Between the different railways and the pier at Fenit it is taxed to the extent of £20,000 a year.

17409. What is the population of the county—I don't know whether it is a large or small county?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—It is a large impoverished county—nearly all mountains.

Witness.—The valuation is £300,000. I have not got the population.

17410. *Chairman.*—What do you say with reference to the through rates from Liverpool to Dingle and from Cork and Limerick to Dingle?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The population of Kerry is 179,091.

Chairman.—Then it is a large county.

Sir Herbert Jekyll.—It is one of the biggest in Ireland.

17411. *Chairman.*—What do you say about these rates?—We complain that the through rates between Liverpool and Dingle are detrimental to the trade of Tralee. The local rate from Tralee to Dingle for bread stuffs is 4*s.* 10*d.* Of the through rate the Dingle railway only gets 2*s.* 6*d.*, and that rate has to be made up by the ratepayers, of whom the merchants of Tralee are interested largely. These are rates fixed before the County Council took the line over.

17412. And they have no power to alter it?—Oh, I should think they have power to alter it. They are not bound down by any clause in that way.

17413. Give us one or two instances, if you like; say for flour?—From Liverpool to Dingle the rate is only 13*s.* per ton.

17414. That is direct by water?—By steamer to Cork, rail to Tralee by the Great Southern, transfer at Tralee into the narrow-gauge trucks and rail to Dingle.

17415. That is from Liverpool?—Yes. From Cork the rate is 7*s.* 6*d.*; the same as the rate from Cork to Tralee.

17416. I suppose Dingle is a very small place as compared with Tralee?—It is principally a small fishing town

17417. And all comparatively small when you take up Fenit?—Yes.

17418. There seems to be an enormous trade done at Fenit?—There is a large trade.

17419. You gave an instance of 6,700 tons brought to Fenit in fourteen days?—Yes, and handled by the railway company.

17420. From the 14th to 28th February 6,700 tons of goods were handled by the Great Southern Company at Fenit?—To Tralee.

17421. Is that handled to your satisfaction?—Yes, sir.

17422. And that state of things could never occur under the old system, the old ownership of the Waterford and Limerick Company?—No; we ran the risk of having to pay demurrage on ocean steamers.

17423. You began by saying that so far as the working was concerned you had no complaint to make?—No complaint.

17424. Let us go on to the general subject. Are you in favour of the amalgamation of the railways of this country?—I am.

Amalgamation of the railways of Ireland into one or two systems under present management advocated.

17425. Into one or two or three or four?—Two or three.

17426. Why do you draw the line at two or three?—It would take in the principal companies.

17427. If two why not one?—Well, if not two one would be satisfactory, I should think.

17428. Then have you considered the question, or given any attention to the question as to how that should be carried out?—I should think in the first instance the Government should come in and take over these railways, and then hand them over to an existing company or companies. Some of these companies have not paid dividends for years, and never will pay them, and the shareholders will only be too anxious to part with their shares at a smaller figure than they paid for them.

17429. Then you agree that it would be an advantage to Ireland if the railways were owned by the State?—Not by the State; I would prefer to have them worked under one or two companies.

17430. You said one just now?—Yes, one company or two companies; I am not in favour of State purchase.

Government to purchase the lines in the first instance.

17431. Who is to purchase these railways?—Well, the Government could come in, in the first case and take them over, and the railway companies would issue capital to float them after.

17432. If the Government took them over by compulsion, do you mean?—I should think by arrangement.

17433. Then they would have to purchase?—They would have to purchase in the first case.

17434. That would be State purchase?—You might call it that in one way, but they would treat with the railway companies.

17435. Why take them over and hand them back again?—I think it would be better for the railways if they were under one or two companies.

17436. That is, to have the country divided into two parts, and one large company for the North, and another large company for the South. General amalgamation, that is what you mean?—Yes.

17437. On the whole, I understand you are perfectly satisfied with the arrangements made by the Great Southern for your district?—Yes, sir.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POE.

Railways to be leased to one or two companies after purchase

17438. With regard to amalgamation, do I understand you to mean you would be in favour of the State purchasing the railways, and then leasing them to one or two companies?—I did not really go into how it should be done, but in that way.

17439. Assuming that they are leased to one or two companies, would not that be open to even more serious objection than the present system; if you had lessees of one or two companies they would have to be rich capitalists or a joint stock syndicate; they would have to pay a certain rent per annum to the Government, and have to look to the earnings of the lines to enable them to pay that rent and also to pay a fair rate of interest to themselves for the trouble of working it. Again they would have a lessened sense of responsibility in looking after the property which did not belong to themselves as against the greater sense of responsibility which directors under the existing systems have. The property is their own; they are answerable for the management to the shareholders, and they have a certain defined responsibilty. In a case such as you seem to contemplate you have lessees who would be working property which was not their own out of which they would get the largest possible amount of profit. Such a system, moreover, would necessitate careful supervision on the part of the Government as to the way the line was maintained, its upkeep, and so on. Don't you foresee all kinds of difficulties?—I would not propose to lease them. I would propose to absorb them with the help of the Government.

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Mr. William H. M'Cowen, representative of the Tralee Urban District Council and Harbour Board.

17440. How do you mean?—Two companies to absorb all others.

17441. What would become of the two companies?—They would work them as their own.

17442. Would you leave it to the two companies to carry out their absorption of the others voluntarily, or to absorb them compulsorily if they could not come to terms?—That would be a matter of arrangement.

17443. It would be a very difficult matter of arrangement. You would be in favour of State purchase?—I mean the State would assist the companies to purchase.

17444. Then if they did that, and if the difficulties I pointed out occurred, the State assumed control, and that, I understand, you are averse to—you appear for the Harbour Board and Urban Council?—Yes.

17445. Has this matter of control, possible control either by the State or by a national authority, been considered by the council?—Yes. It came before the committee, and we were divided on it. Some of the committee were in favour of the nationalisation of the railways, and others in favour of amalgamation.

17446. Amalgamation into one or two systems?—One or two systems. They were in favour of some change in the existing state of things.

17447. What does your Urban Council consist of?—There are only six on the committee. Two were in favour of amalgamation, and four in favour of the other.

17448. It was not considered by the whole Council?—No, the whole matter was referred to a joint committee.

Tralee and Dingle Railway: Baronial liabilities,

17449. With regard to the Tralee and Dingle railway, the barony is under a heavy contribution?—Yes.

17450. Something like £2,400 a year?—Some years it ran up to £7,000 or £8,000.

17451. They are liable for any deficit for working as well?—Yes.

17452. The baronial guarantee is what?—£2,400.

17453. And the average they have to pay is something like £4,000?—£5,000.

17454. I believe there were several proposals for the Great Southern and Western taking over the line?—Yes.

Grant from the Ireland Development Grant for improvement and equipment

17455. Which has resulted in a grant being made from the Ireland Development Grant of £24,000?—Yes.

17456. Part of which has been already expended, and next year there is a provision for something like £12,000 for the further purposes of properly equipping the line?—I am not aware of that.

17457. I think so. With regard to the Amalgamation Act between the Great Southern and the Waterford and Limerick, were these towns along the Tralee and Fenit railway excluded from the operations of that Act?—Oh, no, they were brought in; the Tralee and Fenit line was absorbed.

17458. I mean the Tralee and Dingle?—They were not affected.

17459. And in consequence of that these very low through rates are possible to be charged?—Yes.

17460. What proportion of that 35,000 tons of general goods goes by sea and rail?—Something like 30,000 tons by sea.

17461. The greater proportion would be by sea?—Yes.

17462. And, as a matter of fact, in distributing that through small areas such as between Limerick and Fenit a farthing per mile would make a considerable difference in the profits?—Yes.

17463. I see you say the undertaking given under that Amalgamation Act has not been carried out?—That is with reference to the rates.

17464. *Chairman.*—The rates you have been explaining?—Yes. Every other undertaking has been carried out.

17465. I understand Mr. Healy said these towns were excluded from that.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The wheat rate. We were not allowed to raise the rate for wheat. There is a great deal in what Mr. M'Cowen says. It is unfair to him.

17466. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And you would be satisfied with some reasonable reduction?—Proportionately.

Cross-examined by Mr. HEALY, K.C.

17467. Surely with regard to the rate of which you complain—2*s.* 6*d.* to Dingle—you must see that if the Dingle Company did not take that raffic for 2*s.* 6*d.* it would not get it at all?—The Tralee merchants would get it.

17468. Let us take wheat, Liverpool to Dingle, if that did not come to Tralee on the 2*s.* 6*d.* rate for the land carriage, it would go direct by sea, and there would be no land carriage, and no 2*s.* 6*d.*—is not that so?—That is so.

17469. Then is it not a case of beggars cannot be choosers as regards the Dingle Company?—I do not think it is a fair rate to the traders of Tralee, who are heavy ratepayers. They are charged 4*s.* 10*d.* for the same traffic.

17470. Is not the answer to that, if the Dingle Company did not do it the stuff would go the whole way by water?—It would go from Tralee to Dingle by rail.

17471. Take Cork or Liverpool. Cork and Limerick merchants have steamers of their own—would they not send it direct to Dingle by water instead of by Tralee?—I suppose they would if they had to pay a much higher rate.

17472. Is not that an answer to your complaint?—It is not an answer to the Tralee complaint. It might be to the Great Southern complaint. It is not a fair rate to the ratepayers of Tralee, who have to pay some portion of the loss on that rate.

17473. I agree, but if you did that they would not get the traffic?—The Dingle railway would be better without it.

17473A.—It is better to carry it for 2*s.* 6d. than not to get it at all.

The Commission then adjourned till the following morning.

THIRTIETH PUBLIC SITTING—FRIDAY, APRIL 26TH, 1907.

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; and Mr. THOMAS SEXTON;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Alderman WILLIAM REIGH examined by THE CHAIRMAN.

Apr. 26, 1907.

Alderman William Reigh, Dublin.

17474. Mr. William Reigh?—Yes.

17475. I believe you are an Alderman of the City of Dublin?—Yes.

17476. Have you been connected with the Corporation for many years?—About six years now.

17477. But you don't appear as a representative of the Dublin Corporation?—No, the Dublin Corporation did not offer evidence.

17478. You appear in your individual capacity?—Yes, as a shareholder.

17479. A railway shareholder?—Yes.

17480. And interested in public affairs?—Very much. I have written down some evidence I propose giving.

17481. We shall get on all right. I understand you are not here to go into any question of the rates and fares in detail?—No.

17482. But principally to give evidence on the general principles we are inquiring into?—Yes, and the development of the country, together with the benefit of the railways.

17483. Have you formed any opinion as to the principal reasons why the railway systems through the South and West of Ireland are not properly developed?—Yes.

17484. Tell us what you have got to say bearing on that question?—I have long been a convinced believer in the policy of the State taking over the control and management of the Irish railways, and it is as such that I desire to lay before the Commission figures which, to my mind, clearly establish the soundness of the proposition, and facts which point to its absolute necessity in the general interests of the country. The Commission have already received evidence from Mr. Malone, representing the Dublin Port and Docks Board, to the effect that there are at the present time in Ireland about twenty railway companies, having a total train mileage of eighteen millions annually, while there are no less than eight of the great English railway companies having individual train mileages exceeding the whole of the combined Irish railways, the average of the eight being about thirty million miles annually. The total capital value of the twenty Irish railways is only 38½ million pounds, the full capital, and then off that there is dead capital of practically £2,896,428, which leaves a paying capital of £35,568,447.

17485. Very well?—Which is less than one-third the capital value of the London and North-Western Company, one of the eight great English companies to which I have referred. The proposition for the State purchase of the Irish railways is, therefore, not one of such magnitude as might at first be supposed.

17486. Yes, of course, that is practically true, the whole of the railways in Ireland are not as large as one railway in England?—Not one-third of the London North Western Railway. The whole of the lines are less than one-third of the London North Western Railway Company. I am not in a position to offer to the Commission evidence in relation to the financial position of all these Irish railways. I am interested in but two of the companies—the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western—and it is in reference to these companies only that I wish to give information.

17487. What is the capital of these two companies?—They represent together a capital value of nearly twenty millions, which is over half the total of all the Irish railways. In the Great Southern and Western there is a 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock of £3,974,834, paying a dividend of 4 per cent., amounting to £158,993 7*s.* 2*d.* There is a 4 per Cent. Guaranteed Stock of £2,776,184, receiving a dividend of £111,047 7*s.* 2*d.* There is a 4 per cent. preference Stock of £1,194,272, receiving dividends of £447,570 17*s.* 2*d.*, and there is Ordinary Stock of £5,325,520, receiving for the year's dividend at the rate of 4 per cent. all round—3¾ for one half-year, 4¼ for the other—which makes the dividend 4 per cent. for the year, and amounting to £213,020 16*s.* The total capital of the company being £13,270,810 and dividends paid, amounting to £530,632 7*s.* 10*d.* That is the Great Southern. Now the Midland Great Western Company.

The total capital—class of stock and dividends paid by the Great Southern and Western and Midland Great Western Railway Companies.

17488. With regard to the Midland, of course, these figures are abstracted from the half-yearly reports?—Yes.

17489. I think it would answer all purposes if you could give us the total, not the detail, the total capital and the total amount paid in interest in dividend?—Yes. There are 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock, 4 per Cent. Guaranteed Stock, 4 per Cent. Preference, 4½ per Cent. Debenture Stock, 4½ Debenture Stock, 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock, 4 per Cent. rent charge, 5 per Cent. Preference Stock, 4 per Cent. Preference Stock, and the Ordinary Stock. There are several kinds of stock in that and the Ordinary Stock. The total amount of the Midland capital is £6,510,511. They paid dividends of £242,632 5*s.* 2*d.* The gross then of the two together—M.G.W. and G.S. and W.—is £19,781,321, and they have paid dividends of £773,284 13*s.* 7*d.*

17490. You have given us from the public accounts the total capital and the total amount paid in interest and dividend on these two railways. Now then, I think you wish to make some comparison as to what could be done supposing the railways were purchased by the State?—Yes.

17491. Of course, this is your own idea?—This is my own idea, but the calculations I think are correct.

17592. Of course?—I had them checked carefully. I have a second schedule showing the saving which could be effected by the State purchase of the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western of Ireland. The total present capital as shown on the former schedule was £19,781,321; amount paid in dividends, which I have referred to, £773,280. Well, the interest on that capital at 3 per cent. of Government Loan Stock to the amount of the full capital would be £593,439, showing a saving on the dividends of £179,845, which capitalised value on this saving at 3 per cent. would free for development purposes £5,994,833.

Alleged savings that could be effected on the dividends paid under State purchase scheme based on Government Loan Stock at 3 per cent.

17493. A little explanation is necessary. What do you suggest?—I think the next one, if you take it up, will explain. This is only the actually paid bill; it is not earning—the earning I have calculated as well.

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17494. We will deal with the first. I want to clear up this first. I put it to you—do you think, as a man of business, that a shareholder in the Midland Great Western Railway Company or in the Great Southern and Western Railway Company receiving 4 per cent., now practically secured, would be satisfied to take 3 per cent. of Government stock?—Well, I would say so, because all these preference stocks are more or less trustees securities, and I see the vast majority of such people invest their money in secured Government 3 per cent. in comparison with the number that invest in the railway 4 per cent. There is the inference of greater security.

Probable attitude of railway shareholders towards a State purchase scheme.

17495. I understand you to say you are a shareholder in these two companies?—Yes.

17496. I don't want to be inquisitive, but do you own debentures or ordinary stock?—Ordinary stock—5,000 in the Midland and 2,000 in the Southern.

17497. I don't want to know the quantity, but people holding debentures in the Great Southern and Western Company get 4 per cent. for their investment. Do you think that they would be satisfied to take 3 per cent.?—No; but I do not think that that consideration should be an obstacle if the benefit of the country was concerned. They could invest their money in something else if they could get security to invest their money.

17498. Confine yourself to my question. Are the debenture holders of the Great Southern and Western getting 4 per cent. practically secured as an income bound to take only 3 per cent. stock and make a sacrifice of 25 per cent. of their income?—No. I should not suggest that; but if they get the capital money—Government stock would be capital money—they could invest it where they liked.

17499. One question about capital money. I suppose originally 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock would be issued at par; but in the fluctuations of the market, and the price some years ago I know 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock was about 125. These people who gave £125 for that 4 per cent., do you suggest that they should be compelled to take Government 3 per Cent. Debenture Stock?—No. I have prepared the present value of the stock, and treated of that matter in a further shcedule (3) here in this proof. I have treated that in my further schedule. That will explain itself, schedule No. 3.

Probable savings in net revenue.

17500. Perhaps you had better go on with the statement, with the second part—net revenue?—Yes, net revenue, excluding the baronial guarantees and exceptional items for the year, I think the exceptional items would on both sides balance each other. They would complicate the case, so it was not worth bringing them in. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company earned £582,268; the Midland earned £249,499.

17501. Net revenue?—The net revenue available to be handled as dividend if they were willing to deal with it in that way, amounted altogether to £831,767. Well, the Government stock on the same amount of capital at 3 perr cent. would be £593,439, which shows a surplus revenue or a net saving of £238,328. The capitalised value of the surplus at 3 per cent. would amount to £7,977,800, which could be utilised for the benefit and development of the country and the reduction of fares. If you refer to schedule 3 I think I have dealt with the matter you were speaking of. I take a date. You must, of course, take some date to start your figures upon. I take a date from the Stock Exchange. Mr. John J. Ryan, of 24, Anglesea-street, one of the stockbrokers in Dublin, has published a book which shows the stock deals, the price of the stock on the 23rd March. So, therefore, all my figures are dated from that.

17502. Yes?—Well, now, on that—the Southern—I suppose it is too heavy to enter upon. The amount, in the first place, the full amount which is the market value.

Present prices of Great Southern and Western and Midland Great Western Railway stocks.

17503. Can you give the market value?—The market value of the Great Southern and Western 4 per cent. Debenture Stock stands at 109⅞; 4 per Cent. Preference, 105; 4 per Cent. Guaranteed, 105½; Ordinary, 85¼. In the Midland they have a great variety of stock. The 4½ Debenture Stock stood at 120½; 4¼ Debenture Stock, 115; 4 per Cent. Debenture Stock, 105; 4 per Cent. Rentcharge, 104; 5 per Cent. Preference Stock, 123½. Of course that is a very small amount, only £300,000—123½; 4 per Cent. Preference Stock, 101. Within the last year they would even be under par, and the Ordinary Stock is only 63. Well, then, I have calculated the amount which that would yield at these prices on total value of the railways—at these prices it would be £19,110,000, which original capital was £19,780,000, so that really there is a loss at present on these two railways of £670,000: that is on the present showing on the present capital of the two railways.

17504. The market value?—And the original price.

17505. The full value?—Yes. The market value of the local stock.

17506. What local stock?—The Government Stock, Local Loan Stock, £62,408,768 of which has been issued, was 96 per cent. on 23rd March, on the basis of these prices, the amount of Government Stock at 3 per cent. required to be issued to produce £19,110,587 would be £19,906,861, so that you see altogether at present even on the Local Loan Stock, which is at 96, there would be only a surplus of less than £200,000 in the Government taking it over at present, even on the Local Loan Stock, so that shows the feasibility of the principle. Well, I proceed then with the other.

17507. Let us see where we are. That deals now with these figures?—Would you like to look at this?

17508. Thank you?—These schedules show that the security of the State would be perfect, because it showed a surplus on these two railways alone of nearly £8,000,000 of money.

17509. It goes without saying that the Government Stocks will fetch a better price in the market than any railway stocks?—But the security would be very great, because it would have a surplus on this showing of eight millions of money as a scope in their favour.

17510. That is assuming that the railways were purchased at your price?—The market price. We must take some status to go on. That is a status we have.

17511. Of course you don't suggest the railways should be taken over at the market price without some percentage for compulsory purchase?—I would not suggest that. You must take a status. I would not suggest that.

17512. You would not suggest that anything should be done by any Government unfairly treating the existing railways in the country?—No. I am really personally more interested in the railway companies than in the interests of the country; but I am interested in the country as an Irishman, and I want to make both interests combine together for their mutual good and for the interests of the country as well.

17513. I think you have formed some idea as to the ability or otherwise of the present railway companies to find further capital for railway extensions?—Yes.

17514. You have come to the conclusion that they are not in a position to do so?—They are not in a position to do so.

17515. So as properly to develop the industries of the country?—Yes; they can't do it. At present their system is ruin to the ordinary shareholders, and a thorough stoppage in the development of the country. I have instanced the Post Office service. You see in the Post Office service, which was taken over by the Government, there are certain districts, as we all know, that are worked at a great loss, and if it were not for that the country would be cast back; and every Government business is the same. The railway companies, unfortunately, have to raise the capital for development purposes at 4 per cent., which for an immediate return of money is nearly impossible to earn, and not only do they do that, but they give a preference charge over the heads of the ordinary shareholders, which is reducing the value of the ordinary shareholders altogether. And they appear to have no discrimination at all in making the preference charges, because even for temporary expenditure, for things that represent temporary expenditure, they make a permanent capital charge.

17516. That is all within the discretion of the directors of the company?—But it is ruinous to the interests of the ordinary shareholders.

17517. But don't you think the directors are the best judges of that?—I don't think so—I can show their whole interest is at present to try and keep up the dividend.

17518. And if that is so, surely they devise the best means of raising capital?—Yes, and they have no other means of raising capital, for the Ordinary Stock goes down so low. The ordinary shares are only 63. They would have to raise the money at the rate that this is—it would be 5 per cent.

17519. And therefore they are justified in raising it as preference capital?—I submit that they have no right to charge this expenditure on permanent capital as they do.

17520. I think we are getting beyond our province. Are the railway companies' accounts not audited?—Yes, by private auditors.

17521. And if there were anything wrong the auditors would point it out?—It is the principle which is established. I am going to show the result of that principle is that all the railway companies not only in Ireland but in England have run down their ordinary capital. I will show on this list of ordinary shares dealt with in the Dublin market that there are fifty-one, and of them thirty-seven ordinary shares are under par. It shows seventy-five per cent. of the ordinary shares. In principle this is a very bad arrangement in the finance of the country. The Government, as well as developing the country, would look to protect private investors. I myself sold some of my shares which I see are now quoted at eighty-four, when I was building some houses about twenty-three years ago, at 127. I sold Midlands, which are now quoted at sixty-three, for 114. You see the principle of issuing the capital has ruined the ordinary shareholders. That is my point. It is not doing good to the country.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—What about Consols?

17522. *Chairman.*—I think we had better get on now with your general view. In what respect has the present system failed in the development of the resources of the country?—The want of capital. Development has been stopped. Except they are sure of making practically five per cent. no railway will do any development, because they first put a preference charge over the heads, and except they make more than four per cent. on the preference it is a mistake for the ordinary shareholders to put a preference charge over their heads. The management and ownership of the railways are in the ordinary shareholders' hands. At the Great Southern and Western it is the ordinary shareholders that elect the directors. In the Midland ordinary and preference elect directors. The directorate and management being in the hands of the ordinary shareholders, it would be suicidal for them to spend money that would give a permanent charge over their heads—money that they would not earn anything out of.

17523. What is your suggested remedy?—The State taking over the railways, as I said, because they would practically be able to get the money at a certain price, and have a fine scope for development.

17524. You have formed the opinion that the real remedy is that the State should take over the Irish railways?—The only remedy—the only possible for development. We have the Midland line running up there to the North, Kingscourt. There was a proposition made to run from Kingscourt, which is the end of the line, a line on to Castleblaney, Armagh, and Keady, and the whole scheme did not go on, and even the portion of the scheme from Castleblaney to Armagh was taken up by a private company, authorised by Parliament. Even the private company could not raise the capital. The experience, not only of the small Irish railways throughout the country, was, nobody put money into it, they lost the capital, and then the big railways had to buy them out at a discount. This left from Kingscourt to Castleblaney undeveloped, and the Midland were anxious to do it, had there been no opposition to their Bill, and they saw there was no present profit to be earned at four per cent.—they would have to raise—therefore it was stopped, and that would be the shortest route to Belfast, I believe. Well, now, the same thing occurs with these coal fields in Arigna, in the North of Ireland. The railway companies cannot see their way to invest capital at four per cent.

17525. Arigna?—Yes, Arigna. The same thing occurs throughout the West and the North. All the railways in the West of Ireland, Athenry and Tuam, and so on, they were built by small companies, and they could not work, and finally the Waterford and Limerick bought them out at a discount, and then the Southern came in and bought them out at a discount. There is no encouragement for capital.

17526. In your judgment, there are many districts in Ireland where industries could have development if there were railway communication?—Yes.

Necessity for State purchase of the railways urged.

17527. But it is not possible to provide railway communication by the existing railway companies, because they could not get immediate return for the capital outlay, and the remedy you suggest is that the State should take over the whole of the Irish railways, and that would result in great benefit to the country?—That would result in great benefit to the country.

17528. Shortly, that is what you mean?—And at the same time save the ordinary shareholders from destruction, which it is coming to. That is one of the principal reasons—save them from certain destruction. The shares are going down all over the country.

17529. That is not confined to Ireland?—It is in England the same way. In the railway system there is no provision made for depreciation or for a sinking fund. In ordinary companies, trading companies, it is necessary to put one per cent. aside on leasehold buildings and ten per cent. on machinery as depreciation fund. Now, it is not so on the railways, and the whole stock is going down.

17530. I think we need not discuss that. Railways are maintained in an efficient state out of the current revenue of the company?—Well, now, I would not think so, as far as those balance-sheets show. They commence by charging the small things on the capital, which should be paid out of revenue—new weigh-bridges and little extensions.

17531. Surely that is a matter for the directors of the company, not for us?—But you see it is a principle that is ruinous to the ordinary shareholders..

I think I will leave it there.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

17532. You have a considerable personal interest in the stock of some of the railways?—I have.

17533. And you have been led by this circumstance to regard the questions from a shareholder's point of view?—I have.

Financial aspect of the proposed State purchase scheme discussed.

17534. You have given some details of present capital and dividends, and of the cost of making good these dividends by the issue of public stock, but may I ask you generally whether you have any doubt, from your study of the subject, that the use of public credit would allow of the purchase of the railways either at a premium over the market value of the stock or at a liberal rate of purchase of the present net profit, and yet leave a substantial balance out of the net profit available for the reduction of the rates?—Yes, I have made that calculation eight millions of money of a scope—the capitalised value of that scope to deal with.

17535. You take it only on the market value?—Yes.

17536. But I am suggesting to you that if the policy of State purchase were adopted it would be practicable to give even a liberal premium upon the present market value of stock by the use of the public credit, and yet to leave out of the present net revenue a substantial balance to use in reduction of the rates?—I believe so.

17537. Or if the mode of purchase indicated in the Act of 1844 were adopted, which would leave the amount of the capital out of view, and take the net revenue as the test, do you think that the State could afford to give such a number of years purchase of the net profits as would be attractive to shareholders and yet leave a balance of the future net profits for use in reduction of the rates?—I do.

17538. It seems to follow, therefore, that if the public credit were used for the purpose the terms of purchase might be such as would be favourable to the shareholders from a financial point of view, and yet would give to State ownership of the railways resources for the reduction of rates which the private companies do not, and cannot, possess?—Most decidedly.

Further railway extension in Ireland considered necessary in the public interests.

17539. Do you consider that numerous railway extensions are required?—I do. I consider a great number of extensions required. I think the immediate want of the numerous extensions might not be so apparent; but if the country wants to be developed, if the development of the country wants to be encouraged, I think it is very necessary. I consider the railway service as at present is as

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necessary to the public trading as even the Post Office is.

17539A. Many extensions are required in the public interest, but would you say that few of them would be lucrative at first?—Not at first. Several of them might not be lucrative at first, but I think there would be a great saving on the present railway system by them, because shorter routes could be run and a great saving of train mileage would thus be effected instead of going roundabout different places. Short routes could be run, and thereby there would be a great saving.

The probability of further extensions of railways becoming paying lines.

17540. Do you think that under a system of rates and fares favourable to the public interest, most of these extensions would improve in point of revenue as time went on?—I do with the development of the country, as instanced by the colonial improvements.

17541. And that most of them would eventually become valuable, not only to the districts through which they are run, but that they would probably give a profit in the double aspect, firstly, their own traffic, and secondly as feeders of the trunk lines?—An all-round system would be. There would be a great saving in the train mileage from running about traffic, and would, of course, subsidise the other lines as a whole. It will pay, as the Post Office, as soon as the system was in full working order.

17542. You think that a policy of extension would pay in the end?—I do.

Cheaper passenger fares all round advocated.

17543. Having regard to the circumstances of Ireland, the incomes of the different classes of the people, do you consider that the passenger fares might well be reduced?—I think it is necessary in several places. Yes. I have been considering that on several points as to each class. There are several scales, and there is even discussion among our own shareholders on the different class fares. It has been debated.

17544. I know it has been often debated?—To dispense with second class. The general tone of things even at the shareholders' meeting is that the fares are all detrimental to the traffic.

17545. We have heard that the fares are lower in England?—Reduction of passenger fares would produce not only an extension of traffic, but give actual improvement in receipts and of net revenue thereby.

17546. If third-class passengers were more considerately treated?—I think all round, through Ireland, cheaper, and no preference one place over another. It would disperse the traffic better, and there would be more traffic.

Necessity for cheaper rates for Irish produce to British markets urged.

17547. As to rates, do you think it vital to the interests of this country that the rates upon export traffic, on food products to the British markets, should be so reduced as to give the Irish agriculturists a fairer chance against the Continental competitor, and to enable him to recover the ground which he appears undoubtedly to have lost?—If you want to keep the country as an agricultural country. It will go, it is going, to grass. There is no hope for the agriculturist if you don't do something like that to assist him, and thus enable him to market the produce he grows to the best advantage. Produce is coming over cheaper from America and Australia, where there is little or no rent to be paid and large machinery, farms worked on an extensive scale. There is no hope for the Irish agriculturist—the tendency is to let the land run to grass.

17548. If Ireland, by better conditions of transit by rates comparing better with those available to the continental producer, had been able to seize—or might now recover—even a part of the tens of millions per annum of British money that go to Denmark, Belgium, and other European countries, would it not go far to make Ireland prosperous?—I should think so.

17549. Well, then, would you say that the inland rates in Ireland, relatively high as compared with the corresponding portion of through rates on imported goods, require to be generally reduced in order to give some home manufactures a chance of development, and others a chance to come into existence?—I saw so much evidence coming from the different districts I really did not go into the subject. Local people appear to have taken up that question very generally, and in my opinion they have shown many grievances on the point. I believe the Corporation would have given evidence if it was to put them. It is rather too much to take up at a jump; otherwise, they have not prepared evidence. The subject is very large. I did not go into the rate question much.

17550. Do you think the evidence of those who are engaged in these trades and industries, and have personal experience of what they say, is worthy of attention?—Very much. I have followed it very closely.

17551. You say, though not raising any question whatever of the good intentions of the companies, that they are unable, from financial conditions, to do what is required?—Yes.

17552. The position, as you state it, if I rightly understood your evidence, is that the residue of net profits which is now available for ordinary shareholders allows generally only of the payment of such moderate dividends that the companies cannot or cannot be expected to engage in enterprises or to grant reductions which would risk that margin of profit and probably entail delay in recovering what might be lost?—It is even more serious than that, because in order to keep up that price of the preference stock they must keep up the three per cent. on the ordinary, lest the preference stock would cease to be a trust stock, and if they did, all the Irish railway would be much under par, and they must keep up; that is the reason, I assume, they have been charging so much to capital. They must keep up the three per cent., and in fact they are very close to it. The Great Southern and Western Company run very close. The Midland are barely on it—it is only one half-year with the other they do it; each individual half-year can't do that.

17553. You have referred to the custom which I believe is usual with English companies also?—Yes.

17554. To charge to capital account expenditure, not upon extensions, but upon improvements of the line, which do not return new or additional income?—And permanent improvements. Dealing with public business there are different scales. The Local Government Board have, for instance, concrete. On foot of that it would be only seven years' loan, four-inch pavement 20, electric light stations 20 years' loan. But these are not permanent; a sinking fund has to be established for them, weigh-bridges, and small extensions; they are not permanent, and it is only getting the ordinary capital into a state of thorough decay. We have the instance of the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway, where ordinary capital is practically wiped out by the preference. That is what I fear on every railway.

17555. However useful or however necessary these improvements may be in themselves, or however warrantable it may be by practice to charge them to the capital account, I understand you confine yourself to the point that the effect of making this expenditure, and so charging it, is this, that unless a development of net profit from some new source arises, the interest of the ordinary shareholder in the line must necessarily be diminished?—Killed; because there is a permanent charge put over his head even with a temporary prosperity. If a reaction comes, you have a preference charge over your heads. At the reaction time the ordinary shareholder gets killed.

17556. It is a case of a choice of evils, for if the expenditure be necessary, and if the income be such as will not allow the expenditure to be charged to it without cutting away the dividends, that would be one evil; the other evil is to charge the expenditure from year to year to capital and create a class of preference charges which reduce the residue for ordinary dividends, and may eventually extinguish it?—No, but the ordinary capital, if these preference charges are made over its head, although they get a temporary payment of a little more dividend, their dividend is more than eaten up by the depreciation of their stock because of the preference charge over their head. If you are getting one per cent. more as your earnings, whilst at the same time the market value of the shares falls 3 points, you are at a net loss of two per cent. So it is a foolish principle. They are not considering that. You should consider. This is what the shareholders do. They grasp for the little present day and forget the charge that they are allowing to grow over their heads, which will finally kill the capital. But every investor sees the fluctuations. You may say the investor does not, and won't, give the price.

17557. In the case of a company paying between three and four per cent. on the ordinary capital now—a company with a small reserve and a narrow margin of profit—if they were to go on making most necessary expenditure on improvements and issuing preference capital to pay for that expenditure, the effect

might very soon be that the ordinary dividend would fall below three per cent.; and then in that case, for ten years, the debentures and all the pre-ordinary shares would fall out of the category of trust securities?—I notice in going over the lists of debenture and preference shareholders a large quantity is investments of banks and insurance companies—the people named wherever you see two names is a trust security. I suppose fully half the stock is so held. It would be a very serious matter.

17558. When once the pre-ordinary stocks all round fall out of the category of trust securities they cannot recover that rank until the ordinary dividends are kept up to three per cent. for ten successive years?—I believe so.

17559. The inference you draw from this is, not that the expenditure is unnecessary or that it is against practice to charge it to capital, but that going on so charging it—issuing preference securities for it when there is no new profit to pay for these securities, in the case of such a line as I have instanced the effect might be to drive the ordinary dividend below three per cent., and this might cause a calamitous loss in the value of the pre-ordinary stocks by reason of the loss of their position as trust securities?—Even as trust securities, barely over par, shown by the present market price, they have ceased to be trust securities in England. They are much under par at present in Ireland.

17560. You say generally that the existing financial conditions place it out of the power of the companies either to make the necessary extensions or to give what you regard as indispensable reductions in rates and fares?—That is so.

17561. Can these things be done if the lines are acquired by the public?—I think so.

17562. First you expect that there would be, if purchased by the use of the public credit, a surplus left out of the present net revenue available for reduction of the rates?—Yes. In these two railways I suppose £238,328 surplus.

17563. Then would you anticipate a large saving through single working as compared with plural?—A very large saving and a combined board. Instead of having twenty boards have only one board—a national board. I have suggestions to make about it, too.

17564. These two savings put together would form a fund by which a very good start could be made in the reduction of rates and fares without imposing any burden on the public?—Emphatically so.

17565. But suppose even for the purpose of giving adequate reductions in rates and fares—such reductions as would stimulate agriculture and develop manufacturing in Ireland—do you think that a part of the public resources of Ireland could possibly be better invested than in bringing about such reduction—do you think it would reap an adequate benefit in the end?—I do, but I think that could be done by a national control, because if the Government were to give a subsidy to the present railway companies in reduction of their fares as private companies, it would tend, I am afraid, to extravagance and dilatoriness of them if they had the security of a sinking fund on rates for private purposes. I am afraid it would not be for the public good; but if the railways were commanded by the State, the State could reasonably, as in the Post Office, temporarily subsidise the different positions.

17566. I am speaking of the case of public ownership, and I am suggesting that possibly the savings might be sufficient, but if they were not, a moderate share of the public resources could not be better applied?—No.

17567. Considering the declining population of Ireland, the insecure condition of the staple trade, the cattle trade, the growth of Continental competition in the food market of England, and the almost absolute want of organised industry in this country, what do you say of the prospects of the Irish railways if they continue to be managed under the present system? They are awful. There is no encouragement to invest money. And even Irish-Americans, who are anxious to assist the country with their savings, would not be encouraged to start manufactories in this country, except they were assured of good railway assistance to develop them, and market their manufactures. We have only two great large centres in Ireland, Dublin and Belfast. It would be madness for a manufacturer to start in Ireland if he had not the security of good railway system.

17568. With the continued management of the railways by separate ownerships, and the system of high passenger fares and of rates which appear to cramp the interests of Ireland in the British markets, and to repress home manufactures, you think the prospects are not encouraging?—No.

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17569. Do you think, then, as a shareholder, that the shareholders would in their own interest as well as in that of the public do well to avail themselves of the opportunity of public purchase if those who have the power to do it were inclined to put that policy into effect?—I think that every man who is really an Irishman certainly wishes for the interests of the country, and, as long as he would not suffer himself, he ought do everything for the interests of the country without making a sacrifice. Nobody asks them to make a sacrifice. He gets his money and can invest in something else if he doesn't like Government Stock.

State purchase alleged to be in the best interests of the shareholders themselves.

17570. Of course, in the event of public purchase, the future direction of the railways would have to be regulated by Statute?—Oh, yes, I submit.

17571. You have spoken of Government Stock. Suppose an Irish authority were created with funds at its disposal, and that it could give security acceptable to the Treasury for the needful advance, do you consider, having regard to the nature of what is suffered, to the interests that are damaged by the present system, that it would be better that the control of policy as to the amounts of rates and fares and the reductions should be in the hands of some authority responsible to the people of Ireland?—Oh, yes.

Necessity for a responsible Irish authority to control the railways if State-owned.

17572. And in the details of practical management they would act through a board of practical railway experts?—My suggestion of a board is this—a board of fifteen members be formed, five members to be nominated by Government, including a civil engineer and a mechanical engineer with extensive railway and general experience; four members to be nominated by the present railway directors, say one each from the Great Northern, the Great Southern, and the Midland Boards, and one elected from the boards of the remaining companies; four members to be elected by the County Councils, one from each province; two members to be elected by the City Councils of Dublin and Belfast, one from each to look after trade interests. Out of this board a chairman and vice-chairman could be elected, and those two gentlemen along with the expert engineers, included under paragraph (1) should be required to devote their entire time to the railway service during their term of office, and to hold no other appointments or directorships whatsoever or engage in business. The Government age limit of sixty-five years should apply without exception to every member of the board. In the case of the four railway directors when they dropped out, I would suggest that the vacancies should be divided amongst the provinces, and should be filled by the County Councils, for instance, for a Great Southern and Western director a member for Munster, and for a director representing the Midland Railway Company, a member for Connaught.

Suggestion as to the composition of a Board to undertake the practical management of the railways.

17573. The case I am putting to you regards the subject from a somewhat different point of view. I am suggesting an elective authority, responsible to the Irish people, and with powers over such departments as the Board of Works and the Agricultural Department, which now have functions connected with the railways, and with funds at its disposal, and which could satisfy the Treasury as to the security for the advances made. Would you be satisfied that such a body should have the control of the Irish railways?—Of course I would be satisfied. That would be the true spirit of Irish development.

17574. Subject to that authority, such a committee or board as you speak of might be created to act in matters of detail?—It should be under Irish management. It is to our interest not to allow English interests to predominate.

17575. And apart from that board, for the mechanical work, the technical and expert working of the lines, a body of the best available railway experts should be appointed. Do you approve of that?—I think that under that board there should be three special committees—a finance committee, a traffic committee, and a works committee—as all public boards are worked.

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17576. You would require also, would you not, in addition to any such public committees as you mention, a body of experts,—locomotive engineers, traffic managers, permanent way engineers—for the purpose of assuring that public control of the lines did not involve or imply any failure to bring the best expert skill to bear on all the details?—Yes.

17577. You say that the prospect before the railways under the present system is not encouraging?—No.

The advantages generally to be expected from State ownership summarised.

17578. Do you think that if the public acquired the railways, and by a judicious system of extensions and by well-judged reductions of rates and fares developed the resources of the country, they would make more of the railways for the public benefit than the present companies can?—Oh, yes, and more for the country. Even the manufacture of rolling stock would give employment, and be a very beneficial thing. I understand that in the manufacture of rolling stock 50 per cent. goes in wages and 50 per cent. for material. We suffer an immense loss from not having our own rolling stock manufactured here. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company gives a great deal away; the Great Northern do not manufacture their own locomotives, but only their carriages; the Midland only manufacture in a small way; and the other companies all send away; and a great loss is sustained in that way by the country. A large general workshop would be very necessary.

17579. And do you think that though an adequate reduction of rates and fares might restrict the revenue for a time, it would eventually have the effect of securing larger traffic receipts?—Yes; and the present companies cannot afford to risk that.

17580. You have said so. And that ultimately the public ownership of the lines would secure a larger net profit than private ownership can secure?—Yes; the same as the Post Office.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

The adoption of the Continental railway policy as regards low export rates a necessity for Ireland.

17581. Reference has been made to foreign competition. You are, no doubt, aware that in most Continental countries, where the railways are State owned, the policy of the Government, with a view to stimulating the industrial resources and the agricultural industries of the country, has been to grant exceptionally low export rates?—Yes.

17582. So low, indeed, that in many cases, I think, experience has shown that they leave no margin of profit over the working expenses, and in some cases actually involve a loss. You are aware of that?—I am.

17583. If such a policy is justifiable in the interest of Continental countries, whose natural resources are infinitely superior to those of Ireland, is it not your opinion that such a policy is infinitely more justifiable in the case of a country like this, where our industries are languishing and our trade declining? If the Government want to assist manufactures at all and develop them, it is the only means. It is an absolute necessity.

Effective reduction in rates only possible under State ownership.

17584. Another step. Such a policy naturally could not be initiated under the existing system—a wholly commercial undertaking, answerable to their shareholders, and, of course, administered on purely commercial lines. The only possible authority that could grant such a reduction as might involve a loss would be the State authority?—Yes; they could do it. The average working cost of a line is from 50 to 60 per cent., so that they would have a scope of between 40 and 50 per cent., if there was no profit wanted for subsidising. You could hardly ask private companies to do that. We are not public philanthropists.

17585. That is a further argument in favour of State purchase?—Yes.

Any consequent loss justifiable if it had the effect of promoting

17586. And I suppose one might even go so far as to say, even assuming that no return at all was made for some time on the State-owned system, that a loss would be justifiable if it had the effect of promoting the prosperity of the country and the development of its industries?—Yes; the same as the Government do in the case of the Post Office, or the telephone, or anything—just for the public benefit.

Cross-examined by Mr. Healy, K.C.

17587. If the railway outlook is so black, and the income from the ordinary shares so precarious, why do you maintain your investments in it?—My investments are from my father.

17588. I won't say you; but why does anybody?—Well, I believe if you look at the stocks list you will see that more or less they yield a certain percentage; and people, unfortunately, go for a certain percentage.

17589. I am satisfied. You got your percentage. I took up an ordinary daily paper of this morning while you were giving your evidence about the effect of the through rates in the country, and I see that in Liverpool, which is, I suppose, a good centre for butter, the price of Danish butter (choicest) per 112 lbs. was 102*s.* to 106*s.*, and that of Irish creameries, which is the corresponding quality, 93*s.* to 96*s.* Now, I will take the rate from Limerick to Liverpool. It is 30*s.* a ton; and the Irish percentage of that is 10*s.* a ton. Supposing that the Irish percentage of that were reduced by one-half, what relief would it give the Limerick farmer so as to enable him to compete with the Danish butter maker? It would give him about 3*d.* a cwt., and the difference in price is 9*s.* a cwt.?—I have not studied that subject.

17590. Ought we not come down from the clouds? Has Denmark, say, over Limerick any special advantage?—Of course. Colonel Hutcheson Poë says if the Government should confer a bounty of the railway fare or anything, we cannot compete unless we give a bounty ourselves. There is no other way of competing with it.

17591. But if this butter was carried by the railway companies for nothing, that is to say, by the Irish company, it would not be sufficient apparently. What is the explanation of it?—That has nothing to do with the railways. It is an agricultural question altogether.

17592. But if you take the County Limerick and the County Cork, is not butter a tremendous product? You see it is not the railways that are in fault, at all events. It is not the railways that are making this disease. Is not that self-evident on the figures?—I think they are ceasing to encourage and develop the traffic. In Belgium and those countries where the railways are State owned when a new industry starts they give encouragement to it.

17593. I take a particular product, and I get no answer. Then, I will ask you another question. You say the railways would make a profit if they did certain things as the Post Office does. Is it your impression that the Post Office in Ireland is a profitable thing?—No; I don't think it is. But as to the Post Office system all round there is a large net earning.

17594. The Post Office in Ireland is a loss?—Yes. In some of the smaller districts the railways of Ireland might be a loss; but under a general system worked hotch-pot it would all pay.

17595. But the Post Office is worked hotch-pot?—It is worked as a general system for the United Kingdom; it is not worked as a separate system in Ireland.

17596. It is a loss on the Irish figures?—So I understand.

17597. You have spoken of the development of the country. Will you mention to me any town in Ireland with 2,000 inhabitants that has not got a railway?—I am not prepared to answer that question.

17598. Well, now, you have spoken about the way in which the Irish railway directors raise capital by putting preference shares before the ordinary stock. Are you aware that there is a smaller percentage of preference stock to ordinary stock in Ireland than in England and Wales in spite of the difficulty of raising capital in Ireland?—No; but that would have no effect.

17599. England is a rich country and easily able to raise capital. Ireland is a poor country, and the difficulty of raising capital here is very great; and yet the fact remains that there is a smaller percentage of preference stock in Ireland than in England. It is two per cent.

Chairman.—Roughly, in England, it is about one-third.

17600. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—The figures for England and Wales are—Pre-ordinary stock 63 per cent.,

ordinary 37. The figures for Ireland are—Preordinary 61, and ordinary 39.

Witness.—I suppose in Ireland the ordinary stock was put at the price which they thought would be able to work the country. But the extensions in Ireland have not been so successful as they have been in England, and more stock has been issued in England. Unfortunately our population is going down, though our preference stock is increasing.

17601. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—Would you be prepared to put the Irish railways under a body elected as the Dublin Corporation is?—No, not elected. I have suggested what I would put them under. I would not have a body directly elected by the people, but a body elected on a certain representation from the provinces by the County Councils and a certain representation by the Government, who guaranteed the stock.

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Mr. Healy, K.C.—That is all I ask you.

Chairman.—Thank you, Alderman.

Mr. W. T. TRENCH, D.L., J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. W. T. Trench, D.L., representative of the Tipperary (North Riding) County Council and Nenagh Urban District Council

17602. I believe you have been asked by the County Council of the North Riding of Tipperary to give evidence before this Commission?—Yes.

17603. Are you a member of that body?—No; I am not a member.

17604. Are you a Deputy Lieutenant of the County?—Yes.

17605. And a magistrate?—Yes. May I also mention that the Urban District Council of Nenagh have also asked me to represent them.

17606. Have you been long connected with that part of the country?—Yes, I may say I have been all my life.

17607. Well, now, is it your opinion that the progress and prosperity of the country is handicapped by the existing railway system and the rates and fares in operation?—Yes, I think it is very seriously.

17608. Well, now, just tell me in your own words do you consider the goods rates now charged excessive?—Yes, I think I may say that I do certainly. Perhaps you would allow me to say that I have for some years past looked into this question in a general way as to the effect that the policy of the railway companies has had upon the progress and the prosperity of the country, and I have come to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that under the present system the progress of the country is very seriously handicapped and impeded. And I should also wish to say that the dissatisfaction which exists throughout the country, and of which I have got ample evidence, is, I may say, universal. I do not know that I have ever met anyone who stands up in defence of the present system of Irish railways.

17609. Stop a minute, now. First of all, what is the main industry of the North Riding of Tipperary?—In the first paragraph of the abstract I have mentioned that agriculture is the main industry of the North Riding.

17610. When you say agriculture do you include live stock?—Yes, sir.

17611. Large quantities of cattle are produced in that county?—Yes.

17612. And is grain grown to any large extent?—Yes; the North Riding of Tipperary is particularly well known as a barley-producing district.

17613. Then if the barley is produced in that particular district, are there any malting industries?—Yes; there are three or four. I think it is the best industry in the North Riding.

17614. Successful?—Successful.

17615. In spite of the railway rates?—Yes, in spite of the railway rates.

17616. Where are they situated?—There are two at Nenagh. One has been lately started there. There is another in Birr, which is really in the King's County, but it borders Tipperary; and there is another at Banagher, which is not very far from the North Riding.

17617. Is there any other industry in the district except agriculture and live stock?—No, with the exception of the slate quarries at Killaloe.

17618. Are the slate quarries worked?—Yes, they are.

17619. Are they served by a railway?—No, there is no railway nearer than Killaloe.

17620. Where is the slate carted to?—To Killaloe and Birdhill.

17621. What is the distance?—It must be some three or four miles.

17622. Of course, then, that particular traffic, which cannot bear a very high rate for carriage, is seriously handicapped?—Yes. They have water also for the Killaloe quarries three or four miles distant. They have Lough Derg.

17623. Have they to cart to the water?—Yes.

17624. What is the railway?—The Great Southern and Western.

17625. What are the rural districts that comprise what you call the North Riding of Tipperary?—Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea No. 1, Birr No. 2, and Borrisokane.

17626. You said just now that the rates are too high?—Yes.

17627. Upon what basis do you form that opinion?—The numbers of complaints that I have had from traders and from individuals, and from the constant complaints that have appeared for years and years in the newspapers.

17628. I suppose there is nothing in the rates beyond the powers of the company?—In some cases they are.

17629. Have you got a case of that sort?—Yes, I have got one case. It is not very easy to know them, but I have got one case. I have got a newspaper reference to it here. Traders in the town of Borrisokane who got their goods from the Cloughjordan Station were charged a lower rate to Cloughjordan than the Cloughjordan traders were charged.

17630. Ah. I asked you whether you had any case where it was alleged that the railway companies exceeded their maximum powers?—Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought you referred to undue preference.

17631. Oh, no?—I am not aware that there are any.

Chairman.—Then whether the rate is excessive or reasonable is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Ask him for the particulars. We would like the particulars. He says the Borrisokane traders were charged lower than the Cloughjordan traders.

Alleged undue preference by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company in the matter of rates on goods for Borrisokane.

17632. *Chairman.*—We will come to that. I asked a question whether there is any complaint from the traders that the rates were beyond the powers of the company, and he said he had one. (*To the witness*)—Now you say you have not any case?—I misunderstood.

17633. I thought my question was very plain. You have a case of alleged undue preference. Can you explain in a few words what that case is?—I believe the cause of it was that there was competition with the Canal as regards Borrisokane, and there was no competition as regards the Canal with Cloughjordan.

17634. Surely that seems to me to justify a difference in rate where there is water competition?—Yes, but this was a rate to the same station.

17635. Have you got it there?—I have got it here. It will take me some little time to find it.

17636. If it is not handy I don't think I will delay?—I think I am prepared to substantiate from evidence here all those cases; and I shall be quite prepared to do so.

17637. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—I would be very anxious if he gave us the facts of this case. It is a specific statement and it ought to be proved.

Witness.—This is a pamphlet which I published periodically some little time ago at different periods, and I quote in this pamphlet any cases which appeared in the newspapers or any cases which were communicated to me personally. I published this, and I advertised that I was prepared to send this pamphlet to anybody who desired to have one without charge; and as a matter of fact, I used to send it to anybody who applied for it and to my friends generally. And this is the case that I speak of. The date on which this leaflet was published was the 1st of August, 1898. (*Reads.*) "A correspondent writes: 'It is a fact that the Great Southern and Western Railway have two distinct rates for goods consigned to Cloughjordan and Borrisokane, and that the latter are lower.'" That is the case.

17638. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—You may take it from me that there is not a word of foundation for it?—I have the reference.

17639. *Chairman.*—That publication was in '98, did you say?—Yes.

17640. The correspondent writes about a case that

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may have occurred years before?—I think not. I had a letter a short time ago from a Cloughjordan trader complaining of the same state of things.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Let us have the letter. Let us get the facts.

Chairman.—I think, Mr. Healy, I will go on.

Mr. Healy.—I beg your pardon, sir.

17641. *Chairman (to the witness).*—I don't understand where the undue preference comes in. Can you explain that?—I was under the impression that undue preference consisted of different rates for similar services. The two services were alike. They were to the town of Cloughjordan.

17642. Can you give us a concrete case? What was it? Was it a ton of goods or a cwt. of goods? You don't know?—I don't know.

17643. We will pass from that. You have some remark to make with reference to the through rates as compared with the inland rates?—Yes.

17644. What do you say about that? You mean the through rates from England?

Rates complained of generally as being excessive for a country like Ireland.

17644A. Yes?—I think you have had it in evidence that the through rates from England to all the inland towns in Ireland are lower judged by mileage than the rates between the inland towns in Ireland.

17645. Well, we have had abundant evidence upon that point. We shall hear the railway explanation of it when their time comes. What about the local rates? Confine your attention to the local rates. What have you to say about those?—The local rates in many cases appear to me to be much too high.

17646. Yes. But what is your standard of measurement? How do you measure whether they are high or low?—Well, as near as I can by what the charge ought fairly to be, assuming that they are carried at the lowest paying rate.

17647. At the lowest paying rate?—Yes.

17648. Who are the best judges of that—you or the railway company?—Well, I think to a certain extent that I am as good a judge as the railway company.

17649. Do you say so?—I do, in some cases. Let me say that I am not giving my own opinion, but I am giving the opinion of very much greater authorities than I am. And I have the evidence of those authorities here.

17650. Yes. But can you fix that upon any particular article between any particular place?—Yes.

Instance:—Feeding stuffs, etc., Dublin and Nenagh.

17651. Can you give us one instance?—Well, I will give you an instance of a very important industry, which is the conveyance of feeding stuffs and manures from Dublin.

17652. Let us hear your proof as to the rates being excessive. First of all, from Dublin to what place?—Say from Dublin to Nenagh.

17653. Very well. Now, then. What is the distance from Dublin to Nenagh?—100 miles.

17654. What is the rate for feeding stuffs?—I may say that there are complaints from all the stations. Traders have sent me in their complaints from all the stations.

17655. Give us any one case you like. Select your own case?—Here is a letter which has been forwarded to me by the Secretary of the Nenagh Urban District. Here are feeding stuffs 8*s.* a ton to Nenagh from Dublin.

17656. *Mr. Healy*, K.C.—That ought to be 7*s.*?—I beg your pardon. 7*s.* a ton, 100 miles.

17657. *Chairman.*—Let us follow that out. That is 7*s.* a ton from Dublin to Nenagh, 100 miles?—Yes.

17658. That is less than a penny per mile, including terminals. What is there unreasonable about that?—They are charging more than that to other stations in the same neighbourhood. I mentioned that as the lowest rate, and the reason it is so low is because the Canal competition comes in there.

17659. I asked you to give me any case you liked?—I think that is too high.

17660. Well, what would you make it?—I think it might very well be reduced to one-half.

17661. Then I, as an expert, should say that it would be carried at an absolute loss. Is it your opinion that it should be? Should it be carried at an absolute loss?—No, certainly not. I hope I shall make it clear that I do not think that the railway companies ought to be asked to carry things at a loss. I think that would be a most monstrous doctrine to put forward.

17662. Then I tell you that at 3*s.* 6*d.* a ton it must be carried at an absolute loss. You said that 7*s.* was a low rate. I quite agree that it is a low rate for feeding stuffs. I asked you to mention one typical case. Is there any typical case that you wish to bring under our notice now showing, in your judgment, either undue preference or unfair rates in a particular case?—I should say that is the only case that I had of undue preference—the one I mentioned. With regard to unfair rates, I have no reason to think that any rate is beyond the maximum. I have no reason to think that at all. But my complaints of the fares and rates being too high I might say are grounded upon three authorities much higher than I can lay any claim to be. One of those is the Allport Commission, which decided that the rates and fares generally in Ireland were much higher than were necessary.

17663. That is a general statement?—Well, it is the general statement I wish to deal with, because the authorities on the general position are, I consider, very overwhelming, very strong.

17664. That is one authority?—Yes. I have here a leaflet which was published some years ago by Sir Alexander Rendal, who is engineer for the State Railways in India. He went into the comparison between the rates in India and the rates in Ireland and as compared with the London and North-Western in England; and he arrived at the conclusion that the rates in Ireland were far too high. I believe he had some experience in Ireland before he went to India.

17665. I don't think that he knew much about rates myself. He was consulting engineer?—The leaflet which he published is here.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—All the rates in Ireland have been revised and reduced since the Allport Commission.

17666. *Chairman.*—Well, now, Mr. Trench, I am quite prepared to accept your statement that, considering the circumstances of the trade of this country compared with England, it is a retail trade in Ireland as compared with a wholesale trade in England—that is to say, that the average consignments in this country must be very small—small as compared with England?—Yes, certainly.

17667. And that with that in view, and considering the circumstances of the country it would be an immense benefit to the country generally if all the rates were reduced?—Yes.

17668. That is your view?—Yes.

17668A. You admit that they are not above the maximum?—I have no reason to think that they are above the maximum.

17669. And you do not know whether they are fair and reasonable except that you say that it would be a great advantage to the country if they were reduced?—Yes. May I mention that Mr. Thomas Robertson, late chairman of the Great Northern Railway Company, when he was applying in 1891 to the Board of Trade for powers to raise the rates with regard to live stock, appeared before Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and he stated that the rates for Ireland had always been higher than the rates in England. That was in the newspaper report.

17670. Yes, but that was years ago; and the rates have been revised since then. The powers of the companies have been revised since that. Do you know that?—I was aware that there had been a great many changes.

17671. Lord Balfour of Burleigh was over here revising the rates, and Sir Courtenay Boyle?—Yes.

17672. Like other witnesses you condemn the Railway Commission Court as being not suited to the requirements of this country?—The people generally consider it quite inapproachable; and, as a matter of fact, I happened to look over one report for one year, and I found that out of something like 150 cases that appeared before the Court two came from Ireland, and those were between railway companies, and not between traders. They were disputes between railway companies.

17673. Before the Railway Commission Court?—I think so.

17674. I think not?—Do the railway companies not appear?

17674A. I am quite sure there there is no year in which they had 150 cases before them. It may have been complaints to the Board of Trade you are speaking of. (*To Mr. Barrington, Solicitor*).—The Railway Commissioners have not had an average of twenty-five cases?——

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Something like twenty-five or twenty cases. They are all reported. I think he is alluding to complaints to the Board of Trade.

Chairman.—Since the Railway Commission Court has been established, I am quite sure there has never been a year in which they have had 150 cases brought before them.

Witness.—It may be the Board of Trade. It is quite possible I might have been mistaken.

17675. *Chairman.*—The people in your particular district, and the County Council, strongly object to the constitution of the present Railway Commission Court as being unsuited to the requirements of Ireland?—Yes.

17676. You are aware of the powers given to the Department of Agriculture in this country?—Yes.

17677. And we have had evidence from that Department before us?—Yes.

17678. Have you read the evidence?—I have read what appeared in some of the newspapers.

17679. On the whole, that would be in the interests of the country?—It has been decidedly useful.

17680. Are there any light railways in the North Riding of Tipperary?—No; no light railways.

17681. What do you suggest as the remedy for the various complaints you have made?—Well, I may say that nearly everybody I have met seems to think there is only one way out of the difficulty as an escape from the present unsatisfactory state of things, and that the State ought to take over the lines.

17682. Some form of municipalisation or nationalisation?—Something of that sort.

17683. Do you think it would be an effective remedy for all those complaints that you have brought under our notice?—It is the general opinion of the country that it would be an improvement of the state of affairs.

17684. Have you thought out the subject?—Yes.

17685. I believe you have written upon it?—Yes.

17686. Have you formulated any scheme?—My idea was personally that if running powers were given over the different lines it would get over the difficulty. The whole secret is want of competition—nationalisation won't afford us that. If we had competition, as they seem to have in many parts of England, the whole thing would right itself. The crux of the question is how to create competition.

17687. You would not create competition by the nationalisation of the railways?—Certainly not. That would do away with it.

17688. If the railways are the property of the State where is the competition?—I am not in favour of the State working the lines, but in favour of the State acquiring the permanent way.

17689. By purchase?—Yes, the permanent way.

17690. Don't you agree that the State should purchase the railways, and that some central body in Ireland should work them?—No. The traffic ought to be worked by the companies and the lines owned by the State, as the country owns the high roads at present.

17691. The State does not own the high roads?—No, but the local authorities own them.

17692. The various local authorities should work the railways?—No, the companies should work them.

17693. I see you make a suggestion that the railway companies should furnish fuller accounts?—Yes, of their proceedings.

17694. Surely the half-yearly accounts contain everything necessary for the shareholders to know?—perhaps the shareholders are satisfied. I don't think, comparing these accounts published with the Indian railways, they are anything like as full as we could wish.

17695. These are State-managed, most of them?—Some of them, not all.

17696. Some of them are guaranteed?—My idea is that a great number of them are guaranteed by the State. Some are private owners.

17697. Just name one?—I am not sure.

17698. At any rate, the railways were private companies guaranteed by the State, and now the State has acquired most of them—there may be some exceptions?—I bow to your knowledge in the matter.

17699. If the shareholders are satisfied with the present figures in the half-yearly reports—I suppose they are—I am asking now for information?—I have no reason to think they are not.

17700. What have outsiders got to do with it if the shareholders are satisfied?—I most respectfully think the outside public have a great deal more to do with it than that.

17701. They have no interest in the property. Why should they?—They know nothing as to how the railways are being worked in regard to the prosperity of the country.

17702. I am speaking of the accounts—the detailed accounts?—They must show a good deal of how it is worked.

17703. The shareholders are satisfied with the reports?—The public ought to be given more information—why bury it away in a Blue Book? I say it with the greatest respect.

17704. The Blue Book gives all the information that even the public ought to have?—I am not prepared to say that.

17705. I want you to put it on the notes—I want to know what other information not given in the accounts should be given?—The first thing is that the ton mile and passenger mile returns should be furnished.

17706. Ton mile statistics are being discontinued on some railways in America?—I am not aware of it.

17707. They are fallacious from beginning to end?—I am not aware of it. I believe it is the case, is it not, that they are published in India. All the Indian railways publish them, and American railways—I bow to your knowledge of American railways—have laid the greatest stress upon them.

17708. Some people have?—I have read letters in the papers, and many authorities say that it ought to be given.

17709. Letters in the papers. Take it from me many give it, but they are discontinuing the information?—May I mention that I also thought it desirable the Board of Trade should give the gross earnings, and give a return showing how much was earned by each railway per mile of railway per annum.

17710. I can make it out in two minutes?—I think the Board of Trade ought to publish it; I have done it myself.

17711. You want something that would save you the trouble—anybody can work it out?—It takes some time to work it out for the whole of Ireland, and I think it would be reasonable that the Board of Trade should publish it.

17712. It is very simple, the earnings per mile of railway?—I am not objecting to that.

17713. If you take the *Railway News* or the *Railway Times* you will see it almost every week?—I should like that it should be tabulated, a return showing how much each company was earning per mile.

17714. The gross per mile?—I think it is an important piece of information.

17715. It is now shown in the return—you can get it?—You can work it out if you take the trouble to do it. It took me a good many hours before I did it.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—And you enjoyed yourself, I am sure.

17716. Are you prepared to give any evidence with reference to the Portumna railway—is this your statement?—Yes.

Necessity for the publication of fuller railway accounts.

Birr and Portumna derelict railway.

17717. I thought it was a separate matter?—I should not like to do so without having Mr. Taylor, who is my colleague here. I don't know whether he is in the room or not. He and I were deputed to attend on behalf of the committee which was appointed in the matter of the resuscitation of the Portumna line.

17718. Well, then, Mr. Trench, would you wish Mr. Taylor to give it?—I have not my papers here. I should not like to give it without having Mr. Taylor here.

Resuscitation Committee appointed by the people of the district.

Mr. Shanahan (Secretary to the Commission).—He is here.

Witness.—I am quite satisfied.

17719. *Chairman.*—We have heard a lot with reference to this derelict railway. Just explain who called the meeting and asked you to represent the case before us?—I think it was Lord Westmeath.

17720. Was the meeting called by the original shareholders, or was it by an influential meeting of the people interested in the district, which ought to have been served by the railway?—The people of the district.

Apr. 26, 1907.

Mr. W. T. Trench, D.L., representative of the Tipperary (North Riding) County Council and Nenagh Urban District Council.

Birr and Portumna derelict railway: Construction, temporary working, and abandonment.

17721. When was the meeting held—this year or last year?—This year or the end of last year. I have got a lot of papers on the subject.

17722. Within the last twelve months?—Yes.

17723. A meeting of residents of the district took place within the last twelve months, and they deputed you and Mr. Taylor to bring the subject before this Commission. Can you tell us when this Portumna line was first constructed?—Previous to 1868.

17724. And where was the line from and to?—From the town of Birr, which is just on the borders of the King's County and bordering on the County of Tipperary, to Portumna Bridge, which is on the borders of Tipperary and Galway.

17725. What is the length—about twelve miles?—I think twelve and a quarter statute miles.

17726. When was it opened?—In 1868. It was worked by the Great Southern and Western Company under a working agreement.

17727. How was the capital raised for the construction of the line, do you remember?—It was raised by local subscriptions to a certain extent, also by loans from the Board of Works, and also by a loan from the Great Southern and Western.

17728. How much did the people of the district subscribe?—It has been said that they subscribed £60,000 for the line. I mention that sum, but I am not sure.

17729. Have all the books disappeared?—Nobody knows what has become of them.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The Government have them. The Board of Works or the Public Loan Commissioners.

17730. *Chairman.*—When did the lease of the Great Southern and Western expire?—In 1878. The Great Southern and Western declined to renew the lease.

17731. Do you remember the reason that was alleged?—They said it did not pay them to work it.

17732. Was there a loss, a great deal of loss, on the working of the railway?—According to their accounts, there was a loss under the agreement.

Loss incurred by the Great Southern and Western Company under the working agreement.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—We were working it for 40 per cent. of the gross receipts, and were losing £2,000 a year.

17733. *Chairman.*—It would not be possible to work the line on that. How much did the Loan Commissioners advance, do you remember?—£12,500.

Advance by the Public Works Loans Commissioners and action of that Board after working of line ceased.

17734. On the security of the line itself?—They were there as mortgagees.

17735. When the agreement with the Great Southern and Western expired did the mortgagees take possession?—Yes.

17736. Did they continue to work it?—No.

17737. The rolling stock belonged to the Great Southern?—Yes.

17738. They had agreed to work it and to find the rolling stock?—Yes.

17739. They withdrew the rolling stock, and the mortgagees took possession of the line without rolling stock?

Mr. Healy, K.C.—State ownership.

17740. *Chairman.*—Now, did the Public Loan Commissioners make any attempt to work the railway?—No; no attempt.

17741. How long did they continue practically exercising rights over the line?—About five years from 1878 to 1883.

17742. Had they a staff there to keep it in order?—The milesmen were there, at least, I think they were, and their houses were occupied up to that time.

17743. Now, what was the first move in bringing it into a derelict condition, if I may call it that?—People began to steal the wire as soon as the working stopped, but there was very little damage done for some time until it was abandoned.

17744. Was the property assesed for rates by the county authorities?—Yes.

17745. Was the money paid?—No. The rates were in arrears.

Seizures on the abandoned line for county cess.

17746. Did the county authorities take any action?—The County Cess Collector seized some of the rails and sold them by auction.

17747. For the rates?—Yes.

Inaction of the Public Works Loans Board.

17748. And the Loan Commissioners, what did they do?—Looked on.

17749. Well, that was the beginning of the destruction?—The end, I should say. It was the end. Pilfering had been going on.

17750. Stop a minute. The end of it, you say, when the rate collector seized?—All the rails were stolen. They made a great descent on the line. There was nobody to look after the line, and nobody to look after anything, and all the rails and all the property that was moveable was seized and carried off.

17751. What were the shareholders doing all the time?—Nothing.

17752. No meetings?—No meetings.

17753. Who were the directors?—I don't know. I never heard.

17754. It is most extraordinary; the people in the district saw this line disappear gradually, and they took no action?—Oh, yes; they did.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They took a bridge.

Witness.—No; it was the police prevented the bridge from being taken. The bridge would have been taken. The bridge spans the River Brosna, near Birr, and after the looting of the rails was going on someone—I don't know who he was—a man came down with cranes and other appliances, intending to carry away the metal girders of the bridge; but there happened to be a police station at the little village of Riverstown close by, and the sergeant of the police took it upon himself to tell the man he would not allow it, and so prevented the man from taking it away.

17755. And he did not?—The bridge is there now, I am glad to say.

17756. Was anybody prosecuted for stealing anything?—The police brought up people who were supposed to be in illegal possession of the rails, but no owner of the property appeared.

17757. And the prosecution fell through?—We understood that the police were told—this is only hearsay—not to take further steps in the matter.

17758. Well, we have reached a stage where gradually the material disappeared?—Not gradually; very rapidly. There had been all these petty thefts going on before, and after that, demolition.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The word "thefts" should not be used. There was no owner.

17759. *Chairman.*—There were mortgagees?—I will say "abstractions," then.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They had abandoned the line.

17760. *Chairman.*—We will get it directly.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—When did this take place—about twenty years ago?—It was more like thirty years.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It was thirty years ago.

17761. *Chairman.*—Did the shareholders take any action to bring the subject before the Government, the Public Loan Commissioners, or some public authority or anybody. Were they all asleep?—The idea was that there might be some liability in connection with unpaid shares, and that they would be liable for it, or something of that sort. Lord Clanricarde was said to have bought a number of shares. Not the present Marquis; the old Marquis. Others in the neighbourhood had subscribed for shares.

17762. Let us come down to a later period. I suppose that application has been made to various Chief Secretaries with reference to this question?—Yes; I think to every Chief Secretary who has been in office, nearly, since that date. The first move for the resuscitation of the line was made in 1889. At that time Mr. Balfour—Mr. Arthur Balfour—was in office.

17763. He was Chief Secretary. How was it brought to his knowledge. We held a meeting and memorialised the Government, and a deputation was to have seen him, but it was Sir West Ridgway, who was Under Secretary, that we saw, as Mr. Balfour was not well at the time. A deputation came to Dublin and laid the whole case before him.

17764. And what steps were taken by the Chief Secretary?—The Chief Secretary undertook that the Government would advance a sum of £12,000 on certain conditions towards the resuscitation of the line. We understood at the time that it would cost the Great Southern and Western that. At all events, that they would take up the line and work it if they got £12,000.

17765. And the Chief Secretary did recommend that?—The Chief Secretary recommended giving that grant, and he was very sympathetic in the matter.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—As usual.

Witness.—He gave us the grant, and I may say we renewed the appeal to Mr. Morley, and he said in a letter which I have that the grant would be given.

17766. Now, then, do you know, to your own knowledge, anything as to whether this was communicated

to the Great Southern and Western Company?—It was. My papers in connection with the Portumna Railway are downstairs.

17767. But your memory seems to be perfectly clear?—Do you wish to see the papers?

17768. You seem to have a clear idea of the whole thing. I would rather take it in evidence and put it on the notes. Never mind the papers. Then, you know the Great Southern and Western agreed to resuscitate the line and put it in order on the payment of this £12,000?—There was no actual agreement. I don't like to say very much now, because the correspondence which formed the basis of these negotiations took place between myself and a gentleman who is now no longer alive.

17769. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—We said it would take £25,000 to put it in order. That was the whole difference between us?—That was not my impression. I don't want to go into the matter.

17770. *Chairman.*—All I want is to get the facts. £12,000 seems a very low sum to put a derelict line into order. Did they not say, "We want £24,000," or double the £12,000?—They did say that.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—To put down rails, sleepers, and such like. We sent an engineer down, and the expert found it would cost that.

17771. *Chairman.*—Did the Board of Works make any claim?—It was not the Board of Works; the Public Works Loans Commissioners.

17772. It is the same thing?—They had not abandoned it at that time. They did convey an understanding that provided a responsible company took up the line they would hand it over.

17773. And abandon their claim?—Yes; that is more than twenty years, however.

17774. This seems to me like the Trinity—incomprehensible—the action of these public bodies?—Ireland was in a very disturbed condition at that time.

17775. At the present time there is the bed of the railway?—Yes.

17776. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—It has been abandoned since 1878?—No; 1883.

17777. *Chairman.*—The bed of the railway is there, but the equipment—the rails and wires and gates and buildings—are all gone?—All gone.

17778. And the district has no other means of communication?—It never had any means of communication except this railway. And it has been deprived of that for the last thirty years. If you look at the map you will see a very wide district to the west absolutely without railway accommodation. They, in fact, are in a worse position than the many places that lie between Birr and Portumna. These poor people are an immense distance away from the railway. They inhabit a very poor district.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—This is a letter addressed to Mr. Trench in July, 1891. I will just read one or two passages:—(*Reads*)—"The mention of any sum in January, 1889, could only have been informal, as no further examination was in the interval made, and must have been on the assumption that no material change had taken place since the previous examination, and it now appears that a complete waste of the permanent way and stations has taken place, and, in the opinion of this company's engineer, the large sum of £24,168 will be required to be spent before the line can be re-opened. It seems incredible that this wholesale destruction of property could have been permitted by the Government, who had a very large claim upon it, or could have taken place without attracting the observation of some of the local residents interested in the line. My directors cannot alter the decision handed to you in their letter of the 22nd inst."

17778A. *Chairman.*—That was in 1891?—Yes.

17779. That is in favour of the company. So far as I am concerned, there is no reflection on the company.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—Thank you.

17779A. *Chairman.*—It is the public bodies.

Witness.—We were led to believe, when the correspondence took place that this £12,000 would be accepted and the line would be opened.*

17780. *Chairman.*—Looking at the difficulties, it is impossible that the work should be done for £12,000?—The offer of £12,000 was made, and we understood they were prepared to accept it. We thought that they were prepared to accept it. We were led to expect that, and the correspondence will show it. I am merely trying to clear myself from having misled anybody else.

17781. It is deplorable?—Most terrible.

17782. And I think you have told us everything in a very fair manner?—Thank you. I think Mr. Taylor will be able to tell you more on the subject.

Mr. Laurence Taylor.—My evidence would be a mere repetition of what Mr. Trench has told you. I can remember the working of the line very well. It was worked in such a way it could not pay.

Mr. Trench.—Their arrangement as to trains was very inconvenient.

Chairman.—We won't go into that.

Mr. Taylor.—I remember having sent a message to the Secretary of the Great Southern and Western asking him if it was not possible to withdraw some of the trains. That was just before the line ceased running. One line could be kept going with trains, and it might have paid that way, and have been kept going.

The Birr and Portumna line a source of loss on working to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—We offered to lose £2,000 a year on the place, and the Government would not take it over.

Chairman.—I am sure that there is not another case in the country like it.

Mr. Taylor.—It is a laughing-stock to anybody passing through the country—tourists, strangers, and Americans.

17783. *Chairman.*—Were you a shareholder, Mr. Taylor?

Mr. Taylor.—No, but my father was.

Reason for the inaction of the local shareholders as regards the dismantling of the line.

17784. *Chairman.*—Why on earth didn't they take some action?—(*Mr. Trench*).—There were some prosecutions before Mr. Stoney, the local magistrate. Nobody belonging to the Public Loan Commissioners appeared, and the case was allowed to drop.

17785. Was there an uncalled liability on the shares. Were the shares fully paid up?—I think so; all the local people who had shares were all fully paid up.

17786. What became of the secretary?—I don't know. The Marquis of Clanricarde had a great interest in the line, but he is dead.

17787. What became of the books?—The old Marquis had £10,000 or £12,000 in the line. I heard so, and I believe so. He had a great interest in it. He took a great interest in the traffic of the line. I think he died before the time had expired—before the ten years was expired. After the prosecution had failed tinkers came from Limerick and Nenagh and looted the line. If it were restarted the country beyond Portumna would be benefited by it. More than the towns would, right up to Mount Shannon, and the whole side, and on to Lough Derg—twenty miles.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

Revenue of the line was insufficient to pay cost of working

17788. *Mr. Sexton.*—As to the inaction of the shareholders, we have heard that the Great Southern and Western were working this line for 40 per cent. of the receipts and were losing £2,000 a year. Then, probably, if they had got the whole of the receipts, they would have made nothing?—I was looking at the papers a short time ago. They are very voluminous. I came across a letter addressed to Dublin Castle some years ago. It stated that the Great Southern and Western had given them the gross amounts received for the last three years during which they worked the line, and those amounts came to a very small sum, under £100 per mile of railway worked, and under the circumstances, I don't think the line could possibly have paid.

17789. Looking at the length of the line—twelve miles—and what we have heard about the way in which it was worked, does it appear probable that, with 40 per cent. of the receipts leaving a deficit of £2,000 a year, the whole receipts would have paid for the working?—I don't think so.

17790. It is easy to understand the inaction of the shareholders. Of course, they knew, all acquainted

* See Appendix No. 21. Letters from Chairman, Great Southern and Western Company, to Mr. Trench in 1889.

Apr. 26, 1907.

Mr. W. T. Trench, D.L., representative of the Tipperary (North Riding) County Council and Nenagh Urban District Council.

with the state of affairs knew, that instead of having a substantial interest, the position was that the shareholders were really incurring a liability, and they were not anxious to attract attention to themselves by any combined proceding?—I think that is quite possible.

17791. Very likely?—They did not wish to take up the line and work it themselves.

17792. That explains it. I understand that you rest your case upon two main features: first, that people in this district, including the late Marquis of Clanricarde, subscribed £60,000 to give the district a line, and lost the money. They invested that large sum in the effort to provide the line?—I am not prepared to say it was £60,000, but whatever the capital was, it was lost.

Chairman.—Mr. Trench said he did not know what it was, but it was rumoured that was the amount.

17793. *Mr. Sexton.*—Do you think that a district the residents of which provided so large a sum for the construction of this line deserve attention at the hands of the Government even if there were not very special circumstances in the case?—(*Witness*)—I think they deserve consideration at the hands of the railway company too.

The action of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company as regards the Birr and Portumna line discussed.

17794. Let us be fair. The railway company at the time the line was still a workable line made an offer to take it over without a grant, and to guarantee, I understand, to give a fair, sufficient, and satisfactory service. If the line had been given to them at a time when they could work it they were willing to accept responsibility for the cost of working?—Yes.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—They could not do more than that.

17795. *Mr. Sexton.*—Unless you want them to give a grant to the Government I do not know what more they could have done?—That was the position of affairs twenty years ago. The position of Irish railways has materially improved since then.

17796. I am speaking now of the attitude of the railway company at that time. Take that time for a moment, please. Consider that at that time they had been working the line for ten years. The whole of the receipts could have yielded no profit. Was it not a tolerable offer to make to say, give us that line on which we can now make no profit, and we will give you the usual service and take our chance of a profit for the future?—I don't think that represents the case exactly.

17797. It does represent what is in your own print?—I don't think the company ought to be exonerated for what they did.

17798. I am going to take into account all the circumstances of the time. You have a statement here that at the time the line was still an asset they were willing to forget that they had worked it for ten years without a profit, and were willing to guarantee a certain service, to take their chance of a profit, which on that basis, under the circumstances, was not a very encouraging prospect?—At that time, when the line was made, we got no credit from the Great Southern and Western for its feeding value to them.

17799. *Chairman.*—You must deal with it *per se* as a railway?—You mean as a separate unit.

17800. Feeding value is a question for the Great Southern themselves. They are the judges of what they would get from it.

Action of the Government (the mortgagees) in allowing the line to be dismantled criticised.

17801. *Mr. Sexton.*—The second ground of your case is that the Government, through their agents, being in legal possession as mortgagees of that line created by the residents of the district at an expense of £60,000 allowed it to be destroyed?—They allowed it to be destroyed. There is no question about that.

17802. Well, have they not incurred, by that act or neglect, an equitable liability to that district?—I think the Government ought certainly to take the matter up with the Great Southern and Western, and make whatever terms may be considered reasonable and fair with the Great Southern and Western, and open the line within six months. That is my opinion about it.

17803. I assume the Government cannot leave the responsibility with this London Department, the Public Works Loan Commissioners. They must be accountable for the acts of their agents. How can they escape from the responsibility they incurred as mortgagees in possession of the property which they ought to have protected and which they allowed to be destroyed?—They allowed £15,000 to £20,000 worth to be looted.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The land has now gone back to the adjacent landowners under the law. The very formation of the line no longer belongs to us; it belongs to the adjacent owners.

Mr. Sexton.—Surely if that were the case any grant would be useless.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—There might have been a time limit then.

17804. *Mr. Sexton.*—I assume the law would be capable of recovering this land for the purposes of the line. Assuming, whether rightly or wrongly, that the land is still available, the formation of the line is still there?—If that is the position it is the business of the Government, it seems to me, I cannot say it too strongly, to remedy what occurred through their laxity and remissness.

17805. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—We are all quite agreed on that.

Witness.—It might be done, and I think as representing the deputation it is also the business of the railway company to come forward and see if they cannot put us in a better position, and if they cannot, without injury to their shareholders, remedy that state of things, which at present is nothing short of a lasting disgrace to the civilisation of the centre of Ireland.

17806. *Mr. Sexton.*—It would be a disgrace to the centre of Africa. Did the Government ever suggest that the sum of £24,000 would be more than sufficient to relay and equip that line twelve miles long?—No, they never did that. I think it is very reasonable, so far as I am a judge. £24,000 is reasonable, an extremely reasonable sum. I should wish to be fair to both sides.

17807. If the Great Southern and Western are asked to bear part of the cost of putting the line into working order they would be entitled to refer to the offer they formerly made to work the line when it was in working order, and say to the Government:—"The offer was made, but you allowed the line to be destroyed, and you ought to restore it if you wish it to be worked." What do you say to that?—If I may be allowed to say so, if I was in the position of the Government I would say to the Great Southern: We do not want to put you into a bad bargain. Show us there is no reasonable prospect of the line paying unless you get the £24,000, and we will give you the £24,000.

17808. The company may point to their former experience and say: "We worked this line for ten years when the population was much larger, when it had not been reduced by emigration and the passenger receipts were therefore likely to be larger, and taking 40 per cent. of the receipts we lost £2,000 a year. If we had the whole of the receipts would they yield a profit." Are they not entitled to ask what is the answer to that question?—If it was referred to arbitration whoever was on the other side could refer to the fact that there was not a single railway in Ireland, taking the least paying lines, which was not earning sufficient to pay interest on an expenditure of £24,000 capital. Here are the figures in the *Irish Times.*

17809. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—In a pamphlet.

Witness.—Not in a pamphlet, but in a letter to the *Irish Times,* which I wrote in answer to what Sir William Goulding said—that I wanted the railway companies to take up this line and work it as a matter of philanthropy. I wrote to the *Irish Times* disclaiming such an idea, and asking him to show where I had even written, thought, or said anything so foolish.

17810. *Mr. Sexton.*—There has been no malfeasance on the part of the railway company. Whilst the lease existed they fulfilled their obligations under it. They made an offer to work the line without any question of a grant when the line was still in working order, and they ask now that the sum necessary for putting it into working order shall be provided by those who allowed it to be destroyed. Is that not a fair division of liability. I would make a suggestion in this strange and unprecedented case. Instead of going on talking about it, suppose we find out whether the parties are willing to refer the questions, on the one side the grant to be made by the Government, and on the other the undertaking to be given by the company, to the arbitrament of Sir Charles Scotter, who is a very excellent judge. The question might be disposed of without much delay. I have not asked him whether he is willing to undertake the responsibility, but if he is I am sure he would find a solution of the question?—The Great Southern are very ably represented here, and ought to be able to answer the question.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—I would like to hear what the Government's answer is.

17811. *Mr. Sexton.*—What do you say, Mr. Trench?—(*Witness*)—I say certainly. I had it from Mr. Thomas Robertson at the time. We had an interview with him, that the Government would be satisfied to leave it to arbitration, and I hope we may have some expression from the Great Southern and Western Company.

Mr. Healy, K.C.—The Board of Works is very ably represented here. Mr. Shanahan will give us the views of the Government.

17812. *Mr. Sexton.*—We have now taken up so much time with this subject that I will not trouble you upon the general question, except to ask you one or two questions about Sir Alexander Rendel's figures. He estimated that the Irish traffic could be carried at a saving to the public of two millions a year and to the railway companies of one million a year. You know the total annual revenue of the Irish railway companies is about £4,000,000 a year. To give a saving to the public of close upon two millions a year, the traffic would have to be carried for two millions, would it not?—I think so.

17813. And assuming the companies themselves should save over a million, as the working expenses of the Irish companies are annually 2½ millions, if that saving was to accrue they would have to work the lines for 1½ millions?—I am not prepared to subscribe to all that. I mentioned Sir Alexander Rendel merely as one of three great authorities on the subject of the fares being too high.

17814. I want you to apply his figures to what we know to be the facts. The working expenses are 2½ millions, and if you want to have a million of saving on the working of the lines, you would have to reduce the working expenses to £1,500,000, would you not? But if the total revenue is reduced from four millions to two millions, even if you take one million off the working expenses, the profit on the lines, instead of being £1,500,000 would be only £500,000?—It appears so.

17815. It is evident that these figures of this eminent civilian won't march. Would it not be the case if they were to get the traffic receipts increased by, say, half a million and the expenses reduced by half a million more, there would be such a surplus as might go far to solve the whole question of the rates?—My mind does not travel so quickly over figures as yours does, Mr. Sexton.

17816. I do not think that at any pace you would have evolved the figures of Sir Alexander Rendel?

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

17817. With reference to the Portumna Railway, I think Portumna is on the left bank of the Shannon?—Yes.

17818. In the event of extending the line, say, to Lough Derg, would it not be desirable to go across the river at that point?—It would be most desirable. There is a large tract of country which could be tapped, and it could be greatly improved if we had a line.

17819. That line could run along the right or the west bank of the Shannon, through that tract, up to Ennis?—Yes.

17820. By the Scalp?—Yes, and O'Callaghan's Mills.

17821. Is there a whole country there without any facilities for the disposal of produce or other goods?—It is quite lamentable.

17822. With a view to the success of land purchase, is it not highly important that the peasant proprietors should be placed on a firm basis, and on that acount could we act in a better way than by giving them the greatest possible facilities in the way of railway accommodation and low rates, in order to place their produce, which must necessarily be in small lots, on the market in good condition and at favourable times as regards prices?—That is so in the district of Scariff. The farmers there breed large numbers of cattle. There is no railway, and the cattle have to be driven a long distance to the nearest line. It would be a great improvement upon that if they had a railway—very important for them.

17823. In the event of the farmers, the new proprietors, failing to meet their instalments, the loss will fall, not upon the British taxpayer, but upon the Irish taxpayer. We had an instance of that the other day through the whole of Ireland; in the reduction of probate grants, and agricultural grants as well, which fell upon the whole of the counties, and in the event of any default on the part of the purchasing proprietors, it is not the English people who will have to bear the loss, but ourselves. Therefore, should not every effort be made—is it not a strong point—to put these men in as sound a position as possible to meet their liabilities?—Certainly, they should have every reasonable facility.

17824. Do you think that under the existing system the companies as they are managed find it impossible to give adequate reductions without some sacrifice such as they could not be expected to afford; that the companies find it impossible to afford these facilities to the traffic?—So long as the companies have a monopoly the high rates will continue.

17825. The conditions under which agricultural produce and dairy produce have to be sent are these—are consigned in small lots. They should be in ten ton lots at least to provide full trains. Yet they must be in small quantities, especially in the dairy industry, by force of circumstances. In England I saw a return the other day showing that practically the bulk of the consignments are sent in two to three ton lots, which means running the trains half full. Under these circumstances there must be a large proportion of dead weight, and a very small margin of profit, and the only way to meet that would be by combination and co-operation on the part of the farmers. Don't you think a good deal could be done in that way?—A good deal might be done at present on principles such as these, and it would have a very good effect. The Department of Agriculture is trying to get that in operation.

17826. We have had evidence to that effect. The railway companies are only too anxious in the interests of those whom they serve and the people whose produce they carry—only too anxious to meet them fairly in every way, and to meet combination and co-operation among the producers, by giving them lower rates than they can at present give?—Possibly, in some instances. In others it is quite the reverse.

17827. Do I understand you to say that the nation, the State, should buy the railways and allow them to be administered by the present boards of directors?—I don't think I said that. The suggestion on the part of the North Riding County Council was that the State should acquire the lines, and that it should be worked as a Public Department. Exactly what that body should be is another matter.

17828. Would it be better to continue the present boards of directors or to constitute some new body?—A new body. That, however, is not my own view.

17829. The question as to what particular form the new body should take was not considered by your Council?—We simply discussed that in a general way, and various opinions were expressed. I said that nearly everyone expressed an opinion in favour of the State taking over the whole of the system of railways in Ireland as being the best solution of the difficulty. That is the opinion of everybody I meet.

17830. On this question I should like to know your own opinion—your views on State purchase in Ireland—not the general opinion?——

Chairman.—He says everybody he has met is in favour of it.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I am not going into the exact form of control.

17831. *Chairman.*—He has answered that. He said he had not gone into it himself?—(*Witness*)—My own idea is that the use of the lines should not be confined to one company, so that we might create competition. If we could create competition the difficulty would be got over.

17832. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Under the State there would be no necessity for competition. Can you propose a practical solution?—I am in favour of competition. I don't say whether you can have it under State control or private control—why not under private control?

17833. If they want to cut rates they cannot do so without involving the shareholders in liability?—I don't think that has been proved to be so. I don't see why that should be so in railways—we don't find competition necessarily produces loss in other business.

17834. Are you prepared to express any opinion as

Apr. 26, 1907.

Mr. W. T. Trench, D.I., representative of the Tipperary (North Riding) County Council and Nenagh Urban District Council.

Necessity for convenient railway facilities and low rates to assist peasant proprietors to market their produce.

Combination and co-operation amongst the farmers to take advantage of low quantity rates suggested.

State purchase and control approved by the County Council.

Competition in railway working either under State or private control advocated.

Apr. 26, 1907.

Mr. W. T. Trench, D.L., representative of the Tipperary (North Riding) County Council and Nenagh Urban District Council.

to the advantage of some central authority being set up to whom might possibly be entrusted the administration of the railways; would you be in favour of such a devolution of railway management to such a body?—Yes, if such a body were set up I think there are plenty of men in Ireland who are quite qualified to administer the railways of Ireland; but I should not be personally in favour of handing the administration over to a body like, for instance, the General Council of County Councils. I should be in favour of handing it over to Irishmen. There are plenty of capable Irishmen who could manage the railways.

17835. *Mr. Healy,* K.C.—I have just one request to make, Mr. Trench. Would you favour me with a copy of your pamphlet?—Certainly.

Chairman.—We are very much obliged to you, Mr. Trench.

Mr. Trench.—I hope if my feelings with regard to the Portumna line were too warmly expressed you will accept by excuses.*

Mr. LAURENCE TAYLOR examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. Laurence Taylor, representative of the Birr and Portumna Derelict Railway Resuscitation Committee.

17836. You have heard the evidence about that particular railway; do you agree with the evidence that has been given?—Yes, sir; Mr. Trench has given his evidence very ludidly, and just what he has said I would wish to say.

17837. Well, under these circumstances there is no use of my repeating to you the same questions I put to him, and your giving the same answers?—No; the only thing I would like to say is as to the way the line was worked. You would have to be up all night if you wanted to avail yourself of the morning train, and the night train was so late that arriving by it you were practically kept up all night. The train left at six o'clock in the morning, and you would have to be up all night, particularly if you lived at any distance, to catch that train. It was sometimes 11.30 at night when you got in there.

17838. I don't think it is necessary to go into the working of the old railway, let us take things as they are. I take it that on the general question you agree with Mr. Trench?—Yes.

Portumna Derelict Railway—Anticipation of the line paying well if re-opened.

17839. *Mr. Sexton.*—Do you think that if the line was re-formed and worked again there is any prospect of its being run at a profit?—I don't see why it should not be a very paying line, because there is a vast country about, fully populated, and there are several towns, including Tynagh, Killimore, Woodford, Portumna, and others.

17840. Improving towns?—Yes.

17841. *Chairman.*—The result of the working, you think, could be very different from what it was thirty years ago?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

17842. Are there at present practically no means of communication in the district?—No means whatever, I might say. I am thirteen miles from the nearest railway station.

17843. And the canal, I suppose, does not give you much help in any way?—No; none of communication.

17844. It is not a very efficient service?—Except for heavy goods.

17845. And even for these?—The accommodation is not good at all.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

17846. Would it be, in your opinion, a necessary part of any arrangement towards the further working of the line that this Government mortgage should be cancelled?—Yes.

17847. That they should forego it?—Well, they treated us very badly; they treated the shareholders very badly by allowing their property to be looted all over the country.

* See *precis* of further evidence included in Appendix No. 22.

The Commission then adjourned until the 13th May.

THIRTY-FIRST PUBLIC SITTING.—MONDAY, 13TH MAY, 1907.

At the Board of Trade Offices, 8 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL; and Mr. W. M. ACWORTH.

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Chairman.—I have a telegram from Mr. Sexton regretting his inability to attend in consequence of a rather important engagement.

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN, Assistant-Secretary, Board of Works, Ireland, examined by the CHAIRMAN.

May 13, 1907.

Mr. G. E. Shanahan, Assistant-Secretary, Board of Works.

17848. You are the Assistant Secretary of the Board of Works, Dublin?—Yes.

17848A. And we know you are Secretary to this Commission. You have been requested by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland to give evidence before us?—Yes.

17849. In what capacity?—In my capacity as an officer of the Department, and the evidence I have been asked to give is as to the unsatisfactory working of the Letterkenny to Burtonport railway since the opening of the line in March, 1903.

17850. Have complaints as to the working of that railway been made to your Department?—Yes; only a month or two after the opening complaints began to reach the Board as to the unsatisfactory working of the line, including late trains and serious delays to traffic, consequent on frequent engine failures, and from the evidence before them, the Board were satisfied that the real cause of the unsatisfactory working of the Burtonport engines was that they were seriously damaged by incompetent management and severe maltreatment at almost the very commencement of their working.

17851. What do you mean—serious mismanagement of the engines?—Serious mismanagement of the engines, and in connection with that, I may say that for a considerable time after the opening of the line, the company entrusted the engines to a series of drivers and firemen, many of whom were grossly incompetent, and several of whom had been previously dismissed from other railways for inefficiency and misconduct, and some had to be subsequently dismissed by the Lough Swilly Company.

17852. How did you get this information?—This information came to us in various ways. The Board had an engineer on the line at the time and had other officers in the district. In addition, the Board had information from various people resident in the district who were affected by the unsatisfactory working.

17853. Of course what you call the unsatisfactory working of the line involved necessary delay to the trains?—Serious delays.

17854. And, therefore, I suppose, the public were complaining?—The public were complaining, naturally.

17855. Did you ascertain any details as to what particular neglect on the part of the drivers caused these failures?—Yes. The Board had within the first twelve months information as to numerous instances of carelessness, neglect, and incompetency in the working of the engines, including the burning of fusible plugs (through neglect of feeding the boilers), excessive heating of parts, washing the boilers out when hot, gross inattention to cleaning, the use of inferior and unsuitable coal, &c., involving serious delays to trains and unsatisfactory working of the line generally.

17856. Have you got any specific instance that you can refer to with dates as to these irregularities?—Yes. I have a few selected instances here which I shall quote.

17857. Give us the first one you have got?—On the 6th June, 1903.

17858. One minute—when was the line opened?—On the 9th March, 1903. This was less than three months afterwards: "Engine No. 3 stopped between Kilmacrennan and Creeslough to bucket water into tanks, engine-driver having left Letterkenny after one hour's shunting without taking water."

17859. Was that officially brought under your notice?—That was officially brought under our notice.

17860. Have you the complaint there?—The complaint is available, and can be produced.

Instances of irregularities in 1903 from opening of Burtonport line.

17860A. *Mr. Acworth.*—Complaint by whom?—The matter was really brought under our attention by a locomotive engineer that we sent down to the district to investigate, and in his report he mentioned several specific instances of these irregularities that he considered quite proved the statement that the engines were being badly treated.

17861. *Chairman.*—That complaint of the 6th June, 1903, was brought under your notice by your locomotive engineer, who was down on the spot?—Quite so.

17862. Give us the next instance?—8th June, 1903. "Fusible plug burnt out of engine No. 4 at Creeslough. Train seriously delayed."

17863. These engines, I suppose, are the engines the Board supplied?—The engines that the Board supplied as part of the equipment for the Burtonport railway, paid for out of the grant.

17864. Anything else on the same day?—The same day "driver melted out fusible plugs of engine No. 3. Trains delayed."

17865. You do not know how long they were delayed, do you?—Well, the delays became so serious on the Burtonport Railway——

17866. No, no. Stick to the 8th June?—The delay must have been two or three hours.

17867. Have you got another instance?—10th June:—"Gates at level crossing, Trentagh, smashed by 1.50 p.m. down train—careless driving."

17868. Was it a clear day or a foggy day?—I am not sure as to the conditions of weather, but I think there is no doubt as to the carelessness that brought about the damage.

17869. Go on and give us another instance?—18th June:—"Traffic delayed seriously owing to driver failing to get up sufficient steam in engine due to inferior coal."

17870. On the same day you have another case?—"Engine of 12.10 p.m. from Derry had to be stopped several times near Lough Agher to get up steam. Engine was being worked (through inexperience of fireman) at 50 lbs. steam pressure."

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Mr. G. E. Shanahan, Assistant-Secretary, Board of Works.

17871. What is the next case?—19th June:—"Engine working 6.45 a.m. train had to be taken off at Barnes Gap and sent on to Creeslough for water, leaving the train standing on the line. This was due to the neglect of the driver in not filling his tanks."

Instances of irregularities in 1903 from opening of Burtonport line.

17873. What is the next case?—22nd June—the same month:—"Fusible plugs melted out of Engine No 2 owing to neglect of driver in not feeding the boiler. Train delayed 8 hours 40 minutes."

Mr. Acworth.—May I ask how does Mr. Shanahan know?—Who reports them?

Chairman.—It was explained that he had a locomotive man on the spot watching the working of this railway, and these complaints are extracted from his report.

Sources through which the Board of Works obtained information as to unsatisfactory working by Lough Swilly Company.

17874. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is that so in all cases?—Not in all cases. A railway locomotive engineer was sent down to investigate the cause of the serious continued breakdown of the engines, and he was there ascertaining the particulars as to the number of these irregularities, some of which had been previously reported to the Board through other sources. Though he did not remain in the district, he remained sufficiently long to investigate and report.

17875. As I understand, what the Board of Works is giving are reports, some of which rest on the authority of their own officials and some of which do not?—The reports can be produced; the documents are here.

17876. I am only asking, if they do not rest on the report of their own locomotive engineer on the spot, what do they rest on?—Well, as I said before, partly upon reports presented by locomotive experts (there were several whom they sent down); partly from a special agent that they appointed and located in the district and who is there to this day; partly on the reports of their railway engineer who was resident in the district, and partly as the result of complaints made by the public.

Lord Pirrie.—As long as the witness says he has proof that the statements he has made are correct, I think that is sufficient for us, Mr. Acworth.

17877. *Mr. Acworth.*—I am not expressing an opinion; I am merely anxious to understand the position?—I should explain that in every case these matters were reported to the company.

Instances of irregularities in working.

17878. *Chairman.*—I was coming to that. If you will kindly finish your list, then we will raise that question?—25th June:—"Engine No. 3, working 3.20 p.m. train, leaking so bad from tubes had to be sent to Londonderry for repairs. This failure caused by maltreatment of engine, which had been damaged on 8th idem by neglect of driver." 28th June:—"Level crossing gates smashed at Peg 118, Div. II." on the railway.

17880. That is two lots of gates smashed?—Yes. 8th August:—"6.45 train seriously delayed through leaking tubes in engine and use of inferior coal. Engine had to take water four times extra."

17881. I see you have jumped from June to August. Are there no complaints in July?—Only minor complaints. The complaints noted in my proof are all major. We take no notice, for the purpose of this Commission, of unimportant irregularities, many of which occurred of course.

17882. Give us the next case?—24th August:—"7.50 a.m. train was not started from Burtonport until 8.25 a.m. owing to delay in lighting up engine, which was despatched with only a pressure of 80 lbs. of steam (the minimum at which the vacuum brake could work)." Then on the 27th August—the same month—"Trains delayed through driver of 1.10 p.m. up train starting from Churchhill without train staff."

Report in each case sent to the working company.

17883. Each of these cases, I apprehend, was reported to the railway company as it occurred?—Yes, all were reported to them, as they were brought under the notice of the Board.

17884. And correspondence took place between the Board of Works and the railway company?—That is so.

17885. That was the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes; the Lough Swilly Company.

17886. And the communications were with that company?—Yes; they never denied these complaints; in some cases they acknowledged them; in others they offered an explanation, but in the majority of cases they took no notice.

17887. What have you got to say in reference to the engine men in particular?—Well, the Board thought it desirable to offer some evidence of the character of the drivers employed to show it was natural to expect that men of such standing would perpetrate these irregularities, therefore, a list has been prepared of a number of these drivers. I have extracted, and am ready to present, certain particulars, but, advisedly, I shall not mention names. The names, however, are available on a separate list if the Commission should require them. Take No. 1, for example. This man was formerly employed as a fireman on the Great Northern Railway, and was dismissed for drunkenness on 25th June, 1898. He was subsequently engaged by the Lough Swilly Company as driver on the Burtonport Extension, but was dismissed (June, 1903) for hooking off his engine and running to Creeslough for water, leaving a passenger train standing on an incline. He was afterwards re-employed (June, 1904) as fireman on the Carndonagh and Burtonport Railways, and retained despite the protests of the Board. He was reported for drunkenness and bad conduct in November, 1904, and transferred to the main line. He afterwards left the service. 2. This driver was dismissed by the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company on 28th January, 1903, for carelessness in the management of his engine, and for other offences. Notwithstanding this he was engaged by the Lough Swilly Company for the Burtonport line. He was subsequently dismissed for burning Burtonport Engine No. 3. He was afterwards re-engaged at the time of the strike. On December 14th, 1903, he derailed Burtonport Engine No. 1 at Burtonport. He was supposed to be under the influence of drink on this occasion. He had frequently been cautioned for intemperance and furious driving, but was retained by the company. Subsequently (May,1904) he was dismissed for serious irregularities on the Letterkenny line. That is the record of No. 2.

Evidence as to the character of some of the engine men employed by the Lough Swilly Company on the Burtonport Railway.

17888. I see you have got a very long list?—I think there are nine altogether.

17889. I do not think it is necessary to give the whole nine, but is that a fair sample of what these men were?—In the first twelve months of the working of the line that is a fair sample. Perhaps I may make one or two selections—No. 7, for example.

17890. Just give us one other case?—No. 7. This man was taken on in November, 1903. Various irregularities occurred during his employment. He was dismissed on 27th January, 1904, for drunkenness and the theft of whiskey from the Goods store at Burtonport.

17891. Just give us No. 8?—No. 8. This man was also taken on in November, 1903, but was dismissed for incompetency and neglect on 23rd December, 1903.

17892. That was a man taken on during the strike?—Quite so. No. 6. This man graduated with the Lough Swilly Company. He was dismissed for leaving his train at Letterkenny and going up town for drink. He was subsequently re-engaged to drive on the Burtonport Extension. He afterwards went out on strike.

17893. I think that is sufficient. Did you call in any railway engineer to report on the working of this Burtonport Railway?—Two or three within the first few years of the working of the line—amongst others, the Locomotive Engineer of the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway, Mr. Cronin. He reported on the condition and working of the Burtonport engines in October, 1905, and he stated (and this is *apropos* of what I have just been remarking as to the character and qualifications of the drivers) that "The earlier engine men which the company had employed seemed to be the men who were the refuse of other lines, and these men could not be expected to be reliable and competent."

17894. Was any other railway man called in?—Yes, Mr. Basil Hope, the locomotive engineer of the Midland Great Western Railway.

17895. What date was he called in?—He reported in June, 1903, on the condition and working of these engines.

17896. That was the month when so many failures occurred that you refer to?—Yes. He stated that the serious delays and complete failures which had occurred on the Burtonport line during the previous four months had been caused "By shortness of water, shortness of steam, and heavy leakages of tubes, and melting of the fusible plugs in the fire-boxes." Summarising the case, he reports that "Briefly these

three heads are the causes of failure:—Firstly, the qualifications of the drivers; secondly, the mode of washing out the boilers, and, thirdly, the mode of coaling."

17897. No complaint in either case having been made as to the engines themselves?—No.

17898. As to the construction of the engines?—As to the construction or design of the engines—no.

17899. The whole of the failures being attributable to bad management on the part of the engine men?—Yes, bad management on the part of the engine men.

17900. When you got Mr. Hope's report in 1903 did you send a copy of that to the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, the Board communicated to the Company on the 7th July following the substance of that report, and the Company were apparently impressed by the statements contained therein, as they subsequently, on 13th idem, informed the Board that they had "taken very serious notice of the failures of the Locomotive Department so far as they had been found to be of an avoidable nature."

17901. Was there any complaint up to that time from the Lough Swilly Company as to the faulty construction of those locomotives?—I do not think any specific complaints; generally, they had complained of the type of engine supplied.

17902. But was not that more with reference to the question of tank and tender?—Yes, tank and tender.

17903. Not as to the construction?—Not that I am aware of, as to the construction of the engines.

17904. In fact, the specification of the engines was approved by your locomotive engineer originally?—Yes, it was approved. I may say, however that, subsequently the company did object to the construction of the locomotives—subsequent to the dates of which I am speaking now.

17905. The Lough Swilly Company, I gather, stated that they had taken serious notice of the failures?—Yes.

17906. Did any improvement take place from that time?—Unfortunately, no, because from later reports it was found the irregularities had only been partially corrected, as further instances were brought under the Board's attention as to the ill-use of the engines, and they were advised that no machinery, however good, could withstand the treatment the locomotives had received.

17907. Did you call in another railway expert, with reference to the working and development of the railway?—Yes, the Board called in the services of Mr. Tatlow, the Manager of the Midland Great Western Railway.

17908. What was the date?—8th October, 1905. He made his report in November on the subject of the working——

17909. One minute; just tell us in your own words what were his instructions when he went down to that railway?—I am coming to that presently; I am quoting this paragraph now, as it bears upon the immediate case of the engines and the drivers. But later on I will refer to Mr. Tatlow's inquiry. At any rate, he stated in his report of November, 1905, that the Lough Swilly Company had informed him, "That since the line was opened in March, 1903, no less than thirteen drivers had been employed, ten having left the service, and of these ten, seven had been dismissed by the company, most of them for drink." I may say that he also reported, on this subject, that "The working of the locomotive department does not appear to have been in a satisfactory condition for some time past." He says, in September, 1904, "The then Locomotive Superintendent was made foreman at Letterkenny, and he afterwards resigned. A new Locomotive Superintendent was appointed in September, 1904, and he resigned in August, 1905. From that date the foreman has been in charge of the locomotive department, but I understand the company have now made a new appointment to the office."

17910. Where was the locomotive headquarters of the Lough Swilly Company?—Londonderry.

17911. How many locomotives do you suppose they had on their system?—I think, including the Burtonport engines, twelve. I am not quite sure, but I think that is the number.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I do not know whether we might have access to these reports that Mr. Shanahan is quoting. Many of them, of course, are private documents, but now they are being made public, and I think the railway company might perhaps fairly be allowed to see the reports.

Chairman.—We will consider that.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Thank you.

17912. *Chairman.*—In consequence of the complaints made of the working of this railway, did the Board of Works take any specific action in order to look after it?—They did; they appointed an agent to reside in the district, and to report details of irregularities. A complete record of these has been kept in the Department and is available.

Resident Agent appointed by the Board of Works to report on irregular working of the Burtonport line.

17913. I suppose in the judgment of the Board of Works he was a competent man, but was he a man of railway knowledge?—He was a railway man; he was got from the Great Northern of Ireland Railway through the kindness of Colonel Plews, the General Manager.

17914. Recommended from one of the large Irish railways?—Yes; Colonel Plews lent this officer to the Board of Works; he is in the service of the Department for as long as he may be required, and the understanding is that he may return to his position on the Great Northern Railway at any time.

17915. And is he still in the employ of the Board of Works?—He is still in the employ of the Board of Works and has his headquarters at Letterkenny, the terminus of the railway.

17916. Did you make any communication as to these complaints to the builders of the engines? First of all, tell us who were the builders?—The builders were Messrs. Andrew Barclay, Sons and Company, Limited, of Kilmarnock.

17917. Did you communicate with them?—Yes; the Department communicated with Messrs. Barclay in September, 1904, owing to these continued failures of the engines, and it was considered that something should be done to bring to an end the interminable series of mishaps that were bringing discredit on the line, and interfering with the development of the district, and the Board, for their own satisfaction, requested the contractors who built the Burtonport locomotives to send over a representative to examine and report as to any special repairs that might be considered desirable to improve the efficiency of the engines.

Report on the failures obtained by the Board from the builders of the engines in 1904.

17918. And did that representative report to the Board of Works?—He did. As the result of that examination, the contractors, on the report of their representative, submitted proposals for extensive repairs, to facilitate which they considered the provision of a new spare locomotive boiler was absolutely necessary.

Extensive repairs recommended and agreed to by Lough Swilly Company, but not carried out.

17919. Did you communicate that report to the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes. The company's officers were with the representative of the contractors on the spot, and heard his remarks and comments, and were on perfectly friendly terms with him After some time they formally agreed, or intimated, that they were prepared to adopt these proposals, and to have the repairs carried out and the new boiler supplied, and the Board believed this was going to be done.

17920. Was it done?—Notwithstanding this, however, nothing, except ordinary minor repairs, was done for fifteen months.

17921. What was the result of that?—The result was that during the following year, 1905, failures of these engines caused by leaking tubes, overheated parts, insufficient repairs, etc., were frequent, many serious delays to traffic being involved, and in several instances the cancellation of trains, which caused great inconvenience and dissatisfaction in the district served by the Burtonport line.

Consequent recurrence of the engine failures in 1905, and great inconvenience caused to the public.

17922. These irregularities brought, no doubt, several complaints from the public to the Board of Works?—A number of complaints from residents and local authorities.

17923. And those complaints you communicated to the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, they were communicated to the company on receipt.

17924. And the Lough Swilly Company—what action did they take?—Well, it is very hard to say, because in many cases the Board's Reports were not replied to.

May 13, 1907.

Mr. G. E. Shanahan, Assistant-Secretary, Board of Works.

17925. Do you mean to say that sometimes the Lough Swilly Company did not even acknowledge the complaints made?—They always acknowledged by post-card—a printed card—there is no doubt that every letter was acknowledged in that way.

17926. By printed card?—A printed card of formal acknowledgment, but in many cases there was no further communication. What surprised the Board was the apparent indifference of the company to the inconvenience caused to the public by their prolonged failure to carry out their obligations to work the line efficiently.

Indifference of the Lough Swilly Company to the inconvenience caused to the public by inefficient working.

17927. But were the communications referred to sent to the secretary of the company?—They were sent to the secretary, of course.

17928. Had they a general manager at that time?—Oh, yes, and a very competent manager, too, in many respects.

17929. Now, we have got as far as the end of 1905. Was anything particular done by the Lough Swilly Company in 1906?—Yes; the company adopted a change of policy, because early in that year, some of the engines were thoroughly overhauled and renovated by British firms, and the reports received by the Board show that, on the whole, these locomotives have since worked satisfactorily. It should be explained, however, that the engines, after undergoing these extensive repairs, retained substantially all the features of their original design. In fact, the Board were advised that if these engines, after repair in the early part of 1906, had been sent to the Burtonport Railway and used for the purposes for which they were provided by the Treasury, the extension could have been worked much more satisfactorily than it has been. In proof of this, it may be stated that for the period of about six weeks in the early part of the present year, during which the tender engines were withdrawn from the extension and the Burtonport engines substituted, the trains, with one exception, were worked punctually, and the traffic arrangements were satisfactory. Then, I may add, that the company——

Engines thoroughly overhauled and renovated in 1906.

17930. Do you mean to say that in six weeks in the early part of this year, these engines worked satisfactorily?—On the Burtonport Line.

Satisfactory working of the tank engines on the Burtonport line for a period in 1906.

17931. Of course, they were supplied for the working of that railway?—Yes; they were supplied for the working of that railway. The railway between Letterkenny and Burtonport is a self-contained line—forty-nine and a half miles long.

17932. Did that satisfactory state of working continue?—I am going back to what happened in 1906.

17933. Yes; go back to 1906—I began the question at that date. Why were those engines withdrawn from the Burtonport Railway?—I was going to explain that the company, in opposition to the wishes of the Board, withdrew all these locomotives, except one, and replaced them by two new tender engines, which, except for two short periods each of a few weeks, ran through between Londonderry and Burtonport. The Burtonport engines were sent to other parts of the Lough Swilly system and were worked with satisfactory results. This arrangement at first worked smoothly, but after a short time, failures of engines, including the new locomotives, and mishaps to trains occurred from time to time on the Burtonport Extension, and the working of the line again gave rise to serious dissatisfaction and complaint.

17934. You are now dealing with the first half of 1906?—Yes.

Tank engines withdrawn by Company from Burtonport Railway and new tender engines substituted, with unsatisfactory results.

17935. Were there breakdowns and failures with these new engines in the early part of 1906?—Yes, and the other engines as well—one of the other engines as well—that had been working on the line. I have extracted a few instances by way of illustration. On the 24th of February——

17936. Stop a moment. On the 24th of February; you have got a case there; was that a breakdown of one of the new engines, or of one of the old ones?—One of the new engines.

17937. *Lord Pirrie.*—Were they engines from the old line, or new engines altogether, perfectly new?—The Lough Swilly Company bought two new tender engines without consultation with the Board of Works, and they placed these engines on the Burtonport Railway, and ran them through from Burtonport to Londonderry. They did not consult the Board, or tell them anything about it until the engines were actually delivered. They took away two Burtonport engines, and worked them on the other parts of the system.

17938. *Chairman.*—They took two tank engines away, and replaced them by two tender engines?—That is so.

17939. Did the tender engines work more satisfactorily than the tank engines for a time?—The tender engines worked more satisfactorily for a time.

17940. What was the result of the working of the first half of 1906?—The failures re-commenced and became rather frequent. I have selected a few instances for the first six months. On 24th February, the 12.30 p.m. down train, hauled by tender engine No. 11, arrived at Creeslough forty-eight minutes late, had to be detained 1 hour 12 minutes, waiting to cross the 3.20 p.m. up train from Burtonport. Arrived at Burtonport 2 hours 19 minutes late. On the 26th of the same month the 6.0 a.m. down train was delayed at Foxhall 1 hour through the breaking of a drawbar in tender engine No. 11. The train arrived at Burtonport 1 hour 25 minutes late, and the 7 a.m. up train from Burtonport in consequence arrived at Letterkenny 1 hour 40 minutes late. On the same day the 12.30 p.m. down train was delayed 41 minutes late waiting on engine "Richmond" to be got ready. It was further delayed 1 hour 15 minutes at Creeslough waiting to cross the 3.20 p.m. up train. It arrived at Burtonport 2 hours 9 minutes late. On the 27th the 5 p.m. down train arrived at Burtonport 5 hours 16 minutes late. The delay was caused by the bursting of a tube in Burtonport engine No. 3.

17941. That was a tank engine?—Yes, a tank engine, No. 3.

17942. There are two or three other cases you had better give?—On the 5th March the 5 p.m. down train was delayed at Letterkenny 1 hour 19 minutes, waiting on Burtonport engine No. 3, which had to have a leaking tube plugged. Wagons had to be detached to allow the train to proceed. On the 8th March, the 12.30 p.m. down train was delayed 2 hours 18 minutes at Letterkenny, to cross 1.15 p.m. up train. It arrived at Burtonport 3 hours 14 minutes late. The company stated that the delay was due to driver O'Malley refusing to work the train. On the 12th March the 6 a.m. down train was 2 hours 30 minutes late at Burtonport, due to the drawbar between the engine and tender of the new tender engine No. 12 giving way when passing Pennyburn. The engine had to be replaced, and great inconvenience was caused to passengers and mails. On the 21st March, the 12.30 p.m. down train was 5 hours late in arrival at Burtonport through the drawbar of new tender engine No. 11 giving way when the train had passed Gweedore station. Driver Scarlett was killed by the train passing over his body. On the 24th March, the 12.30 p.m. down train was delayed 2 hours and 28 minutes late in starting from Letterkenny through the leaking condition of Lough Swilly engine "Abbeyfoyle."

17943. There are several other instances, but it will be sufficient if you just give the date?—30th March.

17944. On the 30th March—just give the delay?—2 hours 24 minutes.

17945. Go on to the next?—12th June, there was a delay of 1 hour and a half to the 12.25 train, and there were very serious delays in this case to passengers, and a quantity of fish traffic was delayed nearly 5 hours, a portion of it missing the cross-Channel connection at Londonderry. On the 15th June there was a breakdown of the 12.25 p.m., through the injectors of the engine "Aberfoyle" refusing to work. These engines with names are Lough Swilly engines.

17946. Are they tender or tank?—Tank. The only tender engines on the system are the two new engines provided for the Burtonport Line.

17947. On the 4th July there is another case?—On the 4th July, the 12.25 p.m. down train arrived 2 hours and 9 minutes late.

17948. And on the 14th July?—The 12.25 p.m. down train, worked by tender engine No. 11, left Letterkenny 20 minutes late, and was delayed 1 hour and 15 minutes at Cresslough to cross the 3.25 p.m. up train. It arrived 2 hours and 22 minutes late at Burtonport.

17949. Those are what you call serious cases of delay?—Yes, I should call these serious cases of delay.

17950. Have you received many complaints of minor delays?—Yes. I was going to say that these instances of unsatisfactory working which I have quoted are given by way of illustration, and are only a few of hundreds of such mishaps, which are included in the Board's record, and I have here further extracts which I am prepared to read, if necessary. I have a list here of alarming dimensions. Perhaps I should say several hundreds instead of many hundreds, as being more correct.

17951. But surely they do not run into hundreds?—*This* is the record (*handing in a document*).

17952. You have not got a return of when the trains did arrive to time?—No; I think the return would be a short one—it would be prepared without much difficulty. I may again explain that full particulars of these items were, from time to time, communicated by the Board to the company. The Board were perfectly frank and open with the company in all these matters.

17953. Under the Railways (Ireland) Act of 1896, what powers have the Board of Works to make inquiry?—Under Section 7 of that Act, the Board are authorised to send down an engineer, or other competent person, to inquire into the condition, management, and development of any State-aided line.

17954. Did the Board of Works appoint anybody under that Section?—Yes. On the 14th September, 1905, they appointed Mr. Tatlow, the Manager of the Midland Great Western Railway, "to inspect and report" (these are the terms of the reference) "on the condition of the railway and the working, maintenance, and development of it, by the Lough Swilly Company." I referred to Mr. Tatlow's Report just a few minutes ago; it was the same inquiry and the same report.

17955. Was that Report communicated to the Lough Swilly Company?—It was not.

17956. It was a private Report?—I believe the Report is available.

17957. What do you mean by "available." Do you mean that you have got it?—No, I have not got it, but the representatives of the Board of Works can produce it, if required. It is here in this room.

17958. Could you tell us the principal points raised by Mr. Tatlow with reference to the working of the railway?—Well, I will quote a few extracts. The following are extracts from his Report of 11th November, 1905, previously referred to:—"A very serious condition exists in regard to the running of the trains. Owing to the frequent failures of the engines most extraordinary delays are constantly occurring. Complaints were made to me that this state of things commenced soon after the opening of the line, and had gradually grown worse. In order to obtain reliable information on the subject, I have had the running of each of the trains for a period of six weeks, ending the 30th September last, taken out from the Guards' journals, and the following is a summary of the late arrivals of each of the trains at their destinations during that period. No delays under thirty minutes are included."

17959. No delays under thirty minutes are included?—No; they are all over thirty minutes. This is the table which he gives:—

Number of Cases in which, during six weeks ending 30th September, 1905, Trains arrived at their Destinations—

Over 30 minutes late and not exceeding 1 hour.	Over 1 hour and not exceeding 2 hours late.	Over 2 hours late and not exceeding 3 hours.	Over 3 hours late and not exceeding 4 hours.	Over 4 hours late and not exceeding 5 hours.	Over 5 hours late and not exceeding 6 hours.	Over 6 hours late and not exceeding 7 hours.	Over 8 hours late and not exceeding 9 hours.	Over 13 hours late and not exceeding 14 hours.
25	11	6	6	4	1	1	1	1

17960. Can you give us the total number of trains?—That can be made up in a few minutes. There are three trains each way per day. Fifty-six trains for the period were over half an hour late.

17961. *Lord Pirrie.*—The number of trains that actually run?—Three per day; thirty-six per week.

17962. But you have far more than the total?—There would be 216 trains for the whole period, if there are three trains each way.

17963. *Chairman.*—We will take it in that way. You have given the figures?—Fifty-six. That is the number of trains I have quoted as being more than half an hour late.

17964. You have not taken into consideration any train less than thirty minutes late?—None less than thirty minutes late.

Percentage of Burtonport Railway trains arriving more than thirty minutes late at destinations for six weeks ending 30: 9: '05.

17965. In England we generally take a return of trains arriving three minutes late—or two minutes late in some cases?—Well, the condition of affairs was so bad on the Burtonport line that the investigator thought it better to regard less than thirty minutes as a negligible quantity. I may say the percentage is 25 roughly—the percentage of the trains actually run that were over half an hour late was 25 per cent., or one in four.

17966-7. You have not got the number of trains arriving to time, have you?—No, but these fifty-six trains I have mentioned as more than half an hour late, represent a percentage of 25 on the number of trains run.

Mr. Tatlow's opinion that the train delays are a source of public inconvenience and a bar to the development of the district.

17968. It goes without saying that this must have been a source of public inconvenience?—"The amount of public inconvenience caused by these delays" (this is Mr. Tatlow's phrase), "and their prejudicial effect on the development of the railway, can scarcely be overstated. It is needless to enlarge upon the subject, as the facts and figures speak for themselves. It is clear from these delays that the line is not efficiently worked," Then, he goes on to say about the locomotives:—"The railway is not efficiently developed, nor can it be, so long as the locomotives fail in their work, and the trains are subject to the excessive delays already mentioned. A train service, so lamentably irregular, must deter the public from travelling, and prevent the natural development not only of the passenger traffic, but also of the goods, fish, and live stock traffic. Fish traffic and live stock traffic, all of which is, of course, particularly susceptible of delay."

Temporary improved working constrains the Board of Works to refrain from taking action on Mr. Tatlow's report.

17969. What action did the Board of Works take on Mr. Tatlow's report?—In view of these statements the next step, according to the provision of the Act of 1896, would have been the presentation by the Board of a report to the Lord Lieutenant, on receipt of which the Lord Lieutenant in Council, after giving the persons an opportunity of being heard, might, if satisfied that the undertaking had not been efficiently worked, maintained, and developed, make an order appointing a manager or receiver of the undertaking for such time, and with such powers, as might be specified in the order. Whilst the report was still under consideration, however—that is Mr. Tatlow's report—a marked improvement took place in the working of the Burtonport Railway, which continued for some months, and the Board, in the hope that the improved working would continue, thought it better not to take the further steps which might have led to the appointment of a receiver, and the exclusion of the Lough Swilly Company from the management of the undertaking.

17970. In other words, there was such a change made in the working of the line that you did not take any action with reference to Mr. Tatlow's report?—No action; there was only one possible course of action which would have had the desired result.

17971. And that was a course of action which you did not take?—Which we did not take.

Memorial to the Board of Trade from the ratepayers in Burtonport district, but that Department refrain from taking action owing to improvement in the working.

17972. Had complaints gone also to the Board of Trade in reference to the working of this railway?—Yes; a memorial had been presented to the Board of Trade from the ratepayers in the district.

17973. Direct to the Board of Trade?—Yes, direct to the Board of Trade; and I was just going to explain that this period of improved working which I have referred to also led to the postponement of action by the Board of Trade on this memorial from certain ratepayers resident within the guaranteeing area, sent to that Department on 15th August, 1905, complaining of the unsatisfactory working of the Burtonport railway, and of the inconvenience caused to the public by the incessant train delays, and asking that the Board would hold an inquiry in reference thereto.

17974. The Board of Trade did not take any action

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upon that, did they?—The Board of Trade took no action, because I believe, the Board of Works, in reply to an inquiry on the subject, mentioned that a period of improvement had set in, and also stated that they believed this period of improvement might continue, and that it would be only fair to give it a trial.

Improved working in 1906 not maintained, but irregularities less frequent and management now regarded as relatively fairly satisfactory.

17975. How long did that period of improvement to which you have referred continue?—Unfortunately, it did not continue beyond the early months of 1906, but the failures of engines and the mishaps to trains became less frequent and, on the whole, it may be said that the working of the line during last year was not nearly so inefficient as in the previous twelve months. During the present year, although several serious engine failures and train delays have occurred, matters have improved appreciably, and the management may be regarded at present as relatively fairly satisfactory.

Terms under which Lough Swilly Company work Letterkenny Railway.

17976. I think you are prepared to give us some information with reference to the Letterkenny railway which, of course, is worked by the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes.

17977. Tell us, first of all, how are they paid for working that line?—For working the Letterkenny line?

17978. Yes?—By a percentage of receipts.

17979. What is the percentage?—It is a sliding scale, dependent upon the extent of the traffic, and I think it runs from 61 to 67 per cent.

17980. That is near enough—about 60 per cent.?—Sixty-seven is the maximum, and I think it goes down to 61 or 62. The more the revenue, the less the percentage.

17981. It is worked on a percentage basis?—Yes, it is worked on a percentage basis.

17982. Not a fixed sum per mile?—Not a fixed sum per mile, no.

17983. We have had some evidence by Sir Henry Miller, you remember, representing the Londonderry Corporation. What have you to say on that subject?—The Board think it necessary to make one correction, at any rate. I am not deputed to go into the Letterkenny line specially, but I am only asked to correct one or two points. The questions are 17153, 17154, and 17155.

Correction of some points in Sir F. Henry Miller's evidence.

17984. Is not he the town clerk of Londonderry?—Yes, he is the town clerk of Londonderry. He gave evidence at the last sitting with regard to the guarantee and other matters relating to the Letterkenny line, the reason being that Londonderry city is responsible for the payment of a portion of the interest guaranteed on one of the Board's loans. There are two loans—there is a loan of £50,000, the repayment of which is dependent upon the surplus receipts, and there is a second loan of £35,000, the repayment of which is by an annuity—repayment of principal and interest—guaranteed by the city of Londonderry, and a portion of the county of Donegal. This annuity was for a period of forty years, terminating 1st November, 1923, and the city of Londonderry pays £1,150 per annum, and the guaranteeing area in Donegal £617, representing a total payment annually of £1,767.

17985. That is, no doubt, correcting what was a slip on the part of Sir Henry Miller?—No, that was explanatory. The point Sir Henry Miller mentioned was this, he said that a resolution which had been passed by a committee of the Joint Committee of the Londonderry Corporation and Chamber of Commerce, and the Donegal County Council in 1899 in favour of the remission of the tax payable by the guaranteeing area, and the sale of the line to the Lough Swilly Company was fully and absolutely representative of public opinion.

17986. Well, it appears that the statement is not quite correct?—No, we say the statement is quite inconsistent with the action subsequently taken by the local bodies concerned in the district served by the Letterkenny railway. On 13th June, 1900, the Donegal County Council, by resolution, rescinded that portion of their resolution of 19th May, 1899, which expressed approval of the sale of the line to the Lough Swilly Company.

17987. Was not there a memorial protesting against the sale?—There was, in July, 1900, a memorial protesting against the sale signed by the bishop, clergy, merchants, and prominent residents in the rural districts of Letterkenny, Dunfanaghy, and Milford, and adopted by the Letterkenny Rural and Urban District Councils in the previous month, was forwarded to the Board and the Treasury.

17988. You merely wished to correct the statement so as to remove any false impression that might rest on the Board of Works?—Yes, it might if allowed to stand, be calculated to induce the belief that the Treasury in declining to entertain the proposal for a sale of the line to the Lough Swilly Company, were acting in opposition to the wishes of the locality, whereas it would appear that the people of the district not only declined to support the proposal, but took steps to prevent its adoption. It is only necessary to add that in view of the very large expenditure of Government moneys under the Acts of 1889 and 1896, on the construction and equipment of 112 miles of railways in Donegal, amounting in the aggregate to about £660,000, equal to £5,893 per mile, the payments by the guaranteeing area in respect of the Letterkenny line may be regarded as comparatively unimportant. In connection with this expenditure only two small guarantees for the payment of interest on £5,000 each for the Burtonport and Carndonagh lines are a possible charge on the ratepayers, but no payment in respect of either has been, or is ever likely to be made, so that the full amount of £660,000 just mentioned, was, in effect, a free grant to the district.

17989. I think the county of Donegal has a great deal to thank you for?—Yes, so the Board think.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

17990. I will just ask a question or two as to one point. First of all, I will ask you, from what point of view this comes before us?—This comes before the Commission on the application of the Board of Works, who found it necessary to notice and refute certain statements made against that Department in connection with the construction, equipment, and working of the Burtonport Railway.

17991. In other words, we may take it, so to speak, as a personal explanation that had to be made?—It was necessary because the evidence given on a former occasion by a gentleman representing the Chamber of Commerce in Londonderry, was printed and circulated; and, so far, it reflects on the Department until it comes to be corrected.

17992. I quite understand—we, of course, have not to judge—that is the point I was on. I do not know how far you are able to go into it. The reference to us is, by what methods the economic, efficient, and harmonious working of the Irish railways can best be secured. I think you will agree that this is not a specimen of economic, efficient, or harmonious working?—I am afraid it is necessary to assent to that.

17993. Are you in a position to go on and draw the moral?—I do not think I am asked to do that. I was requisitioned by my Department to make a certain statement; and I have done so, to the best of my ability.

17993A. Then I do not think I want to ask you anything more. If we are not to draw the moral, we clearly are not here to decide the merits of this particular dispute; and, therefore, I do not see that there is anything more for me to ask.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

17994. On this question which you have dealt with at length, it seems to have been a case in which the Government have supplied the railway and supplied the rolling stock?—That is so.

17995. And the people who are operating the railway are criticising?—That is so.

17996. It is a reversal of the ordinary conditions, where the company very often makes a railway and supplies the rolling stock, while the Board of Trade criticises?—That is so.

17997. Can you tell me, in connection with these serious complaints made with reference to the working of the trains, whether the railway, as a whole, is properly equipped with rolling stock in the sense that there is sufficient?—I think it is admitted that for the requirements of a three-train service the rolling stock as originally supplied was insufficient; but the rolling stock equipment was based upon the requirements of a two-train service, the advice having been given not only by experts employed especially for the purpose by the Board of Works, but by the Manager of the Lough Swilly Railway, who went into the matter at an early stage at the time when that line was being promoted.

17998. Yes; but I see there are a great many complaints about breakdowns, some of which are serious,

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and some of which are very trifling indeed. Is it quite certain that there are sufficient locomotives upon the line to carry on the work and to leave a proper percentage under repair from time to time, so that they may be kept in an efficient condition?—Yes, for a two-train service, but not for a three-train service.

17999. I see. Then there are not sufficient?—Not sufficient for a three-train service.

18000. Who ought to supply those?—The working company who, among other things took over the obligation of permanently and efficiently working the line, and, of course, supplying such additional equipment and works as the development of the traffic or the necessities of the case might require from time to time.

18001. Can you tell me how many engines are under steam per day?—I really do not know; but I presume sufficient to work a three-train service.

18002. You see, taking your evidence, in 1905 you had a great many complaints about breakdowns; then, apparently, everything was put into good order, and you had fewer complaints of breakdowns, in consequence?—Yes, fewer complaints.

18003. And in 1906 the breakdowns began to increase in number, showing that the engines had again got into bad condition. It appears to me that the line is suffering from not having sufficient rolling stock, and that there is no time to repair the engines. Unless you can give the figures showing the number of miles run per engine per annum, it is impossible to tell whether they are or whether they are not short of rolling stock; can you give those figures?—No; but I think it is admitted that with the train service they provided they did not get sufficient engines. The same remark does not apply to the other rolling stock. I am speaking about the locomotives. Four locomotives were estimated as the necessary equipment for a two-train service; those were supplied, and after the line had been opened some time it was found that the traffic was very much greater than anybody had anticipated, and that instead of two trains it required three trains a day.

18004. Of course your other complaint about the staff is, that they pay a great deal more attention to whiskey than to work?—I am speaking now of the drivers employed for the first twelve months, at any rate, after the line was opened; since then I cannot say that the same remarks apply.

18005. I want to ask you a question about these smaller railways in Ireland getting their firemen from the larger railways. Is it not likely that those who would make efficient drivers would be the senior firemen? Have you ever heard of that at the Board of Works?—Yes; at least, I personally, have heard of engine-men from the smaller lines getting employment on the larger lines, and *vice versa*.

18006. My point is, why should they select drivers who had been dismissed, instead of taking on senior firemen who would naturally be promoted on the larger lines were additional staff required?—Well, the only explanation I ever heard was, that they get them at a cheaper rate of wages.

18007. So that all we have had this morning means that there is a serious dispute between the Board of Works, on the one hand, and the owning company, on the other?—Well, I am not prepared to admit that there is a serious dispute, because the Board of Works contend—and, of course, I am representing the Board of Works here in this matter—that they have done everything they undertook to do under the agreement between the Treasury, the Board of Works, and the Company; and that everything that has happened has arisen from the failure of the company, as a party to the agreement, to carry out their obligation. As you heard at the last sitting, the Board of Works went so far as to promise, without its being incumbent upon them to do so, that under certain conditions they would provide a certain sum to supply additional rolling stock. But, of course, the conditions have never been complied with and the grant was never made.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

18008. With regard to the question of rolling stock, would you turn to p. 84 of the Board of Trade Railway Returns—I think you will find there that the length of the whole system of the Lough Swilly is ninety-nine miles—100 miles, we may say?—Yes.

18009. And that the length of the Burtonport Extension is 49½ miles, or, roughly speaking, half the total distance?—Yes.

18010. The provision of rolling stock for the whole line is fifteen locomotives and 301 passenger and goods wagons. I do not know what it is worth, but it strikes me that if four locomotives, which, I think, you said the Board of Works provided, were actually provided for that length of line, it would be a small proportion, having regard to the fact that fifteen locomotives are in use for the whole system. In other words, eleven locomotives are provided for the remaining fifty miles?—It all depends upon the traffic and the power of the locomotives.

Rolling stock equipment of the Burtonport Railway supplied by Board of Works.

18011. Yes; but the traffic on the Burtonport line is rather heavier than the traffic on the other part, is it not?—I should say not. You see there are more trains on those other lines than on the Burtonport line.

18012. So much so as to account for that difference?—I should say so; I know there are at least four trains on the Carndonagh, eight or nine on the Lough Swilly Railway, and four on the Letterkenny line. In other words the Burtonport Extension has the smallest train service.

18013. In your opinion, four locomotives on the Burtonport fifty miles is a fair proportion as compared with eleven locomotives on the other fifty miles?—Yes, for the train service for which the rolling stock was originally estimated.

18014. With regard to the passenger and goods wagons, I think the figures work out rather favourably for the Burtonport?—Yes.

18015. There is a total of 301 wagons of different classes for the whole line, of which about fifty are allocated to the Burtonport Extension. And, if you take some of the other railways of proportionate gauge and length, the rolling stock would not work out so high in proportion as in the case of the Lough Swilly?—That is so.

18016. Taking the Clogher and West Clare, I think the number of passenger and goods wagons compare very favourably in the case of the Lough Swilly?—Yes it should be noted also that the Burtonport cariages have a capacity of 50 per cent. more than ordinary carriages; and the same remark applies to the wagons—thus the position is more favourable.

18017. That would be possibly more favourable still?—More favourable still.

18018. I think the provision of rolling stock was included in the free grant in respect of the Burtonport line?—It was.

18019. That free grant was £318,000, roughly speaking, was it not?—I think £313,000. £5,000 of the £318,000 was capital raised on the guarantee of the county.

18020. £313,000, then?—Yes.

18021. Out of that figure, have you any idea what amount was allocated to the provision of rolling stock?—I think, over £20,000.

Provision for rolling stock out of free grant for Burtonport line.

18022. With regard to the Carndonagh Extension, I think there was a specific sum named in the Treasury agreement for providing rolling stock—at least £10,000?—Yes; at least that amount.

18023. And the Carndonagh Extension is twenty miles in length, is it not?—18½ miles.

18024. In other words, you provided double the amount for rolling stock on the Burtonport Extension than was provided for the Carndonagh?—That is so.

Amount provided for rolling stock on Carndonagh line.

18025. And, taking into consideration that there is double the length on the Burtonport line, that is about a fair quantity?—Yes; of course, in the Carndonagh case the money spent on rolling stock was provided by the company and the amount was all that they were under an obligation to provide, but the Board of Works spent all that was required for rolling stock on the Burtonport line.

18026. Under that agreement it was incumbent on the Lough Swilly Company to provide such additional rolling stock as was required from time to time, to cope with the increased traffic on the system?—They had to supply everything additional required. Otherwise, of course, the company might be in a position to come to the Board of Works twenty years hence and say, "We want additional rolling stock for three new trains, because the traffic has grown enormously."

Working company's obligation as regards provision of additional rolling stock, sidings, &c., required by increase of traffic.

18027. I think we have evidence from Dr. Todd and other gentlemen that the great complaints of the inefficiency of the line were due in the first instance

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to bad construction, scamping of the work, and insufficient rolling stock; the line was not constructed in such a manner as to be enabled to cope with the great traffic; but I am right I think in saying that under Section 12 of the Act the Lough Swilly Company undertook, after the opening of the line, to work it in such a manner as would develop the resources of the district, maintain the line in good order and repair, and supply additional sidings to meet increased traffic?—That is the wording of the section.

Working company's obligations as regards provision of additional rolling stock, sidings, &c., required by increase of traffic.

18028. So that when it was contended on behalf of the ratepayers, or of the public generally, that the sidings and accommodation generally were insufficient, it really was part and parcel of the Lough Swilly Company's undertaking to provide proper facilities to meet the traffic as it developed?—Quite so.

18029. Under the Order in Council, I think, there is provision made for a Baronial Director to be appointed by the contributing Barony, and also for two delegates?—That is so.

18030. Do you know if that provision has been acted upon?—Only to a small extent.

18030A. Has a Baronial Director been appointed?—Yes.

Provisions of Order in Council relating to Baronial Director; delegates and Board meetings, Burtonport Railway.

18031. I think we had evidence from Mr. Sweeney that he was one?—You had evidence from Mr. Sweeney that he had been appointed a Baronial Director; but that during two years he was summoned only to two meetings, that he attended only one meeting; and that he had had only one other summons in the whole period.

18032. I have it here, but I would rather take it from you, that the provisions in the Order in Council are that certain meetings were to be held by the company in respect of the Burtonport Extension?—There was no provision for any specific number of meetings; but there is provision for separate meetings, because the Order reads as follows:—Section 20—"The promoters shall hold separate Board meetings for the transaction of business relating to the railway and undertaking authorised by this Order as distinct from the existing railway and undertaking of the Promoters and the Promoters shall, prior to such separate Board meeting, give three days' notice at least to such director after his appointment has been notified to them, save as hereinbefore mentioned such director shall not be entitled to act upon the Board of the Promoters."

18033. I think, further than that, the Order in Council provides for the remuneration of the director, and it also contemplates that possibly as many as twelve meetings might be held in the course of a year?—That is so.

18034. Does it not seem very strange that when the Order in Council contemplates that a maximum of twelve meetings may be held, according to Mr. Sweeney's evidence there was never any meeting in two years, or, at any rate, he got no notice of any?—It is a stranger fact still that the first Baronial Director, Sir John Olphert, had not an opportunity of attending a single meeting.

18035. We have had it in evidence that he was refused admittance?—Yes; and Sir John Olphert wrote to the Board of Works complaining of it, and asking what was the remedy. I know this, because it is a matter of official knowledge. I think the Board took legal advice in the matter, and communicated the result to Sir John, but the remedy was a rather troublesome one and would have involved an action at law, which Sir John Olphert, I think, did not care to enter into; so that the matter was allowed to go by default at that time.

Baronial Director not summoned to Board meetings by Lough Swilly Company.

18036. *Lord Pirrie.*—You mean it does not make a meeting illegal if it is held, and a director, who is either bound under the Act to attend, or who can attend, is prevented, that does not make the meeting illegal?—But they did not hold a special meeting for the special business of the Burtonport line; they presumably discharged the business at the general meetings which were held for other purposes.

18037. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It was contemplated that they might hold twelve meetings in a year; and, so far as we know, they only held a meeting once in two years?—Yes.

18038. Do you know if either of the baronial delegates attended any of the meetings of the company which they were entitled to do?—I am not aware that any baronial delegate ever attended.

18039. Was any action taken—I believe Mr. Sweeney gave evidence to the effect that representations were made to the Board of Works and, I understood also, to the Board of Trade, that he had been refused admittance, or that he had got no notice of the meetings, and that beyond writing to the railway company nothing further was done?—Yes; I think the Board of Works felt that they, as a department, could not interfere directly to preserve the rights of an individual who was acting as a representative of the local authority; in other words, it was for the local authority, or the representative of the local authority, to have taken action. The Board of Works got all the advice it was possible to get, and they communicated that advice not only to Sir John Olphert, but to Mr. Sweeney.

18040. I think reference was made by a gentleman who gave evidence before us that on several occasions representations were made to the Board of Works, and also to the Board of Trade, that they should hold an inquiry into these complaints; and I think Dr. Todd stated that those representations had reference to an inquiry being held under section 21 of the Treasury agreement, which, as a matter of fact, I believe does not apply except in the case of disputes arising with the engineer of the company as to the plans and specifications during the time of construction. Is not that so—section 20, or section 21?—Yes; there were two inquiries asked for—it is as well to keep the two matters distinct. The ratepayers presented a memorial to the Board of Trade under the section of the Order in Council, which authorises twenty or more to do so. That document was treated in the usual way by that Board. And the reason why action was not subsequently taken was that the Board of Works reported officially to the Board of Trade that the improvement which had set in might be given a fair trial to see if it would become permanent. The other application was for the appointment of an arbitrator for the settlement of disputes while the line was in course of construction.

18041. That could only have been held under section 21 of the agreement?—Yes, and had nothing to do with the ratepayers.

18042. That could only have been held during the actual construction of the line, and not three or four years afterwards?—Yes.

18043. Dr. Todd in his evidence distinctly stated that the different representations and resolutions contemplated action under that particular section, and not under section 24, which was the ratepayers' section?—I think if that was said it was wrong, because the Board of Trade, I think, through their officers, could show that the memorial presented to them was from a certain number of ratepayers, and it was presented under that section of the Order in Council which authorises the ratepayers to intervene.

18044. Then it was, I suppose, a mistake on the part of the Board of Trade, because Dr. Todd said that the reason why they did not apply for a Board of Trade Inquiry was that, in the event of any default, the liability would fall on the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, that was certainly the intention, and it was the very strong desire of the ratepayers, as far as I remember the circumstances, that the Lough Swilly Company should be forced to carry out their obligations, and that the Board of Trade might assist.

18045. In reference to these numerous complaints from year to year, did the Board of Works never contemplate inviting the Board of Trade to hold an inquiry, and practically urge upon them the necessity for holding an independent inquiry. The Board of Works were naturally implicated in this dispute, and they could not hold an absolutely independent inquiry; and it is rather strange if they never urged upon the Board of Trade to hold such an inquiry, which you say had been requested by the ratepayers, and which, probably, if it had been held, might have cleared up all these differences?—I may say at once that the Board of Works were animated by the fairest possible ideas after this line was opened. The feeling was this: Here is a new railway; naturally, mistakes will be made in its management; the company which is managing this line is a very small second or third-rate company; they have had no experience of working a big line; let us give them time to develop and to make their management more perfect. And I think it was with that desire that the Board of Works, for a considerable time after the

line was opened, did nothing beyond communicating particulars of these irregularities from time to time to the company, and asking them to prevent their recurrence. Then, as matters got very much worse, it was found that something more drastic was necessary; and about that time the ratepayers became very impatient. They had been pouring in complaints to the Board of Works, and ultimately they took action and sent a memorial to the Board of Trade. But the reason for the abstention of the Board in the beginning was that they were desirous of giving the company every possible opportunity.

18046. I quite understand that; but, after those engines were put into repair, and they did their work for a time, and then went back again, do you not think it would have been advisable that your Board should have asked the Board of Trade to hold an inquiry into the whole of the matters in connection with this dispute between the Board of Works and the Lough Swilly Company—do you not think it would have been desirable to institute an inquiry which would have been satisfactory to the Board of Works and also to the ratepayers?—I am quite sure from the evidence we have had that the Board of Works were very lenient in the matter, and refrained from exercising the powers which they might have exercised; but I should have thought it would have been desirable for their own sake that the Board of Trade, whose assistance had been invoked, and who had been asked to make inquiry, should have gone fully into the whole matter?—I think that at the last sittings of the Commission the engineer of the Board gave explanations on that point. The feeling of the Board was that, although complaints were serious and not infrequent in 1906, they were not nearly so bad or so numerous as they had been in previous years, and that while for a week or two inefficiency would supervene, still there would follow a period of fairly satisfactory working; and it was hoped that in the end things would assume a more satisfactory complexion, and that an inquiry would be unnecessary.

18047. Is the only matter as regards finance or money transactions between the Board of Works and the railway company that question of a couple of thousands of pounds balance due to the company—are there no other outstanding matters?—The only outstanding matters I am aware of are some disputed items with reference to promotion expenses which the railway company have not satisfactorily vouched up to the present moment.

18048. What does that amount to?—Well, some hundreds in each case—I think it is £1,400 in one case.

18049. Altogether, a matter of some £4,000 or £5,000 probably?—Yes, something like £3,000 or £4,000. Then, of course, there was a big claim the company made——

18050. We have had all that—I do not wish to ask about it. But that, to my mind, only enforces the argument I put before you, that, with a view to clearing up the balance outstanding, it might have been desirable for some independent tribunal to adjudicate between you. Now, with reference to the Letterkenny line, I think there is evidence before us that that line, and the receipts of that line, would be very seriously affected by the opening of the Strabane and Letterkenny section, and that the construction of that line was made a strong point for asking that some relief should be given to the contributing area, in respect of the £35,000 mortgage on which they had been paying a high rate of interest for the last twenty-four years. Was that not so—that, in view of the Strabane line, they considered they would be seriously prejudiced thereby, and that gave them good ground for expecting relief?—Yes, that is so.

18051. Is it not a fact that when that Bill was before the House of Commons in 1903 Mr. Wyndham, the then Chief Secretary, appeared in support of it?—I think it was in the following session, 1904, that he did so. I happened to be present, and I heard his evidence.

18052. And he admitted that the Treasury would be in all probability the losers. I think it appears in the Board of Works Returns, and that he admitted that the Letterkenny line would suffer by the opening of the Strabane line?—To some extent.

18053. To some extent; but that the interests of the whole county, in his opinion, counterbalanced any loss that might be sustained?—That was his evidence.

18054. Is it not a fair argument, that if in the opinion of the Chief Secretary, the responsible Minister to the British Government, the Treasury could incur a loss in the interests of the whole county; that it is rather hard to expect the contributing area, which would also be involved in loss by that Extension, should not be afforded some relief?—Yes, it is.

18055. And I think it is a fact—we have it in evidence—that of that principal amount of £35,000, there is a matter of something like £22,000 outstanding?—Yes, I think so.

18056. The old debt was £50,000 in respect of the first mortgage; £6,000 in respect of arrears of interest on that mortgage, and £22,000 in respect of the principal of the second mortgage; in other words, £78,000?—Yes, the arrears of interest up to March last amounted to £5,567.

18057. I think they have already paid in respect of the second loan something like £40,000 in interest and principal?—Yes; I was just going to add as regards a former question, that the Burtonport Line was never contemplated when these loan arrangements for the Letterkenny Line were made; there was no question of this line at that time.

18058. But I think it is also correct to say that the people of Donegal and Derry joined in that guarantee on the understanding that they would get the benefit of any future extensions in the Burtonport direction?—At the same time it must be admitted that any possible loss would be more than compensated for by the benefit of increased means of communication.

18059. But their contention was that their traffic, instead of going by the Lough Swilly main system, would go off at Letterkenny and go by the Great Northern and Midland system?—A portion of it.

18060. And, so far as the receipts for the last four or five years having shown an increase on the Letterkenny Line, the probability would be that there would be a loss and a liability to still further decrease?—Well, I think there is a sufficient margin to admit of diversion of traffic. The receipts have been so satisfactory for some time past that I think if there were a considerable diversion of traffic to the new line, there would be still a surplus. Of course, that is only approximate.

18061. That is a matter of conjecture?—A matter of conjecture.

18062. The interest these people have been paying has been 4 per cent.?—Yes.

18063. I presume the Treasury can borrow money at 3½ or 3 per cent.?—Yes, I think so.

18064. If the interest had been computed at 3½ or 3 per cent., I suppose that at the present time the whole of the principal would have been paid off?—Not the whole of the principal.

18065. The whole of the principal of the second mortgage, which is all they are liable for. The first mortgage is irredeemable?—That is so.

18066. Does not that constitute a further argument for the Board of Works approaching the Treasury—that these people are practically paying interest twice over?—Yes, but, as you are aware, the rate of interest for such loans is settled by the Act of 1 and 2 William, cap. 33, and the Board of Works and the Treasury are helpless without further legislation.

18067. But by a subsequent Act the interest is reduced very considerably on other undertakings which offer no better security than a railway?—Yes.

18068. I only put it in this way—would it not be fair to approach the Treasury, having regard to the fact that possibly the line will not be able to pay interest on the loan after the opening of the Strabane section. With regard to the evidence of Sir Henry Miller and the Joint Committee which waited on the Treasury with a view to their selling the Letterkenny Line, have you any idea as to what price, or whether any price was ever named as the consideration for which that line was to be sold?—I have not the figures before me, but proposals were made.

18069. I have them; but perhaps you will correct me if I am wrong. I understand that a price was to be fixed by railway experts arbitrating, or failing that, the Lough Swilly Company were prepared to give £70,000?—I think those were the figures.

18070. £70,000 in full discharge of all liabilities?—I am not sure that that proposal was ever put forward by the company; but I think it was put forward

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by Dr. Todd, and probably he was acting for the company.

18071. I think he said that the company was prepared to pay that sum if a price were not fixed by arbitration?—Yes.

18072. Does that not seem to be a fair condition?—Well, the opinion of the district was certainly opposed to it, as I have quoted in my direct evidence.

18073. The Joint Deputation was in the early part of 1899; and this resolution was not till the year afterwards, 13th June, 1900; so it is not contradicted, and I do not think you would wish to contradict it, that in 1899 they joined these other bodies in approaching the Treasury for a sale of the line, and that the year afterwards they rescinded the resolution—why, I do not know?—Of course, I might explain that this matter has been thoroughly considered by their Lordships; and that the promoters of this proposal sent a deputation to the Treasury, and that the Treasury had the fullest possible information on the subject direct from the promoters; and, under all the circumstances, their Lordships did not see their way to approve of the scheme.

Proposal of the Lough Swilly Railway to purchase the Letterkenny line.

18074. Probably if at that time this Strabane Extension had been under consideration it would have affected their decision?—I do not think it had anything to do with their decision, or, at any rate, not very much.

18075. No, because it was not contemplated. But, do you not think, if it had been in contemplation, and that Letterkenny was seriously threatened, the Treasury would have been glad to accept that offer?—I do not think so; the reply of the Treasury was so positive that I do not think there can be anything like a feeling of uncertainty as to what was in the minds of their Lordships.

Examined by Lord PIARIE.

18076. You said, in answer to the Chairman, that the Manager was a most competent man in connection with the Lough Swilly Railway; that he was really working this line; am I right in that?—Perfectly right.

18077. You used the words "very competent"; in that case, who do you blame for all the failures you have read out to us, one after the other, which seem to have occurred almost daily, and which show that one-fourth of the trains of the entire service are over half an hour late?—I am afraid the Directors have to accept the responsibility for that. I should be very sorry to blame the Manager; I know the Manager personally, and I have a very high opinion of him. I believe that if the Manager had proper appliances, and everything else to assist him, and if he were given a free hand, which perhaps he has not had up to the present, things might be very much better.

Question of the responsibility of the Directors of the Lough Swilly Railway for the unsatisfactory working of the Burtonport Railway.

18078. It is the Directors you blame for that?—Certainly.

18079. That being the case, do you consider it the Directors' duty to engage drivers and firemen?—Well, there are Directors and Directors—usually speaking, Directors do not interfere in the minutiæ of railway management, but there are exceptions.

18080. In this particular case you consider it was the duty of the Directors to see that properly competent men were employed, and not that of the Manager?—I do not think it was their duty, so much as their action.

18081. They should not have interfered with the Manager, you think?—Certainly not.

18082. In other words, you say that the Directors put forward certain men, and that the Manager had to employ them?—I do not know who put forward the men; but I mean to say that the Directors were responsible for the employment of the men at small wages.

18083. The Board of Works felt the very great seriousness of these cases, and they sent a man down to represent them, the man whom you call an agent?—Yes.

18084. Now, was that agent an engineer? Was he a thoroughly practical engine-driver himself, or, was he competent to see the causes of the failures that we have been alluding to?—This man is a good all-round railwayman; he was an agent of the Great Northern Railway—agent and stationmaster; and, as such, his experience brought him into contact with all conditions of railway service. Among other things, I daresay he would be expected to have at least as much mechanical knowledge as would enable him to say why an engine broke down. I think any ordinary railwayman could make a happy guess at that.

The qualifications and experience of the Board of Works' Agent on the Burtonport and Letterkenny Railways.

18085. Do you really think that an ordinary stationmaster or agent, who has been collecting, or trying to collect goods, has any idea of the cause of a failure of a locomotive, whether it has failed from want of water or too much water, or from having water with lime in it, and so on?—To a certain extent, yes. You remember, of course, what I said before—that Col. Plews recommended this man as being the best man to assist the Board of Works in this emergency.

18086. In every one of your instances, from 6th June, there is not a single complaint put forward by the Board of Works of want of wagons, bad stowage of goods, breakage of goods, or incompetency, of the stationmaster or their agent. Every complaint you have put before the Commission to-day has been of such faults as shortness of water in the engine, and the fusible plugs being burnt out. Is it not better to burn the fusible plugs out than to have an explosion, and perhaps kill a lot of people?—It is a fortunate thing in such cases that the plug does fuse and burn; otherwise you might have explosions; but, what are we to say about the railwayman who would permit the water in his engine to become so low as to allow of this fusing taking place?

18087. Have you any report from the Board of Works as to the distance from one station to another where the engine gets water—that the engine can go the full distance without taking in a fresh supply?—I am not an engineer, but I am able to answer that question in this form; the arrangements for the tank capacity in the engines, and the number of watering places on the line, were thoroughly gone into before it was opened, and proper provision was made for the requirements of the traffic.

18088. The evidence you have given to-day rather impresses me that the stoppages for taking in a supply of water, or the irregularities of the water, was the cause of nearly every one of the failures?—Because of the omission of the engine-men.

18089. Well, because of the incompetence of the man who is looking after them, and that, you say, is the Director?—I say that whoever employs such men and whoever retains such men after they have given evidence of their incompetency, surely must admit some responsibility for having kept such men in the service.

18090. The idea your evidence has conveyed to my mind is, that you have tried to make a stationmaster, whom you call an agent, report to you, and keep the Board of Works posted up in a duty that he is not competent to perform. I forget the name of the gentleman from the Board of Works who gave evidence some months ago, but he said that you had no railway man in connection with the Board of Works competent to report to you, and that you had to engage outside men to report?—We do; and those instances you refer to are taken from the reports of technical men who were specially employed by the Board. So that, so far as those instances are concerned, the particulars given are correct. As regards the competency of our agent in the district, of course he gets a good deal of his information from the Company's representatives and their officials; and if a train breaks down and if he does not know just what causes it he asks the driver or the guard or the fireman, or somebody else, and gets the information in that way. That goes to the Board of Works, and is communicated to the company. If it is wrong the company have every facility for contradicting it in every case which the Board reports.

18091. From this account of yours, he sees a train just going to start, and he sees that the engine which is going to take the train has a certain number of leaky tubes, which you have referred to over and over again?—Yes.

18092. Does not that show gross negligence on the part of the agent in allowing the train to start with leaky tubes?—The agent has no power to interfere one way or the other in the management of the line, any more than the man in the street. He is the representative of the Board of Works, and he reports to the Board what he sees and hears, and of course what he hears he verifies as far as he can; but he is not competent to speak to an official and say, you must do so and so, or you must not do so

and so. He simply has to report to the Board of Works what he believes to be irregularities in working.

18093. That is not the question I intended to put to you. Does the agent ever report to the Board of Works that an engine on arriving from a journey has such a number of leaky tubes that he thinks it is impossible for the engine to get to the end of its journey without being short of water?—I believe there have been instances where reports of that nature were made; and where the driver had no other resource or alternative except to proceed with his train as far as his engine would permit. And, speaking from memory—I have not them before me—I believe there are instances in the record kept by the Board, of drivers, after such protest, having to stop their train, block the line, and wait for assistance.

18094. All the cases you have given me lead me to believe that the engines were short of water because they started with leaky tubes, and therefore could not get on?—Or an insufficient supply.

18095. I am assuming that a competent manager would not allow an engine to start without sufficient water in it?—I quoted the case of a driver who shunted his engine for an hour on the Letterkenny line and did not renew the water.

18096. I need not dwell longer on that; but I do not know why the Board of Works sent a station master. Now, every single complaint that has been made, from the very first year you began to the end, is entirely a case of engines, and not a case of anything else; and therefore the man whom I think the Board of Works should have sent down should have been the most competent man they could have found, so as to point out what was wrong?—May I explain, because I am afraid your lordship is a little in error. There are hundreds of other irregularities, and those have been withheld from you simply because the Board did not consider it necessary to trouble the Commission with minor complaints that will occur on any undertaking, no matter how well managed. Further, these expert matters that you speak of with regard to engines are really not matters for the manager but for the locomotive superintendent of the line. Of course the Board of Works send down, as you have heard, locomotive engineers as experts to go into these matters and report to them; they do not consider it necessary to keep a locomotive expert on the ground always at enormous expense. They thought it quite sufficient to have reliable information which could be gleaned even by a non-technical person of experience in railway matters and engines, such as we have always found this agent of ours to be—a very capable man.

18097. Have they facilities along the line for watering an engine?—There are watering places, certainly.

18098. At various stations along the line?—Yes, at various stations along the line. The engineer gave particulars on that subject at the last sitting, and it is really a matter for him, and not for me.

18099. I understand that the number of trains was a short time ago approved by the Board of Works?—It was, and by the investigators who investigated the prospects of the undertaking at an early stage before it was promoted.

18100. Then at that stage the three trains a day were arranged, were they?—No, two trains.

18101. Were originally arranged?—Yes, originally arranged.

18102. Then, after that, the Board of Works gave permission for a third train to be started?—Of course it really was not for the Board of Works to interfere; they approved of the proposed time-table arrangements for the third train.

18103. In that case, why did not the Board of Works supply an extra engine or two engines which you say were necessary to work the line without injury to the locomotives?—Because there is a certain contract between the Treasury, the Board of Works, and the company, under which the company are bound to provide all additional works and equipment as might be necessary to meet the requirements of additional traffic induced by the development of the undertaking.

18104. All they were bound to do with the stock you supplied them was two trains a day; and if the company had been working only the two trains a day in all probability there would have been no failures?—Quite so. It is not inconceivable that there might be six trains a day, in which case the company would have to provide such equipment and works as might be necessary.

18105. The county gives a guarantee of interest on capital to the extent of £5,000?—That is so.

18106. Could not the county have refused to pay that interest when their director was not allowed to attend the meetings?—I am afraid not. The method of paying the interest is one appointed by statute. Arbitrators have to sit, and having examined the accounts and satisfied themselves as to the actual receipts and expenditure of the undertaking, they issue what they call an award; and it is on that award, which is sent to the Secretary of the County Council, that the Council have to meet the deficit, whatever it may be, and the payment is made. As a matter of fact the arbitrators were never called together for that purpose.

18107. Once they get that notification, that there is so much money to pay owing to the shortness of money, have the County Council not written to say, we will not pay until our representative is allowed to attend the Board meetings?—They have no alternative I am afraid. They can take other steps.

Method of ascertaining the amount payable by the Baronies under guarantee.

18108. That would mean that there would have to be an action at law taken by the Lough Swilly Company?—Quite so.

18109. Did you advise them to take that method?—There has been no such opportunity, inasmuch as there has never been a deficit; therefore the arbitrators never met.

Re-examined by Mr. Acworth.

The equity of the working company's claim to be supplied with additional rolling stock for the Burtonport Railway.

18110. May I ask one question arising out of this: The effect of the bargain, as I understand it, was that you were to hand over to the company a line fully equipped and ready for traffic?—Yes.

18111. The company, as the traffic grew, were to supply the new rolling stock and so on to deal with it?—Yes.

18112. How soon after the opening was this third train necessary?—Within a few months.

18113. That is what I wanted to put. An undertaking by the company to supply rolling stock for the gradual development of traffic does not seem to me quite the same thing as an undertaking to supply rolling stock which was practically immediately necessary; do you not think they had an equitable claim, when it turned out that your rolling stock was insufficient, that you should make it up to what was required from practically the opening?—I think you have evidence to show that the Board recognised a certain moral responsibility in the matter, because the Treasury, on the representations of the Board, some six months after the line was opened, authorised the expenditure of a certain sum of money for the provision of additional rollings stock contingent upon the settlement of all differences between the Board and the company; that was made a distinct condition by their Lordships. That condition has never been complied with; and therefore the money has never been spent. But if to-morrow—I am not speaking for the Board of Works in this respect—the condition were met in a proper spirit——

18114. I do not know that I want to go into a very complicated question which I have no right to decide as to how far the Treasury's distinct condition is reasonable; if you say the Treasury recognised that they have an equitable if not a legal claim to an amount of rolling stock that you have not hitherto furnished?—Their Lordships never intimated that; but I say again that they were willing to have all matters in dispute with the company settled amicably, and consequent on that to supply some additional rolling stock equipment.

18115. *Lord Pirrie.*—All claims, you mean?—Yes.

18116. *Mr. Acworth.*—As far as I know, the Treasury may have been willing that any reasonable claim should be admitted; but could you not go so far as to admit that they have an equitable claim to have so much rolling stock as was necessary?—I am afraid not.

Mr. Acworth.—Very well. I understand your attitude.

The Board of Works' advisers on the question of equipment of the Burtonport line.

18117. *Chairman.*—Who advised the Board of Works as to the number of engines?—I think the last expert who advised the Board was Colonel Plews, the General Manager of the Great Northern Railway.

18118. Did Colonel Plews advise the Board of Works that only two trains would be necessary?—Colonel Plews reported on the sufficiency of the rolling stock for a two train service.

18119. Who suggested the two train service?—It had been settled in the early stages of the promotion of this line. The investigators were Mr. Tatlow, of

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the Midland Great Western Railway, and Mr. Roberts, the chief engineer of the Highland Railway. These two gentlemen held the inquiry necessary before the scheme could be promoted before the Grand Jury, and took evidence. Among others they took evidence from the then manager of the Lough Swilly line. He said that two trains each way would be sufficient for the requirements of the traffic, and he made a demand for rolling stock based upon that service. The demand he made was larger, of course——

Estimate for rolling stock based on a service of two trains each way made by Manager of working company at the preliminary inquiry when Burtonport line was being promoted.

18120. Whose?—The demand of the manager of the line. At the inquiry the number of vehicles he thought necessary for two trains was larger than was subsequently given for that service, but the main point is that, he said, two trains would be sufficient for the purposes of the traffic.

18121. Then the Board of Works asked Colonel Plews to advise you as to the quantity of rolling stock necessary for the two trains service?—Yes.

18122. Was any provision made for a spare engine?—Yes.

18123. How many?—It was considered that four engines would work the traffic—I am speaking now of the working of the Burtonport Railway 49½ miles—that two engines could work the two trains— one each way, leaving two in reserve.

18124. How many engines were supplied altogether?—Four—two engines to work the two trains, one engine to work special trains, and one to lie up.

18125. That was Colonel Plews' report, was it?—I am not certain that it was Colonel Plews' segregation of the four, but it was an arrangement made at an early stage that the four could be apportioned in that way.

18126. Immediately afterwards it was found that 50 per cent. more train accommodation had to be given?—Shortly afterwards—yes.

18127. Surely the supply of rolling stock for that service was a capital charge?—There was no capital available.

18128. I mean it was not a revenue charge?—No, of course not, but it was a charge that they, the Lough Swilly Company, were called upon to provide for.

Qualified consent of the Board of Works to supply additional rolling stock explained.

18129. At any rate the Board of Works agreed to supply the additional rolling stock contingent upon certain claims which the company had made for incomplete works being satisfactorily settled?—All claims. I may explain that there were a number of matters in dispute arising out of the accounts. The first set of accounts for the Burtonport line which we examined disclosed that in apportioning charges and in other words regulating the accounts to show what profits had been made, some of the items had been dealt with in a manner which the Board thought was irregular. Consequently the Board took up these matters with the Lough Swilly Company, and asked them to re-adjust the accounts in order that the surplus might be increased, but the company refused. What was in the minds of the Board, to a large extent, was the question of these accounts, and then there was the claim for incomplete works, which was, of course, a very unimportant matter at that stage. The engineer explained all about that at the last sittings.

Counsel's explanations of the working company's position as regards the matters in dispute with the Board of Works.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—Perhaps you will allow me to say that I have observed what my learned friend, Mr. Healy, says on page 16 of the Minutes of the 22nd April, in Dublin, and my instructions are the same as his. That is to say, our only desire in this matter is to give any little assistance we can in laying the facts before the Commission, and we recognise that it is a matter rather apart and aside from the general question of the management of the railways in Ireland, and one which is rather difficult perhaps for this Commission to adjudicate upon. I am instructed to say that the railway company are and always have been ready to refer all these questions to any impartial tribunal and they are only too anxious that this should be so referred. That has been their position all through. They are quite willing that everything should be referred to one arbitrator or tribunal with a view of settling everything. But there are two points—perhaps you will allow me to mention—that seem to bear on questions we have been discussing to-day. Many of the details would have obviously to be dealt with by the evidence I believe you are going to be good enough to hear on Wednesday. For the assistance of the Commissioners I might mention that of these two points the first is that 21 miles from Letterkenny there is no crossing place on this railway. It is a single line, without a crossing place for 21 miles from Letterkenny; nor was there, when it was opened, a watering station on this 21 miles.

Lord Pirrie.—That we have had evidence of to-day Mr. Shanahan says there are watering places all along the line.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—One may have been put up since, but when the line was opened, not only were there no crossing places, but there was no watering station for 21 miles from Letterkenny. I thought I might mention that fact so that the Commission might bear it in mind in connection with the complaints that have arisen. Another fact I should like to put in at this stage is a letter which was, I understand, addressed to the Board of Works on the 27th July, 1901, by Mr. Malcolm, who was the locomotive engineer of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, and who is still occupying the same position under the Midland Railway in Belfast. And it does seem to show that the type of these engines was objected to from the very beginning. Perhaps I might hand that letter in.

Chairman.—Would it not be better to defer any further remarks until you call witnesses? Either deal with it now, or defer it to Wednesday. I think, having heard the evidence, you ought to have a day's interval to consider the evidence of Mr. Shanahan.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—I am quite willing to fall in with your suggestion, sir.

Chairman.—Unless you wish immediately to correct something of importance. It is, of course, quite at your discretion, Mr. Knox—do just as you like.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—I think there are a number of points that we do dispute in the report of the Board of Works, but having regard to what you have said, perhaps the most convenient course would be to defer it to Wednesday, when we shall bring up our evidence.

Lord Pirrie.—I should like to see the letter as far as I am personally concerned.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—If the Chairman has no objection, I will read that one letter. This is a letter dated 27th July, 1901, which was addressed to the Board of Works:—"Gentlemen,—On the 24th inst. I met Mr. Livesey and Mr. Batchen at the offices of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway at Londonderry, and had a long consultation with them regarding the type of engine best suited to work the Burtonport extension of that system, and I explained my reasons very fully for preferring a tender instead of a tank engine. I am quite prepared to admit that the line could be worked with tank engines similar to those on the Glenties line, but I am convinced that the line can be worked in a much more satisfactory manner, and more economically with tender engines, and I am therefore strongly of opinion that this type of engine should be adopted. The extra cost of a six-wheeled engine and four-wheeled tender as compared with a ten-wheeled tank engine would be trifling, as the expensive parts, *i.e.*, the wheels, axles, axle-boxes, springs, buffers, &c. would be the same in both cases, and practically the only additional material required would be due to the larger carrying capacity of the tender body as compared with the tanks and coal bunkers of the tank engine. Mr. Livesey, while expressing himself strongly in favour of tank engines, did not raise any objection to tender engines, provided the engines are fitted with leading bogies or pony trucks, and I agree with him that a leading pony truck would be an improvement, although on a line with such easy curves as the one in question I do not consider it in any way essential. I may mention that when considering this matter I have not overlooked the fact that for the efficient and economical working of the line it will be necessary to use engines capable of running through from Burtonport to Londonderry—a distance of seventy-four miles—because, to confine engines to a particular section of the line far from headquarters would be both unsatisfactory and expensive, especially on a system like the one in question, on which there is only one locomotive repairing depôt. Arrangements should therefore be made for all engines to run to Londonderry, so that they may be systematically examined, and running repairs carried out under proper supervision, and without the cost of keeping an expensive staff at out stations. I may further mention that the reason why narrow gauge tender engines have not been already adopted in this county is because narrow gauge lines so far are all comparatively short, and therefore suitable for tank engines, but abroad tender engines are largely used; for example, the Cape Government Railways (metre gauge) have adopted them exclusively." It seems to me it is a valuable letter. As regards what was asked by Mr. Aspinall, I have a later

November, 1903, giving the mileage run. He estimates on the service then working there was a train mileage of 99,100 per annum, and that 15,000 was as much as any narrow gauge engine ought to work.

Chairman.—15,000 per annum?

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—15,000 per annum for a narrow gauge engine.

Mr. Acworth.—Might I ask Mr. Shanahan whether that is the fact—twenty-one miles without a passing place?

18130. *Chairman.*—It has been given in evidence by Mr. Shanahan. The evidence of the Board of Works was that the crossing places and water supply tanks were arranged with the engineer of the Lough Swilly Company?—*Mr. Shanahan.*—Yes, and of course it has always to be taken into account that this line was constructed in accordance with plans originally drawn by the promoting company—the working company—and adopted by the Board of Works. But if I may be permitted to, I will read a word or two from the investigators' minutes of evidence—the investigators were Mr. Tatlow and Mr. Roberts, the engineer of the Highland Railway.

18131. *Lord Pirrie.*—Might we not have the answer to Mr. Acworth first. Do you admit that you were wrong in your evidence, and that Mr. Knox is right in saying that there was no watering place for twenty-one miles, and no crossing place?—My evidence is, of course, that the crossing places and the tank capacity were regulated according to the requirements of the traffic.

18132. All along the line?—Yes, according to the plans drawn by the company.

18133. *Mr. Acworth.*—But is the fact admitted that from the point of starting to the next crossing place was twenty-one miles—that is the point I want answered?—Yes.

18134. *Chairman.*—Taking that twenty-one miles, how many stations are there?—Four.

18135. And no crossing places at the stations?—No crossing places at the stations. This is what the manager of the line swore at the inquiry: "So that apart from Letterkenny, which you propose to make a passing station, you only suggest two?—Yes. Two passing stations. It is a large distance—twenty miles?—It is only an hour. How about these excursions—do not you think it would be hampering you?—But this being a congested district, I do not think you should be heaping up expense."

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Mr. G. E. Shanahan, Assistant-Secretary, Board of Works.

18136. This is the answer of the investigator?—Yes, there it is in black and white, and the manager put it in his plans—at least the engineer did. I may mention for the information of the Commission that the engineer of the Board of Works in Dublin is here ready to answer any technical questions he may be asked.

Mr. Acworth.—Would you allow me to get a small matter off my mind. It will be just as well to do it now as at any time. At a meeting in April, when I was unfortunately not present, Mr. Field said, in Answer No. 13138, on the authority of a gentleman named Mr. Cunningham, "that Mr. Acworth admits that the British fares are the highest in Europe, and goods double the price of the Continent, while the Irish fares, as far as I can learn, are higher than in Great Britain." I have asked Mr. Cunningham for his authority for crediting me with that statement. So far he has not given it me. I am not aware that I made the statement. If I ever did make it, I am prepared to say it was an absurd statement to make, because figures justifying it or disproving it are not in existence.

Mr. Acworth's contradiction of statement alleged to have been made by him on the subject of British railway fares. (See Mr. Field's evidence, Question 13138.)

Chairman.—I think Mr. Cunningham referred to me also, but I do not think it necessary to contradict him.

Mr. Acworth.—I do not want to have it said that I made such a statement as that without contradicting it.

Adjourned for luncheon.

18137. *Chairman.*—Mr. Shanahan, I think you have a statement you wish to hand in?—Yes This is a list of Irish Railway Companies (including Light Railways) at 30th September, 1906, showing the gauge of the lines, the miles open, and the paid-up capital. This statement includes lines constructed under the Tramways and Light Railways Acts. I hand it in to be printed in the notes of my evidence.

List of Irish railway companies, showing gauge of line, miles open, and capital paid up.

LIST of IRISH RAILWAY COMPANIES (including Light Railways) at 30th September, 1906, showing Gauge of Line, Miles Open, and Paid-up Capital.

Lines constructed under Tramways and Light Railways Acts are printed in italic.

Company.	Gauge of Line.	Miles open.	Paid-up Capital (less Nominal additions) *vide* Board of Trade Returns, 1905.	Remarks.
	ft. in.		£	
GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN—				
Main Line and Branches		831		
Waterford, Wexford, and Rosslare		47		Part of the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company's undertakings.
Waterford, Dungarvan, and Lismore		28¼		
Fermoy and Lismore		15½		
Claremorris and Swinford		*18¾*	13,380,810	
Collooney and Swinford		*28¾*		Light Railways Acts, 1889–1896.
Headford and Kenmare		*19¾*		
Killorglin and Valentia		*26¾*		
Mitchelstown and Fermoy		*13*		Tramways Acts, 1860–1883.
Central Ireland		6¾	27,480	
Southern		24¼	306,267	
Tralee and Fenit		8	58,850	
Athenry and Tuam Extension to Claremorris		*17*	*100,000*	Tramways Acts, 1860–1883.
	5 3	1,083	13,873,407	
MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN—				
Main Line and Branches		433¼		
Achill Extension		*8¼*		
Ballina and Killala		*8*	6,510,511	Light Railways Acts, 1889–1896.
Galway and Clifden		*49*		
Westport and Mallaranny		*18*		
Ballinrobe and Claremorris		*12¾*	*71,640*	Tramways Acts, 1860–1883.
Loughrea and Attymon		*9*	*54,445*	
	5 3	533	6,636,596	
GREAT NORTHERN	5 3	533	7,998,913	
MIDLAND (NORTHERN COUNTIES COMMITTEE)	5 3	190¾	3,176,269	Capital Expenditure.
Main Line and Branches	3 0	48		
Limavady and Dungiven	5 3	10¼	86,334	
		249	3,262,603	

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List of Irish railway companies showing gauge of line, miles open, and capital paid up.

List of Irish Railway Companies (including Light Railways) at 30th September, 1906, showing Gauge of Line, Miles Open, and Paid-up Capital—*continued.*

Lines constructed under Tramways and Light Railways Acts are printed in italic.

Company.	Gauge of Line.	Miles open.	Paid-up Capital (less Nominal additions) as Board of Trade Returns, 1905.	Remarks
	ft. in.		£	
DUBLIN, WICKLOW, AND WEXFORD—				
Main Line and Branches		140¾	2,523,377	
City of Dublin Junction		1¼	428,830	
New Ross and Waterford		13½	100,000	
Dublin and Kingstown		6	411,300	
	5 3	161	3,463,507	
*DONEGAL—				
Main Line and Branches;		62½	471,594	Light Railways Acts, 1889-1896.
Donegal and Killybegs		19		
Stranorlar and Glenties		24½		
	3 0	106	471,594	
LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY—				
Main Line and Branches		14½	154,694	Irish Railways Acts, 1889-1896.
Buncrana and Cardonagh		18¾		
Letterkenny and Burtonport		49¾		
Letterkenny		16½	144,905	
	3 0	99	299,599	
CORK, BANDON, AND SOUTH COAST—				
Main Line and Branches		51		
Baltimore and Skibbereen		7½	759,349	Light Railways Acts, 1889-1896
Bantry Bay Extension		2		
Bantry Extension		10	105,000	
Clonakilty Extension		8¾	60,000	
Ilen Valley		15¾	120,000	
	5 3	95	1,044,349	
BELFAST AND COUNTY DOWN—				
Main Line and Branches		68	1,310,635	Light Railways Acts, 1889-1896;
Downpatrick, Killough, and Ardglass		8		
	5 3	76	1,310,635	
WEST CLARE—				
Main Line and Branches		27	180,000	Tramways Acts, 1860-1883.
South Clare		26	140,000	
	3 0	*53*	*320,000*	
CAVAN AND LEITRIM	*3 0*	*49*	*190,585*	
SLIGO, LEITRIM, AND NORTHERN COUNTIES	5 3	43	486,781	
CLOGHER VALLEY	*3 0*	*37*	*123,310*	Tramways Acts, 1860-1883
TRALEE AND DINGLE	*3 0*	*37*	*70,000*	
CORK AND MUSKERRY—				
Main Line and Branches		*18*	*75,000*	Tramways Acts, 1860-1883.
Donoughmore Extension		*9*	*33,000*	
	3 0	*27*	*108,000*	
DUNDALK, NEWRY, AND GREENORE,	5 3	26	383,900	
CORK AND MACROOM,	5 3	25	211,830	
CORK, BLACKROCK, AND PASSAGE,	3 0	16	423,220	
BALLYCASTLE,	3 0	16	89,833	
SCHULL AND SKIBBEREEN TRAMWAY AND LIGHT RAILWAY.	*3 0*	*14*	*57,000*	Tramways Acts, 1860-1883
TIMOLEAGUE AND COURTMACSHERRY EXTENSION AND BALLINASCARTY AND TIMOLEAGUE JUNCTION.	*5 3*	*9*	*35,000*	
LISTOWEL AND BALLYBUNION, (Mono-Rail).	—	9	33,000	
WATERFORD AND TRAMORE,	5 3	7	72,350	
BESSBROOK AND NEWRY TRAMWAY,	*3 0*	*3*	*15,000*	Tramways Acts 1860-1883.
CARRICKFERGUS HARBOUR JUNCTION,	*5 3*	*1*	*7,230*	
	5 3	2,798	£40,991,242	
	3 0	505		
	Mono-Rail.	9		
		3,312		

* The Donegal Railway has by the Great Northern (Ireland) and Midland Railways Act, 1906, been vested jointly in these Companies.

List of Irish Railways authorised but not constructed.

Compiled from Board of Trade Returns—Year 1905.

Act.	Company.	Capital.
		£
1903.	Castleblaney, Keady and Armagh (under construction), ...	210,523
1903 and 1904.	Strabane and Letterkenny (under construction), ...	1 205
		£211.728

Mr. Alfred D. Price, M.Inst. C.E. Engineering Inspector, Local Government Board, examined by The Chairman.

18138. Mr. Price, you are a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers?—I am.

18139. And you are a Master of Engineering of Trinity College, Dublin?—Yes.

18140. And also an Engineering Inspector for the Local Government Board of Ireland?—Yes, I am; but I do not appear here in my official capacity as an official of the Local Government Board.

18141. That I understand. You have been trained as a railway engineer?—I have; from the beginning.

18142. Are you the son of the late James Price, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers?—Yes.

18143. And have you done any work in connection with the surveying of railway extensions in Ireland?—Yes. From the year 1878 I was employed first in the surveying of railways—Parliamentary work—in County Donegal and County Antrim.

18144. What was the gauge of the Antrim railway?—It was a three-foot gauge. I constructed the first electrical railway in the United Kingdom—to the Giant's Causeway; it was on a raised footpath. I was with Mr. Traill at that time.

18145. That is an American railway, is it not?—It has been called an American railway; the Americans sometimes claim it, but they have no right to it.

18146. *Lord Pirrie.*—Mr. Traill is now Provost of Trinity College, is he not?—Yes; his brother was the engineer; Dr. Traill was the promoter there.

18147. *Chairman.*—Have you surveyed and constructed railways for the Great Southern and Western Railway Company?—Yes. I constructed the extension to Valencia Harbour.

18148. What year was that?—I commenced that in 1882, and it was finished as one of the light railways on to Valencia.

18149. That is in County Kerry?—Yes.

18150. Did you do any work in connection with the railway in 1894?—Yes. In 1894 I was on the Valencia Railway, and then in 1895 I was employed as engineer on different railways, one of them being the Cork and Macroom Railway; I had charge of the maintenance.

18151. Really you have had a vast experience in connection with the construction of railways in Ireland?—Yes.

18152. Have you been employed by the Commissioners of Public Works at any time?—Yes, on some of the inquiries that were referred to in regard to the Donegal railways. There was a Commission of which General Hutcheson was Chairman, and I was acting as an assistant on that Commission as inspecting engineer to go over the routes of particular lines in Donegal.

18153. Have you put your views in writing at any time?—Yes. I contributed a paper on the subject of the location, construction, and equipment of light railways to the Institution of Civil Engineers in Ireland, for which they were good enough to award me a gold medal. I have sent a copy of the paper to the Commission

18154. The first railway in Ireland, I think, was the Dublin and Kingstown Railway?—The Dublin and Kingstown Railway

18155. What was the gauge of that railway?—It was originally constructed in 1832 with a gauge of 4 ft. 8½ ins.—the English gauge. But that has been abandoned and changed into the ordinary Irish 5 ft. 3 in. gauge.

18156. In 1905, coming down to a later period, how many miles of railways were there in Ireland?—I find by the returns available there were 3,312 miles, of which 505 are 3 ft. narrow gauge, and the rest are 5 ft. 3ins.

18157. 5 ft. 3 ins. being the standard gauge?—5 ft. 3 ins. being the standard gauge in Ireland.

18158. Have you made any calculation as to the average cost of working expenses in Ireland?—Yes. According to the last return it works out at 62 per cent. of the receipts. In Ireland we pay no passenger tax. It is slightly less than the cost of the working of English railways, but it is more than the Scotch. The Scotch is 55 per rent. of the gross receipts.

18159. What is the average expense per train mile in Ireland?—Taking the average, it works out at 2*s.* 10*d.* per train mile; it comes down as low as 1*s.* 6*d.* on some of the light railways.

18160. I suppose the chief disparity between the receipts per mile in England and the receipts per mile in Ireland is attributable to the passenger traffic?—Yes. That is due to the difference in the density of population in Ireland as compared with England. Taking 100 acres in Ireland, the average is twenty-one persons, whereas in England it is eighty-one, or about four times the population per acre.

18161. Therefore, passenger traffic in England must be greater?—Yes; I think you would expect that. Then we have to allow for the number of tourists.

18162. Has the 5 ft. 3 in. gauge been in existence since the first railway was built?—No. The Ulster Railway was originally 6 ft. 2 ins., but by an Act of Parliament making all lines in Ireland uniform, 5 ft. 3 ins. was substituted.

18163. The Ulster line was a line running into Belfast, from where?—From Portadown to Omagh.

18164. Does it form a link in the chain between Dublin and Belfast?—No. It is called the Ulster Railway now, but I think the Ulster line as described in the Report of the Commissioners to 1868 was a railway commencing at Portadown and ending at Omagh.

18165. Can you give us for our information the various gauges there have been in Ireland?—The first was 4 ft. 8½ ins.

18166. That was the Dublin and Kingstown?—A short line of seven miles.

18167. That has been abandoned?—It was changed to 5 ft. 3 ins. Then we had a 6 ft. 2 ins. gauge.

18168. That is the old Ulster line?—Yes. That has been abandoned. It is all 5 ft. 3 ins. now. 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge is the regular standard gauge.

18169. How many miles are there of that?—2,807.

18170. And the 3 ft. gauge?—There are 505 miles at present.

18171. Those are what we call light railways, I suppose?—There are light railways with the 3 ft. gauge and with the 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge. The first was a 5 ft. 3 in. gauge in County Kerry to Castle Island.

18172. In Donegal, where we had so much evidence about the railways, what is the ordinary gauge there; is it the 3ft.?—All these branch railways and light railways in Donegal are 3 ft.

18173. In Antrim?—There are four light railways in Antrim, and they are all on the 3 ft. gauge.

18174. In Tyrone?—In Tyrone it is the 3 ft. gauge.

18175. I think we may take it generally that in

Mr. Alfred D. Price, M.Inst. C.E., Engineering Inspector, Local Government Board. Mileage and gauge of railways in Ireland in year 1905.

Average cost of working expenses.

Cause of disparity between receipts per mile in England and Ireland.

Present uniform gauge in Ireland regulated by Act of Parliament (5 feet 3 inches, except for light railways).

Mileage of light railways with 3 ft. gauge in Ireland.

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the other counties, Cavan and Leitrim, Cork and Kerry there are 3 ft. gauge lines?—They have one 3 ft. gauge line in Kerry, but the other lines in Kerry are 5 ft. 3 ins. There is also a short mono railway line from Listowel to Ballybunion.

18176. Now?—Yes. You get in at one side and they must balance you the other side.

18177. What has been the average cost of these narrow gauge lines, including equipment?—£5,500 per mile has been the average of the narrow gauge.

Average cost of narrow gauge lines.

18178. And what has been the ruling gradient of these railways?—They have got one in thirty and one in forty, in some cases one in twenty-seven; but one in thirty and one in forty have been the ruling gradients on some of these lines, with curves of six chains radius. There are sharper curves; for instance, the Tralee and Dingle Railway has curves on a 2½ chains radius, but that is really a tramway, and it is in a very unfortunate condition at present.

Ruling gradients and curves on the light railways in Ireland.

18179. Do you, with your great experience, claim any particular advantage for these light railways?—The advantage that is claimed by those who advocate narrow gauge railways is that the dead load to be carried is less than on the broad gauge railways; that is, the rolling stock is lighter in proportion to the load carried. It is also claimed that they are adaptable to sharper curves, and that special light wagons can be used, and they can be easily handled.

Advantages claimed for narrow gauge railways and the disadvantages of such lines.

18180. Have you made any calculation as to the dead weight compared with the ordinary railways?—The dead weight is about 39 per cent. in the case of the 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge, and 31 per cent. in the case of the narrow gauge.

18181. That is the goods rolling stock?—Goods rolling stock, the ordinary uncovered wagon.

18182. So that in that respect there is a considerable advantage in favour of light railways?—There is.

18183. I mean in that respect only?—The wagons are lighter, and therefore they have not the same life as broad gauge wagons.

18184. You mention the advantages, but I suppose there are disadvantages also?—The disadvantage generally is the break in gauge; you have to transship the freight, and if it is cattle you have to drive them into another wagon. I think the most important disadvantage is the non-interchangeability of the rolling stock; that is, these small lines have to keep a larger quantity of rolling stock, which is idle except on fair days; they have no reserve; whereas a broad gauge railway can bring down wagons from any other portion of the system.

Light railways constructed on the standard gauge; and cost.

18185. I think you said there are some light railways which have been constructed on the standard gauge?—Yes. The first light railway in Ireland was constructed on the standard gauge; it was from a place called Gortatlea to Castleisland in County Kerry, and it is worked by the Great Southern and Western Railway with special light engines.

18186. Are there any others?—Yes, there are the other branches of the Great Southern; the Mitchelstown line in County Cork, and the Newmarket and Kanturk line; also several in connection with the Midland Great Western Railway.

18187. Have you made any calculation as to the cost of these lines; I am speaking of light railways on the standard gauge?—They vary very much, according to the country that is to be gone through. For instance, if it is near the coast line we have steep gradients and pretty heavy cuttings, and the cost has gone up as high as £8,800 a mile. But some have been constructed for £5,000 a mile.

Receipts and expenses of working light railways.

18188. In other words the cost of construction of the 5 ft. 3 in. gauge line has not exceeded very much the cost of construction of the 3 ft. gauge?—Not much, and it is doubtful whether in similar circumstances the 3 ft. gauge line would have saved much.

18189. Have you made any calculation as to the receipts from these railways?—I have taken the return which the Board of Works have issued of the receipts of light railways, and I find that the West Kerry Railway—that is what is called the Valencia line—the receipts per mile per week are £5, and the working expenses £6 8*s*. But the receipts vary from £4 15*s*. to £7 per mile per week, and the working expenses from £4 to £6 per mile per week.

18190. I think we have heard quite sufficient about the abandonment of the Birr to Portumna Railway, and I do not propose to ask you anything about that. But there is another railway in Ireland which has been abandoned, is there not?—There was a railway laid down to Red Bay, in the iron ore district of County Antrim; it was six miles long and was very well constructed, with a shipping pier. The line has been abandoned and the rails taken up and sent out to America, and the pier has been allowed to go to ruin.

18191. Was that constructed by private enterprise?—Yes.

18192. *Mr. Acworth.*— Did it join the existing Ballymena road?—No; it did not. I surveyed a connecting line there, but it was never carried out, and the other line was abandoned; but there is, at present, a very large traffic in iron ore down that road to the sea, which is shipped in sailing vessels.

18193. *Chairman.*—Do you think that the natural resources of the country in some districts require further railway extensions?—I do. I have gone specially into the question of the portions round the seaboard. There are two things that I think we want in Ireland. One is extension of railways, and the other is reduction of freights.

18194. You do not suggest that private enterprise can make those railways, I suppose?—I do not. There is no encouragement to private enterprise to construct these lines. They would be speculative to a certain extent. I believe they would pay more than their working expenses, but I do not think you would get private enterprise to start them.

18195. I think we shall all agree that it would be extremely difficult for capital to be raised to provide for the construction of these railways?—Yes. In some of the cases I have mentioned it would be very difficult.

18196. In other words, if these railways are to be made, it will have to be done either by Imperial grants or by local guarantees?—I see no other way to hope for it.

18197. At any rate, I think you are of opinion that the railways, if constructed, would be of considerable benefit to the districts through which they would run?—Yes. I have seen the benefits in districts where railways have been constructed. New markets are generally started in the vicinity, and farmers generally are benefited by the construction of railways in their neighbourhood.

18198. Have you formed any opinion as to how far on each side of the railway the benefit extends?—You would have to take each railway by itself. It depends upon the topographical condition of the country. In some cases the railway would benefit only one side, and in others it would benefit both sides. The benefit might extend as far as seven or eight miles on each side of the railway.

18199. Have you considered in what particular districts of Ireland not now served by any railway company it would be an advantage to have railways?—To begin with the map, taking the extreme south-east of Ireland, there is the mouth of Waterford Harbour, from Tramore to Dunmore East. It is a Royal harbour and a very important fishing station. There is no railway to Dunmore East.

18200. About how far are they from a railway?—They are only about seven miles from Tramore, but none of the traffic ever goes to Tramore. They carry the traffic into Waterford, about fifteen miles. I have surveyed a railway from Dunmore East to Tramore, and it could be worked in connection with the Waterford and Tramore—I mean with their ordinary rolling stock.

18201. Would you suggest that in that particular district the railway should be on the standard gauge?—Yes. The Tramore railway is on the 5′ 3″ gauge.

18202. So as to avoid the transshipment to which you referred?—Yes; that is very objectionable in the case of fish.

18203. There are industries in that particular district that would be developed by a railway, are there?—It is a good farming and agricultural district.

18204. Is there any fishing industry?—Yes. The deep sea fishermen come in there at certain seasons.

18205. What is the next district?—The next on the coast would be in County Cork. There is a harbour at Ballycotton, but there is no railway connection to Ballycotton. Several lines have been considered. As to that, the simplest one to make would be from Midleton to Ballycotton, joining the Great Southern Railway at Midleton.

18206. What would be about the length of that?—Ten miles.

18207. Where is the next one that you would suggest?—The next place would be Castletown Bere. Castletown Bere is now a naval station, and the line I suggest would be from Kenmare to Castletown Bere. Castletown Bere would be the extreme end of the line. That would be a branch of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

18208. These are in County Cork?—Yes.

18209. Are there any in County Kerry that you would suggest?—I think the railway which I have completed to Valencia Harbour might, with advantage, be extended to Waterville, a fishing district which has no railway accommodation. By extending that line about nine miles you would open up a further district. Waterville is an important place of itself; it is one of the places where the Atlantic cable comes in.

18210. *Mr. Acworth.*—The Great Southern have an hotel there, have they not?—Yes. Another railway in Kerry which I think is required is from Listowel to Tarbert, a harbour at the mouth of the Shannon. The distance is twelve miles, and it should be a 5′ 3″ gauge, joining the Great Southern and Western at Listowel.

18211. *Chairman.*—Now, will you go on?—Then I come to County Mayo. Since I prepared this evidence the preamble of a Bill has been passed which will bring Belmullet into the railway system. It is not commenced yet. It is a line from Killala to Belmullet. I was employed by the Board of Works to hold an Inquiry when a railway was contemplated, but the railway was rather expensive and it was never carried out. It is thirty-eight miles from Killala to Belmullet. There is a good harbour at Blacksod Bay.

18211A. That railway would form a junction with the Midland?—Yes, at Killala. The railway at Killala was extended, under a former Government grant, from Ballina to Killala, and this will be a further extension of that same railway.

18212. All these which you suggest it would be advisable to construct on the standard gauge?—Yes; so that they could be worked by the parent companies each with their rolling stock.

18213. Then we come to County Donegal. I should have thought that Donegal was sufficiently served with railways?—There is a little town in Donegal called Ardara, which is the centre of industries; the woollen and other industries are there, and it is also a fishing station. The railway which at present goes to Glenties is paying more than its working expenses, and to extend that railway to Ardara, about six miles, would be a great advantage; it should be on the 3′ gauge.

18214. Because the railways in that district are on on the 3′ gauge?—Yes.

18215. How far is it from Glenties to the coast?—Six miles.

18216. Your suggestion is that that should be the same gauge as the adjoining railway?—Yes. There is another village in Donegal which is not provided with railway accommodation. It is not very far from Letterkenny. It is twelve miles from Letterkenny, and it is an important point near Lough Swilly, near Milroy Bay.

18217. Is that a good agricultural district?—It is a very good district.

18218. Now, Antrim?—There is another railway in Donegal which I would suggest, from Londonderry to Moville, where the Canadian Mail steamers used to come in. More than twenty-five years ago I surveyed a line there. The Great Northern were at that time going to construct it, but it has never been constructed. I think it is a blot on the system not to have that line.

18219. What is the distance?—About twenty miles.

18220. How did the mails come when they were landed there?—A tender went down and brought the mails from Derry to Moville.

18221. But you said the mails were landed there?—The mails were put into tenders at Moville and brought up to Derry.

18222. But that, you say, has been discontinued for many years?—Just a year ago.

18223. And the tender brought the mails to Derry?—Yes.

18224. What is the distance from Derry to Moville?—Twenty miles.

18225. Now, in Antrim?—In County Antrim I would suggest that the railway which has been abandoned——

18226. The one you referred to just now?—Yes. From Parkmore to Red Bay—the termination of the Ballymoney Red Bay line. That should be constructed. The distance is six miles, and it should be on the 3′ gauge. That is a total of 164 miles.

18227. A total of 164 miles that you have ventured to suggest?—Yes; representing about a million of money.

Reconstruction of Parkmore to Red Bay line recommended.

18228. As an experienced man you suggest that the gradients should be limited to one in fifty?—Except in very exceptional cases.

18229. But exceptional cases rule the whole, do they not?—They do; but there may be an exceptional case where there is a short gradient of one in forty leading to another—a sort of switchback arrangement. That is not so objectionable as a long gradient of one in forty. It is very much against the working of these lines to have such gradients.

Importance of proper gradients and curves on light railways.

18230. Any engineer laying out railways of this sort would consider the question not only of gradients but of curves?—Unfortunately, in some of the light railways that were brought before the Commission in Donegal there was very little consideration of the gradients and curves. We have two gradients running into each other with no horizontal between; any engineer knows that you cannot work a train properly on such a line. If you get the maximum curve and the maximum gradient together, you have a very difficult line to work.

Class of engines required for such lines.

18231. Have you formed any opinion as to whether a special class of locomotive should be constructed to work these railways?—My experience on the Valencia line, where we had gradients of one in fifty and ten chain curves was, that there were special engines made for working those gradients, and the same engines are working them now, and have been since 1894. They have radial axle boxes and two axles coupled, and there are twelve tons on each axle, and they have worked remarkably well on those gradients and curves.

Weight of rails necessary.

18232. Your roadway would have to be strong to carry that?—I do not think there should be any permanent way with less than 60 lb. rails.

18233. But in Ireland they have roads of 40 lbs.?—Yes, but they are regretting it.

18234. Very likely; but I think that with the weight you mention upon the axle the roads would have to be good roads?—Yes. But that was not under the Light Railways Act. Under the Light Railways Act you could only put eight tons on the axle.

Question of the use of road motors to develop backward districts.

18235. Have you considered amongst other things the question whether a district could be served with motors?—I think you have got to get over the difficulty of the local prejudice in that case before you can do anything in the way of developing the traffic by motors on the ordinary roads. They are not popular amongst the farming class, and I need not say that they are not popular amongst the carters on the roads. For instance, the Great Southern Railway purchased some motors and put them on from Tuam to Dunmore. These motors worked very well, but after a short time it was found that they were boycotted; no one would buy from the merchants who brought the material by these motors. The farmers had it in their own hands, and the motors had to be taken off. In Dunmore East, County Waterford, motors have been put on, and they have certainly not developed the traffic. They seem to take the whole road to themselves, and sometimes it is not wide enough and they go over the fences into the field.

18236. You think there is still some prejudice against the use of these motors?—I think there is a very strong prejudice against them. There is another thing which goes against motors which I experienced during last winter, and that was that if there is a snowfall, the roads are simply blocked.

18237. Is not that the case with cars?—Not at all. I was able to get an ordinary Irish car where a motor could not run, because the axle is so near the ground that it touches on the snow.

18238. Have you considered the question of the amalgamation of Irish railways—we will deal with that first?—Yes.

Question of the nationalisation of Irish railways.

18239. But perhaps I ought to ask this question first. Have you considered the question of the nationalisation of Irish railways?—Yes; I considered

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the two questions together, but I cannot see how we should gain much by the nationalisation in proportion to what, I think, we should lose.

18240. Legislation has already provided for the purchase of Irish railways, has it not?—It did in the Act of 1844; section 2 of the Irish Act did provide for the State purchase of Irish railways.

18241. That was subject to certain contingencies, was it not?—To a contingency which I do not think can now arise. In every case railways have adopted reduced tolls and rates, so that there is no compulsory purchase now, I understand. But the Act provided that twenty-five years' purchase of the divisible profits was to be paid subject to arbitration.

18242. You are referring to the Act of 1844?—Yes.

18243. That is sixty-three years ago?—Then, there was a Commission in 1868, which had that question before them as to what should be done about the purchase, and they certainly did not encourage the idea that the State should acquire the lines. Later on we had the Allport Commission, which rather advised amalgamation.

18244. Have you yourself formed any opinion on the question of amalgamation?—I think amalgamation would meet nearly all the defects.

18245. What do you mean by amalgamation—do you mean compulsory amalgamation of certain railways—would you compel one railway to amalgamate with another whether they liked it or not?—Yes.

Compulsory amalgamation of the Irish railways advocated.

18246. You would?—Yes; but you would have to compensate the railways.

18247. Subject to compensation?—Subject to compensation. I think the Government should guarantee that there should be no loss on the undertaking, and the Government should be recouped afterwards when the receipts increased; when the receipts went up the Government should get 50 per cent. of the excess profits.

18248. How many trunk companies do you think there ought to be?—I do not think there is room for more than three.

Three systems considered to be sufficient for Ireland.

18249. Why not two—why do you say three?—I feel that Belfast seems to own a little bit at the top of Ireland by itself almost; it is not worked into Dublin, and I think we have almost to leave the North of Ireland, North of Belfast and Donegal as one system.

18250. As one?—Yes.

Government control recommended.

18251. And the rest as another system?—And the other divided into two.

18252. That would be two?—Three altogether.

18253. Have you thought the question out, really?—Of course I know objections are always raised that the public would not be treated fairly if there was no competition, but I think that could be dealt with by giving control to the Government in return for providing funds; they should have a voice in the matter, and have an expert on each board.

18254. The Government?—Yes.

18255. One of a body of nine, or ten, or twelve?—Yes.

A State guarantee against loss a necessary condition of compulsory amalgamation.

18256. Do you suggest that the State should guarantee the interest on these amalgamated railways?—I think if the State guaranteed that there should be no loss for a certain time, and at the same time there should be a provision made that the State should be recouped.

18257. What is the difference between a Government guarantee that there should be no loss, and a Government purchase altogether?—A Government purchase seems to upset the whole system, and puts it out of commercial hands. The Government could not be expected to work railways on commercial lines as coumercial men do. We could not have better men than are on the boards in Ireland now. We could not find men more interested in the country.

State purchase of the railways disapproved.

18258. What are you going to gain by three railways—that is the point I am on. There would be no competition?—The way the passenger looks at it, or the way the trader looks at it is this. He does not want to have to deal with two or three companies in order to get through. The railways do not run very much in unison; there are awkward gaps in several places.

18259. Would it not be infinitely better if there were only one?—I think one would be too big to be managed in a commercial way, and too small to constitute a good railway department. If it were all one, it would be rather a small department for a Government department.

18260. But Irish railways are not so big as large English railways?—The bulk of Irish railways, no. But still we are linked on very well to England; at present we have three pretty tight links, Belfast, Dublin, and Rosslare.

18261. You do not object to the Government undertaking the monetary responsibilities in the way of guarantee, but you do object to Government purchase?—I do.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

18262. In advocating certain railway extensions, you particularly mentioned the re-laying of the line to Red Bay?—The Red Bay and Parkmore Line.

18263. You said you had surveyed that line?—I did.

18264. Are you aware that after Parkmore where that line stopped there is a tremendous valley—how do you propose to join it with the main line?—You would not join it at the very end; you would join it just below Parkmore Station, and get through the valley on the north side, and go down to Red Bay. You would not go to Cushendall.

18265. How would you cross the hill opposite Parkmore to the line—there is a tremendous valley there. You would have to make one of the finest bridges in the world?—It is not necessary to make a bridge there; you go up into the valley and join the railway.

18266. Have you considered the question of running it to Cushendall?—Unless you put a funicular railway I do not think you could go down there.

18267. On account of the gradient?—Yes; the gradient is very steep.

18268. Are there any people at all living on that side of the hill—the iron ore comes out from Parkmore down to Red Bay—how would you get up into clouds on the side of the hill—what is the object of the line?—It is very largely for the iron ore.

18269. But the iron ore has almost ceased to come down there?—Not at all; it is still cutting up the roads as it used; it is carted down.

18270. Then it is for iron ore and not for passenger traffic?—There would be a development of tourist traffic.

18271. On the other side of the valley, from Parkmore down to Cushendall, would it not be very much wiser to put the line from Retreat to Cushendall?—But it would not be one of your home railways; it would be a Swiss line; a funicular.

18272. Would it not be better than a bridge across the valley?—There is no bridge required.

18273. It would cost more from across the valley than all the way from Parkmore?—I do not think so; the other line was actually laid down there.

18274. But the rails are all up?—They are all gone.

18275. Therefore you would have to lay your rails again, and you have not a population to get to; you have no hotel accommodation at Red Bay, and you land the people at no terminal at all?—It is more for the iron ore.

18276. It is not for tourist traffic then?—It would do both. It runs along the outcrop of the iron ore.

18277. Would it not be very much better to run the line from Parkmore to Retreat, to continue the line to Cushendall and Ballycastle, and so making a continuous line round the coast; you would get the most popular line in Ireland?—I have not surveyed it, but I know the gradients are very much against it.

18278. I know the district so well?—You are a thousand feet above the sea at Retreat.

18279. I think you have the finest scenery in Ireland there, and I do not quite agree with your proposal to go the other side, where there is nobody living?—Yes.

18280. You said that one of the objections to motor traffic in Ireland was the snow. Do you know how many days in Ireland there would be snow on the ground at all, or that you could find in any part of Ireland?—No; I do not. I know the motors were blocked on two occasions, once for three days and once for two days this year at Cushendall.

18281. Once for two days and on another occasion for three days?—Yes.

18282. That is five days in the year, and that is once in every five years, shall we say?—I do not know.

18283. Probably once in ten years. I remember a block three times since 1852?—The snow is not the greatest difficulty.

18284. Now, I presume that what you really meant about the motor traffic is that the smaller carters and men who buy eggs and butter from the small farmers, and sell tobacco, flannel, tea, and so on, would be interfered with in their traffic and trade; that is the objection to motor traffic, is it not?—Not altogether. The objection is an objection of the farmers themselves. A farmer going along a road, when he meets a motor coming along, his horse will not stand it, and he has to get down and put a bag over its head.

18285. Are you not aware that horses in the streets of London meet motor buses and do not shy?—The horses in London are well trained.

18286. What about motors in Dublin? You live in Ireland, do you not?—Yes.

18287. Do you never see motors driving about Dublin or Killarney without interfering with the horses?—At Killarney I think they do interfere with the horses.

18288. Do you think the horses in the outlying districts cannot be trained?—I have no doubt they could be trained if the people put themselves to it, but they are prejudiced against it.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

18289. With regard to the prejudice of which you speak as having been experienced by the Great Southern and Western Railway in respect to motors, was that a passenger service or a goods service?—A goods service.

18290. Even though they were prepared to put on motors for the purpose of feeding their line, they met with such opposition that they had to discontinue them?—That is so.

18291. That is not a very encouraging prospect for railway companies to do anything further in that direction?—No.

18292. You speak of the cost of the light railways per mile as being about 18*d.*?—Yes; on the line I referred to it works out at 2*s.* this year, but it was 18*d.*

18293. At first sight that compares favourably with the expense on the standard system, but as a matter of fact is it not the case that the working expenses on these light railways, without exception, are practically from 70 to 90 per cent., and in some cases even more?—Of the receipts.

18294. Of the receipts, yes?—In some cases it is more.

18295. With only three exceptions there is a deficit; the working expenses are more than the receipts in every case with three exceptions; and in those three exceptions I think the working expenses run from 70 to 95 per cent.?—The French have a curious formula with regard to secondary railways; it works out in English figures that the expenses per mile per week equal £2 10*s.*, plus one-third of the receipts; working that out it comes to exactly £3 15*s.* per mile per week, according to the formula, to pay working expenses.

18296. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is a three train service, is it not?—That is from the French Ministerial Inquiry into secondary railways.

18297. But that is three trains a day, is it not?—It can be any number of trains per day, provided they can get £3 15*s.* per mile per week.

18298. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is to pay working expenses?—Yes.

18299. Taking the Burtonport line, the Lough Swilly Company get £3 10*s.* per mile per week, which presumably pays their working expenses?—That would not apply on a large railway where the receipts exceed £10 a week; it only applies to secondary railways.

18300. With their experience of light railways and the heavy working expenses in proportion to the receipts, there is really very little prospect of any railway company or any local authority being prepared to come forward and advance money for the purpose of such undertakings?—Very little, I think.

18301. As you are aware the greater portion of the money for light railways has been found in the shape of free grants?—Yes.

18302. There have been 1½ millions provided in the last seventeen years in respect of these light railways, and that has been accompanied, I think you will find, by contributions on the part of the guaranteeing areas which have benefited by the railways, to the extent of something like a quarter million, which represents a very small proportion; the contributing areas have been prepared to guarantee to that extent in order to derive benefits from the system of light railways?—The area under the present system of contribution is the barony.

18303. But a wider area benefits sometimes?—Yes.

Extension of the guaranteeing areas for future light railways advocated.

18304. I gather that you think that in future, instead of the contributing area being limited to a certain barony, it should be enlarged so as to include an area on either side of the railway?—Yes; a certain area on each side of the railway similar to what they have in the case of a drainage scheme where the benefit is assessed over a broad area.

Negotiations with regard to the Glenties and Ardara extension.

18305. With regard to some of these extensions of which you were speaking as being desirable, I think there has been some negotiation with regard to the Glenties and Ardara extension?—It was one of those railways which was proposed at the original Commission in Donegal; but at that time there was not money enough to make all the lines.

18306. Did not the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Bryce, go down there recently?—He was down there.

18307. Has there not been some communication on the part of the Irish Government with the County Council?—I do not know how it stands.

Advantages of the amalgamation of the railways into one instead of three systems urged.

18308. I think there has been some communication to the effect that if the County Council and the railway company put forward any substantial offer as to the cost of the lines, the Irish Government are prepared to submit a scheme to the Treasury. I think that is the position with regard to that line. Then with regard to amalgamation into three systems, you are aware that the recommendation of the Allport Commission was an amalgamation into one system?—I do not think they limited it to one system; I think they said either one or three.

18309. I think if you look at page 54 of the Report, it distinctly says with reference to amalgamation that it recommends centralisation in the hands of a single company, and they proceed to consider how that may be best carried into effect. I think you will find that they distinctly express themselves in favour of amalgamation into one system accompanied by Government control?—By State control, of course.

18310. Do you not think that all the advantages of which you speak as being likely to accrue from amalgamation into three systems would be still more likely to accrue if the railways were under one system?—I think that Ireland is naturally divided into three districts; we have three leading ports of Ireland—Dublin, Rosslare and Cork, and Belfast.

18311. If you lay down three systems, or any number greater than one, would not the danger of each of those systems becoming a monopoly, more or less in itself be increased; you would get three monopolies instead of one?—You want control. I go for State control.

State control —*i.e.*, an official on each Board recommended.

18312. That implies one Government official on each Board?—Yes.

18313. Then, again, that increases the expenses of staff and does away with a good many economies which you would hope to effect by means of amalgamation. I presume that the object of amalgamation is to get rid of superfluous Boards of officials, and so on?—I do not think you can get rid of many of the officials; you can get rid of directors, but officials will still be required; there will have to be assistant secretaries and engineers, and so on.

18314. We have had recently a judgment of the Canal Commissioners with regard to the Dublin and South Eastern and the Great Southern and Western. That Commission reported practically, that without in the least imputing any wish to take advantage of the position which had been given by the Amalgamation Act, yet, owing to the difficulties imposed upon the Great Southern and Western, that amalgamation had not been in the interest of the South of Ireland, but had resulted in the port of Rosslare getting advantages over the port of Dublin. I think that was the effect of the judgment?—Yes.

18315. Undoubtedly that was not in the interests of the public, and my only point is that if you put the whole of the railways of Ireland into three systems, you run the risk of having this disadvantage in each of the three systems and of making a big monopoly in each direction—North, Midland, and

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South—which you would obviate if you put them into one hand under strong Government control?—I think it would be too small to go into one Government control. You would have a very small Government department to select the staff from, and I doubt if the railways would be better than they are at present.

18316. I think the Chairman pointed out that the total mileage of the Irish railways is less than many of these in the Colonies, but we have had figures from Australia that the mileage in New South Wales and Victoria is practically the same as the Irish system, and the whole of the Colonial rails are managed by Commissioners, or in some cases by the municipality?—Yes.

Management of Colonial railways.

18317. The experience of those Colonies was that it had resulted in the greatest possible benefit to the whole of the State and to the development of the resources of the country?—It is just ten years ago since the Melbourne Commission was held, and this paragraph appeared in the *Times* of September, 1895:—"The Board of Inquiry on Victorian Railways reports that the service is disorganised, and that political influence is noticeable throughout. It recommends the complete separation of the railways from the State." That was in 1895 when they had had experience of the State railways, and that is what I would be afraid of in Ireland if you have too much connection with politics; I would be afraid of political influence.

18318. The evidence we had from Mr. Anderson the other day was directly contrary to that?—But this is a Blue Book of 1895.

State ownership of railways in Continental countries.

18319. That is ten years ago, and those difficulties have been overcome. He distinctly stated that where the Railway Commissioners were a strong body of men and doing their work well, if there were any attempts on the part of the legislature to interfere with them and put political pressure upon them, public opinion in the Colonies was so strong that it was able to back them up and prevent that pressure being exercised. Further than that, the different Governments on the Continent, Belgium, Denmark, and Holland, have all considered it better and wiser in the interests of their States to resume the management of the railways. They have given very large reductions in order to develop the industries of the country. Do you not think that amalgamation in one hand would be more likely to follow the same course and to make reductions with a view to possible development?—I do not think it is uniform on the Continent.

18320. The Italian railways have not been successful. But I think that with that exception, and perhaps Spain has not been very successful——

18321. *Chairman.*—But the Italians only got possession last year. You cannot form any opinion on the Italian case.

18322. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Though the facilities may not be so great as in this country, the experience of most Continental systems is that State ownership has enabled them to give very low rates?—I do not know about the rates.

18323. Can you imagine how under the existing system such reductions can be given?—They can be given if there is a Government guarantee against loss.

Alleged disadvantages of a system of State-subsidised railways under private ownership.

18324. Against the Government guarantee, do you not think there is a great danger that any incentive to stimulus on the part of the railway company would be diminished. At present the complaint is that they are not enterprising enough; surely that enterprise will be diminished if the railway shareholders have reason to believe that whether they get traffic or not, the Government will guarantee a subsidy?—It might have that tendency.

18325. But you do not anticipate that?—I do not anticipate that.

18326. The general experience is that where there is a guarantee, people are less diligent in looking after the undertaking, as they know they will get an income in any case?—I do not think the Irish railway boards are quite of that nature; I think they are more broad-minded than that. I think they are working for the good of the country and for the good of the shareholders at the same time.

18327. Would you be opposed to putting these railways, in the event of their being amalgamated, under this new council which has been suggested in the event of its being established?—I think owing to my position as a Government official, I would rather not touch on that.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

18328. You have apparently surveyed a great many lines in Ireland?—Yes.

18329. With regard to this list of additional railways which you say you think might be made, do you not think some of them might be made very much like the Belgian railways in a very much cheaper form; are you aware that the Belgian Government have got a very large system of subsidiary railways, something over 3,000 miles, which have cost not more than £3,300 a mile. If in Ireland the figures which you have given point to anything between £5,000 and £6,000 a mile, and the figures which Colonel Hutcheson Poë has quoted show that the expenditure comes to 70 or 80 per cent. in the case of these smaller lines in Ireland, is it not the more necessary that the first construction should be done at the cheapest possible rate in order that you may get a good return upon your money in a poor country?—Yes, as cheap as possible consistent with permanency, but I do not see how you can make a railway at £3,500 a mile.

18330. Are you familiar with the Belgian lines?—I have been over them. We have railways or tramways such, for instance, as the Clogher Valley, parts of which were made at £3,000 a mile, but it is along a public road. Then that railway to the Giant's Causeway—a portion of that was constructed at about that figure, but you would have to have special rolling stock.

18331. Is not the rolling stock which is used on the Belgian railways suitable?—Is it a narrow gauge?

18332. It is a metre gauge?—It would suit the Irish 3-foot gauge, but you would be limited to a 3-foot gauge.

18333. What is the objection?—The non-interchangeability of rolling stock; they would be only local lines.

18334. You mean that you could not put the rolling stock of a 3-foot gauge on to the 5 foot 3 inch gauge?—Except you have transferable wagons.

18335. What is the objection to the use of that very efficient arrangement which the Donegal Railway have of transferring the tops of their wagons to the Great Northern wagons at Strabane and elsewhere?—That is a very ingenious and a very useful thing, but that will not meet the case of wanting a number of wagons for fairs or special traffic; you require an excessive number of wagons.

18336. Is there not a great deal too much made of this question of transferring from one gauge to another?—I think there is with regard to the cost of it.

18337. In the North of England every day thousands of flat bottoms are transferred from the lorry which brings the stuff to the station practically to the truck; the railway takes these to the truck; to the end of their journey, when the flat bottom is again transferred to another lorry, and nothing is done except that the crane lifts this flat bottom containing from four to six tons from the truck to the lorry as the case may be, and no handling takes place beyond that. Is not that system applicable as between a narrow gauge line in Ireland and a broad gauge?—I think it is quite applicable.

18338. Has it ever been tried in Ireland?—There are some places where they have these hopper wagons. They have them on the Ballymena and Red Bay Railway, but I do not think they have tried flat bottoms in Ireland to any extent.

18339. I do not think you have studied the Belgian railways very carefully?—I admit I have not.

18340. Or you would have seen how applicable they would be to Irish requirements. In that pamphlet of yours you speak about Board of Trade regulations in connection with Irish railways; you are not satisfied as to the regulations being as easy as they might be?—I think that in regard to the light railways they might be greatly relaxed if the railways were properly constructed and heavy gradients avoided.

18341. *Mr. Acworth.*—You think you might do away with signalling at level crossing gates, telegraphic locking, and all those luxuries which the Board of Trade like to have?——

18342. *Mr. Aspinall.*—You recommended another line to Ballycotton. Is there any depth of water at Ballycotton?—Not for steamers.

18343. What is it for—fishing vessels?—Fishing vessels; there is a pier there.

18344. Was there not a railway commenced at Moville at one time?—No.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

18345. You speak of the percentage of working expenses in Ireland as compared with England and Scotland?—Yes.

18346. Do you attach any importance to that?—What I draw from that is that we cannot say that the management of Irish railways is extravagant.

18347. What I put to you is, can you draw anything from it?—That is all I draw from it.

18348. Are you entitled to draw any conclusion whatever from it—do you know how far the goods are carried on the average in Ireland and in England respectively?—They must be carried much further in England.

18349. Do you know, as a matter of fact—have you any figures?—No, I have not.

18350. Do you know how many tons are carried over the average mile in each country?—No, I have not the particulars.

18351. Do you know the average rate that is charged for carrying a mile?—No.

18352. In ignorance of all these factors, is it any use to attempt to draw any conclusion from percentages of varying ratio?—The only conclusion I draw is what I said. At first sight it would appear that Irish railways are not extravagantly managed.

18353. Would you say, for example, without knowing anything more, that the French railways, which are operated at 50 per cent. are more economically managed—would that be a reasonable conclusion?—No. I do not think it would be the same.

18354. Would you say that the American railways, which are managed at about 68 per cent., are very much more extravagantly managed—would that be a reasonable conclusion?—I think I would draw that conclusion from it.

18355. Would you really, from that sole factor—supposing the Irish railways are charging 1*d.* at present, and they cut that rate to ½*d.* except so far as traffic increases, the receipts would be halved?—Yes.

18356. And their working expenses would be the same?—Yes.

18357. They would then be managed at 124 per cent.—would that prove that they were extravagant?—It would prove that they had reduced their rates.

18358. Is it not clear that without a knowledge of the factors making up the cost the ratio of expenses to receipts percentage is not of any importance?—It is not of much importance.

18359. You have a note on your proof that with thirty trains per mile per week the receipts are £3; where is that?—It follows from the 18*d.*

18360. It is not a receipt; it is an expenditure, is it not?—The two are worked together. Taking the receipts at 18*d.*. you would have thirty trains.

18361. You are taking the case of a 100 per cent. working?—Yes.

18362. You do not draw any conclusion from it?—No.

18363. I thought perhaps it led somewhere. As to the narrow gauge question, I suppose we should all agree that the Donegal railway is a big enough thing; there would be no question of touching the gauge in Donegal now; would that be your view?—I think it can be worked as a narrow gauge system.

18364. You would have it as a little system by itself?—Yes.

18365. Take the Clogher Valley and the Cavan and Leitrim, and the Tralee and Dingle; would you be inclined to make them all broad gauge?—There is a great difficulty about these railways on the side of the road; you are bound to leave 18 feet from the edge of the railway to the opposite fence, and you cannot do that without buying land.

18366. That is only the Statute We are not concerned with the Statute; we are concerned with what you would desire to do; we may recommend that the Statute should be modified; you would be inclined to change the gauge where the lines are extensions of standard lines?—Yes.

18367. Have you any estimate of what it would cost, taking one with another?—I have not made any estimate of it; it cannot be very much.

18368. What do you suppose; £2.000 a mile?—It would not cost £2,000 a mile; probably you could lay the whole line at £1,400 a mile.

18369. It means new sleepers, but it does not mean new rails, clearly?—Not necessarily.

18370. There are not many standing works that would have to be widened?—No.

18371. You made a calculation of how a new railway might be financed; you suggest a certain tax on the land on either side?—Yes.

18372. For a certain proportion of the assumed advantage to an acre of land you suggest taking 3*d.*, or some sum of that kind?—Yes.

18373. I do not want to discuss that, but in the table you put forward an estimated profit on working of £52?—That is taking the profits per mile.

18374. What ground have you for taking that; do you think it is true that the light railways which have been made are, on the whole, the least unprofitable; one would expect that the best would get made first, of course?—The best lines were made first, yes.

18375. You think they were?—Yes.

18376. If the best lines are only just paying working expenses, what is the probability of the next best earning a profit of £1 a week?—Some of them are earning a good deal more than that.

18377. Very, very few. The average working cost is 100 per cent. of receipts as near as may be. There are only three, I believe, that are making a profit. Does it seem to you really that there is much hope of £1 a week?—I think so.

18378. Are you in that assuming that the present lines are not being worked for all they are worth?—Some lines are being worked for all they are worth, and some are not. I think there is a traffic that is greatly neglected; that is what I call the 2*d.* traffic.

18379. What do you mean by that?—Picking up people for short runs. You still see in the country markets, carts coming in to the market with whole families. These people should go by rail, and, in some cases, where they have catered for these people they have got a very substantial traffic. The Cork and Macroom line, for instance, they cater for them; they pick up people and bring them into market at a very reasonable price; but I think some of the larger lines have not done it, in some places you run ten miles without a station.

18380. Do I understand that in putting in that £1 per mile, you think that more might be done in that traffic than is done?—I do.

18381. You think receipts might be increased in that way?—I think passenger receipts might be largely increased by working the motor system.

18382. That is my view, I confess. Are you also thinking that expenditure might be diminished seriously?—I do not think so.

18383. You speak of a permanent way of 60 lbs. Do you really mean to say that you cannot do with less than 60lb. rails for this petty traffic?—I think it is very unsatisfactory to try and work with less; I have tried to maintain a line with lighter rails.

18384. What is the difference between England and America; I have travelled thousands of miles over 50 lb. rails with standard locomotives with 18 or 20 tons on the axle, and twelve-wheeled Pullman cars behind. What is the difference; is it the Irish atmosphere, or what?—I know it is very hard to keep a line in order with 40 or 50 lb. rails. We do not keep these small railways in a great state of efficiency. On the permanent way the line is not touched for the whole winter sometimes.

18385. The difference between 50 and 60 lb. rails is 20 per cent. extra on the capital cost of the rails one of the largest items?—Possibly.

18386. Surely it is worth your while to do a little more maintenance to save that capital?—My feeling

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Cost per mile of substituting standard for narrow gauge.

Possibilities of increasing the receipts of existing railways by improved methods of working.

"Pick up" or roadside passenger traffic not fully catered for.

Question of the necessary weight of rails.

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very strongly is that it is a great mistake to put in light rails.

18387. And I believe you are speaking the general opinion of Irish engineers?—I think so.

18388. That is my impression. As to motors and the local prejudice against them, has there not been in some cases exactly the same local prejudices against trains?—Before my time, yes.

18389. But do you not know the story of the coal mine in the last year or two where a free grant was offered to make a railway, but it was rejected for fear of throwing certain carters out of employment?—I have heard of it.

Popular objections to road motor services.

18390. I have not heard it contradicted. Do you think there is more fear—speaking of prejudice and not of the objection to the look of motors on the road—of taking other people's livelihood away; why should there be a stronger prejudice against motors than against trains?—Against trains on the road, do you mean?

18391. No, against any trains. A train will take away a carter's livelihood perhaps more efficiently than a motor?—Carters have found out that wherever trains have come they have not lost, because trains bring a further development to their trade in different directions.

18392. And they do not think that that would happen with motors; motors appear to them more like closer competition?—I think so.

The proposal for State-aided compulsory amalgamation.

18393. Now, I want to take you to the real gist of your evidence; you spoke of State-aided amalgamation?—It was not intended to be the gist of my evidence, but I had to answer questions.

18394. Here is my difficulty. Suppose that we agree that the Tralee and Dingle line ought to pass to the Great Southern, or, without taking names, we will say, the A and B line. The A and B line values itself at £300,000, and the Great Southern values it at £50,000; what is the compulsory process to be—to make the Great Southern take it at a valuation?—To take it at a valuation.

18395. One side must sell at a price they do not want to take, and the other must buy at a price they do not want to give?—That is done in Ireland in other commodities than railways.

18396. Is it?—Yes.

18396A. In what direction?—That is the system of purchase of land in Ireland.

18397. But there is a willing purchaser or a willing vendor in that case, is there not? Either the vendor wants to compel somebody to buy, or a purchaser wants to compel somebody to sell; is not that so?—Yes, that is so.

18398. But in this case you have two people, neither of whom is willing?—I still think a Government arbitration should be able to settle the question.

18399. Of course it can settle it, but it can only settle it to the dissatisfaction of both sides?—It is a proof that the award is fair.

Suggested apportionment of the country under a scheme of amalgamation into three systems.

18400. You speak of three companies. There are two principles on which you might have three companies. As I daresay you know, in Italy before the State purchase there were two companies, and they were arranged to meet at all the big points, to meet at Milan, and again at Florence, and again at Rome, so as to get all the competition possible. On the other hand, the French have distributed their railways on the principle of only meeting at unimportant places so as to minimise competition, and they pool the traffic at the little places; which system have you in your mind?—Competition in Ireland is controlled by the English companies, and I think that would very much divide the railways in my idea. English companies are controlling the North by the Midland Railway; the London North-Western at Dublin; and the Great Western in the South, so that they divide, I think, Ireland into three parts.

18401. How do you fit that into Irish geography; one system centreing in Belfast?—Yes; but the Great Northern Railway really centres in Dublin rather than Belfast; it is the Midland Company at Belfast.

18402. How would you apportion the country to the three companies?—I have not gone into the details.

18403. That is the difficulty; when you come to details the difficulty arises? There are certain small companies which I have in my mind which ought to be amalgamated. The Sligo and Leitrim would go to the Great Northern.

18404. Your stumbling blocks are what will go to the Northern Counties?—The Northern Counties has been taken by the Midland Railway of England.

18405. You can leave that?—Yes.

18406. What about the Dublin and Wicklow? Is that sufficiently acquired by the London and North-Western of England?—I do not know how that stands.

18407. Do you propose to amalgamate that?—Yes, I think so.

18408. Is the Great Southern to have it?—I think so.

18409. Would you leave the Midland in existence?—Sweep it out; it has been cut so much to pieces already that it is hardly able to exist.

18410. What about the line to Galway?—I could not exactly say; it seems to me to be the Great Southern.

18411. It is to be the Great Southern?—Yes.

18412. Then we come to two, with the third in the hands of the Midland Company of England?—Yes, of course, I have not gone into the details.

18413. But one has to face the question in detail when it is proposed to deal with them?—Yes.

18414. What about the English companies; are they to be left?—I think the English companies are a great blessing to Ireland; some people do not think so, but that is my view.

18415. You would not interfere with the English alliances as at present?—No, I think they are an advantage to us. I do not think we should have sufficient competition if it were not for the English companies.

18416. What about your expert on the Board of the new and enlarged Great Southern; what is to be his position; he is to represent the Government?—Yes.

18417. And what power is he to have?—I should say a consultative power; he would be able to keep the Government exactly informed how things were going on, and to express the Government opinion on different matters in regard to the working of the line.

18418. And be outvoted by nine to one?—Yes, he would be outvoted if the matter went to the vote, but I do not think a railway company is so unanimous as that.

18419. You may take it that they would be quite unanimous in desiring to get as much money as possible in return for as little done as possible; you cannot blame them for that?—They like to get the money, but they do their best with the money they get.

18420. Is your expert to be the same on both Boards, or a different one?—That is a matter of detail. I think it would be necessary to have more than one expert in Ireland; it would be better to have three, because they could consult and act in unison.

18421. Do I understand that your idea is really a Government Board?—Yes.

18422. One member of which would be entitled to sit on the Board of each company?—Yes.

18423. I do not quite understand that. Then about Moville. Moville is on the west side of Lough Foyle?—Yes.

18424. Surely there was a railway proposed to Moville within the last four or five years?—It has been twice proposed, to my knowledge, recently; I think the last was an electrical tramway proposal to run along the road.

18425. I have a distinct recollection of a railway being proposed, and being abandoned on the ground of local opposition?—There is a place called Magilligan on the east side; there was a proposal for a branch railway to Magilligan.

18426. It was abandoned on the ground that it would deprive other people of their livelihood in carrying traffic, was it not?—I do not know why it

was abandoned; there was some understanding come to—I rather think it was between the two companies.

18427. That would have given the traffic to the Northern Counties?—It would.

18428. Has your attention been called to the Rénard system?—No, only what I have seen in the papers about it. I was wondering whether our roads in Ireland would stand that.

18429. One of the difficulties with regard to motors is the weakness of the roads?—It is so.

18430. Clearly anything which gives you a maximum of two tons on an axle instead of five would give the roads a much better chance?—It would; but we have not been able so far to get the County Councils to do anything to strengthen the roads. I do not know of any instance in which they have; several proposals were made to them under Lord Pirrie's scheme.

18431. Do you think a motor service of some kind that only implies a very small capital outlay to start with is a good way of testing whether there is a serious traffic available for a railway if built?—I do not think it would be. I do not think you could judge from the traffic you would develop on a road in that way, whether a railway would pay or not. In the old time, when we had cars on the roads in Ireland, no one thought a railway would pay to Limerick, judging from what the cars carried.

18432. But that is a far cry. Do you think you must spend these £5,000 or £6,000 a mile in order to see whether there is any traffic?—That is my view.

18433. Some of the English railways think you can test the traffic with a motor vehicle first?—I do not know of any place where it could be so tested in Ireland.

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Mr. Alfred D. Price, M.Inst. C.E., Engineering Inspector, Local Government Board.

Establishment of motor services as a test of the traffic available disapproved.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

THIRTY-SECOND PUBLIC SITTING—TUESDAY, MAY 14TH, 1907.

At the Board of Trade Offices, 8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel W. HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. EDWARD GREER, B.L., J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

May 14, 1907.

Mr. Edward Greer, B.L., J.P., ex-Assistant Legal Land Commissioner.

18434. You are a member, I believe, of the Irish Bar?—I am.

18435. And a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

18436. Now, were you an Assistant Legal Land Commissioner in Ireland?—I was, for sixteen years.

18437. And in that capacity, of course, you became thoroughly acquainted with nearly the whole of Ireland?—I did.

18438. Had you any previous connection with any railway in Ireland?—Yes; I was a solicitor practising in Newry previous to that, and I promoted the Bill for the line from Newry to Armagh—that is, for the direct line of railway from Newry to Armagh—also the Newry and Greenore line, and several other schemes in connection with Newry.

18439. You are, of course, acquainted with all the railway facilities for the port of Newry?—Quite so.

Carlingford Lough improvement loans.

18440. Have you had any business relations with the improvement of the harbour?—Yes; I was concerned in the Harbour Orders for the improvement of Carlingford Lough some years ago—in 1867 and 1875. We obtained under that Order a loan from the Treasury of £80,000, which was expended in improving the sea entrance to the Lough by removing obstructions and making a deep channel 600 feet wide into the harbour. That work enables the steamers of the London and North Western Railway Company to arrive at Greenore from Holyhead at fixed hours, and at present that route is used for the transmission of a portion of the North of Ireland Mails from England.

Importance of the Port of Newry.

18441. Is Newry an old port?—One hundred years ago it was superior to Belfast. The Customs returns show that it was then a very much larger place than Belfast. I should say that that improvement of Carlingford Lough was a matter of national importance, inasmuch as it assisted in making the harbour of Carlingford Lough a Harbour of Refuge.

18442. You were saying something about the expense of the improvements of Carlingford Harbour?—That expenditure was raised by a loan from the Treasury of £80,000, and the interest and principal on that loan have been since charged upon the port of Newry. It was not a shareholders' undertaking; it was done under a Port and Harbour Order.

Principal traffic dealt with at that port.

18443. What is the principal traffic dealt with at Newry now?—The principal import traffic is coals, timber, hardware, slates, and general merchandise from England and Wales and Scotland.

Service of steamers.

18444. Is there a regular service of steamers from Newry?—There is a very fine service of steamers indeed—Holyhead from and to Greenore—and there is a direct service from the Canal at Newry to Liverpool.

Newry Canal.

18445. Is Newry at the canal?—The canal passes through the town of Newry.

18446. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is within the port?—Yes.

18447. Within the Customs port?—Yes.

Extent of the jurisdiction of Carlingford Lough Commissioners.

18448. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Is Carlingford Lough in the port of Newry?—It is. The jurisdiction of the Commissioners in the port of Newry extends to within about five miles of Greenore; then the jurisdiction of the Carlingford Lough Commissioners comes in, and they have charge of Greenore and five miles up the Lough.

18449. *Chairman.*—Do you know anything about the cross-Channel rates between England and Greenore?—No; I am not conversant with those.

18450. You do not know whether they are looked upon as favourable or unfavourable?—No; I cannot say.

18451. But I suppose the traffic to the North of Ireland which originally, according to your statement, must have passed through Newry has been diverted to other ports?—Entirely diverted from Newry; it is coming back a little now. The cross-Channel traffic of Newry and the traffic of Ulster, I may say, was formerly almost all done through the Port of Newry; it was done by means of the Ulster Canal.

18452. You are going back a great number of years?—About seventy years.

18453. Now, will you come to a later period, since the Ulster Railway was made?—Since the railways were made the traffic on the canals has, to a great extent, disappeared, and the traffic is now carried by rail from inland towns to Belfast, Newry, and to Dundalk.

18454. What I wish to bring out from you is that the traffic that used to pass through Newry, and was sent by canal into the country, subsequently came into Newry, and was sent by rail, but has since been diverted from Newry to the Port of Belfast?—Yes.

18455. So that Newry practically has lost nearly all its direct traffic by it being diverted to Belfast?—Quite so. All I wish to bring out is this, that Newry at one time was the natural port for the export of most of the agricultural produce and the manufactures of Ulster, and that has all been drawn from Newry in consequence of the development of railways, and the railway interest being very largely in the interest of the City of Belfast, the traffic has been drawn to Belfast.

18456. But when you say that the interest of the railway company was to carry the traffic to Belfast, I suppose you know that traffic—nearly the whole of the traffic carried between England and Ireland— is consigned by the senders by a particular route?—Yes, certainly.

18457. That it is not the railway companies that divert the traffic—it is the consignor who has ordered his traffic to go by a certain route?—Yes, but that is generally the result of greater facilities being given upon one route than upon another; so that to come back again, really it is the railway companies that are at the root of it all.

18458. They are at the root of all evil?—No; not the root of all evil; I should certainly not say that. But the two hang together so very closely. The consignor inquires from two railway companies which route he can send by the cheaper. One quotes it cheaper than the other, and of course he sends it that way.

18459. Do you not think that the development of Belfast as a port with greater facilities than Newry has attracted the steamers to Belfast?—Of course the steamers followed the increased advantages of the

dock. What I mean to put is this, that the Great Northern Railway Company is giving greater facilities to Belfast than to Newry, and consequently the consignors use the Port of Belfast in preference to the Port of Newry.

18460. Is there deep water at Newry?—Yes; deep water up to the canal in Newry, and twelve or fifteen feet of water in the canal, so that vessels of considerable tonnage come up to Newry.

18461. Can they lie afloat all the time?—They can lie afloat all the time, and discharge over the ship's side.

18462. But I am speaking of Newry?—They can lie there.

18463. Then they lie aground?—No, they do not lie aground.

18464. But still a vessel alongside the quay does take the ground sometimes?—Not in the canal; the canal is not tidal.

18465. At any rate, the Port of Belfast in itself offers greater facilities for steamers than the Port of Newry?—Not to Greenore.

18466. *Mr. Acworth.*—Do I understand that cross-Channel steamers come up from Liverpool to unload?—Yes.

18467. In order to get into the town they have to be locked into the mouth of the canal?—Yes.

18468. *Chairman.*—Have you any instances of what you would consider an undue preference given by the railway company to Belfast over Newry?—Yes.

18469. Could you give us one or two cases?—The line from the town of Newry to Armagh is twenty-one miles in length. That line was made by the merchants of Newry, Armagh, Clones, Monaghan, and Enniskillen and was made at a cost of £250,000. It was made mainly by its promoters for the purpose of using the port of Newry and getting up to Enniskillen and the West of Ireland. They formerly got up there by means of the Ulster Canal, and at very cheap rates, but when the Great Northern Railway Company got hold of the whole railway system those canals became gradually disused. The railway company managed to carry goods so much quicker that the canals came to be practically unused.

18470. And cheaper, I suppose?—And cheaper. Then those merchants and those interested in the district, found that they could no longer use the Port of Newry, which was the natural and most convenient port—the shortest distance and the cheapest freight across to Wales and Liverpool as compared with Belfast, and they promoted this railway, but the Committee, after hearing evidence on the Bill, which was strongly opposed by Belfast interests and by the railway company, inserted a clause in the Bill which was ruinous to the whole project. The clause was a clause binding the Newry and Armagh Direct Line, which was to join the line at Armagh and go to Enniskillen and other places, to use the station of the Great Northern Railway Company (which was then the Ulster Railway Company) at Armagh. They no sooner got us into their station than they treated the traffic in such a way by delaying it—keeping our wagons lying there—that it became impossible to work the traffic. Again, if any traffic was going beyond Armagh they insisted upon its being re-booked after coming over our twenty-one miles; if it was going to Clones, Monaghan, Enniskillen or any of those places it had to be re-booked.

18471. Before you go any further, how long was that ago?—About the year 1875 or 1876. The distance from Belfast to Armagh is thirty-six miles; the distance from Newry to Armagh is twenty-one miles. The rates charged are the following. They refused, as I have said, to enter into through booking arrangements at equal mileage rates, in respect of any traffic coming from Newry over the direct line, and which was destined for Monaghan, Clones, Enniskillen, and other stations beyond Armagh. They required all such traffic to be re-booked at Armagh and upon it they charged a ruinous preferential rate; for instance, if the rate for a ton of coals from Newry to Armagh was 2*s.* 6*d.* for the twenty-one miles of carriage, the rate for a similar ton of coals from Belfast to Armagh would be the like sum of 2*s.* 6*d.* for the carriage over thirty-six miles, whereas if a ton of coals was consigned from Belfast to Monaghan (fifty-one miles), the rate would be 4*s.*, but for a ton of coals that had come over the direct line from Newry to Armagh, and which was consigned to Monaghan, the charge from Armagh to Monaghan (sixteen miles), would be 3*s.*, thus raising the freight of Newry coals to Monaghan (thirty-seven miles) to 5*s.* 6*d.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* from Belfast to Monaghan (sixty-one miles). That very soon told its own tale. The Newry Company were practically ruined, and became insolvent, because they could send nothing beyond Armagh, and we applied to the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland to compel them to give us through booking arrangements with equal mileage rates, and the Court decided that they had no power to make such an order in respect of an Irish railway.

Newry traffic to the interior destroyed by preferential treatment to Belfast in consequence.

18472. *Mr. Acworth.*—You said this was after 1875, I understand?—I was wrong.

18473. You must have gone to the Railway Commission after 1873?—It must have been before 1870—I beg your pardon.

18474. *Chairman.*—What became of this Newry line?—The Newry and Armagh—we were obliged to sell it.

Absorption of the Newry and Armagh line by the Great Northern (Ireland) Company in 1885.

18475. Who bought it?—The Great Northern Company got possession of it.

18476. It is a very old story?—Then we went to the Railway Commission and we got relief there to a certain extent.

18477. That was before you sold it?—Oh, no; since we sold it—that was in 1885.

18478. How did you go to the Railway Commissioners after you had sold the railway—as traders?—As traders—yes. I should mention that after we failed in the Queen's Bench we brought an action at law against the Great Northern Railway Company for damage to our traffic at Armagh by delays and by their not supplying a proper stock of wagons. We brought an action for £10,000, and after that had been tried for a week in Armagh before a Special Jury, the jury gave a verdict for £3,500 to the company I represented, and it was after that, that the Great Northern Railway Company bought up the line.

18479. Is the line from Newry to the main line of the Great Northern a single line or a double line?—Newry is at a very great disadvantage in that respect, but not such a disadvantage as I assume could be dealt with by the Railway Commissioners. It is a single line of railway to a junction with the main line.

Inconvenience and loss to Newry owing to the railway from Newry to Goraghwood Junction being a single line.

18480. How many miles?—Three miles; and over that single line of railway the whole traffic of Newry has to be worked. Now, it is a double line of railway, as I am sure you know, from Belfast to Dublin. Every station, except Newry, has a double line of railway to it, but upon that particular portion of the railway there is only a single line.

18481. Have the local authorities ever made any representations to the Great Northern Railway Company as to the inconvenience of that single line?—I am not aware that they have; I do not know that they have. I saw it was stated at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in Newry that they were considering the matter with a view to bringing it before the Great Northern Railway Company; it was such a disadvantage that at that meeting it was stated that goods were going to and from Newry to Dundalk—which is the next station upon the system of the Great Northern Railway—and that it took four days for them to reach their destination, a distance of fifteen miles, whereas by going through from Belfast on the double line they got there in six hours.

Representations from the local authorities on the subject.

18482. I suppose that the case you referred to was quite exceptional; I mean that could not be a regular state of things—it would be impossible for traffic in the ordinary course to take that time to go that distance?—The strength of the chain there is limited by those three miles. It is all blocked on that three miles. Even the morning and evening mails from Greenore have to pass over that three miles

18483. Yes, but that is only twice a day?—Yes; but there is all the through traffic going from Newry, north and south and west besides.

18484. But what I want to get at is, what action have the local authorities taken to bring this under the notice of the Great Northern Railway Company?—As I have stated, I am not aware of any, except what I

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have mentioned with regard to the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Newry.

18485. Do you know anything about the rates charged by the Great Northern Railway, or the other Irish railway companies, for agricultural produce?—Well, I do not know specifically, but I have always understood they are very high. When I was sitting on the Land Commission I heard repeated complaints as to the difficulty of getting produce to markets, and, of course, it was a case made very much by the tenants that they could not market their produce; they could not get it any distance except at very high rates.

18486. But you have no specific information?—No, I have not.

Advantages of low rates for agricultural produce urged.

18487. Of course there are no two opinions about the great advantage it would be to have the low rates for agricultural produce; but you know nothing as to whether the rates are fair and reasonable, or otherwise?—I could not go into that question. I was present when a very important judgment was given by the Railway Commission a few weeks ago, if you wish to hear the opinion of Mr. Justice Madden.

18488. We have got the judgment. But, putting it generally, Newry is at present at a considerable disadvantage, firstly, in consequence of its rates, and secondly, in consequence of the single rail junction with the Great Northern?—Certainly.

Prevalence of secret rebates alleged.

18489. Questions have been mentioned several times here about rebates; do you know anything about those within your own knowledge?—Before I joined the Bar, I was a practising solicitor, and was a good deal engaged in railway practice; and I did know that rebates were given, and very largely given, and I believe are very largely given still; but it is a system that is very difficult of detection.

18490. Of course you are thoroughly acquainted with the procedure in the Railway Commission Court?—Yes.

18491. Do you think that is a Court that is likely to find favour with the traders of Ireland for redressing any grievances?—I do not think it is; I think it is a very fair Court as it is conducted, but it is a very expensive Court; and I think that the evils it is intended to redress could be much more simply dealt with than by the machinery of the present Court.

Suggestion that the County Courts should take the place of the Railway and Canal Commission to hear traders' complaints.

18492. As a Barrister, perhaps you could give us some idea as to what would be a model court for hearing grievances between traders and the companies?—I think, in the first instance, the court should be a local court, as near the *locus in quo* of the complaint as possible; and I would give jurisdiction to the County Court judge to deal with these cases. At present the County Court judge can deal with appeals on income tax and appeals on rating; and I do not see why he should not deal with appeals on a business matter like this. It is, after all, only a business matter, and probably it would be advisable to give a further appeal to a judge of assize.

18493. From the decision of the County Court Judge?—Yes, from the decision of the County Court judge; it would cost but a very few pounds more

18494. Have you heard what it cost the Dublin Port and Harbour Board in their last case before the Railway Commissioners Court?—I have not heard it directly, except as legal gossip. From the number of eminent men engaged in the case, it must have cost a great deal of money.

18495. Then, your idea is that disputes between traders and railway companies could be cheaply adjusted by the County Court judges?—Certainly.

18496. And that that would be a satisfactory tribunal to the traders?—It would be very satisfactory to the traders, because they would have their witnesses almost on the spot. Instead of taking them to Dublin and disrupting their business, they would have all their witnesses at hand; and I should say that an inquiry before a County Court judge would not last as many hours as it would last days in Dublin.

18497. Would not the same kind of thing occur before the County Court judge as before the Railway Commissioners. The railway companies would be represented by Counsel; how would the traders be represented?—I should say the traders would be represented by Counsel too.

18498. Then, where would be the saving of expense? The proceedings in a County Court are almost always very much less expensive; there is no doubt about that. A case can be tried in a County Court for probably a tenth the cost it could be tried in Dublin. I do not see why it should not apply to an inquiry about a business matter of this kind.

18499. The County Court judge's procedure is, I suppose, practically the same as in England?—Yes, very much the same; they hold their courts four times a year, probably in four places in the county.

18500. Have you anything to say about the light railways that are guaranteed by the Treasury?—Some of them are in a very bad way; for instance the Clogher Valley Line, and the Cavan and Leitrim Line. The Cavan and Leitrim Railway absorbs 94 per cent. of its working expenses; and within a period of nineteen years it has involved the ratepayers in a total liability of £77,000. The Clogher Valley Line is worked at a cost of 105 per cent.

18501. I have reason to believe there are some negotiations going on between the Great Northern and the Clogher Valley.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—We are not aware of that here.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It was in the newspaper the other day in connection with the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—There is no one representing the Great Northern Company here, and we do not know of it.

18502. *Chairman.*—Of course you know that all those railways, though worked at 90 per cent., are a great advantage to the public in the neighbourhood, that is, the light railways that are costing so much?—Yes.

18503. And they tend to develop industries that never would have been developed, except for that mode of communication?—No doubt.

18504. Then, in that respect they are of great advantage to the district?—They are a great advantage to the district; but the loss on the working of them falls on a great many people who do not derive any benefit.

18505. I suppose that is so; but that was the bargain made at the time, was it not?—It was. I do not think there will be any more of them made on Guarantees.

18506. Under the same arrangement?—We could not get a county in Ireland to guarantee a light railway now. If you were promoting a Bill to-morrow, you could not get a guarantee.

18507. You began by stating that you were generally acquainted with the various districts in Ireland. I suppose you are aware that there are many districts which would be benefited to a great extent if railway communication existed?—Certainly.

18508. And it would tend to the prosperity of those particular districts if railway communication could be given?—There is no question about it.

18509. I suppose you will agree that private enterprise could not supply the capital for giving those railways?—Not in Ireland.

18510. I am speaking of those districts in Ireland that now have no railway communication?—It is impossible.

18511. We had evidence yesterday as to several such districts; would you be in favour of the State finding the money for those railways?—I would.

18512. Are you in favour of the State purchasing the Irish railways?—I am.

18513. You have considered this subject?—I have, fully.

18514. It is not a new subject to you?—Not at all.

18515. Do you think that the interests of Ireland would be promoted by the railways becoming the property of the State?—I have not the slightest doubt about it.

18516. Do you agree that if the State had the railways considerable employment would be given in Ireland in the manufacture of rolling stock?—Yes, there would—for instance, take Dundalk. Dundalk is a repairing depot for the Great Northern Railway Company; there are very extensive works there, and the population of Dundalk has increased very considerably since the establishment of these works. I am told, and I have no reason to doubt, that the Great Northern Railway Company

disburse as much as £2,000 a week in wages in that town, which is a town of, I think, 11,000 inhabitants at present; they disburse upwards of £100,000 a year among their employees; they manufacture carriages and wagons, and I am not sure that they do not manufacture some of their engines. All that has developed the neighbourhood; and Dundalk at the present time, from having been a very stagnant town indeed, is now one of the most advancing towns in prosperity of the small towns in Ireland.

18517. Of course the small railways have to import their engines, wagons, and so on?—The small railways cannot do anything else, of course.

18518. As a Barrister, you know that there is a power under some old Act for the Government to take over the Railways. Do you know anything about the Act of 1844?—Yes.

18519. Do you remember it?—No, I do not, only as a matter of history; I have never read it.

18520. But you are clearly of opinion, after consideration, that the interests of Ireland would be promoted by the railways becoming the property of the State?—I am in favour of the State acquisition of the railways in Ireland, and of the placing of the entire system under a representative Council of control, associated with elected representative members representing the various Chambers of Commerce and the Port and Harbour Boards, together with members to be nominated by the Board of Trade, the Board of Works and other Departments connected with the advance of Imperial funds to Ireland.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

18521. You spoke, I think as to the action of the Great Northern having been detrimental to the interests of the Port of Newry; and you said that at the time that the Newry and Armagh Railway was constructed, that railway in conjunction with the canal, would have the effect of drawing, and was designed to draw, traffic from Clones, Monaghan, Enniskillen, and even so far as Sligo, to the Port of Newry; is that so?—Quite so.

18522. At the same time, you complain now that the result of the action of the Great Northern has been to divert to Belfast traffic which should have gone to Newry?—Yes.

18523. But surely is it not rather inconsistent of you to complain of that when your action was designed, in the first instance, to draw traffic from Sligo? Would not that have been the natural outlet for a good deal of traffic you were attempting to draw to your port?—I do not think I mentioned Sligo—Sligo is rather out of the range. I do not think I went beyond Enniskillen. I think Sligo is going too far.

18524. It occurred to me that a great deal of the traffic which you were wishing to draw to Newry would have found its natural outlet at Sligo, and that, just on the same basis as you say certain traffic, whose natural outlet would have been Newry, has been diverted to Belfast, so in the same way the natural outlet of much of this traffic that has come to Newry would have been the port of Sligo?—Clearly. What was in my mind was Enniskillen.

18525. But even as regards Enniskillen, would not Sligo be practically nearer to Enniskillen than Newry?—Yes, it is; undoubtedly; but not for cross-Channel traffic to and from England and Wales.

18526. We have had evidence from gentlemen interested in the port of Sligo complaining of the natural traffic of the port of Sligo being diverted to the port of Derry, and so on; and Enniskillen, amongst other places, was mentioned as one where the traffic was being diverted from the port of Sligo. My only point was, that if you complain of Belfast and the Great Northern injuring your traffic, I think the Sligo people are equally justified in complaining of your injuring their traffic?—I did not mean to go as far as Sligo. Enniskillen was more in my mind. When I was a boy the whole coach traffic from Enniskillen to Dublin was all done through Newry—the mail coaches ran from Enniskillen through Newry to Dublin.

18527. May I take it, then, that while you disclaim any intention of diverting traffic from its natural channel, you consider that under a system such as at present exists, under which the railway systems are divided into the Great Northern, we will say in the interests of Belfast, the Great Southern and Western, in the interests of the port of Dublin, and the Midland, the tendency naturally must be to divert traffic to two or three large centres at the expense of a number of smaller ones?—That is my point.

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18528. And, generally, you would favour every port in Ireland, if capable of developing traffic, getting the full benefit of its geographical position?—That is all I meant to insist upon. I think, with regard to the traffic of the whole country, if the lines were in the hands of a general Council and the traffic were allowed to flow in its natural channels, it would be very much better for the country. I only advocate equal mileage rates for all ports.

Equal mileage rates for all ports advocated.

18529. Assuming the result of this Commission is to recommend that, at any rate, the smaller railways should be concentrated and amalgamated and drawn into the bigger ones, would not that still further tend to keep all traffic in the direction of the large centres if you do away with the small companies which at present exist and confine yourself to two or three large main traffic routes?—Well, taking the larger ports of Ireland on the east coast—Londonderry, Belfast, Dundalk, Drogheda, Greenore, and Newry, I do not know of any other ports, and those are all the natural ports for that traffic.

18530. What I meant to convey was, that until you could put the management of the railways into one hand—no matter whether into the hands of a Board of Directors, with some kind of Government supervision, or into those of the State or some national authority—until you put them into one hand there will be naturally a tendency to draw traffic over the length of line which gives the greatest return?—That is exactly what I complain of as regards Newry—that the Great Northern Railway will take goods from Enniskillen down to the port of Belfast, and give greater facilities to the port of Belfast than to the port of Newry, although their own line runs into the port of Newry, because they get a longer haulage. They are bound in the interests of their shareholders to do so.

18531. And under existing circumstances, and so long as the present system of private ownership is continued, such a policy must be pursued. The only remedy then is, as you consider, to put the whole of the railways into the hands of some central authority?—And let the traffic go through its natural centres.

Constitution of the controlling authority of the railways if State-owned.

18532. Would you be in favour of that authority being a direct State authority—by which I mean under the direct supervision and control of the Imperial Parliament—or would you advocate its being in the hands of some responsible Irish authority?—An Irish authority, certainly.

18533 In the event of the Bill now before Parliament becoming law, and an authority such as you have foreshadowed being established, would you consider that when the handing over a number of very important Departments to this Council probably no more important function could be assigned to it than the control of the railways and other communications of the country?—I think the management of the railways of Ireland would be essentially a work for them to do.

The excessive cost of procedure in the Railway and Canal Commission Court a serious tax on litigants.

18534. You spoke of the judgment which was recently delivered by the Railway and Canal Commission, and of the great expense which was probably involved by that Commission. I think you said you could not give any forecast of what that expense would be, but I happened to look over the list of counsel, and I saw that one of the law officers of the Crown—the Solicitor-General, I think—and an array of twelve King's counsel, and I think eight lesser lights of the legal profession, were engaged in the litigation, and I think one can form some idea of what the cost of that must have been, lasting, as it did, over three or four weeks.

Chairman.—I have a letter from Mr. Field giving the cost to the Dublin authorities.

Recent case by Port and Docks Board instanced. (See Appendix No. 25)

Mr. Shanahan.—There is a letter from Mr. Field. I think he said £3,000. The letter is not here.

18535. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I should have thought it would have been more. At all events, with such an array of legal gentlemen the expense must have been enormous?—Certainly.

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18536. And I take it to be your view that with the present legal system, expense of that kind must be incurred whenever traders or the public wish to get any redress of grievances under which they suffer?—Under the present system.

18537. Under a unified system, such as we are contemplating, where the control would be in the hands of a central body, that expense would disappear?—Yes; and my idea would be that the proceedings before the County Court judge would be initiated by a short petition, stating the grievance, and the solicitor, or counsel instructed by the solicitor, would deal with the whole thing. Of course, the procedure would be greatly simplified if the railways of Ireland were in the hands of one authority, and if there were rules and regulations laid down it would simplify the proceedings.

The advantages expected from a unified State system of railways

18538. There would be hardly any recourse to litigation, I suppose?—Very little.

18539 I suppose you also consider that for the future prosperity of Ireland, in order that some encouragement and some stimulus may be given to the agricultural industry, and also to such manufacturing industries as may be established, and which we hope to establish, it is absolutely essential that the administration of the railways should be of an enterprising nature, and should be directed to develop those industries by the only means by which they can be developed, and that is, by a material reduction in the rates and charges which are at present in force?—I have a very strong opinion upon that subject; and I believe if something is not done, and done very soon, in that direction, the country will be face to face with a very serious financial crisis. It is becoming a question already of whether the rent instalments will be ultimately paid. The counties are beginning to cry out, and it is a matter of notoriety that a great deal of the supplemental grants they have hitherto had will have to be applied in making good the defalcations in rent instalments.

18540. I quite agree. The main point of a unified State system would be to bring about such reductions as would improve the position of those agricultural tenants, of whom you are now speaking?—Certainly.

18541. Such development cannot be given by the existing system of private ownership?—I think it is hopeless to look for that.

18542. They are restricted from making experimental reductions by legislation introduced in the interest of the public?—The railway companies are making money for their shareholders; the Railway Council would make money for the people of the country.

Excessive cost of the construction of existing light railways.

18543. To go to another point. You spoke of light railways and the great cost involved in their construction. Seeing that something like £1,500,000 has been given in the last seventeen years in the way of free grants, and that the baronies are responsible for another million and a quarter, towards which the Treasury give a certain contribution, does it not occur to you that either the cost of construction of those light railways must have been very largely in excess of what it should have been or that the traffic to be served by those light railways was of such a small and unimportant character, so to speak, that a much less expensive system of railway communication would have been not only justified, but would have been absolutely essential if economic conditions are to be considered at all?—I think the lines were constructed quite too expensively. Those lines should not have cost more than £4,000 a mile, instead of which they cost up to £8,000 and £10,000 a mile. That line you have spoken of—the Newry and Armagh line—cost something like £15,000 a mile.

18544. You are of opinion that the lines have cost a great deal more than they should have done. Might I ask you, having regard to the fact that the districts through which they pass could not possibly develop for many years, is it not manifest that they did not require so expensive a line, and that a simpler line would have answered all the purposes?—A line of about £2,000 a mile would have been all that was necessary or justifiable. Certainly, circumstances have shown that the higher-priced line was not justified.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

18545. Supposing that you had the arrangement in force which you seem to desire of having a certain area allocated to the Port of Newry, Belfast would, of course, have to have an area allocated to that port?—I would not allocate any area. I would like to let the merchant in Enniskillen or the merchant in Monaghan use either the Port of Belfast or the Port of Newry, whichever suited him best.

18546. But let us take, say, twenty miles from Belfast, twenty miles from Newry, twenty miles from Dundalk, twenty miles from Drogheda—suppose the rates to those ports were all equal?—That is for the twenty miles.

18547. For the twenty miles, yes. Would you not even then have the difficulty that some of these ports have not the same natural advantages that you have at Belfast, where you have deep water at any state of the tide, and where, therefore, you have a continuous flow of steamers coming and going any time of the day, giving facilities which cannot be given at your Port of Newry, because it is tidal, or at Dundalk, because it is tidal, or at Drogheda, because it is tidal, and that, therefore, you will attract the merchants by the facilities that exist for transit quite irrespective of the question of the railway rate?—I should be very well satisfied, if I were a merchant, if you gave me twenty miles from Newry, and twenty miles from Belfast. I would be perfectly satisfied. I would then put the Port of Newry in competition with the Port of Belfast, and for cross-Channel traffic Newry would get it.

18548. Take a port like Belfast. You have steamers going from Belfast direct to Liverpool?—Yes.

18549. Where there is no question of tide. You have them going direct to Fleetwood, and direct to Scotland, and that creates a facility which is very, very attractive to the merchant?—I will answer that. I think you are assuming that the facilities for some years going in and out of Newry, are not equal to Belfast.

18550. Quite so; because it is tidal?—They are equal. A steamer can come in and can come right up to the town of Newry, just as into Belfast, at any time of the tide.

18551. Drawing what depth of water?—About fifteen feet.

18552. Can she get right up into the port?—Right up into the canal.

18553. She cannot get into the canal at any state of the tide?—She can, when drawing fifteen feet, get into the locks.

18554. Are you quite sure?—Quite sure, because they come in and out at stated hours.

18555. Take the case of the Dundalk and Newry Steamship Company. They have got one steamer—the Dundalk, and they have some smaller steamers. Where are those smaller steamers run to? Are not the smaller steamers run to Newry, and the larger steamer to Dundalk?—Because larger steamers cannot go up to the quay at Newry, but the larger steamers go to the canal and go in and out at all times of the tide. Take the Belfast steamer going to Liverpool. Belfast is not by any means so direct a port for Liverpool as Newry is.

18556. But surely you must generally agree that the great facilities of these deep water conditions will attract traffic irrespective, to a certain extent, of railways?—Newry is not labouring under that disadvantage as a port at all, because Newry has got Greenore, where the London and North Western steamers go in and out at all tides. They start every night at eight o'clock.

18557. The London and North Western start from Greenore, where they have deep water at any state of the tide. Then you look upon the London and North Western steamers as a great advantage to that part of Ireland?—They have been a great advantage.

18558. So you are not complaining of the Greenore boats?—Not at all; they are carrying the mails to Belfast now by Greenore.

18559. Greenore is an illustration of my point that you have deep water at any state of the tide, and the coming and going of those steamers is absolutely regular, and, no doubt, has taken away from the Port of Newry some of the traffic which used to go in the smaller steamers from that port?—Well, it has not taken much from Newry, but it has taken from another place between Greenore and Newry,

namely, Warrenpoint, where there used to be a large fleet of tidal steamers, but these have all disappeared, and smaller steamers have taken their place and go up to Newry.

18560. It all comes back to deep water being an advantage?—Yes.

18561. Speaking of the difficulty you experienced on the Newry and Goraghwood section of line because it is a single line, can you tell me what tonnage passed over that?—I cannot say; but a good deal of the trade must be done over it, because it is the only way into Newry.

18562. How could the local courts you spoke of decide matters of rates with regard to this particular district around Newry without inflicting injustice upon somebody out in Donegal, where the circumstances were somewhat similar in character? How could you permit local courts spread over the country to deal with questions affecting the general policy of the railways?—Of course, if the question was one that affected two or three counties, and the traders of two or three counties, there would be something in that.

18563. Does not that point to having some skilled authority to whom you can go?—Well, if you had this great central railway authority, this Railway Council, they could send representatives down to investigate, and take evidence.

18564. If there were a Railway Council, you would be satisfied that that body would be efficient for the purpose?—I would; I think they would take the place of the County Court judge.

18565. And that would have the effect of giving uniformity of decision?—It would have that great advantage.

18566. You have expressed the hope that if these railways were taken over by the Government, and were worked for the benefit of the State, Irish industries would improve materially. Of course, that would not happen until the lapse of a certain period of time. How soon do you suppose that Ireland would begin to respond to the advantages which you suppose would then exist by reason of greater railway facilities and lower railway rates?—I should say ten years.

18567. And during that period of ten years there will be great difficulty in carrying on the railways for the State at a profit?—Well, of course, some financial arrangement would have to be made to bridge over that period.

18568 That difficulty would have to be recognised?—Certainly.

18569. But you do hope that after a period of ten years a considerable change would take place?—I do.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

18570. You spoke of this single line. Do you really think that a single line three miles long is a handicap to a place of 15,000 people?—I do, where it is a port, and where vessels are going in and out, and discharging cargoes and coal and wishing to get away again.

18571. You know Plymouth, I suppose—at any rate, by name?—I do.

18572. You would admit, I take it, that Newry is not likely to be as important as Plymouth for some time to come?—I wish it was.

18573. Do you know that last year the Great Western had about three miles of single line to get to Plymouth?—I was not aware.

18574. Do you know that until a few years ago on the Great Western there were twenty or thirty miles of single line to get to Plymouth?—No, I did not know that.

18575. Does that change your view?—Not very much.

18576. If a rich company can get to a place like Plymouth with thirty miles of single line, do you really think three miles of single line is necessarily a great handicap to Newry?—Might I ask you whether there are any other towns near Plymouth circumstanced as Belfast is with regard to Newry.

18577. We are talking not about competition, but about the inconvenience of a single line, that is all?—Well, I think the inconvenience of a single line of three miles, if it is connected with a system of seventy or eighty miles from Greenore to Belfast, is almost too evident to admit of argument. Why, a man can send goods from Belfast to Dundalk and get his goods into Dundalk in six hours, while another man sending goods from Newry to Dundalk cannot get them there in less than four days.

18578. I do not want to argue that at all. I want to ask you to consider whether you are prepared to maintain that three miles of single line is such a great obstacle as you have suggested?—I think it is a very great obstacle.

18579. The London and North Western, by-the-bye, is behind Newry?—Yes.

18580 The North Western has got to get through these three miles?—Yes.

18581. The North Western is not very poor?—I should say not.

The disadvantage of the single line from Newry to Goraghwood and its effect on London and North-Western Railway traffic.

18582. If the North Western thought it a serious obstacle, do you not think they would find means of getting it doubled?—I do not know what their relations with the Great Northern are.

18583. They have an interest in getting to and from Greenore?—They have.

18584. If they thought this was a block of so much importance, would they not have done something?—I dare say they would.

18585. That is what it seems to me. As I gather, what you really want is State management?—Yes.

18586. Of course, the State would not allow itself to be taken into the County Court, would it? The State would lay down its rules?—When you say State management, might I ask you to define what you mean?

The control of the railways in Ireland by a public representative authority advocated.

18587. I understood it was to be managed by a public body?—Yes, that is what I meant. A Public Representative Council.

18588. Which would have statutory authority to levy certain rates?—Certainly.

18589. And would levy them if it thought proper?—Quite so.

Litigation between traders and the railway authority under public control improbable.

18590. You could not take them into the County Court on that, could you? You could not take the Chancellor of the Exchequer into the County Court on the Income Tax or the Tea Tax, which would be the same thing, would it not? If your view prevails, we need not talk about the County Court—that is what I am trying to get at?—If the public Council is established, then I do not think there is any necessity for going to the County Court at all.

18591. That is just what I understood you to mean. You were suggesting that the County Court should be resorted to if private management continued?—Yes.

18592. Then I will not ask you about that, if you do not want to have it?—I very much prefer to have a public authority.

18593. In that case resort to the County Court would not be necessary?—Certainly not.

18594. Now, on that, I want you to tell me this. I think I understood you to tell Mr. Aspinall that supposing the reductions you desire were made, there would be a difficulty about money for the first few years until the traffic grew?—Quite so.

18595. Where is the money to come from?—It must come from the State.

The loss involved by rate reductions in the event of State purchase to be borne by the Treasury.

18596. What do you mean by the State now?—From the Treasury of England.

18597. From the Treasury of England?—Yes.

18598. That is your view. I gather that you could not expect Ireland to pay part out of the rates?—Ireland could not possibly pay; it could no more pay for that than it could have found the money for land purchase, which the Treasury has done.

18599. I only want to get your view. The position is that you think the railways ought to be handed over to Irish management, and that the necessary money to fill up the deficit, at the start at any rate, ought to be found by England?—Yes.

Constitution of the Council of Management.

18600. Would the Treasury have any control?—I suggested that—that the Board of Trade, the Board of Works, or whatever Boards were necessary, should appoint their representatives upon this Council.

18601. A certain number?—A certain number.

18602. Perhaps it would be 25 per cent. as suggested in Mr. Birrell's Bill?—Quite so—they would be fully represented.

18603. Then they would not be able to stop a reduction of rates. A 25 per cent. representation could not control?—It could not control in an assembly of 100.

18604. The interest of the other seventy-five would clearly be reduction of rates, would it not?—Certainly—not a ruinous reduction of rates, but a fair reduction.

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18605. A fair reduction at the expense of the Treasury as represented by the minority?—Well, I would not say at the expense, because that would be a dishonest thing to do.

Constitution of the Council of Management.

18606. I do not think it is in the least dishonest, but that is the proposal, is it not?—The proposal is, that of the 100, twenty-five should represent the interest of the bodies that were advancing and have control of the funds, and the other seventy-five should represent the traders and persons interested in the general development of the trade of the country and the prosperity of the country.

18607. By means of lower rates?—Whatever it may be.

18608. We may assume that the 75 per cent. would outvote the twenty-five?—That might or might not be.

18609. Would you propose to give the 75 per cent. power to vote reductions to any extent they thought desirable in the interest of the development of Irish trade?—That is rather a difficult question. If you gave them power to do it, and they had absolute power to do it, they might ruin the whole thing.

18610. No, the lower the rates were to be, the better for Ireland. It would be much better for Ireland if they had no railway rates to pay at all, clearly?—It would be better, of course, but how are you to bring that about?

Treasury control in the case of rate reductions.

18611. The Irish representatives on the Council would naturally vote for it?—They would, I suppose.

18612. Are you proposing to put a stop anywhere?—Of course, there must be a check upon it at some point or other.

18613. I want you to tell me what you suggest?—That I have not considered.

18614. It is a serious point for those of us who do not live in Ireland, is it not?—I can scarcely follow you in that, because if the rates were reduced, if the Board were so foolish——

18615. But surely they would be very wise, would they not? If the Board is appointed——?—Pardon me, I do not quite see it, because they first get the money to purchase the railways, and they get that from the Treasury of England; they then proceed to reduce the rates so low that it would not pay the interest and I think that would be a very dishonest thing.

18616. I follow your point, though I cannot myself see that it is dishonest. Of course if there is a bargain that you would not reduce below a certain point, then it might be dishonest to break your bargain?—I think it is assuming rather much.

Suggested arrangement for preventing excessive reductions with consequent loss of revenue required for payment of interest.

18617. Let me turn it round then. Is your point that the Council ought not to be allowed—ought not to have power, we will put it—to reduce the rates below the point at which they paid interest on the purchase money?—Some such arrangement would provide a safeguard.

18618. You think there ought to be a limit of that kind?—That would be reasonable.

18619. Supposing that were put into a Bill, do you think there would be any money available to reduce rates—any serious money?—You mean that the Treasury, under those circumstances, would not advance the money?

18620. No, I mean this. Assume that the Irish railways were bought by the State for £40,000,000, or any other sum you like to take, would you be able to get out of them more than enough net revenue to pay the interest on the £40,000,000?—That is a question of calculation altogether. I cannot say what has been estimated it would take per annum to pay, say, 4 per cent. upon £40,000,000.

18621. We can easily do that—it is £1,600,000, is it not?—Yes.

18622. Have you gone into it financially?—No, I have not.

The question of the manufacture of railway rolling stock in Ireland.

18623. Then I will not ask you any more about that. Just one other thing. The manufacture of rolling stock you laid stress on; I think you said the Great Northern manufacture it practically all at Dundalk?—Yes.

18624. So that is in Ireland already?—Yes.

18625. The Great Southern manufacture, also, at Inchicore?—Yes.

18626. Do not the Midland Company manufacture most of theirs?—I am not aware of it.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—Not all, but largely.

18627. *Mr. Acworth.*—The Great Northern and the Great Southern are a very large part of the Irish railways?—Yes.

18628. You have that already?—Yes.

18629. So that really all the additional manufacture wanted is for the little railways—the bulk of it is already in Ireland?—So it appears.

18630. Do you know what the Northern Counties do? They have works at Belfast—you do not know whether they manufacture?—I am not sure.

18631. Anyway, the Great Northern and Great Southern form the bulk of the railways of Ireland?—Yes.

18632. *Mr. Aspinall.*—I should just like to ask a question upon that. With regard to the manufacture of rolling stock, say, at Dundalk, is there not an impression that any additional rolling stock which is required would bring in a very large amount of money to the artisans of Ireland. Take wagons, for instance?—That is the way I put the case of Dundalk. There is a sum of £2,000 a week spent amongst the working population of Dundalk, and it has had the effect of increasing the population of the town very considerably during the last twenty years.

18633. I only want to ask you how far that is true. According to the Board of Trade Returns, there are about 19,633 wagons owned by all the companies. Now, I think it is generally accepted that from the rolling stock in Ireland the number that you would require to renew in a year—to make new wagons instead of those that are worn out—would be about 785 a year. Now, the whole of the wages that you can spend in Ireland upon a wagon does not amount on the average, to more than £5 a wagon, so that the total amount that you could possibly retain in the country, having regard to the fact that the materials must be purchased out of the country, would be something under £4,000 a year?—Yes.

18634. So that it is rather a smaller matter than it sometimes talked about.

18635. *Chairman.*—You are only dealing with renewals, Mr. Aspinall. What about repairs?

18636. *Mr. Aspinall.*—I was just coming to that. When you come to the question of repairs, which are practically all done in Ireland, you have to spend something like £4 per wagon per annum on a total of 19,633 wagons. Therefore, the question of repairs is of immense importance, while the question of renewals, or new stock, is not of such great importance?—So it would appear from those figures, but whatever it is, the country would have the benefit of it. I could get no other figures that I thought afforded an example of what I wished to convey better than Dundalk. There £100,000 a year is spent in the way I have said, and that, in a town like Dundalk, is a very large thing, and within the last twenty years the prosperity of Dundalk has improved immensely, and I think it is due greatly to this cause that I have mentioned.

18637. Practically all the repairs are done, you know, in Ireland—at Inchicore (the Great Southern and Western), at Dundalk (the Great Northern), at Belfast for the Northern Counties, and at Grand Canal-street for the Dublin and Wicklow. Therefore, as repairs are already dealt with in Ireland, the question of renewals of wagons is of less importance than it is sometimes considered to be.

Cross-examined by Mr. VESEY KNOX, K.C.

18638. You know Mr. Thomas Irwin, of Newry?—Yes.

18639. You know he is Chairman of the Newry Port and Harbour Trust?—Yes.

18640. I do not know whether your attention was called to the evidence he gave before this Commission at page 295 of the Minutes. He said that the Harbour Trust had sent out circulars asking the traders whether they had any grievances, and that they could find no grievances in Newry. Did you know that?—No.

18641. You are not yourself in trade, I think?—No.

18642. The actual people who are in trade in Newry have no grievances?—The evidence I have given upon that subject is based upon reports that I took out of the newspapers of meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies in Newry.

18643. What bodies? Mr. Irwin is also a member of the Chamber of Commerce?—This is a meeting of

the Chamber of Commerce of the 2nd of May, 1907. If you wish it, I will read it for you, it is very short.

18644. Does it go beyond what you said just now?—It states what their grievances are.

18645. Are there any grievances in it except the two—the occasional shortage of rolling stock and this point about the single line?—The point about the single line is one point, and the point about the Dundalk people getting an advantage over Newry in consequence of the single line is another point.

18646. In consequence of the single line?—Yes. The Chairman says here that "he did not know how far other people had suffered, but so far as the firm which he was connected with was concerned, they had a great deal of trouble ever since Christmas, owing to the small number of wagons at the railway stations. They had sent stuff over to the railway, and it had to lie at the station three or four days before sufficient wagons were obtained to take it away. A number of logs for Belfast were lying at the station for three days before they could get a wagon to put them in, and the same applied to their box trade. All their customers were complaining that they could not get stuff delivered as quickly as they could from Belfast, and he would like to hear what the other members present had to say on the subject." It was the Chairman who said that.

18647. This has no reference at all to grievances—there was the question of wagons and the single line?—And the single line.

18648. Now, on the single line question, do you know the Great Northern have promised to double that line?—No; I am very glad to hear it.

18649. Evidence of that was given by Mr. Irwin when he gave evidence before the Commission?—That does not appear by this report.

18650. That is a newspaper report, I suppose?—I am sure it is an accurate report.

18651. How can you be certain it is accurate?—A newspaper has no object in publishing an inaccurate report upon a subject of that kind. It is very easily checked.

18652. Here was the gentleman who is Chairman of this Port and Harbour Board coming here and stating that the only real grievance they had was this difficulty of the single line, and he said that this railway company had promised to remove that for them. You yourself have no actual experience of the trade of the place at all?—No; I am a practising barrister.

18653. I think the grievance of rates that Newry used to suffer from, and about which some controversy arose, was after the amalgamation with the Great Northern, which took place about 1874, I think, speaking from recollection?—I think so.

18654. After that amalgamation there was some little difficulty in adjusting rates, as there very often is after an amalgamation, and there was a case before the Railway Commission about it?—Yes.

18655. That was thirty years ago. Now things have settled down, and there is no difficulty about rates at all?—I would not follow you in that; I believe they have a very great grievance.

18656. There was none they could find to bring before this Commission. Mr. Irwin said there were some complaints, but upon investigation it was found that they had no basis. That is Question 9763?—Well, in this report, one gentleman says——

18657. I do not want that—I mean if it is not anything you know yourself.

Chairman.—I do not think Mr. Greer has given any evidence about this at all.

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18658. *Mr. Vesey Knox*, K.C.—Very well. Now, on the question of shops, do you know that the Great Southern, in addition to their shops at Inchicore, have shops at Limerick?—No, I do not.

18659. Wagon and repairing shops at Limerick?—I am not here giving evidence objecting to the Great Northern Railway Company having works at Dundalk, or to the Great Southern and Western having works at Inchicore. I would rather see those works increased ten times. I have no objection to them.

Extent of rolling stock repairs and renewals in Ireland.

18660. I quite appreciate that; but I do not know whether you know the extent to which Irish railways have gone in this direction to support local industry. Do you know that even a small railway like the Belfast and County Down has got repairing shops?—It has got repairing shops, but I do not think they make any wagons.

18661. They do not make engines, but they make all their wagons and carriages. Do you know that even the Cork and Bandon make their carriages and wagons, too?—I do not.

18662. Do you know that even the West Clare has just turned out a very fine train?—Well, I was only once on the West Clare, and certainly there was room for great improvement.

18663. That is some time ago, I suppose?—Yes.

18664. On the question of uniformity, I know you are very familiar with the legal practice in Ireland, and I do not know whether I might get this from you. It is the law in Ireland that there is an appeal on questions of fact as well as of law from the County Court judge—it differs from England in that respect?—Yes.

18665. And there are sometimes as many as ninety civil bill appeals, as they are called, to be heard at one assize town?—I am sorry to say that is not my experience.

Suitability of the County Courts to deal with disputed railway matters.

18666. Perhaps you do not go to Tyrone—but there are some cases?—But you know Tyrone is a very exceptional county.

18667. There are a large number of civil bill appeals to be heard at each assize?—Not very large, about two days in each assize town is sufficient to dispose of them, except in the city of Belfast.

18668. The judges would get through them very expeditiously?—In from one to two days.

18669. Do you think all those questions of railway management involving the examination of experts could be sandwiched in among all these civil bill appeals?—I do not think it is such a complicated question at all. I think any of our Irish judges would deal with these cases very expeditiously. The assizes in most of our towns—take the North-East Circuit—only last two days, and they only last three days in Armagh. There would be very little difficulty in adding one day more on to those.

18670. Can you tell me this: is there any appeal from a judge of assize?—No appeal

18671. You would not give an appeal to the Court of Appeal?—No.

18672. You have an appeal, of course, to the Court of Appeal in the case of a running-down action, where, perhaps, there are damages of £50. That case can be taken to the House of Lords?—Yes.

Mr. Robert M. D. Sanders, J.P., examined by the Chairman.

18673. You are a J.P., and you live at Charleville, County Cork?—Yes. I was a member of the Grand Jury of County Cork for many years, and I had in that county, which is the largest county in Ireland, a great deal of railway business to consider in connection with the light railways, and we had specially brought before us railway schemes which it was our duty to consider under the Railways Acts.

18674. That was before County Councils were established?—Yes.

18675. Do you farm any land yourself?—Yes, I farm a considerable amount of land. I have a good deal of property round Charleville.

18676. Have you been agent for other properties?—Yes, I have been an extensive land agent in Ireland. I have had the management of estates in various other countries, and I have had to do with about 3,000 tenants. I have a good knowledge of the wants of the people, and the manner in which they carry on their farming business.

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18677. Of course, you are conversant with the railways of your county?—Yes, and for the last ten years I have been chairman of the Tourist Development Company, the object of which company is to increase the tourist traffic in Ireland. We have arrangements with all the railway companies, English and Irish; we

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have contracts with them, and arrangements for through bookings. And that brings one very much in contact with railway work so far as passenger traffic is concerned.

18678. That is principally passenger traffic; it is like Cook's Agency in England?—Well, it is rather more than Cook's.

18679. In what way?—Because we work the routes. We have our own horses and coaches, which run in connection with the railways, and we own hotels.

Objects and work of the Tourist Development Company.

18680. *Lord Pirrie.*—And Cook's actually sell some of your tickets, I believe?—They are our agents.

18681. *Chairman.*—This is something peculiar to Ireland?—I daresay that abroad it has been worked.

18682. How long has your company been established?—We commenced about ten years ago.

18683. Have you any figures to show the result?—Roughly; I can state how it came about.

18684. Never mind that. Has it developed a traffic which did not exist prior to the formation of your company?—Certainly it has.

Improved railway facilities for tourists.

18685. In that respect it has improved the railway and other travelling facilities of the country?—We have assisted the railways and the railways have assisted us; and by our co-operation with the railway companies we have made it possible for tourists to come over, especially to the West side of Ireland, and enjoy themselves better, and at a cheaper rate, than they could formerly.

18686. How many passengers do you deal with per annum?—Mr. Crossley, our managing director, informs me that their number is about 14,000 on the southern section.

Extent of the traffic dealt with by the company.

18687. In one year?—Yes. The movement was taken up about ten years ago in Ireland. Lady Aberdeen first gave a help to it, and then afterwards Lord Crewe, when he was Lord Lieutenant, presided at a very important meeting, held at the Royal Dublin Society, when the Irish Association was formed. That meeting was representative of the whole of Ireland, and it was attended by important men from all parts of the country. I think Lord Pirrie was present at that meeting. At all events, subsequently an important meeting was held at Belfast, at which Lord Pirrie, who was then Lord Mayor of Belfast presided. The meeting was a very great success. Then, again, a meeting was held in Cork, and was attended by men of all classes of political opinions. And afterwards, the campaign was carried into London, and a great meeting was held at the Imperial Institute, which had the effect of drawing attention in Great Britain to the desirability of travelling in Ireland.

The Fishguard and Rosslare scheme and the Great Southern and Western Railway amalgamation in the South.

18688. Do you know anything about the Fishguard and Rosslare scheme?—Yes; I have been interested in that scheme for a good many years. It is nearly twenty years since it was first discussed in the County Cork. At that time the Great Southern and Western had only a limited area from which to draw traffic; their line ran from Dublin to Cork, with a limited number of branches; and then there were numerous small railways, in the hands of weak companies, which ran across the country from Waterford; there was the Waterford and Dungarvan Railway, for instance.

History of the amalgamation, and the satisfactory results consequent thereon

18689. I do not think you need name them; it is sufficient to say that there were several small railways?—Well, the position was this: that we had what was a very inefficient form of competition in South Ireland; we had a strong company, the Great Southern and Western, and we had these other companies; and it was a competition of the very poorest description, because, instead of giving facilities there used to be a good many differences between the big company and the small companies; the small companies imagined that the big company was getting the traffic from them; and they used to raise a good many difficulties at the junctions; and there was a strong division of opinion in Cork. People at that time thought competition was a good thing; some people thought there might be effective competition with the Great Southern and Western into Cork by means of these railways; and certain promoters started a company to run a cross line from Cork, buying up these small railways into Rosslare in connection with England. But they had no strong company behind them in England; and many of us thought—and I was one of those—that that would be a useless scheme, because it would not give effective competition, that it would only perpetuate the then state of affairs, especially as they were asking the County Cork to contribute a very large sum of money to this scheme to finance it. I did not see why we should have to pay a tax in the shape of these guarantees. Subsequently, the Great Western Railway Company made arrangements with the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, with the result that a big amalgamation was carried out, practically amalgamating all the railways in the South of Ireland with the exception of these small railways down in County Cork, which I can deal with afterwards. That has been done at very great expense, not to the ratepayers, as was originally proposed, but by the companies themselves. They have spent a very large amount of capital upon them; and the service is now complete. It is a very fine service, the steamers are very good; and I think it is likely to result in very great benefit to the South of Ireland. It carries out the principles which were laid down in the Allport Commission Report. The only difference is that in that Report it was suggested that these amalgamations should be carried out at the expense of the State; whereas, in this instance, it has been carried out at the expense of the railway companies.

18690. Do you think that on the whole this amalgamation has been an advantage to the South of Ireland?—Most distinctly; I do not say that we have reaped a benefit as yet, but we have facilities now which will put us in a position to reap the benefit in future.

18691. Can you remember the year when the grand juries ceased to exist?—1899.

18692. *Lord Pirrie.*—1900 was the first year of the County Councils?—That is so.

18693. *Chairman.*—I think we will go on, if you please, to the general question, without going into all the detail which you have in your proof. Have you formed any opinion as to whether it would be to the advantage of Ireland if the railways were amalgamated either into two, or three, or even one; have you considered that subject?—Yes, I have given some consideration to it.

18694. I should like to have your views upon it, shortly. First of all, we have had evidence before us on several occasions; some advocated the railways in Ireland being amalgamated into three systems, and some into one system; and a great number went so far as to suggest State purchase. Now, what is your view about it, because you seem to have taken a great interest in the development of the tourist traffic, and of the interest of English people in Ireland?—I think that with proper conditions and safeguards it would be almost better to go for the whole thing, and to have one system.

18695. That would mean some arrangement for the State to purchase the railways?—No, I am not in favour of State purchase; I would not go as far as State purchase.

18696. Who would make the arrangement?—I think it might be brought about by voluntary arrangement with the railway companies.

18697. A voluntary arrangement?—If you buy out the railways altogether and eliminate the shareholders, you must give them a very good price; it would be a very expensive operation, and it is questionable whether it would be a provident arrangement. I think there would be a loss on it, which would have to be made good somewhere; and the question is, who is going to pay for that loss?—It would certainly have to be either paid for by the British Treasury or paid for out of the local taxation; and I do not think Ireland could afford it.

18698. You said just now that you were in favour of the whole of the railways being amalgamated into one system; how do you say that is to be brought about?—I should rather follow the views expressed by Sir George Findlay many years ago. I am aware that he suggested the division of Ireland into three separate railway systems, but I think that probably at that time he did not see the feasibility of going further than that; and he suggested that the State, if it

came in and assisted the railway companies financially by raising a loan of money at a low rate of interest, might then impose certain control over the railways; and that there should be independent Commissioners appointed who would have a voice in the management of the railways. I think that is the soundest policy to go on, if there is to be a change. What I would suggest is, that there should be created a 3 per cent. railway consolidated stock of a certain amount, and that the debenture and preference and ordinary shares should be exchanged for that stock. The details would have to be gone very carefully into to adjust the rights of the various shareholders.

18699. Who would advance the money?—It would be the State authority.

18700. The State is to find the money, to begin with?—I would suggest the establishment of an independent Railway Commission, composed of men who were the best men you could get, and they should be appointed permanently.

18701. Appointed by the State?—Appointed by the State.

18702. Paid Commissioners?—Paid Commissioners.

18703. Well, that is the first step; what is the second step?—I would consolidate the debenture, preference and ordinary railway stock into one railway consolidated stock; I think that would be done at 3 per cent.; and I would exchange the scrip for that.

18704. Whether the railway shareholders liked it or not?—Well, I do not say that. If the railway shareholders did not like such a system, and would prefer State purchase, then I think you would have to give them State purchase.

18705. To begin with, the State is to find the money; but why do you not swallow at once the proposal of State purchase? Why beat about the bush? You say the State is to find the money?—Yes, because the State will have to find a great deal more money if you have State purchase out and out.

18706. How do you mean, "more"?—What I suggest is, that you retain a certain proportion in the railway companies for the shareholders; you do not pay the shareholders the full amount that they would otherwise require if you have State purchase out and out; you retain the shareholders' interest in the railways.

18707. Excuse me, but I really do not follow you at all. Are the shareholders to be bound by any Act of Parliament to come into this suggested scheme, whether they like it or not? That is what I want to know?—Well, of course, when it was ultimately decided upon, the shareholders would have to be bound by it; but the arrangement would be sufficiently favourable to the shareholders, I think, to induce them to approve of it.

18708. Do you know anything about the railways in Australia and New Zealand?—No, except what I have read.

18709. Or those in Belgium?—I have seen something about Belgian railways.

18710. Your scheme differs from anything I have ever heard about?—It is more on the lines of Sir Geo. Findlay's scheme.

18711. No, I am afraid it is not on his lines?—Well, perhaps it goes farther. The way in which it would work out financially would be this: that you give the railway shareholders the value of their stocks at, say, their present market value.

18712. Stop a minute. Do you think that would be a fair thing to the shareholders?—Not if you stopped there, certainly not; but, in addition to that, you would give them an interest in the railways to make up for the further compensation which they would be entitled to.

18713. Who is to fix the interest?—That would be fixed automatically; they would have a share in the success of the railways; and I would give them half of the net profits of the railways after providing for the dividend on the consolidated stock.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

18714. Are you going to give that to the debenture holders?—It would have to be a matter of adjustment; I do not want to deal with the different classes now; but if you pay the debenture holders off in cash you must give rather more than the market value, because you cannot cut down their interest to 3 per cent. without some further compensation. It would have to be a matter of adjustment between the shareholders. But the result would be that the railway interests would receive the present market value of their stocks and, in addition to that, they would receive their share of the profits of the railways. And then there would be a saving, and a considerable saving, through the low rate of interest, the effect of the consolidation with the assistance of the Government. That would give a further sum, which might be available for improvements and for facilities; it would not, I think, deal with the question of a reduction of rates, because it would not be sufficient for that; and I am very doubtful whether that can be dealt with.

18715. I want to follow your scheme. As I understand, you want to leave the ultimate control of the railways in the hands of the shareholders?—I want to maintain the shareholders.

Position of the shareholders in reference to the proposed unification scheme.

18716. You want "to maintain" the shareholders?—Yes.

18717. And then you propose, what you call, the establishment of an independent Railway Commission?—Perhaps I had better use the word "Commissioners," because it is better.

18718. When you say "Commissioners," you do not mean people like the present Railway Commissioners, who are a mere legal tribunal?—Certainly not.

18719. You mean a body with some control, at any rate, over the operation of the lines?—Yes.

18720. They are not to work the lines themselves?—No; the lines must be worked by proper railway managers.

Functions of the proposed Railway Commissioners.

18721. But they are to act as a Court of Appeal between the public and the representatives of the shareholders on the question of rates and on the question of operation, and so on; that is what I understand you to suggest?—I would not call them a Court of Appeal, because I think you would then get into the functions of the Railway Commissioners; but I would call them Railway Commissioners, who would have the control; they would have, for instance, some voice in the appointment of the chief managers; and they would, to a large extent, do what the Government Railway Directors in India do; they have a voice in the management of the railways.

Debenture and preference shareholders to be guaranteed a fixed dividend.

18722. That is just the point: in India, on the Government Guaranteed Railways, of which you are now speaking, the shareholders get a fixed dividend?—Yes; that is very much what I suggest—that you guarantee them—that is practically what it comes to—3 per cent.

18723. No. As I understand you, the 3 per cent. is to be a consolidation of the upper securities which are at present held at a fixed rate of interest?—Yes.

18724. Those we may put out of the way; they are safe at present; they may be worth a little more with the Government guarantee, but they are pretty safe now. But as I understand you, you propose to have also, what we may call, deferred shareholders?—Yes.

18725. Is the Government going to guarantee them?—No.

Financial aspect of the proposed unification scheme generally.

18726. You are now proposing that on the one hand you shall have a Government Commission dictating to the Boards of Directors, and on the other hand that the Boards of Directors, with the shareholders, should depend on the dictation of the Government?—I do not think it goes so far as that, because you see that you at once put them into a better position, owing to the benefit of the upper consolidation; you begin with a fund there which brings them into a better position; and you guarantee them in that way a better chance of dividend.

18727. As I understand, it comes to this: You think that by consolidating with, ultimately, a Government guarantee behind them, you can, either by refunding at a low rate of interest, or by paying off, or in some other way, reduce the prior charges, to give you a fund for the benefit of the ordinary shareholders?—It would give you a fund for the benefit of the ordinary shareholders, and also give you a fund for the betterment of the railways, because I do not think the present system is at all satisfactory. I think railway companies do not keep a sufficient amount for betterment.

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18728. That is how you would create an additional fund, by relieving the pressure of the higher class of securities? that is what it comes to?—Yes.

18729. Now, then, this fund that is available is to be guaranteed by the shareholders of the united company, subject to Government control?—Yes.

18730. The point that I want to ask you is, who is to have the last word in the last resort? Is it that the Directors are to say, "We will not" or that the Government are to say, "You shall"?—That is a difficulty.

18731. That is the difficulty I want you to face?—I am only trying to find some way in which it can be done satisfactorily to all parties.

18732. I only want to see how far you can face that difficulty?—I think I get over that difficulty by giving both an equal interest in the ultimate result; because I suggest that one-half of the balance that would be left over after paying the interest on the Consolidated Stock of 3 per cent.——

Suggested apportioning of the net revenue under the proposed scheme as regards dividends and reserve for improvements.

18733. That is, the net revenue?—Yes; that one-half should go to the shareholders and the other half be carried forward to an Improvement Account to be utilised for the improvement of the railways. That, of course, would to a certain extent assist the shareholders, too, because it would give them a better security.

18734. But I do not at present follow your half. The ordinary shareholders get all that is over after paying the fixed people?—No, they do not get all, because a railway company ought to keep a certain amount back for rest, for improvement.

18735. But you do not suggest that any railway company in the United Kingdom having, after paying its Debentures and Preference, we will say, £100,000 of net revenue for the half-year—you do not suggest that any one of them at present puts £50,000 to extension and improvements, and pays only £50,000 in dividend—you would hardly expect such superhuman virtue as that, would you?—No.

18736. Therefore, if you are only proposing to give them half, and to keep the other half for extension and improvement, you are diverting something which they are getting at the present time?—Well, they are not getting it at present.

18737. Subject to this: we will agree that you are going to make the divisible sum a little larger by reducing the previous burden?—That is so.

18738. But, subject to that, supposing that made the £100,000 up to £120,000, you would divide the £120,000 into £60,000 and £60,000?—Yes.

18739. But at present the shareholders take £99,000 out of the £100,000?—Precisely.

18740. So that you are taking something from them?—I do not think they are getting £99,000 of the £100,000 now.

18741. Well, say, £90,000?—Because you must recollect they have obligations to carry out, and they must find money if we are to have these works in the south, for instance.

18742. That is capital. But when you are proposing to divert some of their income, I suggest that you are not conferring a boon upon the Ordinary shareholders?—I think it is a mistake to say that I am diverting half of the income; I am not doing that at all. I am merely suggesting a condition that there shall be a certain amount paid in for the improvement of the railways and for giving improved facilities which will eventually bring in further revenue.

18743. Paid in, by whom?—Paid in by the managers of the united railways.

Suggested continuance of State grants for railway extensions in Ireland.

18744. But then it is coming out of the railways. Are you suggesting further moneys from outside?—In addition to that, I think the State should give further grants, that it should supplement the fund with further grants, which they have done nearly constantly; we have had grants for railway purposes constantly, and I think it is perfectly right that we should have them.

18745. Are you suggesting grants in the shape of annual grants towards the annual expense of the working?—No, I am not dealing with that question; but for extensions; there are certain extensions in Ireland which ought to be made, but which cannot be made out of private capital, and which, therefore, ought to be made by the State. They will not be made at all if they are not made either by the State or by local guarantee.

18746. Now we have got your scheme: the Government shall reduce the prior charges by lending its guarantee?—Yes.

18747. The Government shall also contribute in the shape of free gratis extensions?—Yes.

18748. And in both those ways the present shareholders will benefit?—Yes.

18749. In return, you think it would be fair to say that the net profit is to be cut in half—half to go in dividends and half in improvements?—I do not tie myself to half; it might be three-quarters, or it might be less or more.

18750. You do not tie yourself to half; but you have to admit that if the yield was less than it is now, you could not do that?—Quite so.

18751. Now, going to another point; your Railway Commissioners would be skilled railway men?—The best you could get.

18752. You quoted Sir Geo. Findlay; we have been very often told of Sir Geo. Findlay's saying. I do not really know whether he said it, that "he could manage all the railways in the country and fish two days a week"?—Yes.

18753. You are proposing to keep a Railway Board and its officers, and to put three Sir Geo. Findlays—the best men you can get—to manage them; so that they would be able to fish six days a week?—Perhaps one might do; but it would be difficult to get the country to leave the matter in the hands of one man.

18754. You want your general manager to be a good man?—Yes.

18755. And you want your Commissioner to be a good man?—Yes.

18756. Would they not clash; how are you going to have two men managing the same concern?—I do not see why they should clash, because the Commissioners would not go into details of the railway management?—I think the relations would be very much like the relations which exist between the chairman of one of our big railway companies and the general manager.

18757. I think you will find that one has to go under?—I agree the general manager must be under the directorate.

18758. I think you will find there is a difficulty?—I think there is an advantage in having three, for this reason; that I think you want one man to be a railway expert, and you require probably an engineer or a man with engineering experience, and possibly a man who has a good knowledge of finance and soforth.

18759. Let me ask you something upon another question with which you must have been brought very much into contact in connection with your Irish tourist experience. You spoke of abolishing competition in the South of Ireland?—Yes.

18760. Well, I put to you that what is to happen in the future is, that you will have introduced a keener competition—more powerful competitors?—I was going to mention that what we have now is an effective competition, which has taken the place of what was merely an ineffective local competition before.

18761. The Waterford and Central Railway could only scratch, and now you are getting a good fight?—That is the position.

18762. And you like that?—From a public standpoint, I think it is satisfactory; but at the same time I think there are disadvantages in squabbles even between big railway companies.

18763. But they have become more dignified than squabbles. You want to keep the competition of the L. and N. W. Railway in the South-West?—I think it is most desirable.

18764. I suppose you would say the same where, for instance, the Midland has gone into the North?—Yes, I think the element of competition is useful.

18765. Do you think it would be useful for a bit of single railway authority in Ireland to deal with that state of affairs?—I think that would be a difficulty.

18767. You appreciate that?—Absolutely.

18767. Although the Central Railway Authority in Dublin might be impartial, the Great Southern and Western, the Northern, the Midland, and so on, would not think he was?—Yes, you would have to have safeguards; and it would be most important that all the ports taking traffic should be properly protected; that is to say, it would not do to have the

whole of the traffic driven into one port, say, Dublin or Rosslare, and driven away from other ports.

18768. What safeguard would you rely on?—Well, of course, the Railway Commissioners, if they were impartial, fair men.

18769. On what principle are they to act?—I should be very happy to be impartial if you will tell me the principle; but if I do not know the principle it is difficult for me to apply it?—I think the principle should be the providing of a free flow of traffic everywhere, and not forcing traffic round by a circuitous route; but to give to every place the benefit of its geographical position.

18770. That means, equal mileage rates?—Oh, no, I do not go so far as that; you cannot have equal mileage rates; that would not do.

18771. Do you know what the benefit of geographical position, when translated into rates means?—I am merely referring to the position of the ports. For instance, no doubt South Wales is entitled to get its traffic by the shortest route from Cork. I do not think it would be a desirable thing to send the traffic up to Dublin, and down to Wales again; nor would it be a desirable thing to send traffic from the County Dublin to Rosslare and up to the North again.

18772. Taking Charleville and Birmingham, you would probably agree that Rosslare and Dublin ought to have a look in for that?—They ought both to be entitled to have a share in it.

18773. Would you suggest that Rosslare ought to have a look in for Manchester?—Yes, I think so, if people like to send their traffic that way. But I think the natural course is to send traffic by Dublin to Manchester.

18774. What I mean is, can you suggest any rule or any principle?—No, I cannot; and I think that is one of the great disadvantages of State purchase, because I do not think you can.

18775. You would rather leave that to a commercial manager than to a State owner?—I would.

18776. Was your attention called to the system mentioned by Mr. Field in his evidence—what had happened in Mexico in the last year or two?—I read a summary.

18777. The system was this: that the State bought the bulk of the deferred shares and had a small financial interest, but had a large voting interest. It then says to the Directors, go and manage as you think proper; only remember that in the last resort we call the tune, and if you do not satisfy us, we will turn you out. That is practically the system of the Mexican Government; how would that strike you?—I would not like to express an opinion about that.

18778. You have not thought about it?—No.

18779. I was asked to ask you?—There is one matter I am anxious to put before the Commission. I do not know whether I might be permitted to do it, and that is in connection with the collection of produce for storage and facilities for the collection of farmers' produce

Chairman.—We will have that after lunch.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

18780. Perhaps I might be allowed to put a couple of questions before the adjournment. (*To the witness.*)—You propose, as I understand, to consolidate the debentures and preference stocks, and to reduce the interest?—What I suggested was, that if the State desired to have control over the Irish railways, then the only way I think that could be brought about is by giving the holders—the railway interests I will say——

18781. You have calculated, I understand, that there would be a saving in the first charges which would be a benefit to the deferred?—I think I rather guarded myself against going into the question of the relative rights of the interests.

18782. I follow that; but if there would be no saving upon the primary charges there would be no profit to the deferred?—There would be a saving certainly.

18783. Do not you think that the debenture holders would insist, as they have a right to insist, upon the same income as they are getting to-day?—That is one of the great difficulties I see, that if you are to pay them off in Government stock you have to give the debenture holders the same income.

18784. Then there is no benefit?—You give them a stock which is worth a great deal more than the stock was worth before.

18785. I daresay you know that the debenture holders of the London Water Companies get the same income now as formerly, although they have the security of the London rates?—That is a great benefit to them, no doubt, but I am not sure that it has been a beneficial operation to the public.

18786. As a financial operation, I do not see any great gain. For instance, I have here a list of investments, and I find the Great Northern of Ireland 4 per cent. Debenture yields £3 10*s.* 3*d.*; then I turn to the Guaranteed Irish Land, and the return is £3 5*s.* 6*d.* So that after all there is no great gain?—We ought to treat Irish Land Stock as an example, because I think there is something radically wrong about the finance of it.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I agree; and that is all I ask you.

Adjourned for a short time.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Approval of the recommendations of the Allport Commission as regards compulsory amalgamation,

18787. I think you said in referring to the Allport Commission that it recommended amalgamtion at the expense of the State?—Yes.

18788. I think that is a misunderstanding, is it not?—What it recommended was that amalgamation should be carried out by arbitration, if possible; but, failing arbitration, that the Railway Commissioners, which it was proposed should be set up, should decide as to the terms?—That was so. I think I am right in saying that they did also suggest that the State should assist in amalgamation.

18789. Perhaps what you are referring to is this paragraph: "Should Parliament think fit in fixing such new scale of rates and tolls to reduce generally the proper statutory charges, we think it is only just that the shareholders should be protected from loss by some guarantee to them on the part of the State." Perhaps that is what you were thinking of?—Yes.

Mr. Childers' views as set out in the Financial Relations Report.

18790. That if this Railway Board, which they proposed to set up, should, in the interests of the public, make any reduction, then the Government should guarantee the railways on a basis of their present gross receipts?—Yes; and that was the view of Mr. Childers, who suggested it in the Financial Relations Report.

18791. Would you have any objection to the State taking over the railways on terms such as were proposed by the Allport Commission, leaving the decision as to future economies to be effected in the hands of such a Railway Board?—I am altogether with the Allport Commission Report. I think what they recommended was very excellent indeed, but I do not think they recommended actually the taking over of the railways by the State.

18792. No, they did not. They recommended that they should be amalgamated in the hands of one central company, and be subject to the control of this Railway Commission?—Yes, and that is the effect of my evidence.

Suggested Government guarantee against loss by reason of compulsory reductions in rates.

18793. Would you go so far as to say that in the event of this Commission recommending certain reductions, that to whatever extent was determined upon the Government should recoup the railways for any loss which might be incurred in consequence of those reductions?—Yes, I agree.

18794. You are opposed to State purchase on the ground of the large sum of money which would be required for such a transaction?—Yes. That is not, perhaps, the wording I used, but the great difficulties of carrying it out owing to the financial operations.

Estimated value of the present interest of all classes of shareholders in the Irish railways.

18795. If you look at that table (*handing document to witness*) you will see that the total capital invested in Irish railways at the present time, exclusive of ordinary stock, is, roughly speaking, 27½ millions debentures, guaranteed and preference, and thirteen millions ordinary, making a total of 40½ millions, of which 27½ milions represent what I call a first charge?—Yes.

18796. And the dividends which were paid in 1905 in respect of that 27½ millions amounts to a little over £1,034,000?—Yes.

18797. The ordinary dividend-paying stock—I am excluding stock on which no dividend is paid—is, roughly speaking, thirteen millions?—Yes.

18798. And that received dividends in 1905 to the extent of £596,000. I think?—Yes.

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18799. Roughly speaking, £600,000. If you capitalised the interest which is earned and received in respect of the debentures, guaranteed, and preference stock at 3 per cent., it would mean thirty-four millions in round numbers. If you capitalise £1,034,000 it comes to thirty-four millions. If you capitalise £600,000, it comes to 19½ millions, giving a total on those two transactions of, roughly speaking, 53½ millions?—Yes.

Estimated value of the present interest of all classes of shareholders in the Irish railways.

18800. In respect of non-paying stock, which amounts to over £3,000,000, which is earning no dividends at all—I am talking of preference and ordinary stock—if you give the shareholders of that non-paying stock 50 per cent. of the face value of their holdings, I think that would be dealing liberally with them, would it not?—I think they would be delighted

18801. Even if you do that it only represents another one and a half millions?—Yes.

18802. If you add that to the 53½ millions, which we have given as the capitalised value of the other classes of stock, the whole thing comes to fifty-five millions?—Yes.

18803. Surely, if one could get rid of the whole of the interest of all classes of shareholders in Irish railways at such a price as that, as far as they are concerned they would be quite satisfied, would they not?—I think it would be a splendid bargain for the shareholders.

Purposes to which the probable savings to be effected under a system of central control might be devoted.

18804. Yet, on the assumption that such a transaction could be carried out, and that the State was willing to lend the money or was willing to allow some central authority that might be set up to borrow the money on certain securities of the railways themselves and of the buildings in Ireland and so on—assuming that that were done, and that the whole of the railway systems could be put into one hand, either under a State authority or an Irish authority, do you not think that very considerable economies could be effected on the present net earning capacities of the independent systems?—That is a point I am not quite convinced upon. I am afraid that State ownership of railways might not lead to economies.

18805. I take it that the first object of ever putting the railways under the State or under a central authority would be this—that it should be part of the arrangement that they should institute, not extravagant reductions, but reasonable reductions, in the hope that after a few years they would be recouped by the extra traffic which would follow?—I thought you meant reductions in expenditure.

18806. Well, to a certain extent, there would be such reductions; but I think that economies effected in one direction would very probably be swallowed up to a great extent in another by the increased cost of the Railway Board, which you contemplate being established?—Yes.

18807. But, putting aside any economies which might be effected by amalgamation, would not such a body probably be in a position to experiment in the way of certain concessions, both in regard to passenger fares and goods rates, with a view to stimulating industries and manufactures, and even for the time being to incur some loss by so doing?—I am afraid the loss would be a very large one.

18808. What reason have you for thinking so? You have studied to a certain extent, doubtless, the experience of foreign countries, where their rates compare favourably with ours, and though in some instances their rates do involve loss, still they believe it is good business to incur that loss?—That loss would have to be thrown on somebody.

18809. But it would not be thrown on the shareholders?—No; the shareholders would be secured. But it would have to be found by somebody, and the question is, would the Irish taxpayer be willing to make up that loss for the sake of the traders, because, looking into this question, I see that there are instances where rates have been reduced considerably, and it is not the consumer or the producer who has benefited by the abatement, but very often it has been the trader who has got the benefit. There is a notable case on the Great Western Railway, where, in connection with the milk traffic, they brought the rates down considerably to assist the farmers in the West of England, and the result was that the wholesale milk people reduced the price they paid to their farmers. So that in that way I think it does not quite follow that the producer gets the full benefit of the lower rate.

18810. I could understand your objection if you thought these concessions would involve some increase of taxation on the Irish ratepayer; but, assuming that such a body was empowered to allocate a certain annual sum in respect of such reductions, would you have the same objection then?—No; I think it would be very desirable if we could get it done, but I think the Irish taxpayers are too poor to bear the loss themselves. I agree with Mr. Childers' Report on the Financial Relations—that if there is a sum of money capable of being applied from the Treasury to Ireland one of the very best ways in which it could be applied is in this question of reducing rates. But we have, first of all, to convince the people on this side of the water that we are entitled to some concession of that kind.

18811. Without looking to any redress as regards financial relations, you are aware that under the constitution of the Department of Agriculture that Department is empowered to spend money in promoting transit facilities throughout the country?—Yes.

18812. That is an indirect power which they are given?—Yes.

18813. And Sir Horace Plunkett has more than once said that if the funds at their disposal permitted of it, he could see no direction in which the money could be so profitably expended as in subsidising—as that is what it comes to—the carrying companies of the country?—Yes.

18814. If that principle has been admitted and embodied in the Act which constituted that body, is it not reasonable to suppose that if certain powers were given, perhaps to this proposed new authority, where the Board of Works are, for instance, given £300,000 in addition to anything they are getting now, there would probably be no difficulty in giving the Council such a sum of money as would compensate them for the time being at any rate, and see what result would follow from an effectual reduction of the railway carrying charges?—I would be very glad to see it done.

18815. You would be willing, under those circumstances, which would not involve any direct charge on the taxpayer, to favour some method of State or National authority purchase?—Yes. On those lines I would see a benefit in it.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

18816. With regard to new railways in Ireland, do you think any additional lines of railway are required?—Yes; there are; but I do not think they will be made by private enterprise.

18817. If the Irish railways are to remain in the hands of some commercial company, and are yet to be controlled by the State, and these new railways, which perhaps are not likely to be remunerative, are to be made, how is the new authority to pay for the building of those railways?—You would have to follow out the principle adopted already, and recommended by the Allport Commission; that the State might be expected to build the line, and the parent company might be expected to work it.

18818. But the State must first of all provide the money for the additional railways which they may know are not going to be remunerative?—Yes.

18819. Is it to be laid down that these railways are to produce a certain rate of interest, or is the State to be satisfied that they shall be absolutely unremunerative?—I am afraid that these railways hardly ever pay more than their working expenses. But railways which were wanted very badly have been made, and it is not such a big question as it used to be. And then there are the possibilities of motor transit. There are many places that would not pay for a railway which might well pay for a motor service. I think that is one way of getting out of the difficulty of providing facilities in remote districts.

18820. Does that mean that you will not require new railways?—There are certain places where railways are required, and where it would probably be desirable, in the interests of the State, that railways should be built.

18821. Your view really is that if these railways are required, the State must pay for them?—Yes; I think

must take each case on its merits. There are some railways which one might well look upon as important railways for the State to build, and you must take each case on its merits.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

18822. I take your evidence, broadly speaking, to be that you favour the amalgamation of the railways, but you are not quite prepared to say by what scheme, or how you will bring that amalgamation about, and you are opposed to State purchase because you are afraid of the working of State railways in Ireland, and you suggest a sort of partnership between the State and the shareholders of the present railway companies?—Yes, that is so.

18823. I only want to get it clear?—One of the great difficulties is the financial difficulty.

18824. But that is your broad view—that you want to get one large amalgamation in which the State will be partly interested and the shareholders will be partly interested?—Yes.

18825. Is that because in your experience as an agent of large properties in Ireland you have found that landlord and tenant work so harmoniously together, that everything goes on so satisfactorily that you want to bring a similar state of matters into the railway system?—I do not think you can compare the two things.

18826. But you want to bring, as I gathered from your answers to the Chairman and to Mr. Acworth, the State into exactly the same position with regard to the railways as the landlords have held in Ireland with regard to the land for the last hundred years?—I do not think it is the same case at all. You have the State already controlling the railways, though I admit in a very clumsy way.

18827. Does the State control the Great Northern Railway, or the Midland or Southern?—They have a certain amount of influence and control over the railways at the present time by the Act of Parliament.

18828. But it is not because everything works so satisfactorily between landlord and tenant that you would like to set up a similar system in regard to the railways?—I do not think the two cases are on parallel lines at all.

18829. Then you do not mean that line of argument?—I do not think you can compare the two things at all.

18830. But the partnership you were suggesting was that the State should become partly interested owing to the 3 per cent. preference that they guarantee; you actually go so far as to propose to do away with the debentures, the preference, and the ordinary stock, and to give a 3 per cent. preference—I do not know why you call it a 3 per cent. preference when there is no stock before it?—It is a 3 per cent. Consolidated Government Stock.

18831. But your own evidence is that you should turn the Debentures and Preference and Ordinary Stock into a 3 per cent. Preference Stock, guaranteed first of all out of the revenue of the railways?—Yes.

18832. Secondly, if they fail, you take the local rates next?—Yes.

18833. If they fail over a certain amount, you would come on to the consolidated fund for the balance?—Yes.

18834. That is what you have put down in evidence?—Yes.

18835. Then, if there is a profit of £50,000, I understood you to say that you would give half of that to the State and half to the shareholders?—I do not give it back to the State.

18836. Not at all?—No, May I correct that? I do not think I was very clear in answering Mr. Acworth. Perhaps my best way is to give an example. I have taken out the present value of the Irish railway stocks from the Stock Exchange. I do not want to be taken as saying that this is the price at which you ought to buy them, because stocks are depressed now. But I will assume that you create a perfectly good security, a 3 per cent. railway stock. The value of the stocks at present is forty millions. Three per cent. on that is £1,200,000. The present net receipts of the railways are £1,600,000. That leaves a difference of £400,000.

18837. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do you say that the Stock Exchange value is only forty millions?—Yes.

18838. It must be more than that?—It is a very depressed market at present.

18839. Have you included the Preference Stock which was handed over to the Northern Counties by the Midland Company of England?—Yes.

18840. That is about five millions?—Yes.

18841. That return which I gave you gives the face value as forty-three millions?—There are a great many stocks below par. But this is merely an illustration.

18842. *Chairman.*—It is merely an illustration; we will assume the figure?—You have a difference of £400,000 a year. You have given to the Irish railway interests—this will include everybody—a very solid security, and you have this £400,000 a year over after paying that interest. As I say, the £1,200,000 is very well secured on the receipts of Irish railways, amounting to £1,600,000, and, therefore, there will be nothing falling on the rates at all to make up that 3 per cent. You have £400,000 over, and I would say that there would be a possible saving in amalgamation—I am not quite certain on this point, but I know it has been stated on good authority that there should be a saving of £100,000 a year. That would make £500,000. If that money were divided so that one portion of it could be carried to an improvement account——

The anticipated savings from the conversion of the existing stocks into a 3 per cent. railway stock.

18843. *Lord Pirrie.*—Or for making extensions of railways?—If you take over the Irish railways you will have to spend a lot of money on them—capital expenditure—because I think the system of railway finance both in England and in Ireland is not very satisfactory at present.

18844. But we have nothing to do with England?—It is not very satisfactory, because it tends rather to over-capitalisation, and there ought to be funds out of the profits made available for improvements and betterment. Then I would give the shareholders a very fair proportion—I suggest one half, because I think that would give them as much as they are receiving at present.

Expenditure on improvements and betterments necessary.

18845. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is that £250,000 to be divided among all the holders of the 3 per cent. stock?—That is a matter I do not want to go into; I do not want to go into relative rights of shareholders—that is a matter of arrangement.

18846. If that were one level 3 per cent. Preference Stock, they would get a bonus of as much as £250,000?—You may call them bonus shares if you like.

18847. *Lord Pirrie.*—I think Mr. Sanders must have meant to leave some of the original stock, so that they will get a portion, because all along he has said that so much would go to the original shareholders and so much would be put aside altogether? (*Witness*).—That was rather suggested in certain questions, but I did not wish myself to go into the differences between them. I want to treat the railways' interests as one. Then it is a matter of apportionment afterwards how they are to be dealt with as between themselves. The point I want to make is this. It has been suggested that I am taking something away from the shareholders. I am not really doing that.

18848. Who suggested that? I did not suggest it in my question?—Oh, no, you did not; but I think it was suggested that this was taking from the shareholders some of the income which they receive at present. It does not do that; it merely provides a fund for improvement which will give them an increased security, and at the same time it will strengthen the Irish railway system, so that it will be able to do better service to the public.

18849. I did not quite understand your answer there. Why do you want to give the shareholders of the Irish railways more than the market value of their security in a country which even in the most commercially successful parts in the North we believe is being depopulated every year—why are you going to give them that benefit?—Because I do not think it would be just to take the railway shareholders' property away without giving them a fair equivalent.

18850. But in Ulster alone last year the population decreased by over 12,000?—That is not the fault of the railway shareholders.

18851. Never mind that. If you reduce the popula-

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tion of a district, how do you expect it to increase in earning power?—I hope that we shall have the population increasing some day.

18852. Why do you propose to give them greater value than the value of their shares in the market?—Because I do not think it would be a fair thing to take the present Stock Exchange quotations as the proper price to pay the shareholders.

18853. Why?—I do not think it would be just to do it.

18854. Why? If I give you a sovereign, will you give me 21s. for it on the chance of gold going higher?—I will put it in this way: let us forget altogether about the State. Assume you have a big railway company buying up the Irish rails. Would it be considered fair to compel the shareholders in one railway to sell to the shareholders in the other railway unless they got, at all events, not only the present market value but a little bit more?

The financial arrangements in connection with the suggested amalgamation scheme.

18855. Why? I know of many railway companies in Ireland who have sold willingly, and the shareholders have sold willingly, feeling that they were getting the stock of a large railway company, which they could always sell immediately. Why should we Irish shareholders try to get out of the English taxpayer more than the value of our property?—I am not taking anything out of the English taxpayer.

18856. Excuse me, what is the Consolidated Fund; where does that come from? In your own evidence you have already said that the third security for this 3 per cent. stock is the Consolidated Fund?—Yes.

18857. Is not that the British taxpayer?—Yes; but I am not taking anything from him; I am giving him a very good security.

18858. You cannot give a security to a man without making him liable for what he undertakes to do. How can you have the Consolidated Fund as a security without placing some responsibility upon it? Your evidence to-day is that we want to get something more for our railways than their present value. I do not think that is what you intended?—I do, certainly. I do not think the Irish railway shareholders would be satisfied to sell their property at the present quotations—it is the very bottom of the market. Great Southern and Western Stock, for example, which stood at 140 some years ago, is now something below 90. I do not think they would be satisfied with that price. Then there was a question of Colonel Hutcheson Poë in regard to increasing the traffic on the railways. I do not think you will get an increase of traffic unless you can get the people, at all events, to make use of the facilities which are already offered by the railway companies. There are some very excellent facilities offered by the railway companies which are not made much use of at present. It is very hard to get people to co-operate in that direction; and I am a very strong supporter of the idea of agricultural co-operation in regard to the transit of produce.

The prospects of increasing traffic.

18859. *Chairman.*—In adopting in Ireland what you know has been adopted in Holland and Belgium to the advantage of the producer?—Yes; and not only in Holland and Belgium, but in England.

18860. To a limited extent?—Yes. On some of the railways in England they have done a great deal in that direction, and a great deal might be done to improve the condition of Irish agriculture in that way.

18861. That is by co-operation?—Yes.

Necessity for co-operation amongst the farmers.

18862. The consignments, instead of dribbling in in small quantities, should be sent in one large quantity?—Yes. The railways offer excellent facilities for the transit of perishable goods, but the farmers do not make use of these facilities to the extent which might be expected. The reason for this is that there is no organisation to bring home to them the extent of these facilities. Everybody acts for himself, and there is no combination. Capital is required for collecting and grading stations, cold storage, and so on. This is not forthcoming; and the question which I think it worth considering is where the capital ought to come from. I am afraid we cannot expect the railway companies to build these cold stores. They have done a good deal, and it is a question whether that might not be taken up by some co-operative arrangement on the part of the farmers, or whether the Treasury or Board of Works might not give loans for the erection of these buildings, as they do for agricultural buildings. I think they are just as much agricultural as any others.

18863. *Lord Pirrie.*—I think some of the railway companies have offered to do it?—I dare say they have. I think in connection with these depôts and cold storage stations we might have a traffic development by means of collecting cars. Motor cars or steam lorries might be utilised for collecting the produce of outlying districts and bringing it into a central depôt at the railway station. This has been done abroad, and that is one of the reasons why foreign produce competes against Irish produce.

18864. *Chairman.*—Do you suggest that it should be done by the existing railway companies?—I think it would be better to get voluntary effort. I am rather in favour of private enterprise. I think the railway companies might give facilities, and in some cases they might build depôts, charging a small interest on the expenditure, or else the Board of Works might be authorised to make loans for the erection of these buildings. It is not a big question. You can put up a big cold storage establishment for about £1,500 at a wayside station. If you had these collecting steam lorries, it would be a great advantage. I know a case in point where it would be of great benefit. The place to which I refer is in the centre of a great dairying district in County Limerick, and in an area of some fifteen miles round there is probably 100,000 lbs. of butter produced in a year. There are a number of creameries, but they are in outlying districts. I know one creamery where they are not able to turn out absolutely fresh butter because it takes them some time to get to market. That is due to the fact that they are fourteen miles from the railway station. If you had a means of getting their stuff in they would be able to catch the night train, and the stuff would be in the English market anywhere you liked the next morning or before mid-day.

18865. *Mr. Acworth.*—Did you hear the evidence from Tuam yesterday about the motor that was put on, but because it interfered with local carriers it had to be taken off again?—That is one of the difficulties you have to contend with. The railway companies have to be very careful what they do, and there may be a great deal of opposition to movements of this kind. In time people will understand that it is the right thing to do, and traders will see that it has got to come.

18866. Do you think it is in the public interest, taking it as a broad question, that the railway company should encourage petty consignments? We have heard a good deal about the 7 lbs. and 14 lbs. of butter being sent to little local stations in England and getting low rates. Do you think it is in the public interests that they should be encouraged, or would it be better if the railways should throw their weight on the side of co-operation?—I think that suggestion is the best, but I do not think the small man ought to be cut out.

18867. But do you think the railway companies ought to do their best to squeeze the small man into co-operation, or to go on with what you agree is an inferior method?—I should prefer that they should co-operate of themselves.

18868 You would not say that they should squeeze him by refusing to give low rates?—I do not think they ought to do that.

Mr. Andrew Spence, Secretary of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company.

Mr. Andrew Spence examined by the Chairman.

18869. You are the Secretary of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway?—I am.

18870. How long have you been Secretary?—Since 1901—six years.

18871. Were you in the service before that?—I was for seventeen years in the head office.

18872. You were connected with the company when the arrangement was made between the Lough Swilly Company and the Board of Works with reference to the working of the Burtonport Railway?—I was; as assistant to the General Manager I had a knowledge of the whole of the negotiations.

18873. I have a very extensive proof here, but I think we can curtail it considerably. First of all, it has been stated before us that the specification for locomotives for the working of that railway was submitted to the Board of Works by some one connected with the Lough Swilly Railway; do you agree to that statement?—No; it was stated that the specification was submitted to us by the Board of Works in order that we might refer it to our expert adviser; that is not correct. What happened was this, our former manager had a conversation with the Chairman of the Board of Works about the stock.

18874. One minute. Just confine your answer now to the question of engines; we will deal with the carriages and wagons separately. With regard to the engines, who prepared the specification for those engines?—It was prepared by a traffic manager of a competitive line who was consulted by the Board of Works as their expert on this occasion.

18875. Who was he?—Mr. Livesey, of the Donegal line.

18876. He was a very experienced man, was he not?—A very experienced gentleman in traffic matters, but one without mechanical training, having no more knowledge than the rest of us about locomotive engines.

18877. How did he prepare the specification if he had no knowledge?—He did it, but I cannot say how he prepared it. I know he did not provide any plans, for when we asked for one none could be supplied.

18878. What do you mean by a plan?—Any drawings of the engine showing the particulars which were meagre on the specification.

18879. I see the specification was printed?—It was.

18880. And sent to you by the Board of Works?—Not until after tenders had been invited; we had previously consulted Mr. Malcolm and sent recommendations to the Board. Notwithstanding this the specification was prepared and tenders were invited without any reference to us. We wrote protesting, and in reply a specification was sent.

18881. What objection did you take to the specification; please confine your remarks to the engines first?—Our objection is summed up in this: we were advised that tender engines were required to work this line efficiently and that the specification was for tank engines.

18882. A letter was read to us yesterday by Mr. Vesey Knox from Mr. Malcolm; I gather from that letter that he did not object to tank engines as being unsuitable for the traffic?—He did very strongly.

18883. Have you got the letter?—Yes; shall I read it?

18884. Yes?—The letter is dated July 27th, 1901—"On 24th inst. I met Mr. Livesey and Mr. Batchen at the offices of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway at Londonderry, and had a long consultation with them regarding the type of engine best suited to work the Burtonport Extension of that system, and I explained my reason very fully for preferring a tender instead of a tank engine. I am quite prepared to admit that the line could be worked with tank engines similar to those on the Glenties line, but I am convinced that the line can be worked in a much more satisfactory manner and more economically with tender engines, and I am, therefore, strongly of opinion that this type of engine should be adopted. The extra cost of a six-wheeled engine and four-wheeled tender as compared with a ten-wheeled tank engine would be trifling, as the expensive parts, *i.e.*, the wheels, axles, axle-boxes, springs, buffers, etc., would be the same in both cases, and practically the only additional material required would be due to the larger carrying capacity of the tender body as compared with the tank and coal bunkers of the tank engine."

18885. Apparently I put a wrong construction on that letter; you are quite right. Mr. Malcolm did recommend the tender engine?—Yes.

18886. *Mr. Acworth.*—I think the witness had better read the next three lines?—"Mr. Livesey, while expressing himself strongly in favour of tank engines, did not raise any objection to tender engines, provided the engines are fitted with leading bogies or pony trucks, and I agree with him that a leading pony truck would be an improvement, although on a line with such easy curves as the one in question, I do not consider it in any way essential." I was going to explain that we were yielded this interview after the order for the engines had been placed.

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18887. *Lord Pirrie.*—At the time that letter was written?—Yes; in response to sixteen or seventeen letters of protest, they at length yielded this interview, but after the order for the engines had been placed.

18888. That is the usual practice, I have no doubt?—I cannot say.

18889. *Chairman.*—Mr. Malcolm's letter is dated the 27th of July, is it not?—Yes.

Allegation that the Board of Works' Order for "tank" engines was placed in face of Lough Swilly Company's objection to them.

18890. When was the contract for the engines placed?—I cannot say; but the 28th June, a month previous, we were informed that they had placed an order with Messrs. Barclay & Sons, Kilmarnock. This was a firm who had never before built a passenger locomotive, and if that were possible, our efforts to prevail upon them to reconsider their advice were redoubled. Mr. Livesey himself protested, he told me, against the order being given to an inexperienced firm.

18891. *Lord Pirrie.*—Who gave the order?—The Board of Works.

18892. *Chairman.*—Do you happen to know when tenders were invited?—I have a copy of the advertisement, which was issued before we were consulted at all.

18893. Have you got it there?—I will hand it in.

18894. You have got it?—Yes; I have it in the room.

18895. Where was it advertised, do you remember?—I have it cut from the "Contract Journal."

18896. Do you know the date of it?—I can give you an approximate date, because on the 17th April——

Specification said to have been issued and tenders invited without any consultation with company.

18897. If you have the advertisement, that will settle it at once?—On the 17th April, 1901, we wrote to the Board of Works when we saw the advertisement, expressing disappointment that a specification had been issued and tenders invited on the 29th March; that is the date.

18898. When was it first brought to your notice in any shape or form that tank engines were going to be provided for this railway?—After we had consulted Mr. Malcolm, and sent his recommendations to the Board of Works, they replied early in 1901 to say that they would adopt the Glenties type.

18899. The Glenties type of engine?—Yes.

18900. That is the type used on the Glenties line?—Yes, on the Glenties line; they are tank engines.

18901. When was that?—On the 1st February, 1901.

18902. Did any communication between your company and the Board of Works take place before that?—We had previously submitted Mr. Malcolm's recommendations; we employed Mr. Malcolm as an expert, gave him the necessary data, and got a report from him. By data, I mean we gave him the length of the line, the gradients, the limit of weight, the loads required, the curves, the ambit of the turntables, and other data. With that information he made a report which we sent to the Board of Works.

Type of engine in use on Glenties line ("tank") selected by the Board of Works.

18903. When was that sent?—On the 28th January, 1901.

18904. Before that, who was the General Manager?—Mr. Dawson, who is now General Manager for a railway in South Africa—the new Cape Central Railway.

18905. You were with him?—I was his chief assistant.

18906. Had Mr. Dawson any interview with the Chairman of the Board of Works?—He had.

Interview between the former General Manager and the Board of Works.

18907. Before that?—He had a conversation some time before.

18908. That would be some time in 1900?—Towards the end of 1900 Mr. Robertson, the Chairman, asked our Manager to write to him on the subject.

18909. On the subject of what?—Of the rolling stock which we thought necessary. Mr. Dawson immediately took the necessary advice from Mr. Malcolm and our own locomotive superintendent, and submitted a recommendation.

18910. When did he submit that?—On the 28th January, 1901.

18911. That was sent in writing to the Board of Works?—The letter was as follows—"Referring to the conversation I had with your Chairman some time ago with reference to the question of rolling stock for the Burtonport Extensions, I beg to inform you that since then I have gone very fully into the matter, both with our Locomotive Superintendent and the Locomotive

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Superintendent of another railway, who has great experience in such matters, and the conclusion we have arrived at is that the following would be the most suitable engine for the Burtonport Railway, having regard to the long mileage and the delay that would arise in watering the engine so frequently, and also in coaling. Outside cylinders: fourteen inches diameter; twenty inches stroke. Wheels: leading, driving, trailing, 3 feet 9 inches diameter. Weight: leading, driving, trailing, each eight tons; wheel base not to exceed eleven feet six inches Boiler pressure: 160 lb. per square inch. Tender: four or six wheels, two feet two inches diameter; capacity coal, three tons; water 1,200 gallons. Engines of this type will be able to work a train of eight fully loaded wagons, three bogie carriages, and one combined brake van and carriage up the inclines with ease and good speed; they will be easy on the road, as the maximum weight on any pair of wheels will not exceed eight tons, and the large fuel and water carrying capacity of the tender (impossible in the case of a tank engine), would prove of great advantage on such long runs. I beg to suggest that a number of locomotive builders should be asked to submit designs, based on the leading dimensions given above."

Former General Manager's recommendation to the Board of Works as to design of tender, engines for Burtonport Railway in 1901.

18912. *Mr. Acworth.*—From whom is that letter?—It is from the General Manager of the railway company, Mr. Dawson, to the Board of Works.

18913. In the early part of 1901?—On the 28th January, 1901.

18914. *Chairman.*—The tenders were invited after that?—They were.

18915. Have you found the advertisement?—No; I will send my clerk to the hotel for it.

18916. I thought you said it was in the room?—He cannot find it in the bag. I have given the date on which it was issued.

18917. Now, let us go by steps. Did you receive any communication from the Board of Works after that letter suggesting that tank engines would be preferable to tender engines?—In reply to our recommendation we got a very short letter quoting us clauses of the Agreement. "Having laid your letter of the 28th ultimo, S. 21/469, before the Commissioners of Public Works, I am directed to request that you will be so good as to draw the attention of the Directors of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company to the terms of Clause 11 of the Treasury Agreement scheduled to the Order in Council of the 18th May, 1899. It is as follows:—"The engines and rolling stock to be of suitable type for the efficient working of the line. The engines and rolling stock shall be legibly inscribed with the words 'Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension Railway' or some other appropriate designation or mark to distinguish them as belonging to the undertaking for the benefit of which they shall be exclusively used." The Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway, now under construction, will be similar to that from Stranorlar to Glenties; and the stock supplied to the latter has been found to be efficient in the working of the line. Consequently, the Board will supply for the Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway, engines and rolling stock of a similar type, but with any alterations which may have been found necessary from experience in their use on the Stranorlar and Glenties Line."

Decision of Board of Works under Clause 11 of the Treasury agreement as to selection of type of engines and rolling stock.

18918. What is the date of that?—February 1st, 1901.

18919. Who worked the Glenties railway?—Mr. Livesey, the gentleman who advised the Board.

18920. That was part of the Donegal railway?—Yes.

18921. And Mr. Livesey was General Manager?—Yes.

18922. These engines were worked on that line; is it the same gauge?—Yes.

Difference in the gradients on the Glenties and Burtonport lines.

18923. What was the length of the Glenties railway?—Twenty-four miles as against fifty on this. The vital difference is in the gradients. The longest gradient on the Glenties line is ¼ mile of 1 in 50. There are in all ten miles of 1 in 50 on the Burtonport line.

18924. What is the most severe gradient?—You are climbing 1 in 50 for four miles.

18925. What is the most severe?—1 in 50.

18926. Nothing below that?—Nothing worse than that.

18927. It is a long run, is it?—Four miles.

18928. *Mr. Acworth.*—With no break?—Yes.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

18929. The Glenties engines were tank engines?—They were.

18930. And they were working without difficulty, as far as you know?—They were not working satisfactorily.

18931. Do you know anything about that?—I do, because the former locomotive engineer of the Glenties line was our locomotive superintendent at this time, and he warned us to have nothing to do with the Glenties type of engine because of the trouble they had given him.

18932. Were they built by the same people?—No; Mr. Livesey said that if they had been built by the people who built his engines they would have been better, but they would not follow his advice.

18933. Who was the builder of the Glenties engines?—Messrs. Neilson Reid, of Glasgow.

18934. Now, we have got to the point where the Board of Works point out that the engines working the Glenties railway were to be the engines to work this Burtonport railway; what was your answer to that?—We replied as follows.

18935. Will you give us the date first?—12th February, 1901.

18936. Just read the point bearing on the question of engines?—"The similarity between the Glenties and the Burtonport railways is confined to the rails and the sleepers being of the same section and size, but otherwise the whole line differs both in mileage and in length of grades of 1 in 50. For the expert working of these gradients I have taken some trouble to offer my advice, which I now regret, seeing the tone in which you reply." That was the manager's reply.

18937. Will you let me look at that letter?—Certainly (*letter handed to the Chairman*).

18938. What do you mean by that last paragraph?—I think the General Manager was a little piqued at not being consulted.

18939. What is the date of that?—The 12th February.

18940. After that letter the Board of Works advertises for the new engines?—There were several other letters passed to the same purport in which we begged the Board to consider our expert advice and in which they adhered to the Glenties type.

18941. Would you give us what you consider the strongest letter on that point; we do not want all the letters, but just one; make your selection?—There is one on the 17th April, 1901.

18942. That was after the advertisement?—After the advertisement.

18943. Have you got something before the advertisement appeared?—When we wrote that letter we did not know that the specification had been issued. We did not know until the 17th April. We at once wrote as follows:—"I took an early opportunity of submitting your letter to my directors, and they desire me to say in reply that they regret there should be any difference of opinion between them and your Commissioners with reference to the rolling stock for the Burtonport railway, inasmuch as they believe it is for the advantage of both that before the stock is contracted for the description most advantageous for the efficient working of the line should be mutually settled. My directors are much disappointed to find that a specification has been issued and tenders invited without reference to them or to the officers of the company responsible for the maintenance and working of the railway, whose opinion would be of some practical value as to the requirements. It is most desirable that we should be agreed at the present time and thereby avoid any difficulties on the subject when the line is about to be opened for traffic. I therefore suggest that you send me a copy of the specification for the information of my directors and responsible officers, and that in the meantime no steps be taken to close the contract for stock. If necessary, a circular can be sent to the firms supplied with specifications postponing the date for receiving tenders. By referring to page 13 of the Treasury agreement, Clause 11, you will see that the engines and rolling stock were to be of a suitable type for the efficient working of the line, and at page 15 of the Blue Book the quantity was estimated as follows:—6 locomotives; 6 composite carriages; 14 thirds; 4 brakevans; 80 wagons; 2 combined carriages and timber trucks; 1 horse box. It is in no hostile spirit

that your attention is drawn to the present position, but with a view to co-operating with your Board in procuring rolling stock on the most favourable terms, and of a class that will enable the company to work the line efficiently and satisfactorily."

18944. That is perfectly clear; what is the reply to that?—"I am directed by the Commissioners to state that they have pleasure in forwarding copies of the specification for the locomotives and rolling stock. The Board recognise the spirit expressed in the concluding portion of your letter and they have caused the question under correspondence to be carefully inquired into by experts of great experience, and have given it full consideration, and they believe that the engines and rolling stock proposed to be supplied will be found suitable. Minor alterations in detail can of course be arranged for if necessity arises. The Board, as conveyed in their last letter, will be glad if your company's officers will confer with the railway engineer in connection with such points as suggest themselves, if your directors desire it. I am to add that this estimate of rolling stock was only the estimate of the Secretary of the company, and was not accepted by the investigators, or by this Board.

18945. Did that conference take place between the representatives of the Board of Works on the spot and your officers?—It did.

18946. And what was the outcome of that?—The outcome was that they agreed to meet Mr. Malcolm, our superintendent, and manager, while the Board was represented by their engineer and by Mr. Livesey. The letter which was read yesterday was Mr. Malcolm's report of what took place.

18947. That is bringing it up to that point?—Yes.

18948. Were any minor points mentioned?—None were mentioned in Mr. Malcolm's Report, and I am not sure whether any were discussed.

18949. Have you mentioned any to the Board of Works in the correspondence?—No; we confined ourselves to the question of principle—tank or tender.

18950. *Mr. Acworth.*—That letter spoke of the Board having been very carefully advised by its experts, I think?—Yes, in the plural.

18951. You have told us they were advised by Mr. Livesey?—Yes.

18952. Do you know who the other expert was?—There was no one else, unless it was their civil engineer.

(*Mr. Acworth to the Chairman*).—But the letter says that the Board was advised by its experts—experts in the plural—and I got from the Secretary that as far as he knows nobody but Mr. Livesay was consulted.

18953. *Chairman.*—And the resident man, I suppose?—The civil engineer and the manager; there was no mechanical engineer consulted on the question.

18954. As far as you know?—As far as I know.

18955. *Lord Pirrie.*—Was not the stationmaster or their agent consulted?—No.

Lord Pirrie.—I thought his opinion was taken on all subjects.

18956. *Chairman.*—Were the engines supplied in accordance with the specification that has been printed?—They were supplied fairly well, but not quite in accordance. There were numerous improvements suggested by ourselves and some by the builders; but there were some points on which the engines, when they arrived did not conform to the specification; but they were not very large.

18957. The crux seemed to be that your advisers strongly recommended tender engines, and the Board of Works supplied tank engines?—Yes.

18958. Is not that the real point?—That is the real point. I wanted to say that before this interview with Mr. Batchen took place, we asked for a plan of the engines and a profile of the gradients of the line, and neither could be supplied. The order had been placed by the Board without any plan of the engine being before them or the builders, and without any profile of the gradients to be worked, being prepared. Mr. Malcolm would not give us any recommendation until we gave him all those data.

18959. All the plans and specifications for the line were prepared by your own engineer?—No doubt; but my point is——

18960. But that is so, is it not? Therefore, you had it within your power to give all the particulars from your own engineer—you have got all that information?—At this time he had been taken over, and his plans with him, into the service of the Board of Works.

18961. He had left you?—We have an engineer, and had one then, and if we had given him the working of the plans he could have prepared the profile, but we thought they had a profile before them.

18962. You mean a section of the gradients?—A section of the gradients showing the ups and downs; but we found that they did not use one in ordering the engines.

Allegation as to neglect to supply a section of the gradients on the Burtonport line to the builders of the engines.

18963. It is not usual to get these sections of gradient out until the line is about to be completed, is it?—It is necessary in designing an engine to know any figures or a profile of the gradients to be worked.

18964. If you know there is a gradient of 1 in 50 for a certain distance, and that that is the worst gradient, is not that quite sufficient?—I do not think so. A good deal depends on the continuity of the gradient. If you are climbing all the way for ten miles, even though the worst gradient is not a bad one, it is a strain on the engine to get to the summit.

18965 But you knew all about that?—We did; and that is why we wanted tender engines, but the builders did not know it.

18966. But you need not make a grievance of the Board of Works not supplying a section of the gradients when you knew all about it?

Mr. Acworth.—But the point is that they did not supply the information to the builder, so that the builder did not know what the engines had to do.

Chairman.—But everything is specified.

Mr. Acworth.—They had not the material to specify.

Witness.—The builders, when they came over, after a year and a half, and saw the line that had to be worked. told me and the chairman of the company that if they had known the gradients that had to be worked they would not have recommended the engines they were building, but they had to build them according to orders.

Chairman.—That is what I say—they had to build them according to order.

18967. *Mr. Acworth.*—Did they build to a detailed specification or were they invited, to some extent, to make their own specification?—It was a very general specification. All the expert work of translating what was in the specification into actual machinery was done in their own drawing office by their own staff at the works.

Allegation as to insufficient details in the specification of the engines furnished to the builders.

18968. Was it only a specification on certain leading points—the weight on the wheels, and that kind of thing?—It was a more detailed specification than that.

18969. *Chairman.*—It must have been?—A good deal more detailed than that.

18970. You have the specification, have you not?—I have. (*The specification handed to Chairman.*)

18971. *Lord Pirrie.*—It gives the size of the tubes, and so on, I suppose?—Yes, and the diameter of the wheels.

18972. *Chairman.*—At any rate, the engines were supplied. I think, according to the evidence given when this line was applied for, the estimate was for six engines?—Yes.

18973. How many were supplied?—Four.

18974. And did you consider that would be sufficient for the traffic?—We did not.

18975. I suppose it would have been barely sufficient for two trains a day?—The manager's estimate of six was for two trains a day and occasional specials. The Board accepted the estimate of the traffic, but rejected the estimate of the quantity of stock.

Complaint as to insufficiency of the engines and rolling stock supplied.

Mr. Acworth.—I should have imagined this to be a detailed specification (*indicating the specification*).

Lord Pirrie.—No, it is not a detailed specification; it is a broad specification; it does not give the actual particulars. There are various points, which I take it, were worked out by the builders' experts in the drawing office. I would not call it a detailed specification.

Chairman.—You know a good deal about shipbuilding, but I think I would prefer Mr. Aspinall's opinion on that. (*Handing the specification to Mr. Aspinall.*)

Mr. Aspinall.—It is only a very general specification; you might build anything on that.

Lord Pirrie.—Then you support the shipbuilder.

18976. *Chairman.*—Then about the rolling stock; there has been no complaint that I have heard about the rolling stock?—Except as to the quantity; we complained very strongly about the quantity.

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Protest as to the inadequacy of the proposed supply made by working company before opening of the line.

18977. I think it has been admitted, even by the Board of Works, that contingent upon certain things and conditions, all the rolling stock would have been supplied?—Yes; but I wanted to correct two things in their evidence about that. At first they said that the application for additional stock was not made by us until after the line was opened and traffic had increased. The facts are that we began to protest about the inadequate supply on the 16th May, 1901, and have kept at it steadily ever since.

18978. When was the line opened?—On the 9th March, 1903.

18979. I understood it was within two or three months?—We began to apply two years before the line was opened—in ample time.

18980. What did you complain of two years before the line was opened—as to the quantity?—Yes. You will recollect that the engineer of the Board of Works said that by agreement with us the number of carriages was reduced from fourteen to twelve on condition that we got another compartment, and the letter in which we confirmed that arrangement is as follows:—"Whilst my Directors confirm the several matters put forward by Mr. Fisher and myself with reference to the type of rolling stock, they desire me to say clearly and explicitly that they consider the quantity of rolling stock proposed is altogether insufficient for the proper working of the existing traffic, and that unless a very much larger quantity of rolling stock is supplied, it would be impossible to work the line efficiently or to develop the district. The number of engines proposed is four. The minimum mileage will probably be 80,000 miles, or 20,000 per engine. This is an excessive mileage for a narrow gauge engine, and clearly illustrates my Directors' contention that the quantity proposed is altogether too small, and the same thing applies as regards the carriages and wagons."

18981. What is the date of that?—The 16th May, 1901, two years before the opening of the line.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

THIRTY-THIRD PUBLIC SITTING—WEDNESDAY, 15TH MAY, 1907,

At the Board of Trade Offices, 8 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel W. HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH, and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL.

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Chairman.—I think I had better announce, for the information of the parties concerned, that the next sittings of the Commission will be in London; we shall sit on Thursday and Friday, 6th and 7th June, and on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 10th 11th, and 12th June. The meetings will not be held in this room, but due notice will be given as to where they will take place.

Mr. ANDREW SPENCE further examined by the CHAIRMAN.

May 15, 1907

Mr. Andrew Spence, Secretary of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company.

18982. I forget where we left off yesterday?—You asked me about the quantity of stock, and I said there were two errors of the Board of Works on this subject that I wished to correct.

18983. I asked you about the carriages and wagons?—The number of carriages and wagons supplied.

18984. Yes?—The first error I wish to refer to is, where the Board of Works stated, in the answers to questions 15237 and 15244, that the increase in traffic necessitating additional rolling stock did not occur until five or six months after the opening of the line, and it was not till then that the company applied for some.

18985. *Lord Pirrie.*—What page is that?—It is on page 16 of my proof.

18986. *Chairman.*—But I suppose you have quoted from the official notes?—I have given the number of the questions in the official notes.

18987. That will be sufficient?—It is down on the notes.

18988. What have you got to remark on that?—That that statement is wholly wrong. The letters urging on the Board of Works the advice my directors had received as to the quantity of stock required were addressed to the Board on the 17th April, 16th May, and 8th June, 1901, two years before the opening of the line—about the time the order for the stock was given—and on the 27th January, 3rd February, 22nd April, 19th May, 26th May, 30th May, 8th August, 14th July, and 7th September, 1903, being the year in which the line was opened.

18989. You may read one letter from you to the Board of Works with reference to the rolling stock—the first letter you wrote after the line was opened?—Yesterday I read at your request one letter written on the subject before the order was placed.

18990. I know, but I am now speaking of another matter. The rolling stock was supplied in accordance with the expert advice given to the Board of Works. Now, what communications passed between you and the Board of Works after you received the rolling stock and commenced to work the line—what was the first letter?—The first letter was on the 26th January, 1903, after the stock had come, but before the line was opened.

18991. That will do?—"Sir, My Directors have just obtained from your engineer, Mr. Batchen, an inventory of the rolling stock provided for the Burtonport Railway. As you are aware, the equipment which has been provided consists of four engines, twelve carriages, and sixty-two wagons. My Directors desire me to say that they consider this equipment altogether insufficient for the working of the line, and that more must be supplied for the proper working of it. They have taken out particulars of the rolling stock owned by narrow gauge railways in Ireland, and find that if the Burtonport Railway had been equipped on the basis of this average, no less than nine engines, twenty-four carriages, seven vans, and 169 wagons would have been provided. It will be seen that this is more than twice the equipment supplied. For the Killybegs and Glenties lines" (I should explain that these lines were also equipped by the Board of Works out of the public funds a couple of years previously; therefore, they afforded a good precedent), "with a mileage of 43½ miles, six engines, seventeen carriages, and four other vehicles, and seventy-eight wagons were provided. My Directors would ask you to look into the list of rolling stock supplied and compare it, as they have done, with the supply of other lines under similar conditions with a view to the reasonable equipment of the railway for the traffic anticipated, as it is most undesirable that they should be crippled at the opening stages, and the advantages of the new railway curtailed from the fact of the rolling stock being so inadequate. Seeing that the line will be ready for opening at an early date, a reply stating what you purpose doing will oblige."

Company's letter of 26th January, 1903, to Board of Works as to supply of rolling stock.

18992. What is the answer to that?—The answer is dated the 28th January:—"I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to refer to your letter of 26th inst., as to the rolling stock provided for the equipment of the Burtonport railway, and to state that the comparison of the rolling stock with that supplied to the Glenties Railway is not a fair one. Apart from the consideration that the requirements of the Burtonport line were carefully considered, having regard to the character and population of the district and its traffic-producing properties, I am to remind you that the Killybegs and Glenties lines were constructed at different periods, and separately equipped with rolling stock, and that even if the circumstances were analogous any comparison between the Burtonport and these railways should be with the rolling stock of each individual line. The Board also desire me to point out that as a matter of fact the Killybegs and Glenties Railways were provided with more than the usual supplies of rolling stock under the special circumstances of each case. As regards the rolling stock owned by narrow gauge railways in Ireland referred to by you, I am to request that you will communicate particulars as a matter of information. The Board desire me to remind your company that they were fully aware of all the circumstances connected with the provision of the rolling stock, and to state that this is not the proper time to put forward a claim for an additional equipment, as any application of this nature should have been made long since. I am to add that before deciding as to the extent of the engines and rolling stock required for the Burtonport Railway, the Board obtained the best advice on the subject available, which was only given after a full investigation of all the circumstances."

Board of Works' reply of 28th January, 1903.

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18993. Who signed that?—It is signed "George E. Shanahan, Assistant Secretary." You will recollect, sir, that they alleged that the Glenties and Killybegs lines were similar as regards the type of engine, but they deny that they were similar as regards the traffic-producing properties of the district or the quantity.

18994. I think that clears up that part of the question. Now, what about the men that you employed?—Well, sir, I said there was a second error in the Board of Works evidence that I wished to correct.

18995. What is the reference to the question?—Question No. 15244.

Question of the adequacy of the supply of rolling stock for the Burtonport line.

18996. Where is that in your abstract?—In question 15249, page sixteen of my proof.

18997. What is the statement?—The Board's Engineer was asked by Colonel Poë if the offer of additional stock was made practically as soon as the line was opened, and he replied, "Yes. The Board saw very soon after the line was opened that a third train service would be necessary."

18998. What do you want to say upon that?—The Board's witness, who was examined the day before yesterday, said the offer was made six months after the line was opened. The fact is that the offer was not made until eighteen months after the line was opened, when the engines had completely failed, when the traffic was being carried on with our own engines, and when things were at their worst.

18999. I do not remember the statement that it was six months after the line was opened that the Board of Works offered to supply rolling stock; I think you are wrong there?—Well, the notes will show that when they are printed; I took it down at the moment.

19000. At any rate, I do not think anything turns upon that that is material. We have now got from you, at any rate, proof that two years before the line was opened you wrote for considerably more rolling stock than the Board of Works intended to provide?—Yes.

19001. And that just before the line was opened you have read the letter in which you detailed what you thought was necessary?—Yes.

19002. Now we will leave it there. What have you to say about the men? You have heard the evidence given to us with reference to the incompetency of the men?—Yes.

The alleged incompetency of the engine drivers on the Burtonport line.

19003. What have you to say upon that? First of all, is it within your knowledge as to the capacity of these men?—Yes, I am familiar with them—everyone of them.

19004. Did you hear the evidence of Mr. Shanahan?—I did.

19005. And did you notice the dates that were given of the complaints made as to breakdowns?—I did.

19006. And as to certain men being dismissed?—I did.

19007. Would you just tell us generally what you have got to say upon that?—A great number of the changes that took place in the engine men occurred in consequence of the strike which broke out on the line in the month of November, 1903.

19008. How long was that after the line was opened?—Eight or nine months; and from the strike on for a year very numerous changes took place; but the injury to the engines—the failure of the engines—was all prior to this, while they were being driven by our own trained and trusted men. The suggestion that it was the fault of the men is a very obvious one. It did not require any ingenuity to suggest that. We thought of it ourselves at first, but when the breakdowns occurred with one man after another, always with these engines, we began to look elsewhere for the cause. We brought in Mr. Malcolm, and he reported.

19009. I want you to deal with the period before the strike—before your difficulty. As to what occurred after the strike, I do not think you need say a word, because we know that certain men had to be taken on, and under circumstances such as those irregularities necessarily would occur. We will not deal with that period at all. That is exceptional. But now, before the strike, or a month or two after the railway was opened, instances were given?—I do not know whether you have got them?—I know them all.

19010. Very well. Can you deal with the man who was dismissed for drunkenness on the Great Northern, and engaged by you as driver, and dismissed by you in June, 1903—that was just after the line was opened?—What was his name?,

19011. I do not think it is right to mention his name. You said you had got all the particulars?—I cannot identify him from those particulars.

19012. I thought you said you knew all the particulars?—I do.

19013. I will let you read that in the proof—just those remarks there (*handing document to witness*).

Mr. Shanahan.—I refrained advisedly from mentioning names. I will give them privately to Mr. Spence.

Chairman.—Put them down on a slip of paper.

Mr. Shanahan.—That is No. 1 (*showing a paper to witness*).

Witness.—That man was recommended to us by Mr. Batchen; he drove on the line before the line was opened, and was highly recommended by Mr. Batchen. He was taken on at the time as fireman, and was afterwards promoted to be driver, and he remained with us until he resigned.

Mr. Shanahan.—That man came from the Donegal Railway, and was dismissed for drink.

Mr. Batchen.—May I deny Mr. Spence's statement sir?

Witness.—I will prove it.

19014. *Chairman.*—At any rate, it does not matter who recommended him really. The man was in your service at the opening of this railway as a fireman, was he?—Yes.

19015. Then he was promoted to be driver?—Yes.

19016. And he was several times cautioned, I think, for being drunk and for leaving passenger trains standing on an incline, and subsequently he was dismissed?—Yes. I am not sure as to his being cautioned several times; I have no record of that, but I know he was dismissed for drink.

19017. And he was afterwards re-employed by you?—I do not think so.

19018. I am not going into all these cases, but this seems to me a typical case of an incompetent man upon an engine, and it explains some of the causes why this line was improperly worked?—I do not think that it was a typical case, because there are cases of men in the employment still who drove these engines after the line was opened, and they are still giving satisfaction.

19019. He was dismissed in 1903?—He was.

19020. June, 1903?—Or thereabouts.

19021. We have got the dates. Then in June, 1904 you re-employed him. If you do not know anything about it, say so, and we can go on?—Well, I know generally, but I am not aware that he was re-employed. I am not able to say whether he was re-employed or not. I have asked to have the papers found to see if it was so. (*After examining papers.*) Yes, sir; I have traced the man's career. He joined the Company's service in February, 1903, as fireman; he was promoted to be driver on the 2nd June. Of course he came as a passed fireman from the Donegal line. He was reduced to fireman on the 23rd June, 1903, instead of being dismissed for the incident alluded to. He resigned because of his reduction on the 26th June. He rejoined the Company's service on the 5th June, 1904, as fireman on the main line, but was not employed on the Burtonport line.

19022. He was re-employed in June, 1904?—He was. sir, as far as the main line was concerned.

19023. In November, 1904, was he reported for drunkenness again?—He was, and dismissed.

19024. About No. 2—that is another case. I am speaking of cases now immediately after the line was opened. (*The witness examined certain papers*). I think we will dispense with this. You heard the evidence given of a series of men who were incompetent and dismissed the service. Have you any reason to believe that the statements given to us were incorrect? I will put it broadly in that way?—I think that the facts were correct, but that the sweeping inferences drawn were unwarranted, and the damage alleged to be done by the men wholly exaggerated.

19025. But a drunken man on an engine might easily go short of water, and do other damage to his engine—you will admit that, of course?—Certainly.

19026. But you say, I suppose, that the real cause was the engines themselves?—I do, because we at first thought it was the men; we were very strict with them,

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and we changed them, and selected the best, but the engines failed with one man after another. Then we asked Mr. Malcolm's advice on the 8th November, 1903—before the strike, but after the failure of the engines. He reported as follows:—"I am of opinion that tank engines, such as those in question, are not suitable for the work, and that tender engines of the type described in various reports dated 9th and 19th January, 26th April, 13th May, and 28th June, addressed to you, and 27th July, 1901, addressed to the Board of Works, would have proved more suitable in every way. The engines have neither fuel nor water-carrying capacity for such long runs as those on the Burtonport Extension, and frequent and serious delays and constant inconvenience is the result. I fear I can add nothing to what I have said in those reports, except that I am convinced that a serious mistake was made in forcing tank engines on you for this work." I also want to say that when our new tender engines came we were anxious that they should be given every chance, and we selected two drivers who were in our employment when the Burtonport line opened, and who had driven the Burtonport engines and failed with them. These were the men that we chose to take charge of our new tender engines, which cost us £2,750 each. One of the drivers—an excellent fellow—was unfortunately killed a short time afterwards owing to the breaking of the draw-bar to which the witness of the Board of Works referred. Another driver named Butler, who was in at least a dozen breakdowns with the Burtonport engines, was given charge of one of these tank engines after we had re-designed it, put in a new fire box, reduced the number and diameter of the tubes, thereby increasing the centre-to-centre of the tubes, and strengthened it in other ways. He got the engine handed over as it came from the maker; he drove it for 30,000 miles; he handed it over——

19027. 30,000 miles in what period?—In about fourteen months; every day except washing-out days, from the day he got it until he brought it back to the works, and it was handed over in perfect condition, ordinary wear and tear excepted, and we have since promoted him to one of the tender engines. These are the men that broke down with the tank engines.

19028. Some of the men?—That is one of the men who were blamed for ruining them.

19029. I think we have had enough about the men; we will not go into further details about the men?—He had not a single breakdown during the whole 30,000 miles.

19030. Are those engines running now?—They are.

19031. We heard from Mr. Shanahan that, on the whole, the working of the extension was giving satisfaction now?—It is.

19032. To the satisfaction of the district?—It is fairly up to the average narrow-gauge single-line work.

19033. What is the service—how many trains per day?—Three trains per day.

19034. I suppose you admit that the line was constructed in accordance with your own engineer's plans?—I would rather not go into that; the witness who is to follow me will go into the construction question.

19035. I am not speaking of the construction so much as that the line was laid out, and the specifications for the contractors drawn up by your own engineers and surveyors; is not that so?—They were approved by the Board of Works.

19036. Then we understood yesterday that this engineer had left your service and had joined the Board of Works?—That is true.

19037. And the same man carried out the works?—He became the resident engineer under the Board's engineer.

19038. Under another engineer?—Under the engineer to the Board, who has been before this Commission.

19039. What about coal—something was said about inferior coal?—I say that we buy the best coal in Ireland.

19040. Irish coal?—It is Welsh—Monmouthshire steam coal, bought by us from the Ebbw Vale Company. We have had contracts running with the Ebbw Vale Company since before the opening of the Burtonport line.

19041. Was Welsh steam coal supplied to the Burtonport line?—It was.

19042. And used on these engines?—Used on these engines.

19043. Of course, Welsh coal varies; sometimes you may get it better than at other times?—We get always the same brand from the same colliery, and at that time it was being got double-screened, but we were advised that to have it double-screened was something of a luxury, more suitable for a gentleman's yacht than a railway, and now we are only screening it once

19044. You used only the Welsh steam coal?—We did then, and we do now.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

Effect of the Treasury agreement in respect of Carndonagh and Burtonport lines.

19045. I should just like to ask you a few questions as to the effect of the Treasury Agreement in respect of the Carndonagh Line and the Burtonport Line. Am I right in stating that the Treasury Agreement, in respect of the Burtonport Line was supplemental to that in respect of the Carndonagh Line?—You are.

19046. And that a clause was inserted in the Carndonagh Agreement that if a line should at any future time be constructed in the direction of Burtonport, the Lough Swilly Company would undertake to work and maintain that line?—That is right; they were, in that sense, joint undertakings.

19047. Is not the whole of the Treasury Agreement with reference to the Burtonport line starting with the preamble to that Agreement, to this effect—it says here:—"And whereas the Treasury are satisfied that the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company being an existing railway company, will, if an advance is made by the Treasury under Section 1 of the Act of 1896, construct, work, and maintain the railway,"—that is, the Burtonport Railway; is not that the preamble to the Agreement?—Yes.

19048. And the whole of the Treasury Agreement is based upon the understanding that the Lough Swilly Company were, as a matter of fact, not only going to work and maintain the line but they were to construct it?—Quite so.

Bearing of Clause 11 of Treasury agreement on the question of promoting company's obligation to start the construction of the line within a specified period.

19049. There is a clause also in that Agreement, rather an unusual one, I think, giving the Board of Works power, in the event of the promoting company not taking up the contract at the end of six months, to take up the contract themselves; it is Clause 11?—Yes.

19050. That is rather an unusual thing, I take it?—Most unusual.

19051. Might I ask you if you can give any reason why your company did not undertake the construction as it had practically covenanted to do under that Agreement?—It was wrested from us by an unfair use of that Clause.

19052. In what way do you mean "wrested" from you?—That Clause provides that if no contract is entered into within six months of the Order becoming binding they can take it out of our hands. I say that the Board of Works, after they got the approved plans delayed over six months before issuing advertisements for tenders——

19053. Just wait one moment. The confirmation of the Treasury agreement was 25th July, 1898, and six months from then would bring you to 25th January, 1899?—Yes.

19054. What was the date when the contract was taken out of your hands in consequence of your not being ready to take up the construction?—It was taken out of our hands in May, 1899.

19055. Practically a year after?—Practically a year after.

Alleged cause of delay on the part of promoting company in proceeding to take up a contract for the construction of the Burtonport line.

19056. That surely gave you plenty of time to take up the contract under the terms of the Agreement?—Yes; but my answer was that the Board of Works themselves delayed the issue of advertisements for tenders until the time had elapsed, thereby, in our opinion, waiving that Clause. But they revived it afterwards quite suddenly and unexpectedly in connection with a dispute as regards promotion expenses. We issued a Writ and took proceedings, by Petition of Right, to compel them to allow us to go on. But after the date of the trial had been fixed, we took counsel's opinion, and he advised us that on the construction of the Agreement we could not succeed, and the proceedings dropped.

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19057. Might I ask you when the inquiry by the railway officials—the Railway Traffic Manager and the Railway Engineer—as to the suitability of the line was instituted; was it after the Treasury Order was confirmed by the Order in Council? When did the Inquiry as to the suitability of the line and the satisfaction of the district which it passed through take place?—You mean the Inquiry by the Investigators?

19058. Yes?—The Investigators under the Act went down before the Order in Council; that is a procedure precedent to obtaining an Order; you require to have that in order to obtain an Order.

Dates of the inquiry by the investigators, the Treasury agreement, and the Order in Council.

19059. Having obtained an order on the strength of the Investigators' Report, when were tenders invited?—Tenders were invited on 6th February, 1899.

19060. 6th February, 1899?—Yes, a year after the Report.

19061. No; the Order in Council was 25th July, 1898; that is, seven months after the Order?—After the Agreement.

19062. The Agreement was in January, 1898?—Yes; a year after.

19063. Clause 11 was only to take effect within six months of the Order becoming binding; and of course the Treasury Agreement did not become binding until after the Order in Council confirming it. The Order in Council was dated 25th July; and therefore Clause 11 did not become binding until 25th January. You cannot dispute that, surely?—The Order in Council is dated May, I think.

19064. 25th July, 1898?—That is the Act of Parliament confirming the Order. The Order was given at the Council Chamber, Dublin, on the 18th May, 1898.

19065. But it did not become binding until the Act of Parliament confirmed it, surely?

Mr. Acworth.—The six months may have run from another date.

Absence of the representatives of promoting company at the opening of the tenders by the Board of Works explained.

19066. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At any rate tenders were invited early in February, 1899; and it was part of the Treasury Agreement that those tenders should be opened in the presence of the officials of the company; and we were told the other day that for some reason or other your company did not choose to send representatives?—That is so.

19067. Why not? I should have thought that you were almost bound to under the Agreemnt. The tenders were based on the plans which your own engineer had provided?—We were quite willing to accept whatever they reported by post the amounts of the tenders were; our presence was not absolutely necessary.

19068. At any rate, you had the opportunity?—We objected to go, on the ground I have explained, because the promotion expenses which we had already incurred had not been paid.

19069. What reason have you for saying that?

19070. *Chairman.*—There must have been a little temper in this?—There was.

19071. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At any rate, you admit that you had the opportunity of attending there, for what it was worth?—Certainly.

19072. And that the tenders were based upon your own plans and specifications?—Certainly.

Manner in which the free grant was determined.

19073. The free grant was determined by the lowest tender?—The lowest tender did not include the price of the rolling stock, the land, the permanent way material, the cost of engines, and rolling stock, and the engineering and promotion expenses.

19074. Pardon me a moment. Sec. 3 says that the free grant shall be determined in such and such a way; and then it says: That from the free grant there shall be deducted the sum of money produced by the issue of the guaranteed capital of the company and the remainder, including the amount required for the engines and rolling stock shall be the amount of the free grant" ?—Yes.

Alleged variation of Clause 3 of the Treasury agreement by the Board of Works.

19075. So that the free grant included the provision of rolling stock?—It ought to have included it; but that Clause was varied by the Board of Works; and that variation of the Clause brought on us all this trouble, or a great deal of it.

19076. Will you give the Commission your reason for saying that that Clause was varied by the Board of Works?—Because they accepted from the contractor a tender which, so far from fixing the total amount of the free grant, did not include the items I have named, the cost of land, the cost of the permanent way material, the cost of engines and rolling stock, and the cost of the engineering and promotion expenses. They entered into separate agreements for the land, for the permanent way material, and for the engines and rolling stock, and when we asked them to enter into a separate supplemental Agreement with regard to the engineering and promotion expenses which we had incurred, they declined to do so; for that reason we did not attend, and it was then that the negotiations broke down.

19077. You did not attend the opening of the tenders; is that what you mean?—Yes.

19078. The amount of that grant was something like £315,000?—Yes; but the amount of the tenders which you say should fix it, was only £224,000, that was afterwards reduced to £219,500.

19079. Under that Agreement, the Treasury were to be the sole Arbiters as to the solvency of the contractor, and so on?—Oh, yes.

19080. So that it was in their province to determine whether the tender was a sufficient one. At any rate we have had evidence that out of the £315,000 a sum of £20,000 was expended on rolling stock for the Burtonport Line. Have you any reason to contradict that?—No; but, as I have stated, it was wholly inadequate.

19081. In the Carndonagh Agreement, under which the amount of money allocated for the provision of rolling stock was in a separate Clause, there is a Clause providing that a sum of £15,000 shall be raised, and not less than £10,000 expended on rolling stock?—Yes.

19082. As a matter of fact, I think we have it, that about £12,000 was expended?—The true facts are, that we expended over £17,000 on the rolling stock for the Carndonagh Extension.

19083. £17,000. It was given in evidence before us that the amount was £12,000; the Cardonagh Line is some eighteen miles long, I think?—It is.

19084. And the cost of that line was given in evidence before us as £6,200, including rolling stock; or, £5,600, exclusive of it?—Yes.

19085. That line, I believe, was constructed on the most expensive principle, the work was of the most elaborate description, and stations were provided which would have been suitable for the L. and S. W., or any of the English lines?—It was constructed in accordance with plans approved by the Board of Works.

19086. At any rate, it was constructed in a very substantial manner?—Yes; we say it was constructed on plans approved by the Board of Works, and that it really corresponded to those plans. We say that the Burtonport Railway was constructed on plans approved by the Board of Works, but that the works did not at all correspond to the plans.

19087. As regards the relative cost, I think the cost of construction of the Burtonport Line came to £6,000, exclusive of rolling stock, and £6,400, inclusive?—Yes.

19088. In other words, some £400 in excess of the Carndonagh line. And we know—at least I believe—that the gradients and curves on the Burtonport line involved considerably heavier and more expensive works?—We do not allege that too little money was spent on the Burtonport line. On the contrary, we allege that true value was not got for the money spent, because the contractors were allowed to depart from the plans and specifications to a very large extent: and that therefore value was not obtained for the contract sum.

19089. We had it in evidence the other day that with regard to the deviations from the original specification they had to submit them to your company, and that, as a matter of fact, your company refused to give their consent until they were handed over a certain sum of money by the contractors. That has never been disproved or contradicted. At any rate, whether you received the money or not, the deviations were approved of by your company, and *ipso facto* you were a consenting party to those deviations?—Allow me to explain. We do not complain of the deviations of which we approved, and which were afterwards authorised by a separate Order in Council. A bargain is a bargain, and if they had been twice as bad we would not have said a word. What we do allege is, that the detailed works, both on the original line and on the deviated line, are wholly inferior to the works as set out in the working plans, specifications, contracts, and other documents.

19090. Will you answer the suggestion I make to you? It was suggested in evidence before us the other day that a sum of money was received by your company in order to obtain their consent to promoting an Order in Council sanctioning these deviations, which were considered essential in the interests of the line?—I will. The first we heard of these deviations——

19091. *Chairman.*—Is it true?—Absolutely true, quite true.

19092. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You received a sum of money before you gave your consent?—Certainly. I will explain it, if you will allow me. The first we heard of these deviations was when the Board of Works, who were in charge of the line, informed us that proposals to deviate had been made, and they sent us the plans to get our consent. The engineer to the Board of Works followed us with considerable pressure to persuade us to agree to these deviations. I will read you a letter from him dated 29th July, 1899, in which he said:—"I received your letter of this day's date, and am now sending you herewith the plans of the deviation proposed by the contractor, and referred to in the Board's letter of the 25th inst. As I mentioned to you, I have been asked by my Board to exhibit these plans to you and answer any question I can in regard to them, and I would respectfully urge upon you that your directors do send for me this afternoon previous to discussing among themselves the merits of the deviations. I would point out that the Arbitrator begins his hearing in connection with the purchase of land on Monday, the 1st"—(that was the extent of the notice we got)—"and to prevent a double purchase of land it is desirable to get the opinion of the directors as early as possible. I shall remain in my rooms all this afternoon, and if you send a messenger for me at any time I will be glad to attend on your directors." We placed that in the hands of the resident engineer for his report. He replied on the 1st August saying that the details were not sufficient to enable him to give an official report. On the 16th August he reported fully on the proposal. There were eight deviations, four of which were not recommended, two were described as unobjectionable, and two were recommended.

19093. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That was your engineer's report?—Yes. It was the engineer who was at the time in a transition stage between our employment and that of the Board. While the Petition of Right to which I have referred was pending, we sent them to him to help us with his report. We were not aware at that time that he had gone into the employment of the Board, but in making his report he mentioned that among other things.

19094. That was on the 16th August—what next?—In that report he stated that the deviations would give a worse line, steeper gradients, sharper curves, and greater length. I will read you what he said.

19095. I do not think we want that, but the point I wish to get at is this—assuming that the deviations in his opinion were not suitable and were not in the interests of the line—we will assume that?—He believed it would enormously reduce the cost of the line.

19096. I do not think that is the point; what we want to get at is, what justified your company in accepting deviations which they considered were not desirable, and what justified them, when they held such an opinion, in accepting money to waive those opinions?—We agreed to those deviations with the greatest reluctance.

19097. Granted. But you apparently took a sum of money and then accepted them—that is the point I think we should like to be satisfied about?—We wrote to the Board of Works on the 2nd of August saying:—"Taking into consideration the fact that the contract plans have been approved and tenders taken thereon, my directors consider the alterations proposed would open the door to an infinite amount of trouble."

19098. That is all going on the same line, showing that you objected to these details—will you come to the point, please?—We objected, because it gave us a line longer and more difficult to work.

19099. We are agreed upon that point—that you objected to these deviations *in toto*. What we want to know is, how it came to pass that, having these opinions, you waived them in consideration of a sum of money?—Quite so. The contractor's partner came to our solicitors and opened negotiations. The legality of receiving any portion of the money he offered was raised by my directors, and he advised us that we were perfectly justified in accepting it, and the sum of £5,900 was received, and was distributed as follows:—£4,000 to the company as against the additional cost of working and maintaining a worse line than the original line; £1,500 to the solicitor for the legal expenses (because, of course, he had to get the presentment from the Grand Jury, the Order from the Privy Council, and to take up the new line just the same as a new railway, and for all that preliminary legal expense, he got £1,500); and £400 for engineering—we did the engineering and prepared the Parliamentary plans of this line—the Parliamentary plans of this line were prepared by Mr. Cooke and Mr. Hall and lodged by them.

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Explanation regarding the money received by the promoting company from the contractors for agreeing to the variations from the original plans.

19100. I do not think we need follow that point out. When you agreed to these modifications and deviations—as I suppose you did officially through the Board of Works—did you inform them that you had done so with great reluctance, but that seeing you received a sum of £5,900 (part of which was to go to, we will say, legal expenses which you were justified in taking), you agreed to them, because you received a sum of money—£4,000—which, in your opinion, would recoup you for the extra expense involved by this additional cost of working—did you inform them of anything to that effect?—We informed them there was an agreement, but we did not communicate the terms of it to them. At that time the relations between us were somewhat strained. These are the Parliamentary plans to which I refer, signed by Mr. G. Hall and Mr. G. Y. F. Cook, our engineer (*producing same*).

19101. One point that struck us as curious was this. We have heard a great deal about rebates. Apparently the negotiations between this company and the Board of Works and the contractors were something very much of the same kind?—We never heard such a suggestion until the Board of Works witness gave his evidence in Dublin. The transaction was a perfectly open one. We were informed by the contractor that the Board of Works knew all about it, and it was openly referred to by the company in a letter addressed to the Board of Works—a letter of 31st December, 1901.

19102. *Chairman.*—Did that letter state the amount?—It did not; it referred to the fact of the agreement.

19103. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It said nothing about money passing?—No.

19104. At any rate, the fact was that certain money passed, of which you got £4,000 to recoup you for working the line, and so on. Now, having accepted that money, I do not see what right you had to complain afterwards that you were put to expense?—I will repeat that there is not a single item in our claim of £78,000 based on the authorised deviations to which we agreed under that agreement. What we allege is that the principal agreement and this subsidiary agreement were violated by the contractors with the permission of the Board of Works, so that we got a line to work and maintain in perpetuity very much inferior to the line we had bargained to get. Our engineer only visited the works twice during the three years while the construction was going on, and you can yourselves form an opinion as to a check that would be on the way in which the work was being done. On the two occasions that he visited it he observed serious departures from the specifications, which he reported to the Board of Works, and this they very much resented. They wrote to the Press complaining that our engineer had had the audacity to go on the line without asking their permission.

Allegation of promoting company that the plans with the deviations agreed to by them were departed from without their consent and to their loss.

19105. *Mr. Acworth.*—The Board of Works wrote to the Press?—Indeed they did. They wrote a letter which I will read. They went to the Press with this grievance. The letter is dated 23rd October, 1903, and was sent to my directors, being at the same moment sent to the Press of the whole of Ireland.

Board of Works letter to company of 23rd October, 1903. (See Appendix No. 9, III.)

19106. It was not addressed to the Press, but it was communicated to the Press?—It was communicated to the Press.

19107. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—There is just one thing I want to ask you with regard to that £5,900. You said, I think, that £1,500 was given to the solicitor of the company for the expenses involved in legal work in connection with these deviations. Who was the solicitor of the company at that time?—Dr. Todd.

19108. And he received the £1,500?—He did; for services rendered. He alleged it was not enough, of course.

19109. That is the usual practice of members of the legal profession, I fancy. At any rate, all these difficulties in which, from the very first, you were involved would have been avoided if your company had fulfilled the obligations which they were really under when they entered into the Carndonagh agreement, if they

Money paid to Dr. Todd for acting as solicitor to company.

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had taken up the contract, as they were virtually bound to do, under that agreement?—Will you kindly repeat the question?—(*The question was repeated*). I cordially agree. We say that the fatal mistake made by the Board of Works was in ousting us from this line by an unfair application of Clause 11 of the agreement which they had waived by the Bill.

Complaint as to the action of the Board of Works under Clause 11 of the Treasury agreement.

19110. You have admitted yourself that they were entitled to take up the contract in January, 1899, and, as a matter of fact, they did not take it up till May, 1899, so that surely they cannot be said to have exceeded their powers in that respect?—I go back to my point—that they departed from the provisions of the Order in Council as to the fixing of the free grant. They made supplemental agreements for the rolling stock, for the lands, and for the permanent way material. They declined to make a supplemental agreement to protect us as regards the promotion and engineering expenses which we had incurred, and that was where the negotiations broke down.

19111. But do you wish this Commission to infer—we will assume the amount of the tender in February, 1899, was £220,000—that, subsequently, finding your company would not take up the contract, and that they had to take it up themselves, in self-defence, they then introduced fresh agreements, by which they were enabled to obtain the sum of £300,000. Is that what you wish us to infer? It seems rather a strong order, but I do not know what else your contention can be?—I will explain it again. I am afraid you misunderstand the facts. As originally intended, and provided in the Order in Council, the free grant was fixed by an inclusive tender, which was to include everything.

19112. Yes, that is right?—Owing, as the Board of Works' witness stated in Dublin, to the difficulty in getting the contractor to inquire into the price of land, and other matters, they varied the Order in Council, and accepted from him, not an inclusive contract for everything, but an inclusive contract for the line. They made supplemental agreements for all these other things, but refused to make a supplemental agreement for us as regards the expenses we had incurred.

19113. But, with the exception of this provision about rolling stock, which differed in the two agreements, the acquisition of land, and all the other expenses involved in the construction of the line, were exactly the same in the case of the Cardonagh agreement and the Burtonport agreement?—Yes.

19114. So that, with the exception of your expenses, whatever the amount involved, which is very immaterial, the tenders invited for the whole of the rest of the work were based upon the same Orders in Council and Treasury agreements in both lines?—Yes; but on the Carndonagh line they did enter into a supplemental agreement.

19115. A supplemental agreement for rolling stock; but beyond that there was nothing else?—Exactly.

19116 *Chairman.*—The real reason was that they would not pay your expenses—isn't that the whole of it?—It is. Will you let me contrast it with that which was done on the Carndonagh line?

19117. Never mind that. The whole dispute has been because the Board of Works objected to pay your preliminary expenses?—The Board of Works refused to fix them by agreement.

19118. Well, but they refused to pay them. It was no use fixing them without paying them?—No. We met in Dublin, and fixed a supplemental agreement for the Carndonagh. We also came to a conclusion as regards the Burtonport, but the meeting broke up in order to enable our solicitor and the Board's solicitor to drive over to Dublin Castle and ask the Privy Council for an extension of time. Knowing that everything was settled, our solicitor applied for an extension of time, and got it, and the next morning, when we came in to have the negotiations concluded, we were shown the door, because of the letter of complaint we had written to the Treasury asking them to hurry up the Board of Works about this matter. They said we had gone past them, and they would have nothing more to do with us, and showed us the door. Then all these pains and penalties were resorted to. Would you permit me to read a clause in the letter published in the Press? "It may be pointed out, however, that even if your company had not the plans they had full opportunity of finding out everything connected with the line before it was opened for traffic, for your engineer, Mr. Hall, visited it when he thought fit, without even going through the formality of asking the permission of the Board." That is surely inconsistent with the statement that we supervised its construction.

Allegation that the company's negotiations with Board of Works broke down because of complaint made to Treasury.

19120. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Did you make any representation as to the difficulties which the Board of Works put in the way of your engineer supervising?—We did.

19121. Did they remove them?—No.

19122. Did they take any notice of your representations?—Very little indeed. Indeed none; because, when we went back to work the line, we found all the defects of which Mr. Hall had complained, or almost all the defects, still there, and others worse.

19123. And yet the engineer, who was the resident engineer under the Board of Works, was a man who had been practically in your employment, and who would probably have carried out the works if your company had taken the contract?—Yes.

19124. Was it likely that a man who was more or less in your interests——?—He was not at all in our interests. He owed no allegiance to us. He refused to make even a most simple report without a fee of five guineas a day.

19125. I suppose he did not want to serve two masters: he was serving the Board of Works, and he thought it was not incumbent upon him to serve you too. Still, the Board of Works having stepped into the position which you should have occupied as being the contractors to the railway company, was it any part of their province, in the strict sense of the law, to submit all these different matters for the opinion of your Board or your engineer? I mean if they had chosen to act according to the strict letter of the law, I suppose they need not have put them before you in any shape or form?—They did not put anything before us; but they permitted all these departures from the plans and specifications, not only without our knowledge, but contrary to our remonstrances, after they came to our notice.

19126. We can hardly accept that, because it is admitted that in every instance, although there was a certain amount of friction, no doubt, they submitted these deviations, and submitted all these various matters, to your Board and your engineer; and, as a matter of fact, they only did that, I imagine, to avoid friction. You were to work the line afterwards, and they wished to act in harmony with you; but, I suppose, it was not at all incumbent upon them to do so?—It is a great mistake to suggest that they consulted us about every single deviation from the contract plans and specifications. They consulted us as regards all deviations in the route—any deviation in the route for which we required a special Order in Council—and with which, without our consent, they could not go on, because they had to get our agreement to work what was practically a new railway. We do not complain about any of the deviations of route to which we agreed; but we complain that there were deviations from the plans and specifications for which we gave no consent, and which were to the advantage of the contractor, and to the corresponding disadvantage of the company, which had to work the line in perpetuity.

19127. I will not follow that matter any further, but I will ask you whether you were influenced in any way by the fact that at the time of the construction of the Burtonport line it was anticipated that it would not be a paying line. Was not that the case: and was there not a clause inserted in the Carndonagh agreement that in the event of the Burtonport line not paying its expenses the promoting company, the Lough Swilly Company, were to make good any deficit out of the receipts of their existing line?—Yes, as regards the working of the line.

19128. As regards the working and the maintenance of the line?—As regards the working. The expert's estimate of the receipts was mistaken. From the very first the receipts were very much higher.

19129. I am coming to that presently, if you will allow me; but let us stick to one point at a time. Under the 21st section of the Carndonagh agreement it was provided that if there was any deficit your company was to make good the deficit, and there was also a provision for the maintenance of the Burtonport line?—Out of the surplus on the Carndonagh?

19130. Yes. In other words, the one line was contemplated to be a good paying line and the other was, to be——?—To be the foster child of the other.

19131. Yes. In addition to that, you had the Letterkenny line, which was, of course, in difficulties, a badly laid out line, and so on, and in the possession of the Board of Works. Is it reasonable to suggest that your company were influenced to a certain extent by this line being in the possession of the Board of Works as mortgagees, and by the anticipated loss which would accrue on the working of the Burtonport line, and that having got a good line—the Carndonagh line—you did not very much care to fulfil the obligations which you had undertaken in the first instance, and you got out of it and threw the onus on the Board of Works which had to take your place?—On the contrary, we were anxious to get the Burtonport line, and it is entirely due to our persistent efforts that that line is there to-day. And that is shown by the fact that we took proceedings, by Petition of Right, to be allowed to go on.

19132. I take that as your answer. Now, with regard to the rolling stock. Do you dispute that in basing their estimates as to the amount of rolling stock which was to be provided, the Board of Works were not going on the recommendations of the investigators, who, I think, practically recommended—to go no further than the locomotives—that four locomotives were to be provided?—I have not seen the Investigators' report, and I read that statement with some surprise in the evidence of the Board of Works' witnesses, because, throughout the whole controversy they had never used that argument before. But it may be so.

19133. You are not in a position, at any rate, to contradict it, and I do not for one moment suppose that you would suggest that the Board of Works would put forward a statement which they could not substantiate?—No; but after reading the evidence, I do say they are not at all accurate as to some of their facts.

19134. That is a very polite way of putting it. But I suppose the Board of Works could produce the Report of the Investigators, if necessary.

Chairman.—The statement was made in the presence of Mr. Tatlow and Colonel Plews, and neither of them contradicted it.

The Witness.—Perhaps you would kindly let me see the Investigators' Report.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I have not got the Investigators' Report.

19135. *Chairman.*—You must, I think, admit that Colonel Plews——?—He was not the Investigator; it was Mr. Tatlow. I have the Blue Book of the Investigation of Mr. Tatlow and Mr. Roberts with our own Manager's estimate also; and there is nothing in the Blue Book saying what the Investigators recommended.

19136. "Notes on Evidence"?—"Notes on Evidence."

19137. But no report?—No; they made a general report afterwards; and in the copy I have there is no reference to rolling stock.

19138. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—With regard to this difference of opinion as to the relative merits of the tank engines and the tender engines, I think there is no turn-table between Kilmacrennan and Creeslough and Burtonport?—There is not.

19139. And in the event, which I believe is not unusual, of large numbers of people going to Kilmacrennan, to the fairs, or to Creeslough, and so on, a tank engine would be able to stop at those places and go back again, while a tender engine would be obliged to go on to Burtonport and back, a distance of twenty or thirty miles in order to avail itself of the turn-table?—Not at all; a tank engine requires a turn-table just as much as a tender engine does. We always turn our tank engines; we always run our tank engines funnel first, and so do all the Irish narrow gauge lines.

19140. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Why?—Because the driver has his work before him instead of behind him, and he is able to keep a proper look-out and mind his engine duties; and also because we find by experience that they run much better in forward gear than in backward gear, and the danger of heating is not so great. All the narrow gauge railways in Ireland are worked by tank engines except this long one of ours, and they are all equipped with turntables. It is quite different from running suburban trains on a level track to and fro all day.

19141. Why have you gone to the extravagance of a turntable?—Well, it was adopted before my time, and it has not yet been changed.

19142. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—In the event of these tank engines running to Kilmacrennan, for instance, would they go on to Burtonport?—No; in the event of a local train of that kind we run the tank engine backwards and the tender engine backwards.

19143. That is the point. We are saying that you do avail yourself of the tank engine, but you would not run a tender engine backwards, surely?—Yes; we have done so, but we avoid doing so as much as possible with either.

19144. As a matter of fact, do you ever run tender engines in that way?—I have frequently seen tender engines running tender first; but we avoid doing it all we can, just as we avoid running a tank engine with the bunker first.

19145. Would not the absence of a turntable be a reasonable consideration influencing the Board of Works as to the type of the engines?—No; and that was never suggested throughout the correspondence, it would not weigh for a moment.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

Tank engines run to and fro in England without being turned.

19146. With regard to the matter of turning your engines, are you not aware that quite 50 per cent. of the passenger mileage of all the great railways in England run with tank engines?—I am.

19147. And that practically they are not turned; there is no necessity for turning them?—I am aware of that.

19148. Then why, if it is only necessary in England to run them backwards and forwards without turning, is it necessary to turn them on the Burtonport railway?—The conditions are altogether different. In running in a wild country, up and down hill, where trespass is frequent, where a good look-out is necessary and where the drivers are exposed to the weather, it is quite different from running local suburban trains (which make up the 50 per cent. of mileage you speak of) to and fro all day. I really cannot justify, with an expert like yourself, this practice; but it is the case, not only with us, but with all the narrow gauge lines in Ireland. Mr. Malcolm, who stands at the head of his profession, does it on the Ballymena and Larne; Mr. Livesey, who was the Board's expert in this matter, does it on the Donegal; it is done on the Cavan and Leitrim; on the Clogher Valley and all the lines in the South of Ireland. But even if it were not, I submit that it is a very indifferent matter, because, since we opened the line in 1903, we have not had six local trains to Kilmacrennan that ran backwards without going on the whole way.

Working company's real objection to the "tank" engines, the want of sufficient coal and water storage.

19149. I do not propose to press it any further, but it seems to me an extraordinary thing that turntable should be necessary for tank engines in Ireland when they are not required in England. However, the real question between tank engines and tender engines which you have been speaking of is not that you disagree with the use of the tank engines on such a railway, but that you want to get an engine which will carry a large quantity of water, and, therefore, you want to have a tender engine in order to carry the necessary quantity of water behind, because the weight that you can put upon the wheels of the tank engine would be excessive if you put the water in the tank of the engine, instead of behind it in the tender?—That is our case in a nutshell.

19150. So it all depends on the question of water-carrying capacity, which is put very shortly and concisely by Mr. Malcolm in his letter?—Precisely.

19151. Then if it does turn on the question of water-carrying capacity, and you have a length of railway with one section twenty-one miles without any passing place, could you not have got over the whole difficulty by putting a passing place, and putting a water station half-way between the two points?—We did so, but it had not the desired result. We put up an additional water station, but then we found that we wanted more coal capacity. The Board of Works suggested that we should keep bags of coal at intermediate stations. We have had in some cases to run wagons of coal behind an engine; in other cases we have stolen coal off our customers' wagons, to bring in our trains.

19152. *Mr. Balfour Browne,* K.C.—I am afraid you are now incriminating yourself?—I have several instances where we commandeered other people's wagons and replaced them the next day.

19153. *Mr. Aspinall.*—But you say that if the tank

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engines had had sufficient coal-carrying capacity, and sufficient water-carrying capacity, you would have been satisfied?—And sufficient power.

19154. Quite so; but you do not quarrel with tank engines as tank engines?—No, because all our other lines are worked with tank engines; it is only this long one that is not.

19155. It is merely a question with you as to water-carrying capacity, as to coal-carrying capacity, and as to the general efficiency of the engine which is to do the work?—It is.

Suggested difficulty of designing a suitable tank engine for Burtonport line.

19156. And what you say is that if Mr. Malcolm's advice had been taken you would have been supplied with efficient engines?—I do.

19157. That is all I want; but I do want to have it recorded perfectly clearly that for the purpose of working such a railway proper tank engines would be perfectly sufficient if of a proper design; is not that so?—Well, that is a question for a Mechanical Engineer; but I do say that the problem of designing a tank engine with the necessary coal and water capacity for these long runs, and with the necessary power to climb these long gradients, would be a very difficult one indeed, when you remember that you are limited by your weight of rail, as to the axle weight and rigid wheel base of the engines, owing to the sharp curves on the line.

19158. Is it a very difficult question to decide?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

19159. I want to get, if I can, a few general questions. Our reference asks us to consider by what method the economical, efficient, and harmonious working of the Irish railways can be best secured. Now, I expect we should begin by thinking that the results here have not been harmonious?—They have been very far from harmonious.

19160. We shall agree so far. We shall agree, I suppose, also that the public have suffered very seriously?—Very.

19161. Now, it is also true that the public taxpayer has paid nineteen-twentieths, or something of that kind, of the total cost of this railway?—He has.

19162. It is further true that it was to your interest to get this railway, was it not?—It was.

19163. In order to get it, you entered into various agreements?—Yes.

19164. You submitted to clause 11 of the contract that has been referred to?—We did.

19165. Under that, you made it legal—I will not say whether it was equitable or not—for the Board of Works to do what they did, and take it out of your hands?—Yes.

19166. Under that same contract, you consented that practically the Treasury were to be the sole judges of the construction of this agreement, and of all matters and things therein referred to, save as regards working plans, specifications, designs, and works?—The works to be executed under the agreement. We submitted to that, but not without a great deal of protest.

19167. You did submit?—We did.

The Treasury agreement with the Lough Swilly Company, and the powers of the Board of Works and the obligations of the company as regards the Burtonport Railway.

19168. In your view, the game was worth the candle, because you got the railway made—that is what it came to?—We yielded to the persuasion of the public, chiefly to that of Mr. Vesey Knox, who was then member of Parliament for the City of Londonderry, and sealed the agreement rather than let this money go to another part of Ireland, which the Board of Works continually threatened they would do if we did not submit to their terms.

19169. In consequence of the persuasion of my learned friend, Mr. Vesey Knox, you wisely or unwisely came to the conclusion that it was worth your while to enter into the agreement?—We did.

19170. Then you did enter into the agreement?—We did.

19171. Now you are kicking very much against the way you find yourselves bound?—No; we say that if the agreement were carried out to the letter——

19172. Yes, in your view?—We would have no cause for complaint.

19173. But the position is that you kicked against their taking the contract out of your hands?—We did.

19174. You found you had no legal remedy?—Yes.

19175. You found that in consequence of the persuasions I have referred to, you had bound yourselves?—We had.

19176. Is not that broadly the position?—Yes, but we were not dismayed at the time by what happened, because we did not anticipate——

19177. I do not want to discuss that. It may be possible, if you had to go into it again, knowing what you had to do, you would not be persuaded, even by Mr. Vesey Knox, but you did enter into it. Now, I want you to tell me this. It is clearly your interest to get everything you can out of the Treasury, is it not?—the better the line they build the better for you?—That was our interest when we were negotiating the agreement, but our interest now is to get them to keep up to it, and we say they do not do it.

19178. Never mind; leave out agreements altogether. It was your interest to get out of the Treasury all you can to make as perfect a line as possible?—That was our aim.

19179. It is your interest now—any time, and all the time?—It is our interest to get a line as easy to work and as inexpensive to maintain as possible, because we have to work it in perpetuity under onerous obligations.

19180. It also was your interest, and still is, to make the Treasury give you all the rolling stock you can?—It is.

19181. So as to have a full supply, and not to have to supply any at your own cost?—Yes.

19182. On the other hand, it is the interest of the Treasury, as representing the taxpayer, to make you do as much as they possibly can?—Yes, consistent with the agreements into which they have entered.

19183. Never mind; I am not talking about agreements. It is their interest to put all the responsibility on you they can?—No; it is their interest having spent a quarter of a million of public money in County Donegal, not to destroy the object for which it was spent, and so to retard the development of the district, and to frustrate the intentions of the Government by refusing the necessary stock to work the line which has been built.

19184. Yes, but supposing they can get the stock out of your pockets instead of out of the taxpayers' pockets; it is their interest to get it that way, is it not?—Yes

19185. What I want to ask you is, after your experience, do you think it is likely that a system of that kind ever would work? I want to get the benefit of your general evidence. I will assume that you were both as much in the wrong, or as much in the right as you like—I want to know what you think. Do you think it is a system that is likely to work?—Well, our experience of it has been very unfortunate. I would say that under existing conditions in Ireland I do not think the experiment would work.

19186. Do you think it ever could work when the two interests are absolutely antagonistic?—Well, I do not see why a Government Department cannot enter into, and loyally adhere to, an agreement like any other public body.

19187. I quite agree, but will not there always be friction at some stage? The railway company will try—and naturally and rightly try—to get all they can out of the Government?—They will.

19188. Will not the Government, on the other hand, try to give—naturally and rightly also—as little as they can?—They will.

19188A. Will not there always be great friction, or probability of friction?—There will always be probability of friction.

19189. Have you thought about this as a general question, or has your whole mind been directed to the question as it affects the Lough Swilly?—I have been afraid to think about it as a general question—I have had to think of it so much in reference to the Lough Swilly that I fear my view may have become distorted.

19190. You think it is dangerous, and is likely to lead to friction again. But bringing your mind to bear upon the general question, you would agree that no private company would ever have made that line as a commercial speculation?—I agree that that is so.

19191. If the Government has to find the money what is to be the relation between the Government and the private company, if there is to be one?—How would you suggest you could avoid these conditions?

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Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—May I say this, sir, without, of course, wishing to prevent your asking any question you like. You will remember this gentleman is not put forward as a railway witness representing the railway views?

Mr. Acworth.—I entirely agree, of course, with that, and if he likes, upon that ground, to decline to answer the question, he can of course do so.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Not at all. I do not mean that. You are, of course, quite entitled to ask him anything you like, but I wanted to make the position clear.

Mr. Acworth.—I was only asking him, because it occurred to me that very few railwaymen have had more reason to think about the subject than Mr. Spence.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Quite so.

Witness.—I had an answer ready, but it has disappeared; perhaps you would repeat the question.

19192. *Mr. Acworth.*—The point I want to get at is this: You have had a great deal to do with the relations between the Government that finds the money and the company that has to work the line. Now, supposing for other lines money had to be found, and supplied to a company (leave the Lough Swilly Company out of your consideration for the moment) what sort of relations between the Government and the company would you suggest?—Well, I think the mistake the Treasury made in these matters, when Parliament voted the money for railways, was in looking upon the Vote as an investment upon which they might expect a capital return in the shape of sharing in the surplus receipts, and that if they did——

19193. This 55*s.* a week, or whatever the figure was?—Over that—If they had handed over the money to the district without any provision of that kind, but with a provision that a portion of the profits of the line should be devoted to improving the facilities and to developing the struggling industries of the district instead of going back to the English Treasury or the British Treasury, that would have altered the point of view of the Secretary, and the engineer, and the agent that Lord Pirrie referred to, who are watching us all the time; they would not care whether or not there was a little difference in the surplus receipts, but would only be interested in the efficient working of the line.

19194. Now, tell me another thing. Your speaking of the Board of Works officials reminds me of it. You spoke of their representative, and said that he had no right to be there; but you did not object?—That is true; there was no provision in the Agreement, but we gave them the fullest information. Mr. Shanahan said that we did not reply to their letters.

19195. Never mind; I will not go into grievances. The position is this: the Government in the public interest found almost the whole of the capital of that railway?—They did.

19196. And if they send a person to see how it is working, you are entitled to say—I do not suggest that you have said—"Get out; you are a trespasser." Does that seem reasonable?—No, and it was because we thought it unreasonable that we did not do it.

19197. Do you not think that if the Government does find the capital, it ought to reserve an official right to "call the tune" to some extent?—I do.

19198. Have you ever thought how that could be done? Do not answer if you have not any views?—I think I ought not to answer that. As regards the reports of the agent, these are a few (*producing a pile of papers*). Those are the replies that the witnesses said had not been given.

Mr. Shanahan.—As that is a decided contradiction of an alleged statement of mine, may I say that I think that my remark as to non-replies to letters from the Board of Works related to the first twelve months after the opening of the line, and I still think that I was right in saying that for the first twelve months only an occasional letter from the Board was replied to. The letters were certainly acknowledged by post-card, but in most cases they were not otherwise noticed. I admit that at subsequent periods our letters did get attention, and explanations were offered.

Witness.—I wanted to say that there was a great deal of delay in replying to the Board of Works letters during the strike, because the officials were down acting as pilot men on the engines, and when we asked the Board of Works to allow their permanent way inspector to go down and give local instruction to the new men, they declined to do so or to give any assistance in the crisis.

The information given by the Lough Swilly company to the Board of Works.

19199. *Mr. Acworth.*—And any reply you did make to the Board of Works was pure courtesy, as far as I understand—they were not entitled to ask a question?—We gave full information, very much in the same way as a stationmaster would give to a general manager—explaining everything.

19200. The legal position being that you were not bound to account to them as to the way in which the line was being worked?—We were advised that, while we had certain obligations, they did not go to that extent.

19201. You were entitled to work the line as you liked subject to this—that when you got a certain amount of receipts there was to be a proportionate division?—We were bound to work the line efficiently so as to develop the resources of the district.

19202. But the test of the efficiency was with you up to the point when they had reason to think it worth while to have a public inquiry—up to that point you were the sole judges?—Except as regards the audit of accounts.

Audit of the accounts by the Board.

19203. They were entitled to audit the accounts to see that they got their share of this figure of 55*s.*, or whatever it was, but they were not entitled to interfere with the working of the line which they paid for, and that, I think you agree with me—although you do not care to go further—does not seem a system likely to promote the public interest or harmonious development?—No, not in the present hands.

19204. Do you think it would in any hands?—That is too large a question for me.

19205. You do not suggest the hands in which you would be likely to find it work harmoniously?—You asked very particularly the Board of Works witness when the sudden increase in traffic took place that showed the necessity for increased stock.

The necessity for a better supply of rolling stock alleged to have been demonstrated from the opening of the line.

19206. Did I ask that?

Chairman.—Nobody asked that question.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It was at a former sitting, I think.

Witness.—You asked Mr. Shanahan, when he was giving evidence, when the increase of traffic took place.

19207. *Chairman.*—You said "sudden." There is no question of a sudden increase?—He said shortly after the opening, and the other Board of Works witness said about a year after. Now, I wired when that question was asked for a monthly return of the traffic, and what I wanted to tell the Commission was——

19208. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is on page 18 of your proof; I noticed that?—That there was no abnormal increase of traffic. The first month the line was opened (although it was opened on the 9th, so that there were only twenty-one days) the traffic was £608. The year after, for a month of thirty-one days, the traffic was £618.

19209. *Chairman.*—That proves nothing. There was a fillip given to the district by the opening of the line which increased the receipts at the beginning. What were the receipts for the second and third months?—They began with £608 for March; for April they were £683, and for May, £883.

19210. That is a gradual increase—there is no doubt about that. Now, the next?—£967.

The traffic receipts on the Burtonport line in the first year.

19211. Well, that is 50 per cent. increase?—Permit me to say that the same thing happened the next year and the next year—that is to say, April was a little higher than March, May was a little higher than April, and June was a little higher than May—but there was no substantial increase in the total traffic that could be called abnormal. It has been steady and normal. For instance, March, 1903, was £608 14*s.*, while March of 1906 was £608 11*s.*—a difference of 3*s.* My point is that the necessity for the increased rolling stock was apparent from the very day that the line was opened.

19212. *Mr. Acworth.*—If you give the four figures that you have got on page 18, they seem to me to deal with your point very fully—if you think it necessary to put those in as showing the receipts from the opening?—The receipts for the first nine and three-quarter months—that is, nine months and twenty-one days—were £8,023; for the next twelve months, £9,215; for 1905, £10,616; for 1906, £10,132; and I say that that traffic necessitated a three-train time-table from the very first, and I also say that the Board of Works urged us, before the line was opened, to put on a

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three-train time-table, although there was only stock for a two-train time-table, and they even submitted us a draft time-table with three trains on it.

19213. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I should like to ask one question, which I forgot when I was questioning you before, about the meetings of the Board. I think under the Order in Council it was contemplated that there should be separate Board meetings for the purpose of the business of the Burtonport Line?—Yes.

19214. Were any separate Board meetings, as a matter of fact, ever held?—There were very few.

19215. How many?—Two, I believe.

Two Board meetings for Burtonport line business held since 1903.

19216. In the course of how many years?—Since 1903..

19217. In four years two meetings have been held?—Yes.

19218. Were notices of those meetings sent to the Baronial Director?—They were.

19219. When was notice sent to Mr. Sweeney? What dates were those two meetings?—They are not on my proof.

19220. 1905?—I do not dispute Mr. Sweeney's evidence on that point.

19221. Was it the first two years of the working of the line?—No. The ratepayers whom the Baronial Director represents were never called upon to pay any dividend upon their county guarantee, and there were no important capital questions appropriate for bringing before one of those Directors, or one of these Special Meetings. The two meetings that were called were to consider a demand for a new station, and that being a capital question, we asked them to the meetings, and said that we would pay half the cost of building the station; but the Board of Works refused, and the station is not built yet.

19222. Would it not have been very desirable, in view of the contentions between the Board of Works and yourselves, to have given the ratepayers' representative an opportunity of attending the meeting between yourselves and the Board of Works? Do you not think that would have been desirable?—We always thought the Board of Works would yield in time to the logic of events.

19223. At the same time it would have strengthened your position to have had an expression of opinion by the Baronial Director, would it not?—The Baronial Director moved several resolutions, which were sent to the Board of Works, calling for an inquiry, but they would not agree.

19224. He complained very strongly of the want of notice, and of the fact that no meetings were held, and went so far as to say that his predecessor, Sir John Olphert, was refused admittance?—We never did refuse him admittance. He was refused an annual pass, and he complained to the Board of Works of that, and they called upon us to provide him with a pass, and we replied that there was no provision for doing so.

19225. At the time that these agreements were entered into with the Government, it was contemplated that as many as twelve meetings might be held in the year?—We would have done so if the ratepayers had been subscribing anything.

19226. I think there was such a provision in the case of the Carndonagh Agreement, but not in that of the Burtonport, so that that does not affect the question.

19227. *Mr. Acworth.*—Do the other directors get passes?—They do. We said we would issue a pass to the Baronial Director on any occasion on which he desired to attend one of these meetings.

19228. Is there any limitation of that kind in the case of the other Directors—that they are only to have a pass to attend meetings?—Oh, no. The fact is, the reason he was refused—I am not justifying it, but it was very human—was that he did not ask us for it, he asked the Board of Works, and they wrote down ordering us to send it.

Mr. JOHN M'FARLAND, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. John M'Farland, J.P., Chairman of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company.

19229. Mr. M'Farland, you are chairman of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company?—I am.

19230. And you were the chairman when the arrangement was made with the Board of Works with reference to this particular Burtonport railway?—I was.

19231. Have you been in the room all the morning?—I have.

19232. And were you in the room yesterday?—I was.

19233. Did you hear the evidence of Mr. Spence?—I did.

Alleged serious alterations in the contract plans of Burtonport Railway.

19234. Do you agree with what he has said?—Generally, yes. But I would wish to draw the attention of the Commission to the large amount of time that has been taken up in referring to the improper equipment of the railway. That is simply one of our charges—that it has not been sufficiently and properly equipped for working; but it is trivial as compared with the serious alterations that have been made in the contract plans. Works have been agreed to, and the contract that was entered into has been varied, and we have got inferior works, to the serious loss of the railway companies and to the serious loss of the Treasury, and to the corresponding advantage of the contractors. We say that these works have been seriously altered to our loss and to the advantage of the contractors alone.

19235. That is a somewhat serious charge against the contractors, who are not represented here?—Irrespective of whom the charge may affect, the works are there to speak for themselves. The contract is there to speak for itself, and I hold that it is reasonable to expect the Board of Works, who are responsible for the construction of this line, to come forward and say on what grounds they altered the contract plans in favour of somebody.

19236. I do not propose to go into any question which has been referred to by Mr. Spence, or to ask you to repeat any evidence which has been given by Mr. Spence?—No, but I would like——

19237. You had better follow my questions, I think?—Certainly.

19238. First of all, as regards that running shed?—Would you kindly allow me to refer first to the form of tender and the form of contract, and to show that the conditions therein set out, that were equally binding on the Board of Works and on the contractors and upon ourselves, have been varied—namely, as to the supply of the permanent way materials. The supply of permanent way materials was specially reserved in the hands of the Board of Works. They varied these conditions, and it was handed over to the contractors to supply these materials. The result was that they put rails and sleepers three years in the hands of the contractors before they were absolutely necessary. That was clearly to the advantage of the contractor, who was able to use these rails and sleepers for temporary works; the contractors would have had to buy temporary rails and sleepers for the construction of the line if these rails had not been supplied. I need hardly tell the gentlemen forming this Commission that sleepers for permanent way if exposed for three or four years lose a certain portion of their life, and that loss falls on us—the working company.

19239. All these matters, I suppose, were dealt with at the time?—Objection was raised to the use of them by the company immediately on our first becoming aware of it. The Board of Works at first denied it, then they excused it, and said that if any of these rails were damaged they would take care that they were not used in the permanent works. But I need hardly tell you that after the lines have been finished cracks may take place owing to the rough and tumble of the use the sleepers and rails would get in the hands of the contractor, and the result possibly would be very serious to the working; they might be passed over and put in a permanent way and an accident arise.

19240. We will leave that question. Then, with regard to the running shed. The Board of Works agreed to erect a running shed?—Yes.

19241. And they did not do it?—They have not done so.

19242. Why have they not done it?—I cannot answer that question, but I can give you the whole of the correspondence and the facts leading up to it.

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19243. I want to be very brief, because we have had all the story very pithily told by Mr. Spence. You want the running shed on another railway and not on the Burtonport railway?—Yes. Here is a Minute that was agreed to between the Board of Works and my company on the 5th August, 1898. After settling the other details with regard to the running shed this was agreed to. It was agreed "to provide a running shed with repairing tools at a cost not exceeding £2,000, and to consider whether the amount set apart could be applied at any place outside the limits of the Burtonport railway but for the purpose of the working and maintenance of same. In that case the working company will agree to be responsible for the buildings so erected, or to give a lien on same, or to make any other arrangements necessary to protect the Treasury."

19244. Very well. As a matter of fact, the Board of Works did not agree to that proposal?—They did, because it is here signed by Mr. Robertson on behalf of the Board of Works, by myself on behalf of the company, and by Mr. Stevenson as second Commissioner of the Board of Works.

19245. Ultimately the Board of Works agreed to provide the running shed on the territory of the Burtonport railway?—That was discussed, and that was the reason that this Minute was agreed to, because we contended that it would be absolutely no use or pecuniary advantage to us if it was put on the Burtonport railway while our headquarters were in Londonderry. If any engine required repairs or any carriage required necessary works, it involved a man going to the Burtonport railway, which entailed four hours going and four hours coming, which was, comparatively speaking, an entire day. The man had to do that at serious expense to the company. I should also like to say a word on the question of the ownership of the Burtonport railway. It is eternally referred to as a State railway, or as the railway of the Board of Works. I submit that it is no more the property of the Board of Works than it is the property of any other Board in Ireland. And why? We have entered into a very onerous agreement to work this line in perpetuity. The conveyances are taken in the name of my company and on conditions that we work it in accordance with the agreement. Therefore, I contend that that railway is ours subject to those conditions.

19246. Will you tell the Commission why you refused to attend the opening of the tenders in connection with this railway?—Yes.

19247. Tell us shortly. We have had it from Mr. Spence, and if you have anything to add to what he said on the subject we will listen to it. But it seems to me a most extraordinary proceeding on your part to allege that you could not attend the opening of the tenders in consequence of the expense incurred?—At that time they had accounts before them for over £6,000, and a considerable amount of that was remaining unpaid, although vouchers had been already in their hands for it. I have here, if you will allow me to read it, the correspondence which passed between us and the Board of Works' solicitor, wherein he agreed to pass these vouchers on a certificate from the secretary of the company that the money had been expended. Faith was broken——

19248. Do not let us get into that. Just answer the question. Why did you refuse on the grounds of expense to attend the opening of the tenders for this railway?—That has been already explained. Our accounts were not paid, and we would not go on incurring expense when they had ceased to pay.

19249. We will leave it there. Then with regard to these deviations which you say were made practically in the interests of the contractors?—They were conceived by the contractors, and they were pressed on us by the Board of Works. But in answering questions I do not propose to say a word which I cannot prove by correspondence. I need not tell you that anything which occurred in the mind of an individual six or eight years ago is apt to be twisted in a particular direction to suit himself, but the correspondence which took place at the time will prove the facts, and I hold it is reasonable that this correspondence should be read verbatim to the Commission.

19250. I think we have had sufficient correspondence read already?—But you have not had this correspondence to show why the Board of Works, contrary to our strenuous advice, insisted on not obeying the contract; they did not obey the contract, which, I say, has been varied so seriously to our loss and to the disadvantage of the Treasury. We also say that these are alterations which my company strongly protested against at the time.

19251. The whole of the deviations suggested were submitted to your company?—They were.

19252. And the plans were submitted with them?—Yes. Will you allow me to explain. The plans were submitted to our engineer, but they were incomplete when they were sent to our engineer for him to report upon. He got further details, and a fortnight subsequently he reported that the savings to be effected on these deviations were enormously in favour of the contractors, and he further stated that there were four of them of which he disapproved, and that he recommended two.

Alleged protest by Lough Swilly Company against the deviations from the contract plans for Burtonport Railway.

19253. We have had all that this morning from Mr. Spence. He also read the correspondence. I want to go a little further with you. Whatever the alterations were, did you—and when I say "you" I am speaking of the Lough Swilly Railway Company—did the Lough Swilly Railway Company ultimately agree to those deviations?—I want——

Subsequent approval of the deviations by the company.

19254. Will you answer yes or no?—Yes. But I want to explain so far as this. Our engineer, Mr. Hall, was lying on a sick bed with typhoid fever. These plans were sent to him the following day, and they were recalled, as they were required in connection with the arbitration for the land that was going on.

Deviation from original plan for construction of Owencarrow Viaduct suggested.

19255. We heard that this morning?—They were never returned to us, and we never had an opportunity of knowing whether those works were carried out in accordance with the plans or not until after the line had been placed in our hands for working. I told you that serious alterations had taken place. The Parliamentary plans submitted to us showed that the Owencarrow Viaduct was 110 yards long. The contractors varied that viaduct and constructed it 371 yards long, or almost three and a half times as long.

19256. Stop a moment. Why do you say that the alterations were to the advantage of the contractors?—I will tell you why. This deck girder bridge that they erected was much cheaper than the steel lattice girder bridge with huge earthwork banks. A saving of 81,000 cubic yards was made in the banks joining the viaduct, and they erected this because it was cheaper. Speaking further on that, the engineer for the Board of Works stated to you that the original estimate for the viaduct was six thousand odd pounds, and that it was erected at a cost of £30,000 by the contractors. So far from that being the case, the original estimate of the contractors is here, and instead of it being £6,000 their estimate for it was £19,306. That is the original estimate, and, of course, when they increased the length of this bridge from 303 to 371 yards it consequently would cost more.

19257. *Mr. Acworth.*—103 yards, you mean?—The estimate that I put before the chairman was for a bridge 303 yards long, and they increased it to 371 yards, but the contract with the railway company was only to construct 110 yards.

19258. This was one of the serious alterations?—This was one of the alterations and deviations from the conditions under which we agreed to do it, and on which we took £4,000 for the serious loss that we have sustained in perpetuity in working the line. This was one of them which was entirely set aside.

Allegations that the savings due to the deviations were divided between the Board of Works and the contractors

19259. What I want to get at is this. Whatever the reasons were, and whatever objections were made by you, you on behalf of your company agreed to these deviations?—We did not agree to them as they were carried out. If they had been carried out as laid down on the plans before us, there would not have been a word said about them on our part. But we say that they were altered to the advantage of the contractor and to the advantage of the Board of Works, who divided the spoil equally between them.

19260. What do you mean by dividing the spoil?—You have read from the report of the engineer that there were enormous savings to be made by these deviations.

19261. No; we have not heard that—not "enormous" savings. Do not indulge in superlatives and adjectives?—I am taking the report of the engineer.

19262. Say "savings" were effected?—The words are "enormous savings."

19263. Where do you get that?—From the report of the engineer, if you will allow me to read it.

19264. If it is a short one you may read it. (*Mr. Spence.*)—I read a portion of it this morning, and the original document must be on the table.

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Mr. M'Farland.—This is from the evidence. This report speaks for itself. This is the report from the engineer.

19265. What engineer?—From the resident engineer working under the Board of Works.

19266. That was your engineer?—He was our engineer; he was originally our engineer, but he passed over to the Board of Works and we had no more control over him. This report speaks for itself and shows the enormous savings he estimated the adoption of the deviations would effect.

19267. That is the engineer's remark?—It was sent to him to report.

19268. Who asked him to report?—We did. The plans were sent to us for our approval, and we sent them on to this gentleman who we thought would be entitled to report to us. He reported that four of them he objected to, that two would do no harm, and two were recommended.

Alleged enormous savings effected by the deviations from the original plans for Burtonport Railway.

19269. We heard that this morning?—He similarly reported that the savings were enormous.

19270. We have not had it in evidence; that is what I mean?—I will find the letter and produce it.

19271. *Mr. Acworth.*—Who is the "he" who estimated the savings?—Mr. Radcliff, who was the engineer of the Board of Works.

19272. That letter is from whom?—From Mr. Radcliff to the company.

19272A. The letter there is written by somebody who says that somebody else estimated?—No.

19273. Will you let me see it?—Certainly; that is in my evidence (*letter handed to Mr. Acworth*).

19274. *Chairman.*—What I understand from you now is this: that you agreed—and when I say you I mean the company—that the company agreed to the deviations, but you now raise the question and say that you objected to the manner in which those deviations were carried out?—Quite so. We agreed to the deviations for which we got £4,000, but the deviations were not carried out in accordance with the plans.

19275. That is what I mean?—Yes; to our serious loss.

19276. What did you get the £4,000 for?—The gradients throughout the line, according to the engineer's report, were seriously increased, and involved, as you know, more difficult working, and more steam and coal had to be used for it. That goes on for ever. Similarly the curves were reduced, and instead of being a large size they were made a smaller size. All this involves additional wear and tear in working.

19277. What was the additional chainage—I suppose it was not mileage—of the increase?—It is set out here; the engineer set it out in his report.

19278. I am alluding to the difference between the amended plans and the deposited plans. We have been told that it was a gradient for a certain distance of one in fifty?—Yes.

19279. Was that gradient increased?—It was.

19280. That is what I want to get at; by how many yards was it increased?—It was increased from Owencarrow Bridge for about two miles; the bridge was lowered, and the lift to the summit level was greater for a distance of two miles in one place. The curves at sundry places were made smaller as the engineer's report will show.

19281. The only increased cost of working was in connection with the extra one in fifty gradient?—And the curves; the curves and the gradients.

19282. But the curves would not make any difference?—With sharper curves there would be greater wear and tear on the railway rolling stock.

19283. What was the worst curve?—Nine chains was the sharpest curve. I need not tell you how short that curve is as compared with fifteen or twenty chains, which is the ruling gradient on this line.

19284. Do not confuse curves and gradient?—You understand what I mean.

19285. You mean curves?—Yes.

Explanation of why the contractors paid the Lough Swilly Company £4,000 for consent of latter to the deviations.

19286. You made that arrangement, whatever it was, with the contractors?—Yes. We were to get £4,000 from them. I should tell you that the negotiations were carried on personally in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, between my solicitor, or rather the solicitor for the company and the contractors. We wanted to get as much as we could. Dr. Todd was there representing us, and the contractors explained to us that anything the company got had to come out of their half of the savings. The Board of Works got one half and the contractors got one half, and that these £4,000 which the contractor paid to us, the validity of which we discussed at the time, were to come out of the contractors' share of the savings.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

19287. Out of their half?—Yes. This (*producing document*) is the original report of Mr. Radcliff, in which the words "enormous savings" are introduced. He says: "Deviation E—this is a proposed deviation through Barnes Gap, from peg 765 to peg 958"—over three miles. I have inserted those words "over three miles"; they are not in this report. I will read it precisely as it stands. "This is a proposed deviation through Barnes Gap, from peg 765 to peg 958, and it goes outside the limits of deviation at each end, but is inside for the greater part of the way. It enormously reduces the cost of the line." There are the words.

19288. I do not dispute that he said it, but you said that it had been given in evidence before us, but we had not had it?—It was read this morning by Mr. Spence.

19289. He did not read it this morning?—I apologise.

19290. I do not think he did?—The engineer in the employ of the Board of Works warned us of the enormous savings to be effected by these deviations.

19291. You say that those deviations have tangibly increased the permanent cost of working?—Yes; and it was on that ground we took £4,000. What I object to so seriously is these gentlemen coming in who know all about it and leading the Commission to believe that we accepted that £4,000 as a bribe and misapplied it, whereas it was absolutely applied to the proper purposes of the railway. That is the impression left on my mind by reading the evidence—that the directors had really "gone on the make with it."

Lord Pirrie.—You have not told us what you did with it.

19292. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Was it entered in the accounts of the company?—It passed through the accounts of the company. We could not balance the accounts without showing what was brought in and what was paid out.

19293. It is not entered as so much received from so-and-so?—Certainly.

19294. Not in the accounts you submitted to your shareholders?—At all events, we have applied the funds we received to the purposes of the company.

19295. I think we understood that the amount was never entered in any way in the accounts?—It passed through the books of the company.

19296. *Chairman.*—It would be a difficult thing to put in the public accounts of the company, but the books of the company would show it?—Certainly.

Lord Pirrie.—We were led to believe that there was no trace of the £4,000.

19297. *Chairman.*—Not ostensibly in the half-yearly accounts. But we are quite prepared to accept the statement that the books of the company would show it?—Yes. These gentlemen came down and enquired into it and saw all about it. I beg your pardon, the secretary tells me that is not right. A shareholder hearing all this bruited abroad from Dublin to Londonderry considered it his duty to come down and see about it. No objection was raised, and he enquired into the application of this £4,000 and was quite satisfied.

19298. You may take it from me, as one knowing a little about these railway accounts, that I am perfectly satisfied with your explanation that the £4,000, although not shown in the half-yearly accounts, properly appears in your books as a credit, and is dealt with in the accounts?—Thank you.

19299. And your books will show it?—Yes; the books will show it.

19300. Then we will leave that?—Would it be agreeable to the Commission to have all these facts proved by the letters that passed at the time, showing the pressure that the other side put upon us to agree to these deviations? I think the secretary entered into it to-day, but not so fully as I would like.

19301. But quite fully enough for us. We know the particulars were sent to you, and that Mr. Batchen went down and offered to appear before your Board to explain?—Yes.

19302. We had all that this morning?—But I am at a loss to know why Mr. Batchen should come down

to impress upon people who knew their duty quite as well as he did his. The directors of the company were advised by their professional staff—their professional advisers. I may say that I have been a contractor all my life, and having made railways, know all about the matter. There was no necessity for this gentleman pressing himself on the directors to advise us; we knew our own business.

19303. We will assume that you did, and that it was not necessary for Mr. Batchen to see you. I do not think it is really worth while going into that?—Very well.

19304. We will leave it there. What we did elicit this morning was that whatever the circumstances were, ultimately you did agree and sign the plans for the deviations?—Yes.

19305. And alterations. Now, your complaint is that—or rather you contend that these deviations were not carried out in accordance with those plans?—That is it in a nutshell.

19306. That is your statement; we will leave it there?—That applies not only to the deviations, but to the entire line.

19307. I quite understand; wherever the curves were altered, and so on?—Not that alone.

19308. I know; right throughout?—The works were varied in such a way that you would not know them from the specification.

19309. *Lord Pirrie.*—Without your permission?—Without ever consulting us.

19310. *Chairman.*—And that is how you build up your £70,000?—Quite right. I want to read to you how that claim for £70,000 was sent forward.

19311. I do not think you need?—It is only a word. I want to read to the Commission what that claim consisted of; it shows works not carried out in accordance with the plans, specifications, and contract. There is the sum of that account, amounting to £78,000. That has been carried away by the contractors, but it ought to have been left on the ground in substantial works; some of them are failing to-day.

19312. We have had all that?—We do not want to claim one penny of money in respect of this. We want no money; but we want the work left in accordance with the contract, in accordance with the plans.

19313. Can you tell me in a few words how it is that that particular claim mounted month by month from a certain small figure to £70,000; how did it grow?—It is entirely misleading to say that it grew. I should tell you——

19314. Stop a minute. We had it in evidence that the whole of the work not completed in accordance with the specification would occupy a month in being dealt with?—That is the estimate put on it by the other side. No such estimate was ever made by us, or ever acquiesced in by the company. If you will allow me to give you a few words, it will probably explain the matter. You are aware that we were warned off the line, and that we were treated as trespassers if found there.

19315. I do not think we have had evidence as to that. You carry it considerably further than that letter which was read this morning?—I know we were warned off, and the engineer was warned off the line. I was on it only once during the entire period of construction.

19316. You were about the whole time, I suppose?—I was on it once during the four years.

19317. Why not oftener?—Because it was considered a breach of etiquette to go there, although the conveyances were in our name.

19318. As a matter of fact, you did not go?—I was only on it once during the whole period of construction.

19319. Was anybody there for your company?—The engineer was there twice in addition—that is three times altogether. You want to know why this account began at nothing and gradually swelled up like a balloon. We had no permission to be there until the working of the lines passed over to us on the 9th March, 1903. From that time forward our engineer, who had his other duties to attend to from day to day, was constantly devoting his spare time to going over the works with the plans and the specifications in his hands, finding out on the fifty miles of railway wherein the works differed from the plans and specifications. He would take his field notes, and when he returned to the office he had to make his measurements and so on, and that accounts for the assumption of the Board of Works that a sheet of foolscap would hold them. All the original notes of the engineer are here, and there are 250 items that he has noted on his visits, and the delay in furnishing the accounts was in going through the works, carefully measuring them up, coming back into the office, and preparing the account.

19320. When was the first claim made by you upon the Board of Works, for what I would call additional works?—There was no claim ever made but this one, when the account was furnished for the amount which you speak of, the £78,000.

19321. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is that it in your hand?—Yes.

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How the claim of £78,000 for additional works on Burtonport Railway was compiled.

Re-examined by the CHAIRMAN.

19322. Surely there was some other?—There may have been some conversation. This is the list (*showing document*).

19323. I saw the lists—the first list and the last list?—This is the list of 250 items which were prepared by the engineer on the 17th March, 1903.

19324. That is just after the line was open?—The same month.

19325. Is there any estimate here as to what these alterations would cost?—No. All the works would require to be measured out and priced, which would take a very long time indeed.

19326. I think I looked through this one before, or a copy of it; there are an enormous number of little trumpery items?—I am sorry to hear you call them trumpery, because the items in the contract, whether they be large or small, ought to be carried out. The decorations of this room may be trumpery, but if they are in the contract they should be done; there is no reason why they should be omitted to the disadvantage of the owner. There may be some trumpery items, but there are items——

The first claim made by company shortly after opening of line very much smaller.

19327. I think there are a good many trumpery items?—On the other hand, there are items amounting to thousands of pounds.

19328. There may be a few thousands in this list. When was the next list got out?

19329. *Lord Pirrie.*—I thought that was the £70,000 list. Whilst there are trumpery items in that, there are also items to the value of thousands of pounds.

19330. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is this an index, as it were, to the full claim?—No, not to the full claim; that is not the full claim.

19331. *Lord Pirrie.*—How much is it?—That was made immediately after the opening of the line, and we had to go through the entire works.

19332. How much is this—£5 or £500?—That has never been priced.

19333. *Chairman.*—Are these the items that it was stated would take a month to carry out?—I presume they are.

19334. A bigger claim was subsequently made?—But we deny that that statement was ever made by us.

19335. It was made by the other side?—Yes.

19336. But it was brought before us?—Yes.

19337. But I understood that there was some communication in which it was stated that it would take a month to carry out?—It was represented to us that a large portion of these works would be carried out during the period of maintenance. Some were and some were not.

19338. What is the date of the big claim of £70,000; when was it sent to the Board of Works? This is in March, after the line was open?—Yes. In May, 1905, this claim was finally completed for £78,000.

Explanation of the delay in furnishing final claim.

19339. May, 1905?—Yes.

19340. Two years after?—Yes. I will explain one of them.

19341. That is what I want to get at, because first of all these items were all discussed with Mr. Batchen?—Yes.

19342. By your company?—I believe so. But two years elapsed. I want to explain one of them to you.

19343. I want to get at that?—During the first year of working the line was in the hands of the contractors.

19344. That we know?—It was their business and

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their duty to fill in and complete any of the works that they engaged to complete during the period of maintenance.

19345. That I understand?—We could not begin to prepare our final account until they had left, because we had no staff on the ground. It was the contractors business to maintain the line during the first twelve months; we had no staff there, and we had nothing but the Traffic Department; there was no permanent way staff.

The preparation of the company's first claim.

19346. That I understand?—Hence the engineer did not begin, and could not properly begin the account until the year of maintenance had expired and he could go over it and see all the works the contractors had left unfinished.

19347. But he did prepare this list?—That was prepared immediately before the opening of the line by the Board of Works.

19348. It is after the opening of the line?—It is about that period.

19349. There is a note, "Discussed with Mr. Batchen on 15th and 16th April"?—I think it is in March that the note was made.

19350. The 17th of March?—That was nine days after the opening of the line; we had taken the line over. It would not be much of an inspection.

19351. I think it must have been a very complete inspection judging by these items?—I am glad to hear you say so.

19352. I see an immense amount of detail here which must have been most carefully inspected. Now we get to the big scheme of £70,000?—Yes.

Final claim (£78,000) only sent in two years afterwards (May, 1905).

19353. How is it that that was not presented until two years after? That, you say, was sent to the Board of Works. When?—In May, 1905—fourteen months after the opening of the line for traffic.

19354 Two years and two months after the opening, and fourteen months after the line was taken over to be worked by you?—Yes.

19355. How was it that it took fourteen months on your part to find out these defects?—I have already explained that our engineer had his daily duties to perform. It was only in his spare time that he could take over this work, and he would note in his field book the difference between the works as completed and the works as specified on the plans. When he returned to the office it had all to be put down, and measured and priced. You must thoroughly know the time necessary, and any gentleman engaged on railways, or, indeed, on any contracts, must know the time necessary to take out quantities when you take into consideration that the individual whose duty it is has his daily duties to attend to also. That is the only explanation I can offer. I should tell you that the secretary reminds me that there was an abortive attempt to settle this claim with the Board of Works at a conference between us which delayed the account for a considerable time—for six months.

Reason for the delay.

19356. That may be the explanation?—Will you permit me to read a letter from the office of the Board of Works, Dublin, dated the 10th of January, 1902?

19357. What about? It is with regard to my company going over the line to inspect it. "I have to say that the Board regard the action of the company's engineer in going on an inspection of the works without due notice to the engineer in charge as very unusual and quite unjustifiable."

19358. We had that before?—Very well. It shows the way we were warned off the line that was actually conveyed to ourselves.

19359. At any rate, you say you went over it once and your engineer twice?—Yes, until immediately before the opening.

19360. This claim of £70,000—has it been paid by the Board of Works?—No; they repudiated it altogether. They kept peppering at us for the account until it was furnished, and they originally agreed to arbitration, but have run away from it, and when they got the account they repudiated it. We never asked for £78,000. I wish the Commission to understand that we never asked for a shilling of money, or wanted a shilling of money. We are prepared to carry out our contract with the Board of Works and the Treasury to the extreme limit, but we say that the other side have not done their part; and we want the works either completed in accordance with the contract or some amount allocated and set aside for the purposes of the necessary maintenance of this line when the serious maintenance will fall upon us owing to the improper construction of it. We want the contract works left in accordance with the contract plans and specification, or we want, in the alternative, a sum of money or some variation in the agreement that will put us in as good a position to restore these works when the time of restoration comes much earlier than it otherwise would have done.

Repudiation of claim by Board of Works.

19361. And all these questions you, on behalf of the working company, are prepared to submit to arbitration?—I should like——

19362. Please answer the question?—Yes, I have said that from the first. I am only anxious——

19363. Never mind your anxiety. The whole question in dispute, so far as the short supply of rolling stock and the non-completion, as you say, of the works according to the specification, you are quite prepared to submit to arbitration?—Most willingly.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

19364. I should like to make quite sure that I understand the position. Take the first question—about the running shed. The Board of Works did not undertake to put it off the Burtonport Railway; they only agreed to consider moving it?—Yes.

19365. Whether they considered it or not, I do not know, but in the result they have refused to move it?—Those are the correct facts.

19366. They are within their legal rights in so refusing?—I would be very slow to contradict a gentleman of your position at the bar.

19367. I am only asking the question—is it not obvious?—No, I think not; it is a matter of opinion. I hold that this line was conveyed to us under certain conditions, and for the sake of economy, with our partners, the Treasury, we want this running shed to be at headquarters, where it would be of advantage to them and to us.

19368. I am not discussing that. What I want you to tell me is this: is there anything in the contract binding them to supply the Burtonport Railway with a running shed situated off the Burtonport Railway?—No.

19369. I think clearly not?—No.

19370. Therefore, they are within their legal rights in refusing to furnish it?—I do not think they are, in the face of this minute.

19371. In that minute they agree to consider the question?—What is the use of agreeing to consider the question if they do not carry it out?

19372. It is clear that they could not have made up their mind when they agreed to consider it. They did not say they would do it?—They led us to expect it, at all events. I may tell you that plans were prepared for this, and sent on to them.

19373. For the sake of my question, you may admit that they all ought to be in Bedlam. I am not concerned with that—I am trying to get the facts. The position is this: take the question of the ballast. You say—I do not want to go into the facts—but you say that the ballast is insufficient, and is of inferior quality?—I say that our claim is for the inferior description of the ballast; they have said it was for the insufficiency of it.

19374. Never mind that. You make a claim that the ballast is inferior?—It is not as specified.

19375. That it is below specification?—Yes.

19376. And a great many other claims of the same kind?—Quite so.

19377. The position at present, as I understand it, is that in the contract there is a provision that the Treasury decision is final in most cases?—Yes.

19378. The Treasury refused to appoint an impartial person between you?—They have not done so, and the Board of Trade is the——

19379. Wait a minute. There are two departments concerned. The Treasury decision is final, except in certain cases?—Yes.

19380. The Treasury have finally decided against you, is that so?—Yes, up to the present.

19381. On other points, in reference to the construction, and so on, there is a provision that the Board of Trade is to act?—Yes.

19382. Have you applied to the Board of Trade?—We have.

19383. With what result?—We have applied to the Board of Trade to appoint this arbitrator, and at the same time advised the Board of Works that we were about to do so. The Board of Trade remitted the

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Dispute with the Board of Works as to the proper vouching of the company's promotion expenses.

letter of the Board of Works to us objecting to arbitration, and on that objection I believe the Board of Trade took legal advice, and how it stands I cannot tell; but through the influence of the Board of Works we never got the appointment of an arbitrator.

19384. You cannot know that. What did the Board of Trade answer? You say that you applied to them to decide the question, as I understand?—Yes. The reply was that they had no power to decide the matter.

19385. So you are shut up there?—Yes, we are shut up there.

19386. The position is that you are asking for arbitration and cannot get it?—Yes.

19387. You have no remedy at present?—Up to the present, no.

19388 And all this difficulty has arisen under a contract which was drawn with the understanding that you would carry out the works?—Yes.

19389. That contract which provided for carrying out the works under your supervision, has, under circumstances that we need not discuss, been turned aside into a contract for the works being carried out under somebody else's supervision?—Yes.

19390. That is the position that comes before us?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

19391. As promoters of the line, preliminary plans and specifications which were to be submitted to the Grand Jury were prepared on your instructions, were they not?—By our engineer.

19392. By your engineer?—Yes.

19393. And, subsequently, when you came to render your account for the preparation of those plans, you naturally went to the Board of Works?—The company?

19394. Your company?—Yes.

19395. Did they meet your claim in full or was there any difference of opinion as to the amount of the claim?—There is a balance still outstanding.

19396. You were not able to produce vouchers for the extent of your claim?—On the contrary, the vouchers were all sent forward. If you will allow me to read the correspondence——

19397. I do not think we want to go into all that?—I hold that these questions cannot be answered accurately without the documents I have here, and I do not wish to state anything that I cannot support by the written evidence of the transaction at the time.

19398. We were given to understand by the Board of Works or by the gentlemen who gave evidence on their behalf that you claimed for a certain amount in the way of promotion expenses, including the preparation of these preliminary plans. You produced vouchers for a certain amount, and on those vouchers the Board of Works paid you. You claimed more, and they said: "We will give you the balance when you produce the vouchers"; and those vouchers, I understand, you have never been in a position to produce?—That is merely a statement. I do not know whether it is supported by letters or evidence or not; but I am here to support my evidence by written proofs.

19399. What was the amount actually paid?—The Secretary can tell you that.

19400. *Mr. Acworth.*—There is the question (*handing copy of evidence to the witness*). There were £1,500 that you never vouched for apparently?—The Secretary will speak as to this; you can understand that I am not in daily attendance on these matters.

19401. *Chairman.*—If the Secretary can give a short explanation it would be much better. (*To Mr. Spence*). Will you read the question in the proof, Mr. Spence?—*Mr. Spence* (*reading*).—"Question 14982. And they never furnished vouchers?—They never did. There are about £1,500 standing at this moment that they have not vouched for."

19402. Mr. M'Farland says you will give a short explanation of why the vouchers have not been sent?—*Mr. Spence.*—The vouchers were sent.

19403. They were sent?—*Mr. Spence.*—Yes.

19404. For the £1,500?—*Mr. Spence.*—For the full claim made, and the solicitor to the Board of Works advised us not to send in one of the vouchers

19405. To withdraw it?—*Mr. Spence.*—To withdraw it and substitute for it two sub-vouchers and a certificate; that was done at his suggestion. The next day he wrote to this effect: Yours with vouchers and certificates received; hope you will hear from me to-morrow; I cannot do it to-day. The actual words are: "Yours and further vouchers to hand; I hope you will hear by to-morrow's post; impossible to-day."

19406. What is the date?—*Mr. Spence.*—20th December, 1898. Notwithstanding this, no further moneys were paid, and at the present time a balance of £2,228 is outstanding to us for moneys spent on promotion and engineering on this line.

19407. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—On receipt of that letter saying that they intended to attend to the matter, when they failed to do so, surely you took some further steps?—*Mr. Spence.*—Certainly, a great many further steps, but we never got the money; the accounts have never been paid.

19408. There is no letter from the Board of Works saying that they are ready to pay you when you give proper vouchers, or that the vouchers submitted on the advice of their solicitor were not adequate?—*Mr. Spence.*—A long time afterwards they said that there was a lack of detail on the part of some of the vouchers.

19409. Did they lead you to believe that the vouchers received complied with their requirements?—*Mr. Spence.*—They did not; first they said they would, then they said they would not.

Mr. Batchen.—May I hand this in (*exhibiting document*). It explains the matter very shortly.

Mr. M'Farland.—Why can the correspondence to be handed in by the witness not be read instead of something we have never seen.

19410. *Chairman.*—This is a letter addressed to you?—What is the date?

19411. 14th April, 1902?—That is four years after this. Whatever it may be about I cannot tell. The solicitor writes, as you have heard; the sub-vouchers and certificates suggested by the solicitor were forwarded on the 19th December, and acknowledged.

19412. In 1898?—On 20th December, 1898. It is impossible to explain the matter fully unless you have the full correspondence before you.

19413. You have that letter?—*Mr Spence.*—I think I have all the letters.

19414. I mean there is no doubt about it?—There seems to have been a difference of opinion as to whether they should pay certain amounts?—*Mr. Spence* —Yes.

19415. I think we had better leave it there?—(*Mr. M'Farland*).—I think it would hardly be fair to the Commission to leave it without sifting it to the bottom. All the evidence in my proof will explain it fully to the Commission.

19416. The Commission are quite satisfied on that point I do not see the object in labouring it. There is a dispute between the Board of Works and you as to whether certain demands should be paid by them, and they give reasons for their action in that letter?—Four years elapsed from the time when they told us to send up certain documents and they would pay; four years elapsed when they sent that letter.

19417. That is a fair comment; we will leave it there.

19418. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—My only object was to have a clear understanding that from the very first preliminary work which was necessary to place before the Grand Jury to bring the Order forward there were differences of opinion and disputes between you and the Board of Works, and you, to a certain extent, were averse to going on with the contract for the line afterwards?—No; we were never averse to carrying out our contract. The dispute arose entirely through not fixing the amount to be paid to my company for promotion.

19419. They took up the position in the letter that they were not justified in paying you?—That was four years afterwards.

19419A. However, I do not wish to pursue that matter, and the Chairman does not think it worth going into.

19420. Subsequently, when the time came for preparing working plans and specifications for the construction of the line, you employed an engineer to carry out that work?—We did, and under an agreement, which was submitted to the Board of Works for their approval, whereby he was to be paid precisely the sum of money that the Board of Works were to pay the company for engineering.

19421. There was a written agreement between Mr. Radcliffe and your company?—And the company—of which the Board of Works got a copy.

19422. Could you give the Commission the terms of that Agreement?—The Agreement will speak for itself; he was to get whatever amount of money——

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19423. But might we ask for that Agreement as to the terms of his remuneration for drawing up these plans?—He agreed to accept whatever remuneration the Board of Works would allow.

19424. Mr. Radcliffe was the engineer of the Donegal Railway?—The resident engineer.

19425. He was really employed by you to prepare these plans?—He was, and he was a very competent gentleman indeed, and he agreed to accept whatever remuneration the Board of Works would allow.

Mr. Batchen (exhibiting two documents).—These are the Agreements; the one will explain the other.

Agreement between the Lough Swilly Company and Mr. Radcliffe, Engineer, regarding the preparation of necessary drawings, specifications, etc., for construction of Burtonport line.

Mr. Shanahan.—In connection with the evidence proceeding, the Board of Works wish to hand in two agreements. One is:—"Agreement entered into this 10th day of March, 1898, between the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, hereinafter called the promoters, of the one part, and Edward Radcliffe, M.I.C.E., of Coxtown, Bridgtown, Strabane, in the County of Donegal, civil engineer, hereinafter called the engineer, of the other part," viz.:—

AN AGREEMENT entered into this 10th day of March, 1898, between the LONDONDERRY and LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY COMPANY (hereinafter called the Promoters) of the one part, and EDWARD RADCLIFFE (A.M.I.C.E.) of Coxtown, Bridgetown, Strabane, in the County of Donegal, Civil Engineer (hereinafter called the "Engineer"), of the other part. Whereas the Promoters, pursuant to an Agreement between Her Majesty's Treasury, the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, and the Promoters, being about to execute certain works for the construction of a line of Railway from Letterkenny to Burtonport, *via* Churchill, Creeslough, Fiddlers' Bridge, and Gweedore, have requested the Engineer to prepare the necessary drawings, specifications, schedules of prices, bill of quantities and estimates, and all measurements, particulars, and documents necessary for the letting of the Contract for the said intended works, and to superintend the same during their execution and during the period of maintenance by the Contractor, and the said Engineer has consented to undertake and carry out the same. NOW THESE PRESENTS WITNESS that in consideration of the payments to be made to him by the Promoters as hereinafter provided the Engineer agrees with the Promoters as follows:—

1. That he, the Engineer, will take all levels, make all surveys, and prepare all drawings, specifications, and estimates, and Bills of Quantities, and all other Engineering matters, and things called for by the Promoters in connection with the said construction and maintenance of the said intended works to such scales and with such particulars as may be necessary to enable the Promoters to obtain the sanction of the Board of Works to the same, and also to permit of the Promoters or the Board of Works (as the case may be) entering into a Contract or Contracts for the due execution and maintenance of the said intended works, and to alter and amend the said drawings, specifications, and estimates, quantities, particulars prices, and other engineering matters and things as may be required by the Promoters or by the said Board of Works (as the case may be). The said drawings, specifications, and estimates, bills of quantities, and all documents prepared by the subject to the approval of the Promoters, and the Engineer shall conform to, obey, and carry out all orders of the Promoters relating to the said works.

2. That all such drawings, specifications, and estimates, bills of quantities, schedules of prices, and all other documents relating to and required for the letting of the Contract or Contracts, and for the proper carrying out of the Works, shall be prepared, printed, lithographed, or copied at the expense of the Engineer, who shall also at his expense supply the Promoters and the said Board of Works, and the Contractors and such other person or persons as the Promoters may specify, with prints and copies of said drawings, specifications, estimates, quantities, schedules of prices and documents at such times and in such quantities as the Promoters may require.

3. For the purpose of supervision the line shall be divided into two sections, viz.:—(1) From Letterkenny to Creeslough, and section (2) from Creeslough to Burtonport, or other such sections as may be directed by the Promoters. Two fully qualified and competent Resident Engineers and a Junior or apprentice Engineer shall be employed and appointed by the Engineer for each section during the progress of the Works and until completion thereof. The Engineer shall also employ two competent Inspectors of Masonry, who shall exercise constant supervision during the execution of the Works of all buildings and mason work. The said Resident and Assistant Engineers and said Masonry Inspectors and the Engineer's entire staff of Assistants shall be in the Employment of and be paid by the Engineer, who shall be responsible to the Promoters for the competency of all persons employed by him in connection with the works and for the proper discharge of their respective duties.

4. The Engineer shall superintend and direct all works during the construction and maintenance of same, and he undertakes that the Resident Engineers and Junior or apprentice Engineers and Masonry Inspectors so to be employed by him as aforesaid shall give their entire time and attention to the Works, and the Engineer shall be fully responsible to the Promoters for the proper organisation of the Engineering staff and all matters connected with the Engineering for or in relation to said Works.

5. The Engineer shall reside at Londonderry or on the Works between Letterkenny and Burtonport during the entire time from the commencement of the Contract to the end of the Contractors term of maintenance, but after the completion of the working drawings and the letting of the Contract or Contracts may be absent occasionally with the consent and approval of the Promoters. Each of the Resident Engineers for the time being shall reside at some place on the section in his charge during the progress and until the completion of the works. All information reaching the Engineer in his capacity of Engineer shall be considered confidential and shall not be divulged by him to outside parties or any person other than the Promoters, without their written assent.

6. The Engineer shall attend the meetings of the Promoters from time to time to which he may be summoned in writing by the Secretary and shall assist and advise the Promoters in all matters relating to the design and execution of the said intended works, and also shall attend and assist at all Inquiries with respect to the said intended works which may be held under said order in Council or by order of the Board of Works, and at all Courts where his attendance may be required in the interests of the Promoter or the Board of Works, and shall attend and give evidence at any arbitration held to determine the amount of compensation to be paid or accommodation works to be given to all persons whose lands or premises may be taken or alleged to be injuriously affected by the execution of the said intended works.

7. The Engineer shall aid and advise the Promoters in entering into a Contract or Contracts for the execution of the said intended works and shall superintend the same during their execution and shall fully and adequately inspect and examine the works during their progress and maintenance and report on the progress of the Works to the Promoters from time to time as may be required and shall issue periodical certificates to enable the Promoters to make payments from time to time to the Contractor or Contractors who may be entrusted with the execution of the said intended works, and shall assist in winding up all accounts between such Contractor or Contractors and the Promoters or the Board of Works, and all accounts between the Promoters and the Board of Works.

8. The Engineer further agrees to exercise reasonable skill and diligence in the discharge of the foregoing duties so undertaken by him and to act fairly as between the said Contractor or Contractors and the Promoters and the Board of Works (as the case may be).

9. The Engineer shall complete and hand over to the Promoters the working drawings and all other documents necessary for the letting of the the Contract or Contracts within four months

from the first day of April, 1898, or within such further time as the Promoters for some special reason or reasons may fix by notice to the Engineer in writing, and as part of or on account of the sum to be paid the Engineer, the Promoters shall pay him the sum of One Hundred Pounds weekly during the preparation and until the completion and handing over of the working drawings and documents necessary for the letting of the Contract or Contracts. Provided always that the Engineering work shall be carried on with reasonable despatch having regard to the provisions of these Presents and that no more than £2,100 shall be paid until the completion and handing over of the said working drawings and documents. The first instalment of £100 to be paid on the 18th day of March inst.

10. In consideration of the due discharge by the Engineer of the duties so undertaken and of the payments and expenses to be borne by the Engineer under these Presents, the Promoters agree to pay the Engineer all moneys which shall be allowed by the Board of Works and received by the Promoters in respect of the Engineering of said works from time to time and as the said moneys shall be received by the Promoters. Provided always that the sum paid or to be paid for the Engineering work in connection with the Parliamentary plans shall not be included in such moneys or paid to the Engineers. Such payments are to be fixed by the Board of Works, the Engineer and the Promoters, before the letting of the Contract or Contracts.

11. In case any alteration consequent on said works may become necessary on the Letterkenny line of railway (elsewhere than at Letterkenny Station Yard) or on the Promoters line of railway, the Engineer shall, if called upon to do so by the Promoters before the year of maintenance after the opening of the Burtonport line expires, prepare at his own expense all plans, drawings, specifications, estimates, bills of quantities, and other documents necessary for the execution of the works, of and incidental to such alterations, and shall bear and pay the costs of the printing, lithographing, and copying in connection therewith, and shall superintend and carry out such alterations subject to the approval of the Promoters, and shall conform to, obey and execute all orders of the Promoters in respect of such alterations. This clause shall not include any architectural work or alteration to any station buildings other than at the Letterkenny Station.

12. In consideration of the due discharge by the Engineer of the duties undertaken by him set forth in the preceding paragraph, and of the payments and expenses to be borne by him in connection therewith, the Promoters shall pay to the Engineer a sum equal to 10% (ten per cent.) of the cost of labour (exclusive of cost of materials in connection with such alterations) or if the work is let by contract then 5% on the contract amount. The Promoters shall find and supply all materials necessary for such alteration at their own expense.

13. All plans, drawings, specifications, estimates and documents prepared by the Engineer in pursuance of these Presents shall on the approval thereof by the Promoters be and become the property of the Promoters and shall be returned to their Secretary on application after the completion of the works.

14. In the event of the Engineering work in connection with the preparation of the working drawings and other documents necessary for the letting of the Contract or Contracts not proceeding with such despatch as in the opinion of the Board of Works will enable such Engineering work to be completed within the time fixed by these Presents, the Engineer on getting ten days notice in writing from the Promoters shall hand over the plans, working drawings, specifications, and other documents in his possession or control so far as same are prepared or done, to the Promoters, and the Promoters may, if they think fit, appoint another Engineer to complete such plans, drawings, and other documents as may be necessary for the letting of the contract or contracts, and the Engineer on handing over the said plans, drawings and other documents, shall be paid such sum as may be fixed by a competent Engineer mutually chosen by the Engineer and the Board of Works, or in the event of disagreement by an Engineer nominated by the President for the time being of the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, as the balance properly payable to the Engineer for such plans, drawings, documents and other work done by him, having regard to the provision of these Presents and the conduct of the Engineer.

15. In case from any cause during the construction of the works, the Engineer shall cease to act for the Promoters he shall be paid for the work done by him up to the time of his ceasing to act such proportion of the whole sum allocated for the Engineering as the work done by him shall bear to the whole of the Engineering work (exclusive of the Engineering work in connection with the Parliamentary plans), and in case of any dispute arising as to such sum same shall be fixed by an Engineer to be mutually appointed by the Promoters and the Engineer, or in the event of disagreement by an Engineer to be appointed by the President for the time being of the Institute of Civil Engineers, London.

In Witness whereof the Promoters have hereunto affixed their Corporate Seal and the said Edward Radcliff hath hereunto affixed his hand and seal the day and the year first herein written.

Fred Dawson, *Secretary.*

Witness present—Andrew Spence.

Witness present when signed by
Edward Radcliffe,

Alexander Hutchman,
29 Argyle-street,
Londonderry.

Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company [Seal].

Edward Radcliffe.

Agreement between Mr. Radcliffe and Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland, contractors, relative to certain Parliamentary plans, drawings, etc., of Burtonport Railway.

The second Agreement is "Memorandum of Agreement made the 8th day of March, 1898, between Edward Radcliffe, of Coxtown, Bridgtown, Strabane, in the County of Donegal, civil engineer of the one part and Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland, both of the City of Belfast, contractors, trading as M'Crea and M'Farland, of the other part." viz:—

Memorandum of Agreement made the eight day of March, 1898, between Edward Radcliff, of Coxtown, Bridgetown, Strabane, in the County of Donegal Civil Engineer, of the one part, and Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland, both of the City of Belfast, Contractors, trading as M'Crea and M'Farland, of the other part. Whereas the said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland heretofore purchased from Francis A. Doyle, Civil Engineer, deceased, the Parliamentary Plans, Drawings, and Documents prepared by him, and all his interest therein, in relation to portion of an intended line of railway from Letterkenny in the direction of Burtonport, in the County of Donegal. And whereas the said Edward Radcliff is about to be appointed by the Promoters of the said line of railway as their engineer, and the said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland have agreed to hand him over said Parliamentary Plans, Books of Reference, Drawings, and Documents, and the said Edward Radcliff has, in consideration thereof, agreed to make them the payments hereinafter appearing. Now These Presents Witness and it is hereby agreed between the parties hereto as follows:—

(1.) The said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland shall immediately, on the signing hereof hand over to the said Edward Radcliff all the Parliamentary Plans, Books of Reference, Drawings, and Documents in their hands relating to the said line of railway as approved of and passed by the Grand Jury of the County of Donegal at the Summer Assizes, 1897, and further approved of by the Commissioners appointed to hold an inquiry thereon by the Board of Public Works (Ireland), and so purchased by them as aforesaid from the said Francis A. Doyle, deceased.

(2.) In consideration thereof the said Edward Radcliff shall pay to the said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland a sum equivalent to ten per cent. on the aggregate of the instalments to be paid to him by the Promoters or the Board of Works for or in respect of his fees as engineer during the

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construction of the said railway until such instalments reach £10,000 and twenty-five per cent. on each instalment to be paid to him by the Promoters or the Board of Works in excess of £10,000, and in part payment thereof, the said Edward Radcliff will pay to the said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland the sum of £300 on the signing hereof and gives them his promisory notes or acceptances for £250, £250, and £200, respectively, each of even date, herewith payable twelve months and two years and three years after date.

(3.) The said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland shall, after the appointment of the said Edward Radcliff as such engineer, use their influence with the Promoters to have the name of the said Edward Radcliff returned to M'Corquodale and Co.'s Official Railway Directory as Engineer to the Promoters either separately or together with the name of any other engineer acting in a similar capacity.

(4.) The said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland shall use their influence with the Promoters to obtain for said Edward Radcliff and his engineers and inspectors free passes over Promoter's line of railway.

(5.) Should the projected line of railway from Letterkenny to Burtonport be stopped, abandoned, or discontinued from any cause whatsoever, should the Promoters fail to appoint the said Edward Radcliff their engineer, then this Agreement is to be void and of no effect, and should any moneys have been paid to said Basil M'Crea and John M'Farland in respect thereof the same are to be refunded to the said Edward Radcliff.

As witness the hands of the said parties the day and year first herein written.

EDWARD RADCLIFF.

Signed by the said Edward Radcliff in presence of James Elliott.

Signed by Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland in presence of James Elliott, Foyle-st., Derry.

There are two separate Agreements.

Mr. Acworth.—But that has nothing to do with the company; it is a contract between two private individuals.

19426. *Chairman.*—It is not the Lough Swilly Railway Company?—I and my late partner—I am sorry to call him my "late" partner—have been contractors all our lifetime, and we have nothing to be ashamed of in any of these agreements whatever.

Mr. M'Farland's position with regard to his firm's agreement with Mr. Radcliffe.

19427. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The agreement between Mr. Radcliffe and you was between him as an engineer and you as chairman of the company promoting the line?—Not at all; it was between the company and Radcliffe, whereby he was to take whatever remuneration the Board of Works would allocate to the engineer for his services.

19428. It was your duty as promoters to prepare the working plans and specifications?—Yes; it fell on the engineer to do so.

19429. You were the promoters?—Yes. the company!

19430. Naturally it had to be constructed by somebody?—Yes.

19431. And he acted on your instructions?—I would not say on our instructions at all. The Board of Works were going in any case to promote this line.

19432. Was there any understanding or agreement or covenant between you and him that you, whether in your capacity as a private individual or in your capacity as Chairman of the company, were to receive a certain percentage of whatever amount was paid him by the Board of Works?—There was.

19433. Will you state to the Commission what the terms were?—If the agreement is here it will speak for itself, but such an agreement existed. I and my late partner had already purchased these plans, and we employed engineers, Mr. Swiney, and other engineers, to prepare Parliamentary plans. The actual money paid for the preparation of these Parliamentary plans was between £1,900 and £2,000. M'Crea and M'Farland, the contractors, were entitled to be paid for the same work—for these Parliamentary plans when they were handed over to the promoters—as the Board of Works paid other engineers.

19434. These are the plans referred to in your abstract of evidence?—Yes.

19435. These plans were already prepared in 1890?—In 1889 and 1890, by the late Mr. Doyle, who, being an old man, my firm had purchased his interest in them so that no contention would arise with their representatives.

19436. Would I be right in saying that there was an agreement of some kind between you and Mr. Radcliffe?—I have already stated so.

19437. That he should pay you 10 per cent. on the amount of money he received?—I have already stated that such an agreement was in existence.

19438. Does it not strike you as rather a questionable proceeding that you, acting either in your private capacity—at any rate you were chairman of the promoting company—that you should enter into a covenant with the man you were employing in the interests of the company? Does it not seem rather a questionable proceeding to bind this servant, so to speak, to pay over to you a certain percentage of the remuneration which he received?—As chairman of the company, yes, but as a contractor—M'Crea and M'Farland—it was a different transaction. It was not as chairman of the company I entered into such an agreement or that I employed this gentleman to prepare Parliamentary plans.

19439. You act in a dual capacity, something like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?—There are a great many commercial——

19440. I do not wish to press the matter further?—I submit, with all respect to the Commission, that whatever money the Board of Works have been in the habit of paying from time to time for these Parliamentary plans should have been paid to M'Crea and M'Farland, the same as they would have been paid to any other engineer from day to day.

19441. That is perfectly legitimate, but I think it is rather a questionable way of going to work to recover the value of these plans from the men you are employing in the nature of a percentage?—No.

19442. That is a matter of opinion, and I do not wish to press the matter further. At any rate, the fact that there was this agreement to pay up this 10 per cent. would, I suppose, to a certain extent account for the hostility by which you seem to think he was actuated towards you?—Not at all. I have said here that he was an engineer of high standing and character.

19443. I mean when he became superintendent for the construction of the line?—There is nothing but the greatest friendship between us.

Mr. Acworth.—I understood that that was another gentleman altogether.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—Mr. Radcliffe was the resident engineer.

19444. *Mr. Acworth.*—He did not pass into the service of the Board of Works, did he?—He did.

19445. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I was going to suggest that probably that might account for his not being animated by any great desire to do more than his duty?—That agreement lapsed on his passing into other employment.

19446. You say your relations were very friendly. Is there any truth in the suggestion that subsequent to his engagement and taking up the construction of this line, you endeavoured under the terms of that contract or agreement which you entered into about the 10 per cent. to recover that percentage from the amount of the salary he was earning?—I have no recollection of such a proceeding.

19447. Was not a law suit actually threatened?—I have no recollection of such a thing.

19448. If you have no recollection of it we must let the matter drop?—The secretary tells me there was no such thing; the agreement lapsed when he passed into the hands of the Board of Works.

19449. We will let the matter drop. On page 8 you speak of the valuable property which the Board of Works had in the Burtonport line. It is very valuable now; but at the time of its construction it was never anticipated that it would be a valuable line?—I cannot enter into the speculations of the investigators who inquired into it at all.

19450. I put it to you that the Treasury agreement actually makes provision for a deficit and provided that in the event of the deficit which they anticipated your company should have to bear the brunt and pay

the loss?—If they put it in the Treasury agreement, it speaks for itself.

19451. Subsequently it developed into a fine line?—There is no fineness about it in the world.

19452. It is a valuable line?—The traffic has shown no abnormal increase since the date of opening to-day; the monthly returns are here for the information of the Commission.

19453. If you anticipated that it was going to be so profitable, why did you not take it up?—I did not anticipate any profit at all. If my advice had been followed we would never have promoted the line; it was just the greed of my co-directors and the pressure of the public to have this money that we were being threatened every day that if we would not enter into this unreasonable and onerous agreement with the Board of Works the money would go to the South of Ireland. I would have let it go to the devil if I had not been out-voted by my directors, knowing that no railway could be maintained for £3 10*s.* per mile per week in perpetuity.

19454. And not earn the handsome dividend that you earn?—That has nothing to do with the Burtonport railway; that dividend was earned for my shareholders before the Burtonport line was conceived.

19455. That is very much to your credit?—That is by good management; the line has paid 7 per cent.

19456. You spoke about your co-directors; what does your Board consist of? I suppose you have meetings?—Yes.

19457. You do not appear to have had many meetings with regard to this special extension?—We have had as many meetings as the circumstances of the case demanded.

19458. One every other year?—We have had as many as the circumstances of the case demanded, whether it was one every other year or one every other month. Meetings would be called according to the requirements of the business.

19459. I ask you as chairman of the company whether you do not think it would have been advisable in view of all these complaints and dissatisfaction to have called your directors or delegates who were entitled to attend to a special Board meeting, so that they could have given their views and see if they could not bring a little pressure to bear on the Board of Works?—The delegates always attend. It depends on the official staff when the meetings of a Board, which is only summoned occasionally, take place. They know what business is to be transacted, and it rests with them. When complaints come before me as chairman of the company I would naturally consider the wisdom of what should be done and advise, but beyond that my duty is at an end.

19460. But in your own interest I should have thought that to have given this baronial director and the two delegates who are empowered to act by the Treasury agreement, an opportunity of thrashing the matter out and of bringing their influence to bear on the Board of Works, that might have saved us all this inquiry and yourself a lot of trouble?—The delegates and the baronial directors used their utmost endeavours to have this matter inquired into through the County Council and through the representatives in Parliament; all that has been done.

19461. I should have thought that it would have had more effect if it had come through a Board meeting?—They also sent a memorial to the Board of Trade to hold an inquiry in connection with this, and that also was abortive.

19462. You and Dr. Todd and other gentlemen keep referring to this 21st Clause in the Treasury agreement, which empowers the Board of Trade to send down and inquire into any disputes or differences which may arise between the engineer and the Board of Works during the construction of the line. That does not apply to anything else, but you tried to invoke the Board of Trade under this particular clause a couple of years, or even longer after the line was actually at work. It was impossible for them to act under that clause; you know that?—I am not going to set up my opinion against yours.

19463. It is not my opinion?—I hold that a great wrong has been done and that there should be some means of righting it.

19464. The only clause under which the Board of Trade could act was the 24th section of the Order in Council?—Apart from your opinion or mine, we have been advised by the most eminent counsel in Great Britain and Ireland that we have a right to an inquiry under the other clause.

19465. At any rate, the counsel for the Board of Works or the Board of Trade gave it as their opinion that you were not entitled, and I think that any one reading it would be of the same opinion. I am not a barrister; I wish I were?—You have done very well as a Judicial Commissioner.

19466. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do I understand you to say that the claim of £78,000, roughly speaking, was not a claim to be paid to you in the shape of money, but a claim under their agreement that the Board of Works should compel the contractors for the line to make sound, inaccuracies in workmanship, or bad workmanship, or as regards bridges or material?—Yes; not one penny of money has been claimed, it is merely for defects in the construction works—defects and short works.

Suggestion that the working company's claim against the Board of Works is not a monetary one.

19467. You only ask the Board of Works to compel the contractors to make this good?—To restore them.

19468. Under the agreement as I suppose it exists between the Board of Works and the contractors; was the contract with the Board of Works or with the Lough Swilly Railway Company?—It was a contract binding the three of us—the Lough Swilly Railway Company, the contractors, and the Board of Works, and the Board of Works should see that these works were carried out in accordance with the contract.

19469. Was there no clause in that contract compelling the contractors to make good bad workmanship?—There was.

Allegation as to the failure of the contractors to carry out the works in accordance with the deviation plans

19470. You have not put in any letter or, so far as I have understood, evidence; you have not stated to the Commission yet that you called on the Board of Works to compel the contractors to make good the bad workmanship and the deviations from the plans, which I take it the Board of Works admit were not in accordance with the plans. If the Board of Works admit that the workmanship was not right, why did you make a claim for money, and not merely to make good?—When setting out the works we could also set out the value of them, and I may tell the Commission that the contractors were bound in security for the right completion of the work to the extent of £10,000. That money was to be held during the construction of the works and for the one year of maintenance. During the period of maintenance, owing to these works not being completed, we advised the Board of Works not to pay over these £10,000 pending the completion of the works in a proper manner. We warned them not to do it pending the completion of the works.

19471. I do not understand yet. You say there was a clause in the agreement to compel them to make good. Why did you not call upon the Board of Works to see that the contractors did that. I understood from your evidence that Mr. Radcliffe was the Board of Works' engineer-in-charge?—Yes; the resident engineer.

19472. Did he personally allow the contractors to make this bad workmanship?—Evidently this (*indicating Mr. Batchen, who was present*), is the chief officer, not a subordinate.

Apportionment of the savings on the deviations.

19473. On any of the savings made you were to get one half?—The Board of Works.

19474. I mean the Lough Swilly Railway Company?—No, no. It was the Board of Works and the Treasury got one half and the contractors got the other.

19475. The contractors got one half and the Board of Works the other?—That only applies to the deviations; it had nothing to do with the principal works.

19476. *Chairman.*—Are you sure that the Board of Works got half?—The Board of Works gentlemen are here present, and Mr. Batchen gave evidence on that.

19477. But you do not know within your own knowledge?—Not at all.

19478. Then you had better not say it?—We heard it here.

The payment of £4,000 to the promoting company by the contractors in respect of the deviations.

19479. *Lord Pirrie.*—But we heard that the contractors got it, I think?—Will you let me explain to Lord Pirrie the £4,000 that we got came out of the enormous savings that Mr. Radcliffe reported to us would be effected. Those enormous savings were divided into two, and the Board of Works got one half and the contractors the other, and out of the contractors' half we got £4,000.

19480. *Chairman.*—How do you know that?—It was the evidence here of Mr. Batchen. That has nothing to do with the departures from the plans. If the specifications had been carried out we would have had no claim; it was because the specification was departed from.

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19481. *Lord Pirrie.*—I do not understand yet why a public board or an individual who enters into a contract in which he is bound to make good what was wrong during the first twelve months of the working of the line—is not compelled to make good?—That is for them.

19482. You say that that was the duty of the Board of Works?—I do.

19483. I suppose you will agree that it is because the Board of Works have no officials in a position to know good work; they employ outside men for that purpose?—I do not know. These are professional gentlemen, Mr. Batchen and Mr. Radcliffe, and it is for them to say why these departures were made from the contract.

19484. You made a claim for money independently of the £78,000, and you got a portion of that paid; what is the balance owing to you to-day of your money claim—not the £78,000?—I have no claim for a penny against the Board of Works.

19485. You have not?—No; the company has a claim.

19486. It is the Lough Swilly Railway Company, I mean?—There are some vouchers.

19487. What is the amount which the Lough Swilly Railway say they have not received in cash—not bringing in this £78,000?—*Mr. Spence.*—The only money demand is in respect of promotion expenses.

Balance of £2,600 on promotion expenses claimed by Lough Swilly Company as still due.

19488. What is the amount?—*Mr. Spence.*—£2,600.

19489. The total amount that is owing to the Lough Swilly Railway Company is £2,600?—*Mr. Spence.*—Yes.

19490. As I understand the letter that has been handed in by the Board of Works to-day it is thought they cannot pay that because it would not be handed over to the partners in the Lough Swilly Railway Company, that is the letter which has been handed in to the Chairman?—*Mr. Spence.*—We desired to read it and fully explain the transaction referred to, but the Chairman advised that the matter should drop. I am quite prepared, subject to the Chairman's decision, to explain the matter fully.

19491. I would have thought, in the interests of Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland, that it was very desirable, because that accusation of the Board of Works is a very serious one.

19492. *Chairman.*—There is no accusation in that letter. You have seen the letter, Mr. Todd?—(*Mr. Todd*).—There is no accusation; it is a mere question of opinion.

The question of the use of the permanent way materials by the contractors during construction.

19493. *Lord Pirrie.*—On whose authority were the contractors allowed to use the rails and sleepers?—(*Mr. M'Farland*).—On Mr. Batchen's authority.

19494. It was on his authority?—Yes.

19495. The Board of Works took it into their own hands to lend material for making the line?—Yes, contrary to the specification.

19496. *Chairman.*—No, no; the Board of Works lent nothing. The contractors supplied the rails, and those rails were used in the construction—that is what you mean?—They were not entitled to use them for construction.

19497. The contractors used those rails on the railway, but they were allowed to use new ones?—Yes; but why should they be allowed to use them?

19498. Never mind why?—The contracts prohibited the use of them, and they were allowed to use them to their profit of £3,000 or £5,000.

19499. *Lord Pirrie.*—That is what I understand—the Board of Works took that into their own hands?—They did.

Mr. Aspinall.—Did the contractor reduce his claim?

19500. *Lord Pirrie.*—Has the Lough Swilly Railway Company made a claim on the Board of Works for deterioration on that ground?—(*Witness*).—They have in this account.

19501. Is that the £78,000 account?—Yes, it is.

19502. But you tell me there was no claim except for bad workmanship and for making good what was wrong?—This is making good the rails.

19503. For making good the rails and sleepers that were worn out during the construction of the line?—Yes.

19504. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Would you ask the witness whether the contractor reduced his price because he was allowed to use new material?—I do not know about that at all. The contract with my company is with the Board of Works, and this should not have been done without our consent. Here is a letter of Mr. Batchen's, when we complained of these rails being used in 1900, three years before the line was opened: "I might point out to you that if I find these rails are injured in any way I shall not allow them to form part of the permanent way."

19505. *Chairman.*—That has been read before?—The contract provided for these rails being delivered at different places on the railway by the Board of Works, after which they were to be stored until required by the contractors, who were not to use them on the railway until the banks had consolidated. Instead of using them in that way, and storing them and leaving them until the banks had consolidated, they rushed them into the cuttings and ran their own material over them for years. I should explain or state to you that it is within my knowledge that in England, with companies like your own, when they are extending or constructing a railway there is nothing unusual in taking spring ballast wagons and good engines and using permanent rails and sleepers for laying down the pitching, and subsequently ballasting on the hard road or hard bank adjoining; but it is quite different with contractors, and engineers make it one of the most stringent rules of the specifications that these rails are not to be used except under the most special circumstances, when the banks have got consolidated, when the pitching is laid, and that spring ballast wagons must be used, otherwise the use is prohibited.

Chairman.—I might announce that the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Ward, the Premier of New Zealand, will give evidence before this Commission on Friday with reference to the working of the State railways in New Zealand. We have not yet fixed the time or place, but probably it will be at the Board of Trade office.

Mr. M'Farland.—The Board of Works were allowed to give evidence in detail as to the ballast and as to the masonry, viaducts, and the fencing, and I would like very much if you would give me a few minutes. I will not exceed ten minutes.

19506. *Chairman.*—We have finished now for to-day. We are all exhausted. I am very sorry. I think we have heard quite sufficient about this railway, and I daresay we have all formed an opinion, but what that opinion is I am not going to mention?—Very good.

You had better leave it where it is. You have told your story. It has been very well and clearly told.

Dr. Todd.—There are just three points——

Chairman.—We will not have any more points.

Dr. Todd.—There are three inaccuracies I would like to put right.

Chairman.—You can write them.*

Dr. Todd.—It would be very much better to give them in evidence.

* See Appendix No. 10.

The Commission adjourned till Friday, 17th May.

THIRTY-FOURTH PUBLIC SITTING—FRIDAY, MAY 17TH, 1907,

At the Hotel Cecil, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; and Lieut-Colonel W. HUTCHESON POË, C.B.;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

The Secretary.—It ought to appear upon the Notes that Lord Pirrie, Mr. Aspinall, and Mr. Acworth have written and wired regrets at not being able to be present, as they have been called away by important engagements; and Mr. Sexton is detained in Ireland.

The Right Hon. Sir JOSEPH G. WARD, K.C.M.G., Premier of New Zealand, examined by the CHAIRMAN.

May 17, 1907.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph G. Ward, K.C.M.G., Premier of New Zealand.

19507. We all know, Sir Joseph, that you are the Premier of New Zealand, and we all know also that you are generally acquainted with the State Railways in our Colonies?—Quite so.

19508. More especially, I suppose, with the State Railways in New Zealand?—Yes.

19509. To get it upon the Notes, what is about the population of New Zealand?—It is just under 1,000,000.

19510. And how many miles of railway have you belonging to the State?—About 2,500 opened, speaking from memory.

19511. That is near enough. I will not ask you with reference to any figures, because I have got some figures here which show the revenue of the railways and so on, but I should like to ask you with reference to the policy adopted in New Zealand in connection with these railways. First of all, were the railways originally constructed by private enterprise or by the State?—Originally, by the State.

19512. There have been private railways in New Zealand, have there not?—Yes, two or three.

19513. Has the State purchased any of them?—The State has purchased all of them except one.

19514. Therefore, practically, the whole of the railways with one exception in New Zealand are now controlled by the State?—All but eighty-four miles.

19515. What has been the policy of the State with reference to the development of the country in connection with its railways; have they gone in for making large profits out of the railways *per se*?—No. I think I can explain briefly to you; I was Minister for Railways for eight years; and the policy of the Government for the last fourteen years, that is to say the Government of which I am Premier (which is a continuation of the same Government under which I was formerly Minister for Railways) was to help the development of the natural resources of the country itself upon the basis of charging moderate rates, with no differentiation of rates to any one class of people, the smallest man in the country being allowed to carry either himself or his products at the same rate as the largest user of the railways in any part of the country. We went upon the basis of fixing our rates so as to return about 3 per cent. For some years prior to that policy being in operation under a system of higher tariffs, the railways did not yield 3 per cent.; but, by the lowering of the rates and the assimilating of them and holding out distinct inducements to settlers in the country to go into the interior, and to people generally to more largely use the railways, we have, by introducing these low rates, brought about a great change for the better all over the country; and for years past our earnings have been over 3½ per cent. We have been in the habit of making concessions by way of reduction of rates upon the carriage of butter, cheese, fresh fruit, eggs, vegetables and other farm produce, manures, wool, grain, fish, meat (fresh and frozen); timber, live stock for market and for stocking the land, and passengers in order to carry out the policy of utilising the railways for the purpose of developing the country. I think I have the information here—I have not looked at it for a long time—up to the point of time when I wrote an article to a little journal which I have just had put into my hands. Perhaps you have seen it?

19516. Yes, we have seen it?—I have not got the railway statements here, but we have returned, by way of reduction, several hundreds of thousands of pounds (£750,000) during the last few years.

Allocation of surplus earnings.

19517. I see that in 1905 you had a substantial surplus, which was used in another way, I think, in connection with the staff?—Yes; we have increased the salaries and wages of the staff two or three times during my administration as Minister for Railways, giving them concessions in pay amounting to £365,000 per annum over and above the rates ruling when the railways were managed by a Board of Commissioners for the State, and we have established a Superannuation Fund for all classes of railway servants.

19518. Are we to understand that the rates under the same circumstances are the same to everybody?—Absolutely without exception.

19519. Are there no rebates?—There are no rebates. According to the system prevailing in our country when a rate is decided upon it is gazetted for public information. It then applies to every person who complies with the conditions. Rebates cannot be given by the Railway Administration. If they were given, they would have to be given upon the authority of the Legislative Parliament, which would be a great restrictive institution in the way of preventing rebates to anyone.

Rates for agricultural produce in New Zealand and in Great Britain.

19520. May I take it, generally speaking, that the rates for agricultural produce in New Zealand are less than the rates current in this country?—I do not know that they are; I have not looked into the question of rates as between the two countries; and I would just like to refresh my memory. What I would like to say generally is, that we have no complaints in the ordinary sense about the cost of the railway carriage of products in New Zealand; and if I have mentioned it here it would be absolutely correct; because I took this information at the time from the ordinary records of the service.

Comparison of the passenger fares in New Zealand and in Great Britain.

19521. Now, with regard to the rates for passengers, I find, from a list which I have seen and which is published in that very able article by you, that all the rates for passengers are much less in your country than in this?—Oh, yes; that is so. First of all, we have uniform rates; our passenger mileage rates are uniform. That is, the same rate applies on all sections of the railways; we do not have fluctuating rates. For holiday excursions it is a question of a single rate for a return fare over all our railways. I mean to say the return journey for the single fare. Here is a case in point with ordinary fares, which I worked out at the time I wrote this article, from London to Glasgow, a distance of

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402 miles, the first-class single fare was 58*s*., and the second-class fare was 33*s*.

Comparison of passenger fares and goods rates in New Zealand and Great Britain.

19522. You may take those as first-class and third-class—you have only two classes in New Zealand, I believe?—Yes. In New Zealand for the same distance, the first-class fare at that time was 37*s*. 5*d*., which, as you see, is 20*s*. 7*d*. less for one journey. Our third-class single journey fare was 20*s*. 4*d*., that is 12*s*. 8*d*. less than the fare in this country. Our first-class return fare is 74*s*. 10*d*. as against 110*s*. 3*d*., or 35*s*. 5*d*. less than your's. In our country the second-class return fare is 40*s*. 8*d*., as against your 62*s*. 11*d*. or 22*s*. 3*d*. less.

19523. In that article there are a great number of instances given of rates, and I have had them checked, at least I have checked them myself, and I find that in every case your rates are considerably less than the rates in this country for passengers?—Yes, considerably less for passengers.

19524. And also for goods?—Yes, generally so.

Concessions given in rates for the purpose of developing agricultural districts.

19525. Have you any system for giving special facilities for developing agricultural districts?—Well, there is lime, for instance; we carry lime free entirely, up to a distance of 100 miles—we do not, of course, allow the districts to overlap into one another. We say to the people in a 100-mile zone, "We will carry it free, but if you want it to go outside that, you must pay."

19526. That is done to assist the agriculturalist?—Exactly.

19527. And, of course, the lime is necessary for the soil?—Absolutely; and the result is to give us increased traffic upon our railways.

19528. Have you not also some special facilities for passengers, say, school children?—Yes.

System of free conveyance of school children.

19529. What is your system with regard to that?—We carry school children to the nearest school free all over the country. That answers a double purpose with us. Our schools come under the Education Department; they are an institution of the State; and if we adopted the policy of saying to these children, "you must pay," the odds are that we would have to build schools very much closer together than they are now, although we have a great number of schools throughout the country. So, we have for many years carried them free to the nearest school; and in cases of certain denominations that have got schools within sixty miles distance the children are carried free, so that they can go to the particular denomination to which they belong. There are private schools as well as State schools, of course. That system we have had in operation many years, and it has worked admirably.

Advantages derived from the concessions in rates.

19530. With reference to carrying lime free, and with reference to these low rates for agricultural produce, you are of opinion, I suppose, that without those facilities, the land would not have been developed?—I feel pretty certain it would not have been developed to the same extent; because a man on the seaboard in our country, or close to it, who was raising sheep or wool, or wheat, or grain, or timber (we are a producing country), would be placed at a tremendous advantage as compared with his neighbour 100 miles away from the seaboard, unless we gave a fairly low rate right over that 100 miles. And we find upon the whole that a man 100 miles or 200 miles from our seaboard is doing quite as well in the abstract as the man close to the sea shore. We do not come down in the case of short distances to the same extent as in longer distances, of course.

Advantages of the system of State ownership over private ownership of railways.

19531. Do you think the development of the country could have been carried out to the same extent if the railways had been owned by private parties?—I should very much doubt it, for the reason that I think that the first concern of private parties owning railways would be to take all they could out of the users of the railways. While they might in their own interests, and rightly from that standpoint, desire to have an increased traffic from the products of the soil, a railway company would not look upon it as its business to reduce its dividend from, say, 7 per cent. to 6 per cent. down to 3¼ per cent. or even 3 per cent., as we have done in our country through giving collateral advantages to a number of people to improve their condition upon the land. That is the view we take of it.

19532. And, in the extension of the railways, your first consideration, I apprehend, is to develop any industry in the country, whatever it may be, regardless altogether of whether the line *per se* will give a return immediately?—Well, to some extent, yes. We go upon this principle, in the case of a railway line returning what one would call poor results—say, 2 per cent.—we look upon the return on the capital invested in that line as part of the whole results of the State system; and if our average earnings are 4 per cent., we know that some other line of railway running at the same rates on different articles are helping the poorer line to make up its quota of our results. But at one time, before my time as Minister of Railways, and before the policy of the Government, of which I have been a member for some years, was carried out, on one section of railway in the North Island, higher rates were imposed than upon the bulk of the railways; and, as a matter of fact, we saw the absolute effect of it, because it had a withering effect upon the settlement in and around that particular part; and it did comparatively no good until we reduced those rates right down to the same as those obtaining over the more productive railways. That at once gave a stimulus to that part, and had the effect of improving the general condition of that part of the country.

19533. And removing the population of the towns to the country?—That is distinctly so in New Zealand; I am glad to say it is one of the features of our country. And the more I see of the world at large the more I realise what a good thing it is from our point of view that we have a radiating of settlers, young people and others, from the towns into the country. We find there is a percentage of the people who like the city and town life and who are prepared to take that as against the country; but, generally speaking, for a small population we are wonderfully well spread over the country districts.

19534. You think that the railways being in the hands of the State must have played a very important part in that development?—I am quite sure that has been the result of our railway policy as carried out under State Government. If the same policy were carried out by a private company, I should say the effect would be similar.

19535. That is to say, if the railways were remunerative to private parties?—Yes; I am speaking, of course, of our country—I do not know about here, and one tries to keep one's oar out of the concerns of the other land in everything one does—but we believe that in our country the State can afford to take as little out of the railways as we find it necessary to take; and as a matter of fact we prefer to allow our consolidated earnings in the revenue of the country to make up for any deficit in the interest earned upon our railways, and to keep rates low for the benefit of our producers and the travelling public, rather than to keep up high railway rates and destroy that which is so essential to a new country like ours—a good and complete system of transport.

19536. I think you have demonstrated quite clearly that the State control of the railways in New Zealand at any rate does play a most important part in the development of the country and its industries in all directions?—There is nothing in our country which has done more to make it prosperous, in my opinion (and I am not alone in that opinion—very far from it) than an efficient system of railways, and, on the whole, a comparatively cheap one as far as rates are concerned.

19537. Now, only one other question with reference to the management of the railways. Have you Railway Commissioners?—No; we tried Railway Commissioners for a few years, but we went back to Ministerial control, a Minister being responsible to Parliament, and to the people through Parliament, for the administration of the railways, and one of the chief reasons that promoted the change was the very thing we have been speaking of in another form. The Railway Commissioners looked upon it as essential to produce the best results possible, and, on the

whole, they were not disposed to reduce the rates to the same extent by any means as the Government itself, with its collateral policy of opening up industries, was prepared to do; and, from one cause or another, that system of management became unpopular and was superseded by Ministerial control.

19538. Are all the officers appointed by the Minister for Railways?—Yes; by the Minister for Railways.

19539. And are they appointed for a period or are the appointments permanent?—Absolutely permanent, except in the case of casual labour.

19540. I was thinking of the manager—the manager is not engaged for, say, five years?—Not at all; he is appointed, and if he carries out his work properly he remains. Our present general manager has been with us for—I cannot say how many years—fourteen years, I believe it is.

19541. I gather from the views you have been kind enough to express that you think the State control of railways in New Zealand, at any rate, has been of immense advantage to the Colony?—I feel quite certain of it. If a vote were taken in our country on the question of putting our railways under company management of any sort or kind, I think I am pretty right in saying that nine-tenths of the people would vote against it straight. In addition to that, we spend a very large sum of money annually—we allow nothing to go down on the railways in New Zealand—and we keep everything in as absolutely perfect condition as possible, we have our own railway workshops, six or seven of them, and nothing is allowed to go down. Everything is put into proper condition; and our railway tracks are constructed and laid according to plans of engineers. I am speaking as a layman, of course, but necessarily with some amount of knowledge. Our railway tracks from end to end of the country are kept in most excellent state and condition, and also as regards rolling stock and everything else. We do all that maintenance work out of revenue; of course new rolling stock and further additions we pay for out of capital.

19542. I think I may say that the Commissioners are exceedingly grateful to you, Sir Joseph, for giving us an opportunity of hearing your views upon this question, and all we regret is that we have encroached upon your time at this limited period when you are about leaving this country. We hope that you will have a very pleasant journey home, and that you will feel no worse for your visit to this country.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

19543. Might I ask one question? I suppose the original construction of your railroads was comparatively cheap; you had not to pay an extravagant price for land and Parliamentary or Legal proceedings?—No; I am happy to say we are not in that condition. As a general rule, our railways, I think, speaking from memory, have cost about £7,000 or £8,000 a mile.

19544. The whole capital charges?—The whole capital charges. We take the land in a different way from what you do in this country; we require no Parliamentary Bills of any sort or kind in our country. Whatever land we take from a private person we take it under the Public Works Act, and we pay the full value; but we allow the owner the right of arbitration under a proper system. A great deal of the land in our country was originally owned by the country itself, but a very large proportion of it—I do not know how much, but a great deal more than half—has been purchased. We have not got those contingent troubles of that kind that you have got here.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

19545. I understand, of course, that the returns given from year to year are the returns of the revenue that you earn on your capital?—Yes.

19546. And you consider that a return of about 3 per cent. is sufficient, and that anything beyond that has to go in the way of reductions?—Very largely so; we do not always go down to the actual 3 per cent., but that principle is followed, generally speaking. For instance, if we have a very bad year—which we have not had for some time I am glad to say, quite the contrary—but if we had a bad year we should do just the same as a business concern would do, and say, "This is not the time to make reductions."

19547. That is the point I wanted to get at. Even if you only earned 2 per cent. on your capital, still, in the interests of the Colony, you would be prepared to keep the rates as low as they have been?—No; I spoke just now of a section of railways that had been earning, as a portion of the whole railways, a good deal less than 3 per cent., I think under 2 per cent., and what we did at first was to keep the rates high on that particular section. What we did afterwards was to lower all the rates over those railways to the same rates as existed over the larger section, so that the higher rates and the earnings of the other portion of the railways would make up the deficit on those particular railways. But, as a matter of policy, I think in our country now that would be unnecessary. If, fifteen years ago with the knowledge that I have now of the effect of the working of them, I had been able to influence others to think as I think now, and found it necessary to apply it then, I would have said it would have paid the country over and over again to have made a portion of the railways in the less prosperous parts of the country on the lines you are suggesting in order to have more capacity of production for the country itself, because that is the very life blood of our country, and whether we take the large squatter, the small producer, the small dairy farmer, or the timber producer, or what not, we look upon it as more important to our country as a whole that all these should be helping to add to the prosperity of the country, with greater spending power or greater employing power than to keep rates up to a ruinous height to enable us to earn a better return upon our capital outlay on railways. We regard it as better that a portion of it should come out of the general revenue of the country than to carry out such an operation. It is obvious, of course, that nothing but the State—the people themselves—could carry out a policy of that kind.

The surplus revenue from the richer districts devoted to the development of less prosperous parts of the country.

19548. But, speaking generally, your experience in New Zealand has been that any reduction you have given with a view to developing the country has, after a longer or a shorter period of time, recouped itself; is that not so?—Yes. I have not the figures here, but I remember on one occasion recommending my colleagues to make enormous reductions in passenger rates, and, although we lowered the rates an average of forty or fifty per cent., we recovered the whole of our revenue within twelve months.

Reduction in rates and fares found to result in increased revenue.

Cross-examined by Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.

19549. It would assist us very much in working up the case if I could put one or two questions to Sir Joseph Ward. We are trying to get before the Commission figures comparing the various countries with Ireland, and we have received the railway time tables of New Zealand, which seem to give a great deal of information. So far as it speaks for itself, of course, we can table it for the Commissioners, but I should like to ask one or two questions. So far as we can make out, and I want to know if it is accurate, the rate for passengers for distances under twenty-five miles in the cheapest class is one penny per mile plus one penny—it seems to work out in every case at that?—I can tell you this, and you can apply it generally to any number of miles; the initial charge is one penny. Then supposing a person wants to travel a quarter of a mile the charge is one penny plus one penny, that would be 2*d*. We allow no one to run over the line even a short distance without paying a premium. We have got suburban traffic, of course, in New Zealand, and some stations are only a quarter of a mile from the starting place, and if we have a penny rate per mile, and start with a minimum fee of a penny, that is not a high charge. So we start by saying that one penny is charged for the use of the railway station or anything else you like to apply it to. That exists throughout the country.

Basis of passenger fares.

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Rates once fixed rigidly adhered to on the New Zealand Railway.

19550. It seems that up to twenty-five miles it is a penny a mile plus this initial penny, and then it gets less?—Yes; so as to prevent a very low rate for short distances for suburban traffic.

19551. I do not want to go into details, but I want to know whether you can tell us whether the rates for parcels and for milk and other products, are the real scales on which traffic is carried, or whether it is carried at a cheaper rate?—In our country—you can accept this as being absolute in the examination of the railway charges in New Zealand—no charge can be levied under the railway management unless it is advertised in the public Gazette and until the charge has been passed by the Governor in Council. Once the rates for dairy products or anything else in our country are settled they are gazetted publicly, and then those rates for dairy produce are fixed; they are the same all over the country, and no one can vary them. If you went to New Zealand to-day, and you wanted 10,000 tons of cheese carried 100 miles, you would have to pay the gazetted rate of carriage on that, which is, I think, 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton, or whatever it may be; if you wanted to carry 2 tons, which would be the minimum, you would be charged 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton just the same as for the larger quantity, and if you held out every inducement in the world to get the rate lowered you would still be told that the rate was 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton for 10,000 tons. We cannot vary it in one case without an alteration in the general rate, and that can only be done by the Governor in Council.

Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.—I am very much obliged to you. That will help us very much. Any other information we want, we can get by compiling it ourselves from the returns in our possession.

The Commission then adjourned till Thursday, 6th June.

THIRTY-FIFTH PUBLIC SITTING—THURSDAY, JUNE 6TH, 1907,

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. F. J. CRAVEN examined by the CHAIRMAN.

June 6, 1907.

Mr. F. J. Craven, representative of Messrs. Ransomes, Sims, and Jefferies, Ltd., Ipswich.

19552. I think you appear here on behalf of Messrs. Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, Ltd., of Ipswich?—That is so.

19553. They are, as we know, very large manufacturers of agricultural machinery and implements. I only wish to ask you a few general questions. What is your object in appearing before us to give evidence?—Our object is to get a general reduction of rates on heavy machinery into Ireland; and also our object is to get a reduction of rates in general from English stations to the interior stations in Ireland.

19554. Just let us see how it bears upon our inquiry. First of all, have you considerable trade with Ireland in connection with agricultural machinery?—In what way, may I ask?

19555. First of all, do you supply much agricultural machinery in Ireland?—I should think that my firm supply as much or more than any other English firms manufacturing heavy machinery.

19556. What are the particular machines you are referring to?—Heavy traction engines and threshing machines, and also agricultural implements—ploughs, lawn mowers, and so on.

19557. Do you exhibit at the various shows in Ireland?—We do.

19558. And you send your machinery from England to Ireland?—Yes.

19559. Just carry it on. I want to see how your evidence is germane to our inquiry. You know the object of this inquiry generally?—Yes.

19560. Would any of the suggestions that you have got to make help to improve the industries of Ireland?—I certainly think they would. In the first place we send this heavy machinery into Ireland practically on sale. Our object is, of course, to sell this stuff either at one show or another in Ireland. The main show we are concerned with is the Royal Spring Show in Dublin, to which we send a quantity of this class of traffic. From there, if it is unsold, Belfast comes next; we usually send there such pieces as we have unsold at Dublin.

19561. Are the rates in Ireland comparable in any way with the rates which you pay in England?—Well, as far as our experience goes, we are charged the same in the interior of Ireland that we are in England—the rates are practically the same.

19562. Are there any differences in what we call show traffic as regards rates in Ireland as compared with England?—Shortly the difference which we complain of is this—that whereas English companies carry show-to-show machinery at half rates—that is to say, they carry unsold machinery from one show to another at half rates—we have to pay in Ireland the full rates practically in a line with ordinary English scale rates.

19563. In that respect you have to pay considerably more?—We have to pay considerably more in proportion to what we pay in England.

19564. In moving from one show to another?—That is so.

19565. And you think that is detrimental to cultivating trade in Ireland?—It is detrimental to the general trade in Ireland.

19566. Just go to page 4 of your proof and give us certain rates for agricultural machinery which you have noted down there?—You mean the rates in comparison with the Scotch stations of equal distances.

19567. Very well. There is a remark on page 4, something about the absurd method of charging machinery in Ireland. Now, I want you to give us figures to prove what you say. Just mention two or three?—Take, for instance, the question of a traction engine, weighing seven tons, from Ipswich to the interior Irish station of Birr. At the present time we are charged with local rates from Ipswich to Liverpool, 26*s.* 8*d.*; Liverpool to Dublin Quay, 25*s.* 5*d.*; Dublin cartage 3*s.* 6*d.*, and the Irish carriage, Dublin to Birr, 13*s.* 2*d.*

Alleged excessive rates for conveyance of heavy traction engines to interior Irish stations.

19568. Those are all per ton?—All per ton—amounting in all to 68*s.* 9*d.* per ton, or £24 1*s.* 3*d.* for the engine which we maintain is preposterous.

19569. Can you tell us what the same rate would be if that went the same distance in England? Take the railway proportion—it is no use dealing with the sea. It is easy to say that a rate is absurd, but it must be absurd as compared with something?—It is absurd in comparison with the charge on a 5-ton engine.

19570. Give us some rates on a 5-ton engine?—The rate charged on an engine weighing 5 tons is only 48*s.* 3*d.* per ton, as against 68*s.* 9*d.* per ton for a 7-ton engine, so that in the latter case we have to pay about £6 per ton for the extra two tons over and above the five tons.

19571. Does the same apply to England?—Certainly not. In England we get a through mileage rate which is actually the same rate per ton in each case, and there is no extra charge over five tons.

19572. Surely there must be for ten tons?—If it is ten tons the charge per ton is the same as for five tons.

19573. The rates are the same per ton for five to ten tons?—The same per ton.

19574. That is the rule in operation in England?—Yes; whereas in sending the same engine into the interior of Ireland we have to pay practically 68*s.* 9*d.* against 48*s.* 3*d.* per ton.

Machinery traffic with Ireland handicapped for want of through mileage rates to interior towns.

19575. Have you represented that to any of the Irish railway companies—have you brought it under the notice of any of the Irish railway companies?—I do not know that we have specially to the Irish railway companies; we have to the carriers from Ipswich—that is, to the Great Eastern Railway Company.

19576. That they are not carried at a through rate?—That is our complaint—that they are not carried at a through rate—and we have correspondence from various railway companies stating that they were not able to arrange through rates for five-ton weights, but they must be charged at the local rates.

19577. *Mr. Acworth.*—You can arrange them from all parts of England to all parts of Scotland?—From all parts of England to all parts of Scotland we get through mileage scale rates, whereas to Ireland alone we have to pay the very heavy charges, which are very

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detrimental to English manufacturers and to the users of the machines in Ireland.

19578. Would you be content with the answer that the Irish companies cannot arrange it although you never got a reason?—We have not been content. Right away from 1901, when they commenced to demand these very heavy local charges, we have resisted it and deducted the extra through rate over and above the mileage amount, and we have now deducted a great number of these local rates and have a considerable amount outstanding.

19579. These Irish companies—are they still claiming these local rates, or have they given up doing so?—They are still claiming the local rates.

19580. *Chairman.*—Is the amount outstanding?—It is to a certain extent.

19581. You are speaking of Ireland now?—I am speaking of Ireland now, but practically we have circumvented the conference companies by sending goods by non-conference boats.

19582. But I am speaking of rates in Ireland—railway rates in Ireland?—We are dealing with the question now of through rates from Ipswich into Ireland.

19583. To begin with, you say there are no through rates, but you arrive at a through rate by adding together these various charges?—The railway companies do.

19584. You do it yourselves; the Great Eastern do not quote you a through rate?—The Great Eastern do not; they make through charges at local rates.

Comparison of through charges on machinery from England to Scotland and to Ireland

19585. I understand that your complaint is that as soon as you get into Ireland your rates are 50 per cent. more for large machines than they are in England?—No, that is not our main contention; our main contention is that the general rates throughout from Ipswich to the interior of Ireland are in excess of the rates on similar lots which go up to Scotland.

19586. Did you not tell us there were no through rates?—The through local rates I should say—the through rates charged to us comprising all the local rates.

Mr. Aspinall.—Mr. Chairman, this list of rates which the witness puts in on page 5 is not a list which compares as between Ireland and Scotland, but a list which is made upon the one hand from English rates plus the local rate in Ireland; but to Scotland it is a through rate.

19587. *Mr. Acworth.*—But I do not think that is so. I understand you to say that under five tons you have through rates in Ireland?—Up to five tons we have through rates into Ireland from Ipswich.

19588. So that these charges for agricultural implements, ploughs, lawn mowers, and castings, would be presumably under five tons?—I am speaking now of heavy machinery.

19589. Mr. Aspinall was asking you on the point where you make a tabulated comparison between Irish rates and Scotch rates. Those are charges you say on agricultural implements, ploughs, lawn mowers, and castings?—Exactly.

19590. There you are comparing under five tons?—Under five tons, certainly.

19591. So in that case you are comparing through rates with through rates?—Yes.

19592. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They do not refer to heavy machinery—those rates?—No. If you will allow me, I think I can put it plainly in a very few words by showing the documents which I have here.

19593. Just put it in your own way—I want to get at what your complaint is?—We will take heavy threshing machines and traction engines which are charged at a special mileage scale rate.

Instance of an excessive rate from Ipswich to Ballywilliam.

19594. In this country?—Yes. I have accounts here dated 1898 and 1900, rendered by the Great Eastern Company, who are the contracting carriers as far as we are concerned of this heavy machinery—this machinery weighing over five tons—into the interior of Ireland. Take, for instance, February 4th, 1898; we are charged by the Great Eastern Railway Company on 10 tons 4 cwts. to Ballywilliam at a through rate of 50*s.* per ton. If the same engine is carried now over the same route we are charged at local rates made up of various items such as I have mentioned, and amounting in all to 68*s.* 1*d.* as against the former rate of 50*s.* That is to say we are charged 18*s.* 1*d.* more per ton at the present time than was charged in 1898 for the same engine.

19595. *Lord Pirrie.*—It was 50*s.*?—In 1898 we were charged a through rate of 50*s.* whereas now we are charged at local rates on the various sections of the journey amounting in all to 68*s.* 1*d.*

19596. *Chairman.*—Are we to understand that since the first period you mentioned the through rates have been cancelled?—Through rates have been cancelled as far as we know. Prior to 1901 we were charged at through rates irrespective of weights at a through mileage rate of 50*s.* as against local rates charged at the present time of 68*s.* 1*d.*

19597. For the same kind of machine?—Exactly.

19598. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Do you say that that difference has been made on the Irish railways?—Over the Irish portion. The Irish railway companies now get their local rate from Dublin to the interior Irish station.

19599. Your assertion is that it is all on the Irish side?—I do not say the whole of it—a proportion of it, of course, is due to the English companies and the steamship companies.

19600. *Lord Pirrie.*—He says he does not know where it is?—It must be over the English and Irish railways and the cross-Channel.

19601. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you still get a through ten-ton rate from Ipswich to Dublin?—No; that is our complaint.

19602. Not to Dublin can you get it?—To Liverpool only.

19603. Then it is not all the Irish railways?—It is not all the Irish railways.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—The rates for agricultural machinery are the same in England and Ireland, but with regard to what has been said about cross-Channel rates, the steamship companies have considerable difficulties in dealing with these heavy pieces of machinery, and they have consequently advanced their rates. But the rates are actually the same in England and Ireland; we get no increase on account of that increase in the steamship rate.

Lord Pirrie.—You do not mean to say the steamship companies get the 18*s.* per ton over the 200 miles.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—I do not think so.

19604. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the rate from Ipswich to Liverpool—you say you can get a through rate to Liverpool?—We get the English scale on a ten-ton lot—from five to ten tons—26*s.* 8*d.* per ton.

19605. When that engine goes across Channel to an inland Irish town, do you pay the same rate?—Based on the same scale in Ireland, but not across Channel.

19606. You cannot say whether the through carriage from Liverpool is in excess of what is only going to Liverpool?—I cannot say.

19607. *Chairman.*—What I understand is this—that in the last few years an alteration has been made in the rates for your traffic which has largely increased the cost of getting those machines into Ireland?—That is quite correct.

19608. And that up to a certain date you had through rates?—We were charged through rates.

19609. But since then, for some reason or other, the railway company—the contracting company—can now only book locally to Liverpool; then it is booked from Liverpool to the port, and then from the port to the interior station, and that some of these local rates are largely in excess of what you formerly paid when you had through rates?—That is the case exactly.

19610. We shall perhaps understand by-and-bye how it is that that alteration has been made, but that is what it really is?—You have quite grasped the case.

19611. Did you send anything to the last Spring Show at Dublin?—Yes.

19612. Just for the sake of information, what was about the weight that you sent?—You mean the present year, I take it?

19613. Yes?—We should send slightly over 100 tons.

19614. When was the Spring Show in Dublin?—Early in April, I think—the third week in April I believe it was.

19615. Do you know whether that particular traffic was carried at a through rate to Dublin?—In this particular case my firm proposed a through rate of 30*s.* having regard to the amount of traffic which we sent. In previous years we have generally sent from thirty to forty tons only. This year, in our desire to do a little more trade with Ireland, we decided to increase our Show exhibits, and I think practically

they amounted to about 110 tons, taking them altogether, and on account of the heavy increase we proposed a rate of 30*s.* as against a special rate of 35*s.* which had been previously charged to us for this special sending of the Show traffic.

19616. Was the particular consignment of 110 tons sent about the same time?—Practically all about the same time.

19617. And was one consignment made for one show?—Yes.

19618. Did you get that rate you asked for?—Not up to the present; we have been informed by the contracting company, the Great Eastern, that the various companies have not yet agreed to the 30*s.*

19619. The subject is outstanding?—The subject is outstanding. It has not yet been charged to us.

19620. Do you think that it would encourage the farming industry and the agricultural industries in Ireland if there were low through rates from England to Ireland for these machines?—Most certainly, because the user—the buyer—in Ireland pays from the Irish port, and if we can get through mileage scale rates to the customer's station in the interior of Ireland, his proportion is very much reduced, because we only charge him the proportion of the through rate, viz., from the Irish port to destination.

19621. Do you know from your knowledge if these particular machines are made in Ireland anywhere?—I do not think they are manufactured in Ireland at all.

19622. They must come from England?—They must come from England, or from American makers; and while speaking of American machinery, I might say that I am given to understand that American implements are delivered from the American seaboard into Ireland cheaper than it is possible to send them from Ipswich.

19623. Is that within your own knowledge?—Well, I am given to understand that. I have nothing to confirm it.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

19624. One thing more about the show, which I do not think you cleared up. As I understand, in England you pay the full rate to the first show, and half rate to each other show, and so on all the way back again if it comes back?—That is so.

19625. In Ireland you pay full rates on from show to show, and if it were coming back to a point in Ireland—if your works were in Ireland—coming back free?—That is so.

19626. As your works are not in Ireland you do not get that advantage?—Certainly not.

19627. It is fair to say that the Irish companies do make a concession although in a different shape from the English companies, only you do not get it?—We maintain the concession made by the Irish companies is not so advantageous as the English custom, because we do not want to bring the machinery back to our works.

19628. It is clearly not as advantageous to you; it might or might not be equally advantageous to an Irish customer?—That is so.

19629. We have surely got to this, have we not—that this difference between the rates over five tons and the rates under five tons is not all taken by the Irish Railway Companies; it is pretty clear that the steamers take some part?—I should say so. The Steamship Companies have a great advantage in charging the local rate.

19630. We cannot deal with steamers. You say there is an extra charge which is unjustifiable?—Exactly.

19631. As it began it looked as if it was a charge made wholly by the Irish railways; it is now clear that it is partly made up by the cross-Channel steamers, but how much of it you do not know?—I am not prepared to say.

19632. Have you ever gone to the Board of Trade and asked them to get this out for you—to find out where the difference comes and the reason for it?—I think the Board of Trade is a body to be avoided. We do not get remedy through them so quickly as we might do.

19633. This difference occurred to you beginning in 1901?—1904 is when we got a combined letter from the Railway Companies—the Great Central, the Great Eastern, the Great Northern, the North Western, and the Midland Railway Companies stating they would in future be unable to charge weights over five tons at through mileage rates. There were differences between 1901 and 1904.

19634. It does come to this—that in 1901 there was a change made?—In 1901 there was a change made.

19635. You were notified of it?—Only through the charges in our account. Later, in 1904, we received the joint letter signed by the various managers of the railway companies stating that from that date they were not prepared to carry these heavy weights through.

19636. Ever since 1904?—And we have protested in each case.

19637. And the matter is not yet settled?—And the matter is not yet settled.

19638. In all that period you have never asked the Board of Trade to try and supply it. I am not arguing that you ought to have done so—I merely want the fact?—No.

No appeal against the increased rates made to the Board of Trade.

19639. As I understand, you have got round it as well as you could by employing a non-conference steamer, and in that way you got to Dublin, Waterford, or wherever it was, and then you paid the local rate into the interior?—Yes, but wherever we can, to save the Irish customer expense, we arrange to steam the engine to whatever point the customer may require, and in consequence the Irish companies lose the traffic.

Machinery shipped to Ireland by non-conference steamer at low rates.

19640. How much do you save by taking a non-conference steamer, say, to Waterford. Perhaps you would not like to say that?—I do not know that it matters—it only shows that we do get them through cheaper than ordinary local rates.

Traction engine steamed by road to interior places in Ireland to escape excessive railway freights.

19641. I was wondering whether you would save the 18*s.* you gave?—I should say over and above the 18*s.*

19642. So that the result of this charge that you find unreasonable has been to force you to find out another route and to save money?—I would much rather send it at a through rate, because it entails a great deal of work, and sometimes delay in arranging shipment by the infrequent sailings of the non-conference boats.

Infrequent sailings of non-conference steamers an objection to their use.

19643. Just one other thing. I am not quite sure whether your complaint is practically that you are hampered in getting into Ireland?—It is.

19644. I have noticed since you came this morning that the reference to this Commission is to consider how far the railways afford adequate facilities for traffic "within the island and to Great Britain." Not "from" Great Britain. It is a slip really, I dare say, but it is merely traffic to Great Britain?—We have Irish cases where we have traffic from the Irish seaboard. I have one case in particular—that is an engine from Drogheda into the English station; we were charged 40*s.* per ton from Drogheda to Liverpool and the local rates; 17*s.* 7*d.* per ton from Liverpool to Darlington. After a lot of writing and correspondence with the Steamship Company we got that reduced.

19645. That is not an Irish railway?—No.

19646. The thing you are speaking about is, of course, rates. You want lower rates, or better facilities for the same rates, from England to Ireland?—From England into the interior stations of Ireland.

19647. I do not know how far you have seen the evidence before this Commission—you probably have not seen it much?—None at all.

19648. You ought, I think, to know that we have had a great deal of evidence to the effect that the rates from England to Ireland are too low at present, and therefore enable the Englishman to cut the trade of the Irish manufacturer?—But I maintain in the case of this heavy machinery about which we complain that there are no manufacturers of heavy machinery in Ireland.

The importation of heavy machinery alleged not to compete with any existing industries in Ireland.

19649. Your answer is that you are not competing?—We are not competing with Irish makers.

19650. But what do you say about lawn mowers and ploughs and things of that kind?—I do not think there are many manufacturers of those things in Ireland; they are in the main supplied by English and American makers.

19651. But supposing an Irish maker came and said that he had not a chance of starting such a manufactory because the Englishman is given the advantage in starting in Ireland, what would be your answer? We were told of a manufacturer in Wexford, for instance. What is your answer to that?—I think that, taking into consideration the long distance that we are away, the Irishman would have quite as much advantage as the English maker and more so because of the price the English maker has to pay on the

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machinery from the English centre to the Irish seaboard in comparison with the Irish maker. Of course the English have to pay in addition to the Irish maker freight over a long distance to the English port plus water freight.

19652. Your answer would be that you think you ought to be allowed to compete in Ireland?—Certainly.

19653. You do not think railway rates ought to be adjusted so as to prevent you doing that?—I think it ought to be fair all round both to English and Irish.

19654. You would say in any case that even if you get lower mileage rates the fact that you are further off must help to some extent the Irishman?—To a great extent, I should say.

19655. I only wanted to call your attention to the evidence that had been given, because we have had a great deal of it.

19656. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Your serious competitors are the makers of a large quantity of American machinery?—That is so.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

19657. I think you say that for show purposes there is a specially low rate into Dublin?—We have in past years had one.

19658. And you are trying to get it now?—Yes.

Low rates for machinery to Irish shows asked for large quantities only.

19659. Supposing there is a show in Belfast or Cork, and you wish to send machinery there direct, have you ever had occasion to see if you could get a through rate to Cork or Belfast, for instance?—I do not know that we have had any great weight which entitled us to ask a specially low rate to either Belfast or Cork. We have had occasions where we proposed to send an engine or machine—one set—but we have had no occasion to send any large quantities which we could send to Dublin. Dublin is our main show in Ireland.

19660. You consider it is only where you are sending large quantities that you are entitled to ask for a specially low rate?—For a specially low one—yes.

19661. The effect of the present system with regard to engines over five tons weight is that in the case of a seven-ton engine at present sent to Birr, for instance, you are paying £24 1*s.* 3*d.*, I think it works out to that?—Yes.

19662. And if that was charged at the ordinary 44*s.* 4*d.* a ton it would come to £15 10*s.*?—That is so.

19663. In other words, practically a difference of £9?—Owing to the high local charges there is a difference of £9.

19664. There is a difference on the carriage amount of £9?—That is so.

The possible effect of low through rates on competing Irish manufactures.

19665. You said in reply to Mr. Acworth that you considered in consequence of the longer distance over which you have to send goods to the port of shipment from England you were not inflicting any injustice on the Irish manufacturer by sending your goods in at a low figure?—I should say not, having regard to the short distance paid for by the Irish manufacturer as against our long distance from England.

19666. But against that is there not something to be said in favour of entitling the Irish manufacturer to some difference owing to the fact that he has to import raw material very much higher than you?—I should say he could import his raw material at practically the same cost as we can in England.

The facilities for obtaining raw material in Ireland as compared with East Anglia.

19667. As a matter of fact, we have got no iron and coal in Ireland?—Neither have we in East Anglia. We have to pay for our raw material from the centres the same as the Irish people have. Take, for instance, the raw material which we get. I should say the Irish manufacturer would be able to get from South Wales and Scotland even cheaper rates than we could from Scotland, from the North Country, or from South Wales.

19668. In other words, you consider that you and the Irish manufacturer are practically placed on an equality as regards raw material?—I should say so.

19669. With regard to this small agricultural machinery of a light class, I see the figures you have given on page 5 of your proof show with respect to Ireland that there is an increase of about twenty-five per cent. on the Scotch charges?—It amounts to that, yes.

19670. Of course there are plenty of manufactories of small mowing machines and agricultural implements in Ireland. Do you not think the fact of your being able to send them over at this rate would very seriously affect their output?—At a cheaper rate than Ireland?

19671. Yes, as regards the light machinery I think you will find a considerable number?—I think you would find the Irish manufacturer has a considerable advantage as compared with the very heavy rates paid from the English stations.

19672. The whole of the evidence given before this Commission has been to the effect that the local rates from station to station are so high compared with the English through rates that the Irish manufacturer is unable to live?—I should say that is an additional reason why Irish railways should reduce their rates. We have to pay local rates in the same way that the Irish manufacturer does, with the addition of the long mileage to the Irish seaboard.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

19673. Is this a very large trade—the export of agricultural machinery to Ireland?—I do not know that I am at liberty to say the amount of traffic we do actually send into Ireland, but I think it is sufficiently heavy to warrant our asking for a smaller charge.

19674. Cannot you say the value of the agricultural machinery exported into Ireland?—I cannot. I have not the information on the point.

19675. Do you think it is a substantial amount?—Quite substantial enough to warrant our objecting to these high rates.

19676. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Can you give the tonnage?—I cannot give the tonnage or the value.

19677. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Has it occurred to you and other manufacturers to set up works in Ireland and so save the whole of the railway expenses?—I do not suppose it has; all we have done is to practically start agencies whereby we send as much machinery as we imagine will be used during a certain season. We have warehouses—that is the only extent to which we have gone at present; I do not know that we have contemplated starting works in Ireland at all.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

19678. You have spoken about the through rates from Ipswich to parts of England and Scotland, and you complain of the through rate to Ireland being very excessive. Have you considered that for that nine-ton or ten-ton traction engine you have to pay the craneage in Liverpool, taking off the wagon at the steamer at Liverpool; the same when it arrives at Belfast or at Dublin, and the same when it comes back again to this country; you have to pay the craneage of from £3 to £5 a lift, according to the particular Harbour Board or Trust you are dealing with. Is that not where the cost comes in, and not what Mr. Barrington suggests—the steamship freight?—We have also taken the craneage into account, and we have actually offered to pay the extra charge for craneage on heavy pieces from seven to twelve tons; we have offered to pay the extra charges for craneage over and above the through mileage rate if that is put into operation.

19679. That is what I wanted to be clear about—you have absolutely undertaken that. Then in that case you have got a very strong claim, I take it, for the through rates being the same?—We maintain that out of your profit the craneage charge is reduced to a minimum. I do not think your figure of from £5 to £6 for the lifting of an engine is based quite as low as you could make it.

19680. The first lift is £3, and that will cost you, say £15, and if you have a dozen of them you can take it by the hour, and you can get all that done at the same price?—We are prepared to pay extra craneage charges in reason for extra heavy weights.

19681. I only want to point out that given a free passage to Scotland or any part of England, it remains the same, and you have to pay the extra craneage in connection with that?—Exactly.

19682. *Mr. Aspinall.*—In connection with Lord Pirrie's point about craneage; are you aware that if at Liverpool a large engine weighing ten tons had to be lifted into a Belfast Steamship Company's boat, the Belfast Steamship Company would have to arrange with the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board for one of their floating cranes to come alongside, and very likely the ship itself would have to be shifted from its berth, and all this has got to be taken into consideration in the case of lifting one little parcel of your goods?—Exactly.

Lord Pirrie.—If you go to Belfast a ship has to go a certain distance from its own crane and back again. I only want to have it right on the minutes.

Mr. Aspinall.—I do not think your suggested charge of £5 in some cases would cover it.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—I do not think it would.

Witness.—I maintain that a non-conference boat can take these things and quote a through mileage rate from Ipswich to Belfast, if one can do it the other should be able to do it at the same figure.

19683. *Lord Pirrie.*—Your evidence is on the broad lines that you want the Irish people to get the goods as cheap as people in Scotland or England?—Yes, providing for ourselves at the same time; we do not want to pay these very heavy rates; we have very serious competition to fight against in Ireland from the American manufacturers, and our object is to meet this competition and give some advantage to our customers in Ireland.

19684. *Chairman.*—I think I understand you clearly to state that goods exhibited at a Show in Ireland, if removed to another Show in Ireland, are charged at the full rates?—That is so.

19685. Whereas in England, if they are exhibited at a Show at Derby and sent on to another Show at Nottingham, they are charged half rates?—Yes.

19686. And in that respect it is quite different in Ireland from what it is in England?—That is so; we have been charged by an Irish railway company reduced rates from Show to Show, and our object is to bring the remainder of the Irish companies into line with the English companies who do so charge. We have actually been recently charged by Irish companies reduced rates from Show to Show.

19687. I understood from the other end of the table that the arrangements in Ireland were precisely the same as in England, but in this respect the arrangements absolutely differ.

Mr. Smyth (representing Mr. Tatlow).—The case he mentioned was from Dublin to Belfast.

Chairman.—I will lay down the principle—what it is in England and what it is in Ireland. I look at your Irish regulations, and I find that that particular regulation is not adopted.

Mr. Smyth.—The rates for Agricultural machines and engines were—as the witness admitted—the same in Ireland as in England; but in England there seemed to be a charge for exhibits of half rate "from Show to Show," which was not generally recognised in Ireland, although in the particular case that had been mentioned, namely, that of goods taken from Dublin to Belfast, the half rate had been conceded.

19688. *Chairman.*—I merely want to have it clear on the notes, and I think Mr. Smyth has correctly stated the arrangement. Just one other question. You said that about 110 tons were sent to that Show in Dublin—the Spring Show?—Yes.

19689. Was that traffic removed to any other Show or was it brought back—were the articles not sold?—In this particular Show the portion of the goods unsold remain in our warehouse in Dublin practically on sale; we may send them to other Shows in Ireland or sell them direct to customers.

19690. Have you anything on exhibit now?—No. In addition to the Belfast Shows, we have been offered by another Irish railway company the same reduced rates that we were able to obtain from Dublin to Belfast, from Belfast to Cork providing that the remainder of the companies interested would agree to that reduction. The same company who allow us reduced rates from Show to Show agreed to allow us the same reduction.

19691. *Mr. Acworth.*—Do I understond that your feeling is that your competitors in Ireland are the American and not the Irish manufacturers?—Americans principally, I should say.

19692. In competing you have to keep your eye on the Americans and not on the local people?—The majority of our trade, yes.

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Mr. F. J. Craven, Representative of Messrs. Ransomes, Sims, and Jefferies, Ltd., Ipswich.

Conformity of the Irish with the English railway rates, etc., for "show to show" traffic urged.

Mr. JOHN M'LAUGHLIN examined by the CHAIRMAN.

19693. What part of Ireland do you come from?—From Buncrana, County Donegal, near Londonderry.

19694. What particular trade or industry in Ireland do you represent—The white shirt manufacture.

19695. And that is a very important industry in Donegal?—It is.

19696. Are you a manufacturer?—Yes.

19697. What railways in particular serve your district?—The Londonderry and Lough Swilly, the Great Northern, and the Northern Counties (Midland).

19698. Now, with regard to those particular railway companies, have you any substantial complaint to make with reference to the rates on the staple article of manufacture in your district?—I have.

19699. First of all, let us deal with it in two parts, if you do not mind. Let us deal with what I call the unfinished article, and then with the finished article?—Yes.

19700. You do not manufacture cotton?—No, we have to import.

19701. You have to import the calico, or linen, or whatever it is, into your district?—Yes, from Manchester.

19702. Are the rates from Manchester to your district fair and reasonable?—Yes to Londonderry they are, but the rate from Manchester to Londonderry on the raw material is 22*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

19703. Just explain what you mean by the raw material?—The cotton.

19704. The cotton cloth?—Yes, but there is also linen, which we have to get from Belfast, and the rate from Belfast for the linen is 20*s.* to Londonderry.

19705. What is it from Manchester to Londonderry for the cotton cloth?—22*s.* 6*d.*

19706. 22*s.* 6*d.* from Manchester and 20*s.* from Belfast to Londonderry?—Yes.

19707. Is that for any quantity?—Yes, for any quantity.

19708. Any quantity above three cwt.?—Any quantity above three cwt.

19709. Do the rates in both cases include collection and delivery?—They do.

19710. The Manchester rate includes collection and delivery?—Yes.

19711. And the Belfast rate?—Yes.

19712. What you say is, I suppose, that the rate from Belfast to Londonderry is out of all proportion to the rate from Manchester to Londonderry?—Quite so.

19713. And that is your complaint?—That is my complaint.

19714. Have you represented that to the railway companies at any time?—No, I have not represented any comparison of the rates.

19715. That is with regard to what you call the raw material?—Yes, but of course when the raw material comes to Londonderry I have to get it sent to Buncrana on the Lough Swilly Railway, and my complaint is that I have no through rates from Manchester to Buncrana. To the 22*s.* 6*d.* I have to add 7*s.* 3*d.* for the rate on the Lough Swilly Railway, or a station-to-station rate of 4*s.* 10*d.*

19716. What is the distance?—I believe the distance is about twelve miles.

19717. That seems a very low rate—4*s.* 10*d.*?—It does, but when you consider the terminal charges——

19718. But that rate includes the terminal charges?—But by an arrangement with the various carrying companies in Londonderry any goods consigned for stations on the Lough Swilly Railway are not delivered to the Lough Swilly Railway Company in Londonderry. They allow the Lough Swilly Railway Company's carters to lift it, and they impose a charge for cartage at Londonderry.

19719. But I understood you to say that the rate was "collected and delivered"?—So it is. The rate from Manchester is 22*s.* 6*d.*

19720. To Londonderry?—To Londonderry.

19721. That goes, I suppose, from Manchester to Liverpool, or Fleetwood, or Heysham, and then by trading steamer to Londonderry?—Yes.

19722. When it gets to Londonderry it has to be delivered to the consignee, whoever he is?—Yes.

19723. The consignee in your case is the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes.

19724. It is delivered free to them?—It should be delivered free, but it is not.

19725. Then it is not a collected and delivered rate?—It is, but by an arrangement——

19726. Will you tell us your story in your own way?—I should explain to you that the carters in Londonderry for the Lough Swilly Company are

Mr. John M'Laughlin, Shirt Manufacturer, Buncrana.

Alleged excessive rate for linen, Belfast to Londonderry.

Complaint as to want of through rates from Manchester to Buncrana.

Complaint of added cartage charges in Londonderry on goods transferred from steamers to Lough Swilly Railway.

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Mr. John M'Laughlin, Shirt Manufacturer, Buncrana.

Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland. The Chairman of the Railway Company is a proprietor of Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland, and in order to provide work for his carts, any stuff consigned to the stations on the Lough Swilly and not delivered, his carts are allowed to call for, and they impose a charge for cartage on top of the 22*s.* 6*d.*

19727. It is easy to say that, but have you any proof of that?—I have.

19728. With you?—Yes.

19729. Would you mind showing it?—I will read you a letter written in 1905.

19730. To whom is that letter addressed?—To myself.

19731. From whom?—From the Glasgow, Dublin, and Londonderry Steamship Company.

Instances of cartage charges imposed by Lough Swilly Company for transfer at Derry on goods booked from Manchester at "collected and delivered" rates.

19732. You are entitled to read it?—"Your favour of the 4th inst. Our charges on the lot in question were 6½ cwt. at 27*s.* 6*d.*—8*s* 11*d.*, and this is all we charged on. Then at certain intervals, as you are aware, we refund you 5*s.* per ton in the way of rebate, which brings our rate down to 22*s.* 6*d.* per ton. The difference between our charge, 8*s.* 11*d.*, and the amount shown on the account, 10*s.* 3*d.*, appears to be charged on for Derry cartage, and this you have no right to pay. We are always agreeable to deliver these goods free at the Lough Swilly station here without any cartage, but some time ago we were informed by the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company that their rates had all been made to include cartage, and that in future their own contractors would be made to do the work. This was why these goods were handed to Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland, but if you are going to be charged extra cartage in this way, then we will in future deliver the goods at the station ourselves, and we have given instructions for this to be done. It will be well for you to ask the Railway Company to refund you the difference, as we only charged forward 8*s.* 11*d.*"

19733. *Mr. Acworth.*—Have you got the Lough Swilly Company's account of that particular transaction?—No, I sent it to the Steamship Company, and I did not get it back.

19734. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I suppose your contention would be that the Lough Swilly Company are really charging two cartage rates—they are getting one from the forwarding company and charging you another?—Yes; and also if you look at one of their bills, you will see they include the cartage in their paid-on steamer charge, so that we have no means of checking it except by going round to the various companies and comparing their books with the rates of the paid on charge. In one instance where the total charge was 11*s.* 7*d.* I went round to the various companies and found that 11*s.* was their charge, and that 7*d.* was charged by the Lough Swilly Company for cartage. There is another case of 7*s.* 3*d.* "paid on" and the amount was 6*s.* 9*d.* actually; and in another case where 4*s.* 10*d.* "paid on" was charged the actual amount was 4*s.* 7*d.*

19735. Is it all sent by cart?—Some comes by rail; they come by various routes.

19736. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Where did that particular consignment come from?—*Via* Heysham, I think, from Manchester.

19737. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.*—Would you ask the witness, before you leave that, if he ever made any complaint of this special refund? On the face of it there seems to be an overcharge.

19738. *Chairman.*—These are all instances confirming the same thing. But there is a paid-on steamer charge in every case by the Lough Swilly Company although the traffic has been brought direct into Derry—by steamer. (*To the witness*).—When you got that letter did you write to the proprietors—what action did you take on it?—I wrote back and told them that I claimed the refund of them—that they had a right to deliver the goods to the Lough Swilly Company's premises, and not allow Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland to handle them at all.

Alleged refusal of the Lough Swilly Company to investigate complaints relative to improper cartage charges at Londonderry.

19739. Did you write to the Lough Swilly Company?—No, because previous to that they refused to investigate anything with regard to paid-on charges. There is a letter from them on the 14th May, 1902, on the disputed charges on a truss and a package from the Belfast Steamship Company.

19740. Then you wrote to them?—I may say that when I dispute the charges they take back the stuff to the station and hold it until the matter is investigated. They will not deliver the stuff, no matter how exorbitant the charges are, if you dispute them; they will carry it back half a mile to the railway and hold it until the matter is settled. So I found it always inconvenient, being sometimes in a hurry and wanting the goods; my cutters would be standing waiting, so rather than see it go back to the station I paid the charges.

19741. That action did not encourage you to communicate with the Lough Swilly Company?—No.

19742. And that is the reason you did not?—Quite so. But another reason was that the station-master had replied to my complaint, "Our charges are correct in all the attached bills. I have no means of checking paid-on charges. I have looked up every account, and I do not think there are any overcharges."

19743. What is the date of that?—14th May, 1902.

19744. That is their general answer?—Yes.

19745. And therefore you fell back on the Belfast Steamship Company?—Yes.

19746. That was put right as far as you were concerned?—It was put right, yes.

19747. Has the matter been put right since?—No; it is continuing up to the present day with other companies—the same method.

19748. But I thought that letter stated that for the future they would cart their own traffic to the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes, but they did not do it. They stated so.

19749. That letter states so distinctly?—Yes. There is one of their bills (*producing same*) of the 26th December, 1906, with a paid-on of 6*s.* 7*d.* charged by the Lough Swilly Railway Company, where the actual charge should be 6*s.* 2*d.*—5*d.* is put on for cartage.

19750. Therefore the practice of which you complain, and which the Lough Swilly Company admit is wrong, is still going on?—It is.

19751. And you are paying practically cartage twice over?—Yes.

19752. And you cannot get any remedy—I mean you have not got any remedy?—I am not constantly at home, and the man who pays these charges looks at the paid-on charges, but he has not the knowledge sufficient to enable him to check them, and the result is that these bills are paid, and when I go back there is a batch of them. I would almost have to keep a man to check these. I cannot afford to keep a man to look only after the paid-on charges, as I am only a manufacturer in a very small way.

19753. We will pass on to the rates for the finished article—the shirts after they are made, you know?—Yes

19754. I assume—in fact I think I know—that this is a very important industry in your district?—It is.

19755. And although the traffic is not heavy in so far as tonnage is concerned, the consignments are numerous?—Very numerous.

19756. Small consignments?—Yes.

19757. Have you anything to say with regard to the rates on shirts? First of all, have you got the rates, say, from your station, Buncrana, to, say, another station in Ireland, Cork or Waterford, for instance?—I have not the rates from Buncrana, but I have them from Derry to Cork and Waterford—the rate from Derry to Cork and Waterford is 62*s.*

19758. One minute. That is again in lots above the small scale, I suppose—above 3 cwt.?—Yes.

19759. Very well; go on with your illustration?—The rate from Buncrana to Derry is 7*s.* 3*d.*, which would leave it about 69*s.* Well, a Glasgow manufacturer can send his goods from Glasgow to Cork for 28*s.* 9*d.*

19760. The same goods?—Yes, exactly.

19761. Shirts?—Yes.

19762. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is all sea carriage?—It is all sea carriage.

19763. *Chairman.*—Just make that very clear, will you?—The rate for shirts from Buncrana to Cork, I should say, would be about 69*s.*; the rate from Glasgow to Cork for a Scottish shirt manufacturer would be 28*s.* 9*d.*

19764. That is all the way by sea?—It is.

19765. Of course it operates against you, I admit, but is there a sea communication from Londonderry to Cork?—Yes. I have very little trade with Cork, and I think it is only once in twelve months I send any to Waterford. When I do I ship over to Glasgow, and there re-ship from Glasgow to Waterford.

19766. Yes, of course that is all the way again by sea, and therefore the rate is much lower than if sent throughout by rail; but, as you frankly say,

you have not much business with Cork and Waterford, and therefore I think we will leave this illustration. I suppose you consign from your station practically to Dublin?—Yes, I do, but I should explain that. I only started the business in 1902—it is only five years since I started. At first the shirts are made in the country. I have a small factory in Buncrana; they are made in the country and they are sent to Derry to be laundried—to be dressed. At first I took the shirts back to Buncrana to examine them and box and pack them. I found that it was far cheaper for me to employ a man in Derry and take a place in Derry and ship them direct rather than bring them back to Buncrana. The delay would not compensate me for the charge for the rent that I had to pay in Derry and for keeping an extra man.

19767. Then practically the finished article is sent from Derry?—The finished article is sent from Derry. London is my principal market.

19768. As I say, the finished article is sent from Derry, not from your little station?—Yes, that is so.

19769. Have you anything to say with reference to the small parcel scale?—Yes, the tendency in the white shirt trade now is altogether in the way of special orders.

19770. Say a dozen shirts?—Say three dozen on an order.

19771. I suppose an individual can order a dozen shirts?—Quite so. An individual can enter a hozier's and order a dozen shirts there, and we have to send them over in a special parcel.

19772. What would that dozen shirts weigh about?—A dozen shirts would weigh, with boxes, roughly, about 11 lbs.

19773. What have you got to say about the rate, say, for a 12 lbs. parcel?—I had the scale for the small parcels, but I have mislaid it; but here is a railway receipt I have where I bought some French embroidery for shirts in London last April, and there were two parcels consigned of 80 lbs.—5*s.* 6*d.* it cost for 80 lbs. There was 4*s.* 2*d.* of paid-on charge and 1*s.* 4*d.* charged by the Lough Swilly Railway Company to Buncrana.

19774. Where was that from?—From London.

19775. How was that to be sent from London, do you know?—It was sent by the London and North-Western.

19776. That would go through Holyhead, I suppose?—Yes.

19777. *Lord Pirrie.*—It would go through Fleetwood in all probability, would it not?—Or Greenore. The charge of 1*s.* 4*d.* is what I paid on over the Lough Swilly for 80 lbs. They justify it in this way—that it is sent by the passenger train, but there is no such thing as a passenger train on the line.

19778. *Chairman.*—They are mixed trains, I suppose?—They are mixed trains. For instance, a parcel handed to them on Saturday at two o'clock is not delivered by them in many cases until the afternoon of Monday; yet they charge at the rate of an express service for that, and if you hand in a parcel at their passenger platform—very often in Derry I get special orders down on Saturday evening to send by post to customers, and if the van-man from the laundry hands it in at the passenger platform instead of going down to the goods, they charge me passenger rate.

19779. I think that is right?—Although they send them by luggage train?

19780. Oh, I assume they were sent by passenger train. But why do you not send these small parcels by post?—A parcel of over 40 lbs. you could not send by post.

19781. I am speaking of 11 lbs.?—I am not complaining so much about parcels of 11 lbs. as about parcels of 80 lbs. and upwards.

19782. What would be the goods rate?—7*d.*

19783. And for goods they send by passenger train they charge how much?—1*s.* 4*d.*

19784. Your contention is that they are mixed trains, and that all articles sent should be charged at the goods rate?—Quite so.

19785. That is your contention?—Yes.

19786. Why have not you through rates from England *via* Londonderry to your station. I do not know. I had an interview with Mr. Moore, the Manager of the Lough Swilly Railway, in 1903, previous to taking his place in Derry, about through rates, and he could not see his way to give them.

Alleged refusal of Lough Swilly Company to arrange through rates from England to Buncrana.

19787. Did he give any reason why?—I think he said my traffic was not of sufficient dimensions at the time.

19788. Are there any through rates for anybody?—I believe there are through rates for fish but not for anything in my way.

19789. But yours is a large industry up that way?—Oh, yes; it is the staple industry of Londonderry.

19790. Have you anything to say in reference to the owners' risk rates and the company's risk rates?—Yes; those parcels I speak of, for instance, from Belfast, if we are getting a parcel they charge a penny on it, but if we sign this agreement upon owner's risk, they will take them at a halfpenny a pound. I paid on 47 lbs. in April 3*s.* 11*d.*, and if it had been sent at owner's risk it would have been half of that.

Complaint as to scale of charges for small parcels between Londonderry and Buncrana, "ordinary" and owner's risk.

19791. Why do you not sign that owner's risk note, and get your traffic carried at 50 per cent. below the ordinary rate?—It rests with the people who consign the goods as to what way they should be sent.

19792. But of course this risk note only refers to traffic from Derry to your station?—That is so.

19793. Is that a general risk note applicable to Ireland, or merely to the Lough Swilly Railway?—Merely to the Lough Swilly Railway.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That is general, sir—half parcel scale.

Chairman.—We are not talking about the rate. The point is, that whatever the rate is, if that is signed, they carry it at half rate.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Those are the conditions in force all over Ireland, and, I believe, England, too. Mr. Aspinall can tell you.

Mr. Acworth.—The quaint thing is that this does not say to what it is applicable at all. They have two rates for the carriage of certain merchandise by merchandise or passenger trains. It might apply to coal, or salmon, or anything; there is nothing to show.

The Great Northern Company's rates for goods by passenger train.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I have here, sir, the Great Northern of Ireland time-table, and this says: "Traffic conveyed at half parcels rates, at owner's risk, unless otherwise stated, between stations locally on Great Northern Railway (Ireland)." And then it fills in a scale—bread, so many pounds at a certain rate; butter, so much, and so on. With the two together, you can make out what it is.

Mr. Acworth.—That is headed, "Half Parcels Scale." This applies apparently to merchandise in any quantity. That is the queer thing about it. I think we all know the half parcels scale in England—it is quite common—but never on that standard.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think if you will read it, it is a form to be filled up. It says:—"I beg to inform you that the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company have two rates for the carriage of certain merchandise on passenger trains, at either of which rates the same may be consigned at the sender's option: one, the ordinary rate, when the company accepts the ordinary liability of a railway company; the other, a reduced rate, adopted when the sender agrees to relieve the company and all other companies or persons over whose lines the merchandise may pass, or in whose possession the same may be during any portion of the transit, from all liability for loss, damage, mis-delivery, and so on. Then he accepts one of those rates on the form below.

Mr. Acworth.—But my point is this: it is quite common to sign a document like that on English railways if you send your linen to be washed from your London house into the country; but the form I have seen applies to parcels by passenger train, while this applies to parcels up to any quantity, and I think that is exceptional.

Witness.—When you add on the terminal charges to the ordinary traffic charges and the owner's risk charges are practically the same. For instance, a packet of 3 cwt. from Derry at the ordinary scale amounts to 1*s.* 4*d.* At the owner's risk rate it amounts to 11*d.*, but when you add 3*d.* for the cartage at Derry, and 2*d.* at Buncrana, it amounts practically to the same thing as the company's risk.

19794. *Chairman.*—Do two railway companies deliver at your station?—Two.

June 6, 1907.

Mr. John M'Laughlin, Shirt Manufacturer, Buncrana.

19795. First of all, you complain about the rates being, in your judgment, excessive, and secondly, about the want of through rates?—That is so.

19796. Are there through bookings for passengers on the whole of the system?—No not to England.

19797. Not to England?—No.

19798. Take your own station for instance?—Buncrana.

19799. Yes. Supposing you want to get to England, how do you go?—I have to go to Londonderry first.

Inconvenience caused by absence of through passenger bookings to England from Lough Swilly Railway Stations.

19800. And then from Londonderry you can book anywhere?—Yes. There are not through bookings on their own line; you could not book from Buncrana to Letterkenny on their own system.

19801. Do you mean to say that on the system of the Lough Swilly Company they do not book from any station to any station on that railway?—If I wanted to go to Letterkenny, I have to take a ticket to Londonderry, and then another ticket to Letterkenny.

19802. You could not book through?—No; the train does not stop there all times.

19803. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is quicker to go to Derry than to wait on the platform?—Yes.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I am told, sir, that really the practice or custom of the company is that they do book through where there is a connection, but where there is no through connection they do not book through.

Lord Pirrie.—But a junction should be a connection, should it not?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—In some cases there is a connection with the junction, and then I find that where there is a local fare there is a through booking, and where there is no local fare they do not book through.

Witness.—There is never connection at the junction.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That may be an answer.

Reduction in freights and improved facilities generally called for to develop local industries.

19804. *Chairman.*—Do you think that if better facilities were given, and these charges that you mention abolished—this extra cartage charge, and so on—it would tend to increase the industries of your neighbourhood?—It would.

19805. Do you think that those what you call vexatious charges and this want of facilities, operate against the development of industries in this district?—Along with other things, I think they do.

19806. I see you refer to arrangements on the railway—I do not know that I need go into that—with reference to free passes and other things?—No, I do not think it is necessary.

Complaint as to frequent delays to traffic in transit from Derry.

19807. Generally speaking, do you complain of delays in connection with the traffic from Derry to your station?—May I give you an instance that happened on the 8th May last with me? I got an order from London on the 2nd May for thirty dozen of a shipping order for South Africa. Unless the order was delivered in London on the 22nd May, the goods were useless, as they had to catch the connection for the Cape. Some of the material I had in stock, and what I had not I wired to Manchester for. On the 8th May the stuff had not arrived at Buncrana. I went down to the station, and I asked the clerk to telegraph to Derry, to the goods station, to see if there were any goods for me, and he said, "Yes I will." So he wired to Derry, and they said they had just got them from the Midland Company; they would send them down by the 6.30 train. (This was about three o'clock in the afternoon.) I came down about 6.30, and they were not on the 6.30 train. He wired and they said they would send them on by the half-past nine. The next morning, when I went to get them out, they were in a wagon in the middle of the way; they were not near the platform. The stationmaster said he had got only three porters instead of five, and one of those was at his breakfast. I asked him what had happened to the other two. He said they were taken off to run the train at half-past nine on the previous night, and that in order to give them the two hours extra they did not resume their work until ten in the morning. But, I said, "If so, why did you not pay them something extra?" "Oh," he said "they were paid 2*s.* extra a week up to this, but now the company are going to save this 2*s.* a week by allowing them to come at ten in the morning." The result was I did not get my goods till two in the afternoon.

19808. May I ask, did you lose the order?—No.

19809. You do not seem to get on very well with the staff at your station, do you?—Well, fairly well.

19810. What you are telling us now is an exceptional thing, I suppose?—It is exceptional.

19811. Then we will pass it over, if it is exceptional thing, I suppose?—It is exceptional.

of complaint with reference to the delays?—Oh, yes; the delays are by no means exceptional; they are quite the rule.

19812. And you consider that is detrimental, at any rate, to your trade, which is one where orders are received almost by telegraph, and have to be executed promptly?—Yes.

19813. And that is the essence of doing your business, I suppose, really?—It is.

19814. Small profits and quick returns, is it not?—That is it in a nutshell.

19815. Have you considered the question generally with reference to Irish railways?—We have had various suggestions made as to the remedy that should be applied. Have you considered that an amalgamation of the railways of Ireland into two or three large systems would be of benefit to the country?—Yes, I think so.

19816. Have you considered the subject?—I have merely considered it as it affected my own trade.

19817. That is perhaps the best way of considering it?—My most formidable competitors here in London are the Belgians, the Austrians, and sometimes the Americans. They can send their shirts here—the Belgians pay 20*s.* a ton for the goods we are paying 45*s.* 10*d.* to send.

19818. *Mr. Aspinall.*—How do they go?—I am not sure. This is a letter from one of my best customers in London—a firm who take about 100 dozen a month from me, though they also buy shirts from the Belgians which they would buy from me if I could compete with them.

19819. Will they not come direct from Antwerp to the Thames?—I am not certain.

19820. You can send, can you not, from Londonderry to London direct by water?—No.

19821. *Chairman.*—The letter which you have handed to me merely points out that from a Belgian port they get their goods into London at about half the rate that they have to pay from Manchester to London?—Yes.

19822. But it is all by sea, and you can see that that makes a vast difference, can you not?—I can, but in the case of the American goods they can send them for 16*s.* from New York to London, and send them by rail from Liverpool to London.

19823. Oh, no, that is impossible, because the rate from Liverpool to London is about 25*s.* So you see it must be by direct steamer into London. There are steamers direct from New York into London—you know that—a regular service of steamers?—Yes. It mentions that they can deliver them in sixteen days, I think it is.

19824. At any rate, have you considered the question of whether it would be an advantage to your district and your trade and your industry if the railway were owned by the State?—I think it would.

19825. You said just now you thought it would be better to have them in three or four large railway companies?—I understand they would be under the control of the State.

19826. If the State control them, why should it control three or four?—I mean that the State should have control of all the railways.

19827. In other words, that the State should buy the railways, the same as the State-owned railways in our colonies—is that what you mean?—Yes.

19828. Or as the Germans, for instance, in Prussia—all the railways there belong to the State. In that sense, should the Irish railways be placed in precisely the same position—is that your idea?—That is my idea.

19829. And your idea is that if that were done your industry and others of a similar character in Ireland would be still further developed—is that your idea?—Yes; they would treat us more sympathetically than the other railways do.

19830. More sympathetically than the Lough Swilly Company?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

19831. You say you complain of the absence of through bookings on the Cardonagh and Buncrana line. Are you aware that under the Burtonport and Carndonagh Treasury Agreements, there is a special clause providing for the railway company, after the line opened, entering into an arrangement for

through bookings?—But Buncrana is not a part of that.

19832. It is part of the Carndonagh extension, is it not?—No. Buncrana is the terminus of the original Lough Swilly Railway.

19833. The Treasury agreement says:—"The Company shall, on the completion of the railway, enter into the necessary arrangements with other Companies for through booking of passengers and goods to the satisfaction of the Board of Works." I take it that if that clause is inserted it means that from any place on that system the Railway Company (that is, the Lough Swilly Company) were bound to enter into arrangements with all the other carrying companies for through rates. You say you believe they have given it in respect of fish, but I take it that as they have never given you through rates in respect of other goods, they are not conforming to that agreement?—It was in 1903, when I had the interview with Mr. Moore. At that time they could not give it, and I then made arrangements to have my shipping place in Derry, and I have not asked ever since.

19834. I only wish to make it clear that there is a provision in those Treasury agreements making arrangements for through rates for passengers and goods. Whether they have carried it out or not we shall probably hear afterwards, but at any rate there is a provision. We have had a good deal of evidence with respect to the general working of the Lough Swilly Company. I understand you have only been in business in Buncrana five years?—I had been in business previous to that, but not as a shirt manufacturer.

19835. Were you resident there?—Yes.

19836. It would be interesting to the Commissioners to know what your views generally are as to the facilities, both as to the train service and the rates and fares and the facilities generally, on the Londonderry and the Lough Swilly system?—My experience is that there is no idea of a connection at all. The trains run without any idea at all of a connection with other lines. There is the time-table, and I will point out, if you will allow me, what I complain of. For instance, if you want to go from Buncrana to Belfast there is a train leaving Buncrana at 7.10 in the morning which is scheduled as arriving at Londonderry at 7.45 to catch the morning train at eight o'clock, but it never catches it in nine cases out of ten.

19837. Is that habitual—the missing of that connection?—One morning out of ten you would manage to catch it, perhaps, by driving across the city; but if the train did arrive in time to make the connection a quarter of an hour is too little. There is not a car on the Lough Swilly station at that hour of the morning generally, and you have to walk to the waterside, a distance of about a mile and a half.

19838. With regard to the return journey, is there a reasonable through connection back to Buncrana?—If you are leaving Dublin at three o'clock in the afternoon you arrive at Londonderry at ten minutes to seven in the evening, and have to stay there for the night—except for three months in the summer time.

19839. So that, generally speaking, there is not a widespread feeling of satisfaction with the way the railway company manage the line?—The feeling is quite the other way.

19840. I am only going to ask another question or two. With regard to the order which you say you fulfil with your London customer of one hundred dozen shirts a month, you say if you could be put in a better position to compete with either Americans or Belgians, you would probably increase that order by three or four times the amount?—Yes, I am almost positive I could increase it by twice the amount, at all events.

19841. So that even allowing for the fact that where there is sea competition goods must be carried at a lower rate, you consider it is essential in the interest of your trade and other similar trades that there must be, in order to develop them, an appreciable reduction in the rates charged for those articles?—It is essential, and more than essential.

19842. And one reason for your advocacy of State control or State purchase is that you assume that under no system of commercial enterprise such as that under which railways, at all events, are now administered, is it possible for railway companies to give you such an appreciable reduction?—Yes, I am aware it is not possible.

19843. But you hope that if the State take them over they would be prepared to undergo some loss for the time being in order to develop the manufacturing industries of the country?—Yes.

Reduction of rates under State Control anticipated and required for the development of industries.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

19844. Why did you set up at Buncrana?—Well, it was my native town, and the district also was one that was most suitable for that enterprise.

19845. You get of course very cheap labour—there is a lower standard of wages than in a big town, of course?—No, I cannot say that there is, because my workers are earning as good wages as they are in Derry. I pay them the same rate of wages exactly that is paid in the big factories in the City of Derry.

19846. Then what was the advantage—apart from the feeling that you wanted to stay at home, what advantage have you?—I have an advantage in the rent. I have a place there at Buncrana and the rent is £9 a year; in Derry I would pay, I suppose, £60.

19847. Then you do get some advantage by being in an out-of-the-way place?—Yes.

19848. On the other hand, too, you must have expected when you went there that the communications would be worse than in Derry?—I was quite aware I would be handicapped in that way.

19849. You said that it was with London that you had your main business?—Yes.

19850. What is your rate to London?—45*s.* 10*d.* from Derry.

Rate for shirts Londonderry and London.

19851. And you have to pay the local rate in addition—4*s.*, or something like that?—7*s.* 3*d.* The parcels are generally under 3 cwt. or about 3 cwt.

19852. What do you really pay per cwt.?—I think it is about 2*s.* 3*d.*; I am not quite sure.

19853. That must be wrong, must it not, because that would be only 45*s.* a ton?—Oh, yes; it is from Derry I am speaking of.

19854. Take it at 3*s.* That is something like what you have to pay to get into London?—Yes.

19855. Have you no competitors inside the United Kingdom?—Yes; there are competitors in West Somerset, I think.

19856. Do you know anything about what they have to pay?—No, I do not know anything about that.

19857. Do you know anything of your own knowledge of what they have to pay from other countries?—Nothing more than that letter.

19858. I have read the letter; you would not pin your faith to it, would you?—Oh, yes, I would.

19859. I would not advise you to. At any rate, it is not within your knowledge, so I will not ask you. At any rate, you cannot give me positive evidence as to what your competitors have to pay?—No, I cannot give positive evidence upon that.

19860. Taking your rate of 3*s.* per cwt., supposing it came down to 2*s.* 8*d.*, that would establish a reduction of eight per cent., would it not?—2*s.* 8*d.* per cwt.?

19861. Yes—it would be a reduction of eight per cent. on the rate?—Yes.

19862. Would that make any serious difference to you?—No appreciable difference at all.

19863. I daresay you see that if the railway company reduced all the rates by eight per cent. it would knock its whole dividend off, and yet you say it would not be enough to help you?—Yes, I see the point, but your calculation is somewhat wrong, as I do not send any of my stuff by Lough Swilly Railway to London. I have to keep my place in Derry and ship direct to London, and so the carriage is only 2*s.* 3*d.* per cwt.

The reduction in rates necessary to materially affect the cost of production.

19864. But take it that you pay 3*s.*, and supposing that you get it down eight per cent., that would be enough to more than sweep away the Great Northern dividend, and yet it would not be enough to help you?—It would be something, but it would not be worth speaking of.

19865. It would not be worth speaking of from your point of view, but it would mean absolute ruin to the railway company?—Yes, according to that view. But if you assume the reduction of 3*d.* per cwt. on these goods reduces the income of the railway by 8 per cent., I take it the 8 per cent. lost by the railway will be added on to my income and it would be something then.

Effect of a serious reduction in rates on Railway dividends.

19866. But that is just what I want you to see; you have a great many expenses, and the railway carriage is only a small part of your total cost?—It is more

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Mr. John M'Laughlin, Shirt Manufacturer, Buncrana.

than a small part. You are speaking now of railway carriage on material going out. There is also the carriage on material coming in and, besides, I have to send the undressed shirts by cart to Londonderry, because I find it cheaper. The carts will take it for 4*d.* per cwt. and deliver by road. So, taking all, railway carriage is a big item.

19867. I want you to get to this point: your expenses for rent and material and so on are bigger than your expenses for railway carriage?—Much—oh, yes.

19868. No doubt if you got eight per cent. on all that you would get fat, but eight per cent. for railway carriage only would not help you very much?—No.

Proportion of transit charges to total cost of production.

19869. On the other hand, the railway company have nothing to live on but carriage?—They have their passenger rates.

19870. Oh, yes, of course. Is there any reason why shirts should be treated better than passengers?—I think there is.

19871. What do you think the passenger would think? You see what I am driving at. If you cut down your railway rate, how is the railway to live?—The State could come in.

Question of whether the State should meet any loss to Railway Companies arising out of reduction in rates.

19872. Supposing it does; as a taxpayer in Ireland, are you prepared to pay taxes to make up the deficiency of the railway rates?—We are paying sufficient taxes; I would not like to pay more, but I think even from what we pay there might be a corner that would go to the alleviation of railway taxes.

19873. But would it not have to be new taxation?—I suggest it should be taken up by the British Exchequer.

19874. Provided the British Exchequer pays the eight per cent.?—I think they could very well afford to pay it.

19875. You would not be surprised if some of us who do not live in Ireland took another view?—I should expect you to take another view.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

Complaints made to the Manager of the Lough Swilly Railway.

19876. Would you look at this gentleman?—Yes.

19877. Do you know him?—I think so.

19878. Who is he?—Mr. Moore, of the Lough Swilly Railway.

19879. He has been general manager since 1901?—He has.

19880. Have you ever made a single complaint to Mr. Moore?—Yes, decidedly.

19881. When?—In 1903, in the office of the Lough Swilly Railway Company in Ship Quay-street, Londonderry.

19882. What did you complain of?—Of the want of through rates, before I took my place in Londonderry.

19883. And without through rates you took your place in Derry?—Yes.

19884. Now the original railway ran from Londonderry to Buncrana?—Yes.

19885. The new railways up to Carndonagh and away to the West are State railways?—Quite so.

19886. I suppose that even if the State owned all the railways in Ireland they would still have to be worked by men?—They would, but I take it they would be men.

19887. What do you mean by that?—I mean that the men at present working some of the railways in Ireland could be better.

19888. And I daresay even some of the shirt manufacturers could be better?—Oh, yes.

19889. With regard to this train in the morning—the 7.45—do you know it was never put on for the purpose of allowing people to go to Belfast, but was intended to carry working girls to Derry?—There never has been a working girl travelling by that train to Derry since it has started to the present day.

19890. Have you gone every day to the station to see?—I have been there pretty often—three mornings in the week sometimes.

19891. Do you go by that train?—Occasionally when I am going to Derry.

19892. Without wanting to go to Belfast at all, but going to Derry?—Yes.

19893. Are there seven intermediate stations between Buncrana and Derry from which working girls travel to Derry?—Yes, and we shunt at every one of them—I know the number.

Mr. C. S. R. Palmer, M.Inst.C.E., examined by The Chairman.

Mr C. S. R. Palmer, M. Inst. C.E., Engineer for the Western Australian Government.

19894. Mr. Palmer, I think you are the Railway Engineer for the Government of Western Australia?—I am at present the London Engineer for the Government of Western Australia.

19895. And you are acquainted with the railways in Western Australia?—Entirely. I was for ten years there in the service of the State and latterly as Engineer-in-Chief.

19896. Could you tell us whether the railways in Western Australia are the property of the State, or are privately owned?—They are, with one exception of 200 miles, owned by the State.

Mileage, gauge and cost of the State owned and privately owned West Australian Railways.

19897. What is the length of the railways owned by the State in Western Australia?—1,612 miles last year.

19898. What is the gauge of those railways?—3 ft. 6 in. gauge; 92 being double track.

19899. Are the privately-owned railways the same gauge?—Yes.

19900. They are all 3 ft. 6 ins., are they?—Yes.

19901. I suppose the bulk of the 1,612 miles are single lines?—All, except ninety-two miles of double track.

19902. Can you tell us the total cost of those railways owned by the State?—£9,965,940.

19903. Were the railways originally made by the State?—All except two—one that is still a private line, and the other that has been purchased.

Method by which purchase money was raised.

19904. By the State?—By the State.

19905. How have the State raised the money for the purchase of those railways?—With the exception of about one-sixteenth of the capital, which has been found from revenue, it has been raised entirely from loan funds borrowed on the security of the State at a rate of interest on an average of 3½ per cent. secured on the whole of the revenue of the State.

Date of the commencement of construction of the State Railways in Western Australia.

19906. When did the Western Australian Government begin to make State Railways?—As far back as 1879, but there was very little progress until 1893.

19907. Then they are practically all of recent construction?—Practically; since 1893 there have been 1,410 miles brought into working.

19908. Can you give us any information as to the origin of those railways. First of all, I suppose the Government of Western Australia decided whether a railway should be made?—That is so.

19909. Then when they decided that, did they take into consideration the fact that the railways should be so constructed as to develop what I call undeveloped country; is that the policy of the Western Australian Government?—Practically. I may say that the lines of my State have never been built into an absolutely uninhabited country as some of the American lines perhaps have been. On the other hand, at least one-half of the lines that we have built could not have been expected when built to pay even working expenses for several years, and some do not do so now. The policy, therefore, has been one of creating and developing industries and of opening up lands for agricultural settlement, and it is not too much to say that not one of our industries and but little of the agricultural settlement could have been established without railways, and nothing but cheap construction could have enabled this to be done; we could not have got the money for expensive lines.

19910. Have you before you the average cost per mile of the State Railways?—I think I have it here.

19911. We will leave it now if it will come up later. In raising these loans for the construction of the railways, do the Government make any provision for a sinking fund?—They have a sinking fund for all Government loans, but that is a question apart from railways.

19912. In other words, I suppose a loan is automatically paid off in a certain period?—Yes.

19913. And that is set forth in the prospectus when the loan is invited?—Yes, it is part of our Constitution Act.

19914. Is the period thirty or sixty years?—I could not tell you because the amount of the sinking fund

varies according to the purposes for which the loan is obtained. Sometimes we have as high as a three per cent. sinking fund.

19915. For the loans to construct these railways there is not only a certain interest to be paid, but also a proportion for sinking fund?—Not necessarily so.

19916. Not necessarily so?—Not from railway revenue. There is interest certainly. The reason, I understand, is that we cannot expect the railways to pay for a sinking fund; they are for the benefit of the whole State.

19917. Having got the railways, we should like to know how they are worked by the State. Is there a separate Department for railways in the Government?—There are two Departments. The construction is in the Public Works Department, and there is a separate Department entirely for the working of the railways which is under its own Minister.

19918-19. The working is absolutely distinct from the new works?—Quite distinct. There has been some variation of policy back and forward as to improvements of existing lines, but mainly the improvements have been carried out by the construction staff.

19920. That is what we may call permanent improvements?—Yes.

19921. But for ordinary working?—For ordinary working and betterment there is a separate Department.

19922. And with that Department you are quite familiar, I suppose?—I am familiar with it. I have never been employed in it, but I am perfectly familiar with it.

19923. How are the railways managed at present?—At present there is a Commissioner appointed under an Act of Parliament who has the control of the railways subject to the Minister responsible to Parliament. The Minister, however, does not interfere in details unless there may be special reasons for it.

19925. May I ask, is there only one Commissioner or more?—There is only one at present. The Bill provided for three, but for some reason this was not carried through.

19926. Were there three appointed in the beginning?—No.

19927. Never?—No. There were to have been three, but this was a tentative policy on our part, and only one was appointed.

19928. Colonial Governments have three?—Yes with the exception of South Australia, which has only one.

19929. Victoria has three?—Victoria and New South Wales each has three.

19930. The Western Australian Government railways are worked by a Commissioner of Railways?—That is so.

19931. Is that a permanent appointment or for a term of years?—For five years, subject to renewal.

19932. He is responsible for the working of the railways subject only to the control of the Minister for Railways?—Yes, for the working.

19933. With regard to the betterment or new works; that is another Department altogether, is it not?—As I say, the policy has varied; sometimes the railways have done it themselves and sometimes the Public Works have been called upon to do it. There has been no hard and fast line for that; the idea being generally that large sums of loan money should be controlled by the Minister for Public Works; but expenditure from revenue on the railways by the Minister for Railways. I think it is the same policy in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

19934. The same policy is adopted there, is it?—Yes.

19935. I notice that between 1893 and 1906 about 1,410 miles of new railway were constructed by the State?—That is so.

19936. And were those railways constructed for the purpose of developing industries already there or in the hope of developing industries?—Partly both.

19937. Would you, as a practical man, tell us whether private enterprise could have constructed those lines with any hope of making profit?—I do not think private enterprise could or would have done so, but we have not lost on them as a whole.

19938. The State being owners?—I think they could do better. I think, the State being the owner, can do better than a private company as regards the establishing of a new railway. I think the history of our two privately owned lines has shown that.

19939. Are they successful?—They were not. It is partly a question of land policy.

19940. Your opinion is that very little of the agricultural settlement could have taken place or industries fostered had it not been for the construction of those railways by the State?—That is so.

19941. What has been the expenditure; I see you have the figures here for the cost per mile inclusive of equipment of the State railways?—£5,900 per mile inclusive of equipment, on the average.

19942. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is all railways?—All the railways of the State.

19943. And they are 3 feet 6 inches gauge?—Yes.

19944. *Chairman.*—That figure may appear rather high for a narrow gauge railway, but, of course, all your equipment had to be imported?—That is so. But I think that is about the lowest amount anywhere where we can get any public figures; I do not think there is any country where we can be beaten on the average of the railways, and this notwithstanding our position and high labour rates.

Improbability of private enterprise ever accomplishing the results achieved by the State in developing industries.

19945. As a matter of fact, all your rails and everything have to be imported?—Rails, fastenings, ironwork, machinery, equipment, tools, cement, and light timber, all have to be imported from this side of the globe, and wages are thirty per cent. over those in America; the minimum for any class of labour being 1s. per hour.

19946. At any rate, the cost of the State railways, including equipment, has been £5,900 per mile. That was the cost up to 1905, was it not?—1906. We now have some exclusively agricultural railways in hand, costing from £1,000 to £1,100 a mile exclusive of equipment.

Capital cost per mile of the State railways.

19947. I suppose you have no lands to buy?—We have no land to buy, very little at any rate.

19948. And no great physical difficulties?—No, not on these lines. We have on the ordinary lines; we have a whole tunnel.

19949. Have you really constructed any railways in Australia at £1,000 or £1,100 a mile?—Yes, we have just built 100 miles of line at that cost—£1,050.

19950. *Mr. Acworth.*—What gauge?—3 ft. 6 ins.

19951. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What weight rails?—45 lbs.

19952. *Mr. Acworth.*—New?—New.

19953. *Chairman.*—You are not hampered there in any shape or form by any regulation with regard to block-signalling, interlocking, and all that sort of thing—I am speaking of these agricultural lines?—No, not there; but the whole of the rest of the lines are either absolute block or train staff, and ticket under rules in accordance with the Board of Trade regulations in England.

System of providing cheaply constructed lines for agricultural districts.

19954. They are worked as similar railways are in England?—That is so. We have pretty stiff gradients on some of our lines. To show the character of the country, there are 1 in 40 and 1 in 45; those are the ruling gradients. 1 in 75 is about the flattest ruling grade.

19955. Have you found these cheaply constructed railways in agricultural districts have been of any benefit to the districts?—They could not settle the land without the railways.

19956. Have you any figures before you to show us the result of the working of any portion of the line which has been opened?—There was one line opened prior to these. These that I have been speaking about are later lines, but there was one opened in July, 1902. This line in 1904-5 had a gross goods tonnage movement of 20,320 and gross revenue of £4,049, with working expenses of £5,020.

19957. Then that was worked at a loss?—That was worked at a loss.

19958. Do you know what has been the result since that period?—No, I have not the figures since then. As a matter of fact, this was some special information; the Government do not publish these figures as they take the railways as a whole.

19959. Of course they do not publish the sectional receipts and expenditure?—No.

Surplus revenue devoted to reduction of railway rates.

19960. That was the policy adopted on that particular part of the railway with regard to the rates when it was found that the railways were not earning a profit?—I cannot say that it was with reference to that one particular line, but generally speaking, as soon as it has been found that the railways were more than paying interest and working expenses, the rates have been reduced, and that affected that line as well as the others.

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19961. The rates for agricultural produce?—For agricultural produce, yes.

19962. And the result has been satisfactory to the State?—Quite satisfactory.

19963. That is to say, the reduced rates for carrying agricultural produce have largely increased the traffic on the line?—Yes.

19964. And also increased the nett profits?—Well, I think we are too new to say that yet. The State is developing its property, and there is no doubt whatever that our earnings are developing also.

Surplus railway revenue devoted to the reduction of rates

19965. Are they paying interest now?—The lines?

19966. Yes, as a whole?—Yes, the lines as a whole have paid for the last three years 4¾ per cent.

19967. Then there is a considerable profit?—1¼ per cent. over the loan interest, but we have reduced the rates, so that I do not think in the coming year there will be that profit. The rates have been reduced mainly on industries that required help.

19968. In other words, when it is found that there is a substantial profit in the working of the railways the policy of the State seems to be still further to reduce the rates?—That is so.

19969. That is the policy?—That is so.

19970. So that they do not work the railways with the sole object of getting the largest amount of interest out of them?—No.

19971. If there is a substantial profit they make a further reduction in the rates so as to give the country the benefit of it?—So as to give the producers the benefit, yes.

19972. That is the country?—And the consumers, yes.

Method of dealing with receipts and providing for the expenditure.

19973. Could you tell us in your own words how the receipts are dealt with?—The receipts all go into the Treasury as part of the revenue of the State. And the expenditure is budgeted for and passed by Parliament.

19974. That is to say there is an estimate made by the Minister as to what he wants for the working of the railways, and that is passed as part of the Budget?—As part of the Budget, yes.

19975. And the receipts go to the Treasury to swell the receipts of the States?—That is so.

19976. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Do you mean the gross receipts?—The gross receipts.

Mr. Acworth.—Just like the English Post Office.

19977. *Chairman.*—Of course, dealing with it in that way members of the Parliament of the country have every opportunity to discuss questions of rates or anything appertaining to the working of the railways?—When the estimates are presented.

19978. I mean when the estimates are presented?—Yes, and also by resolution at other times.

19979. But more especially when the estimates are submitted?—Exactly.

19980. I mean there is a free discussion then?—Absolutely free—very free.

Position and authority of the Commissioner of Railways.

19981. I think you told us that since 1902, previously there had been some alteration made, and that the responsibility for the working of the railways rested with the Commissioner?—Prior to 1902 there was a General Manager who was entirely under the direction of the Minister. Now the Commissioner has powers of his own irrespective of the Minister and subject only to his general political control. The position is this—the Commissioner is not interfered with unless there is some real reason to do so.

19982. Has that system worked well?—Unless there is some strong reason to do so the Commissioner is not interfered with.

19983. But has the new system worked well up to the present time?—Yes. There is the usual reaction, I suppose. It is now stated that he wants to make too much money.

19984. That the Commissioner does?—That the Commissioner wants to make too much money. But, as I say, the Government have taken that in hand and have reduced the rates.

19985. But you think, putting it in the interest of the Colony, that the change which was made in the management of the railways has been for the good of the Colony?—Certainly.

19986. You think so?—I think so. That has been the experience I may say of the whole of the States I am acquainted with.

19987. The Commissioner really has practically the sole responsibility, as I gather?—He has.

19988. I do not know, but it has been suggested here that the Commissioner might be subject to political influence. Do you know whether any great political influence has been brought to bear upon the Commissioner in the working of these railways?—Not on our Commissioner. I know it has occurred in the Eastern States sometime back; I know that by hearsay.

19989. But not in Western Australia?—No; it has not been successful at any rate.

19990. He is really an independent responsible person?—An independent responsible person.

19991. And the only complaint is, as I gather, that some people think that he is working the railways and making too much profit?—That is the present claim.

19992. But Parliament steps in there and reduces the rates?—The Government have.

19993. I mean the Government?—I think, speaking personally, that that was really following on a resolution placed before Parliament in August of last year and accepted, that the rates should be reduced—a general resolution.

19994. In other words, that the increased profits should go to the benefit of the Colony?—That is so.

19995. I mean to the benefit of those using the railways?—To the benefit of those using the railways.

19996. I suppose you have no figures to place before us with reference to rates?—I have some here that may be of interest.

19997. If you have any rates so that we could have them on the notes to make our own comparisons, it would be advisable that you should give them to us?—Taking passenger rates, our general passenger rate is 2*d.* per mile, first-class, and 1¼*d.* per mile, second-class; return fare one-half.

19998. What is your third-class rate?—We have none; we have only two classes.

19999. Those rates are higher than the rates in this country?—I think not, for the accommodation.

20000. What do you mean by the accommodation? Surely the third-class accommodation in this country is equal to your second-class?—It is all a question of comparison in the country to which one goes. One cannot expect on bush railways the same facilities as are provided at home here. But we have sleeping berths, restaurant cars, corridor carriages, and so on.

20001. But still the lowest rate at which a passenger ordinarily can travel is 1¼*d.* per mile?—That is for the single fare; return fares are one-half.

20002. It is 1¼*d.* against 1*d.* in this country?—That is the general passenger rate, but there are very considerable reductions in suburban areas and also in season tickets. I know that I pay at present here over £6 for a season ticket which in Western Australia would cost £5 4*s.* 2*d.* for the same distance.

20003. You pay £6 here for what in Australia would cost £5 4*s.* 2*d.*?—That is so, for my season ticket.

20004. There is not much difference there?—But it is on our side.

20005. I do not know where your season ticket is to, but probably you have five times the number of trains here?—Undoubtedly; many more trains on main lines, but not over 50 per cent. extra in suburban areas in my experience. Then, besides, we have workers' tickets.

20006. What we call workmen's tickets, I suppose? Yes, at ⅜*d.* per mile.

20007. I am afraid we are much cheaper than that here?—We also carry every one learning at a quarter fare.

20008. That is school children?—Up to twenty years of age.

20009. That is what we call school children's fares?—We also carry clergymen at reduced rates and commercial travellers. Then as regards goods rates——

20010. One moment. With regard to passenger rates you have a lot to learn yet in Australia?—Yes, but our wages scale has to be remembered.

20011. And a good many reductions to make before you come down to our standard?—Yes, it will be coming down in receipts.

20012. Now as to goods rates?—We carry our coal at ½*d.* a ton per mile.

20013. Is that for any distance?—Any distance over five miles.

20014. Do you mean to say that six miles would be 3*d.*?—No, it would be ½*d.* a ton per mile over five miles; five miles is 1*s.* 3*d.* The first five miles is 1*s.* 3*d.*

20015. That is your minimum rate?—Yes.

20016. And after that it is ½*d.* a mile?—Yes.

20017. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Have you terminal charges?—No charges besides that.

20018. *Chairman.*—That is the charge to the public?—Yes.

20019. It is rather interesting to have this on the notes carefully. Let us see if I follow you correctly. You have a minimum charge for the carriage of coal; do you find the wagons?—Yes.

20020. You have a minimum charge in Government wagons of 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton for any distance up to five miles?—That is so.

20021. That is the minimum charge?—Yes.

20022. But above five miles it is ½*d.* per ton per mile, plus the 1*s.* 3*d.*?—That is so.

20023. And that applies generally over the Western Australian railways?—Yes.

20024. That is very interesting in regard to coal. Now, have you anything else?—Our hard woods are 1*d.*

20025. That is what we should classify as timber, I suppose?—Yes; that is 1*d.* in the same way.

20026. With a minimum?—Yes.

20027. *Mr. Acworth.*—With an initial 1*s.* 3*d.*?—An initial 2*s.* 6*d.* for ten miles; 100 miles would cost 10*s.* 1*d.*; 150 miles 13*s.* 2*d.*, and so on in reducing ratio.

20028. *Chairman.*—For ten miles the minimum rate for timber is 2*s.* 6*d.* per ton. Above that it is 1*d.* per per ton per mile. I think that is what you said?—Those were our rates in 1905, but since that date there have been the reductions which I have spoken of.

20029. By resolution of the House?—Yes, which reductions, I am sorry to say, I have not by me at present.

20030. We will assume that they are percentage reductions?—They are pretty serious—pretty large I know. But I could get you the figures if it would be of interest to the Commission.

20031. *Mr. Acworth.*—Could you give it in percentages?—I could not, at present.

20032. *Chairman.*—This information is of considerable value to us. Have you anything else besides timber?—I have grain.

20033. That is interesting. First of all, do you carry grain in bulk or in sacks?—In sacks.

20034. Is there any question about the quantity carried, or is the rate for any quantity?—For peas, wheat, oats, maize and rye there is no minimum; for other grains, truck loads, four tons constituting a truck load; in the same way with the others.

20035. Your truck load is four tons?—Yes.

20036. Of course, on narrow gauge railways you have not such good trucks?—That is what we call a truck load; it is not a full truck load, but what we call a truck load.

20037. For rating purposes?—Yes.

20037A. What is the rate for grain?—For grain we had, up to ten miles, 2*s.* 6*d.*; eleven to twenty-one miles a further 2*d.* a mile; twenty-two to sixty miles 4*s.* 9*d.* more; then ½d. a mile. All cumulative charged to eighty-five miles.

20038. *Mr. Acworth.*—But you would not pay the same for ten miles as for for forty-nine?—I have given you the total amount; it is graded.

20039. There are intermediate points between ten and fifty?—Yes; so much per mile.

20040. *Mr. Acworth.*—Does it run the same per mile for each of those forty miles; it is a little under 1½*d.*, which does not seem to fit.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is 2*s.* 6*d.* for the first ten miles, and 4*s.* 9*d.* for sixty.

Witness.—They go on reducing as one goes on; they reduce by distance; as the carriage gets longer the rate per mile gets less.

20041. *Chairman.*—Speaking generally, can we take it that the rate for ten miles is 2*s.* 6*d.* for grain, and that after that it is about 1*d.* per ton per mile?—It is close on 2*d.* per ton per mile up to twenty miles.

20042. *Mr. Acworth.*—2*d.* for the next ten?—Yes; they do not charge in halfpennies, and therefore sometimes there is an increase of 1*d.*, and sometimes an increase of 2*d.* per mile, until you get to the figure that I gave before—up to sixty miles.

20043. What would be the cost for carrying four tons of grain for sixty miles?—£1 16*s.* 4*d.* for four tons.

Mr. Acworth.—That is 9*s.* 1*d.* per ton.

20044. *Chairman.*—In this country it is lower than that?—When you get to 100 miles, we only charge 11*s* 9*d.*

20045. "Only" 12*s.* 5*d.*; I wish we could get 12*s.* 5*d.*?—Of course we pay pretty heavily for other things.

20046. This is all interesting to us. Now, let us have, if you can give it, the rate for manure. But manure, I suppose, is not wanted in Australia; it is virgin soil, and therefore you do not use it. But you use lime, do you not?—Yes, for building purposes; you might take it that the rates for that are five-eights of the one I have just given you.

20047. That is slightly more than one-half?—Yes.

20048. If you could give us one other case; we will say draperies—something that is carried. Have you draperies or groceries; take it broadly, anything in the drapery line, or tea, tobacco, or sugar?—It will be remembered, of course, what we pay for our labour.

20049. Oh, yes; we are not making any comments on these rates; we want to get them on the notes, so as to see what sort of rates they are getting as compared with what are charged in Ireland; that is all. Have you any rates for draperies, or groceries, or general merchandise, or any broad term of that sort?—These are box goods.

20050. We know what that is?—The rate for box goods is about two and a half times what I have given you for grain.

20051. That is 2½*d.* per ton per mile?—Two and a half times.

20052. *Mr. Acworth.*—What is the initial rate for a short distance?—6*s.* 6*d.*

20053. 6*s.* 6*d.* is the lowest rate for which it can be carried any distance; that is ten miles?—Of course, it will be remembered that we have not those short distances to carry.

20054. No?—That goes on to twelve miles, and there are comparatively small increases after that. That includes all terminal charges.

20055. *Chairman.*—Does it include collection and delivery?—No. Of course there is a great difference with regard to the distance that we have to carry. I have brought a plan to show it; ours is long-distance carriage. That has to be remembered.

20056. You go to Coolgardie?—Yes; that is 360 miles from the port.

20057. Can you give us any rate from the port to Coolgardie for anything?—£1 6*s.* for grain.

20058. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is ⅝ths of 1*d.* per mile exactly. Can you give us the drapery rate?

20059. *Chairman.*—What you call box goods?—We have a 600-mile rate, if you would like to have it—£1 12*s.* for grain.

20060. And the bulk of your traffic is carried long distances?—No, but a very large proportion of it is.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I suggest that these distances are too large for Ireland. If we could get shorter distances we might be able to compare our rates.

Chairman.—360 miles.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—But the witness was giving 600 miles just now.

The Witness.—The reason I gave that was that the policy in our country would vary according to the interest to be served. One-fourth of our population lives inland at these distances.

Chairman.—Of course 600 miles did not apply to Ireland, we know.

20061. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you give us the box goods rate to Coolgardie?—I will get it for you.

20061A. You might add it to your evidence; I think it would be useful?—Mixed groceries for instance, £6 5*s.* 3*d.* for 360 miles, without minimum limitation of weight, and at railway risk.

20062. *Chairman.*—I think you told us that last year's working, or the last published returns at any rate, show that these railways about which you have been speaking, earned 4¾ per cent. on the borrowed capital?—4¾ per cent.

20063. I think you told us that that profit was considered too large, and that the surplus was really devoted to reductions in rates?—That is so.

20064. And that those reductions were substantial?—Were substantial.

20065. But the exact amount or percentage you are not quite sure about?—I have not got that figure; I know there was a reduction which they claim will cost £16,000 on timber.

20066. That goes to the benefit of the timber trade?—To the benefit of the timber trade. I regret I cannot give you the other figures, but they have not come out to us yet.

June 6, 1907.

Mr. C. S. R. Palmer, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer for the Western Australian Government.

The system of State ownership of the railways a great benefit to Australia.

20067. From your knowledge of Australia are you of opinion that these State-owned railways have resulted in great development of the country?—Yes; I am definitely of opinion that the country could not have developed without the railways; that is my definite opinion.

20068-9. And I think you are also of opinion that private enterprise could not have done it—could not have been expected to do it?—I do not think they could have done it; they could not have got the money to do it with. That is what I have seen there. They certainly could not have got it at the prices at which we can get it.

20070. In your judgment, are there any drawbacks to State ownership?—Yes; one is more expensive working than privately-owned railways, due to the fact that the public require more from a Government railway than they would accept from a privately-owned railway. That is what I have seen in Western Australia at the present day.

20071. You mean that the staff exact more?—No; not the staff, but the public. The public desire better facilities—more trains.

20072. You spoke about working at greater cost?—That is so.

20073. That must mean that more wages are paid?—Higher wages are paid, but apart from that, there are more trains put on, and that adds to the expense really much more than paying higher wages.

20074. In spite of those drawbacks these particular railways pay 4¾ per cent.?—In spite of those drawbacks.

20075. Are there any other drawbacks that you wish to mention?—No; I do not think there are beyond those.

20076. Then on the whole, speaking for your Colony, do you think there has been—I think you said in fact that it had been of great advantage to have these Government-owned railways?—I think so, yes.

20077. And that the development of the country has practically followed from the development of the railways?—That is so; there is no question about that, I think.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

20078. You were saying, I have no doubt truly, that the money to make the railways would not have been got except by the State taking over the responsibility?—Yes; it would not have been got at the price.

20079. You would not have got it, or if you had got it, it would have been on very expensive terms?—Yes.

The possibility of applying the Australian system of raising capital to Ireland.

20080. That view would not necessarily apply to a case where the railways were already made, would it. I mean if you were to translate that into Ireland, where the railways are made and the capital has been found. So far as you base your argument—and I gather it is a very strong argument in Australia—on the fact that that was the only feasible way of getting the money—that would not apply to Ireland, because the money has been got?—Yes.

20081. Would you agree?—Yes; but I do not know at what percentage it has been got.

20082. But there it is; it has been obtained and the railways do not want making again, although, no doubt, there are extensions, and so on?—Yes.

20083. I want to go over a good many of the points you have raised, as it is the first time I have had the opportunity of asking any questions of a gentleman coming from Australia. Would you tell us what your annual receipts are?

Gross earnings per mile of the Australian railways.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I have it here; the gross earnings were £1,588,084.

Mr. Acworth.—That is on 1,600 miles of lines, roughly speaking a thousand pounds per mile per annum. That is what I wanted to get at; it is roughly about the same as Ireland—about £1,000 per mile.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Ireland works out at £1,250.

20084. *Mr. Acworth.*—I thought it was not quite so much. Then about capital, if my recollection is right, Western Australia used to pay a good deal more than 5 per cent., did it not, in the very early days?—We never paid more than 5 per cent.

20085. Not in 1888, or something like that?—There was one loan in 1872, but that was only——

20086. I do not mean paid for money; I mean that the railways paid a bigger percentage of profit; that is my recollection?—Western Australia has paid as high as 11 per cent.

20087. I think it paid a very high rate in one year?—In 1896.

20088. Then they developed their lines very fast—they had to, no doubt—and the interest ran down a great deal—the percentage of earnings to the capital involved?—Yes, but there were also heavy reductions of rates.

20089. Can you tell how low it went?—The lowest percentage earned on capital has been 3·75.

20090. Then it has very nearly paid its way all the time?—Excepting up to 1891, when we were just balancing; there was a very short length of line constructed.

20091. In this worst year it very nearly paid, is that the position?—Yes.

20092. And on the whole, it has more than paid?—Certainly.

20093. That is therefore a great deal better than the average of any other State in the Commonwealth?—Yes; that is so. We have paid better on the whole.

20094. Am I not right in saying that Queensland, for example, has never paid full interest on their capital?—I think they have paid their way—more than done that.

20095. Have they?—Oh, yes. What Queensland has not done recently at any rate is to cover the whole of its interest.

20096. That is what I mean; I do not mean that they have not always paid working expenses. The Queensland Railways' net receipts have never covered the interest on the Queensland Railway debt?—Not quite.

20097. In New South Wales only in a few years?—New South Wales has varied; I think it would be found that she has done so on the whole.

20098. Barely, I think?—One point has to be remembered, and that is the cost of construction in these Colonies.

20099. We will go back to that afterwards, if necessary. As to Victoria, only two years ago there was a deficit?—I daresay there was.

20100. In New Zealand there has generally been a deficit until quite recently?—I could not tell you that.

20101. So that, if I am anything like right, though we are told that the policy of Australian States is to keep down the net receipts to the point where they pay the interest on their capital, the fact is that as a rule they have had difficulty in getting them up to that point?—I would not put it in that way. I think I might fairly put it another way, and that is that they have kept their rates persistently low in order to develop industries.

20102. They have got rid of their surplus before they have got it, so to speak?—In some cases.

20103. They have not really had a large surplus that they could afford to distribute, but they have distributed before it accrued?—Not always.

20104. But in many cases?—In some cases.

20105. I think that represents the history. Your figure of £5,900 a mile does that include the new railways at £1,000 a mile, which you are building?—No.

20106. It does not?—No; that was up to 1906, and the new railways have just been built.

20107. That would bring the figure down further?—Yes.

20108. Do you suggest, leaving out these new railways, that practically £6,000 a mile, which I may translate as $30,000, is other than a full ample price to pay for a single narrow gauge line across a flat plain?—It has more than paid for a single narrow gauge line across a flat plain in our case, because we have some rough country also, and our position and wages have to be allowed for.

20109. But broadly, I think you said it was a flat country?—In the interior, yes, but we have a range that we have to penetrate.

20110. You do not suggest that it is exceptionally cheap?—£6,000 a mile, no—not what you can construct a railway for, for first purposes, but this includes much well developed line.

20111. It includes equipment?—Yes.

20112. *Chairman.*—It depends on the equipment of course?—Our equipment is about the same as Irish railways, I believe—quantities of equipment per mile.

20113. *Mr. Acworth.*—I am very much struck by your figures of £1,000 or £1,100; I find that it means seventy tons of rails a mile?—That is so.

20114. What would the rails cost on an average—£6 10*s.*?—They cost under £6, delivered there.

20115. That is £420 for rails without fastenings; there is no ballasting?—No.

20116. Just laid on the soil?—Graded, of course, and there is a local ballasting—earth ballasting.

20117. Practically on the soil scraped up with the sleepers that are in that neighbourhood?—We use fairly good sleepers.

20118. You perhaps get them along the line. There is nothing in the nature of road crossings to provide for?—There is, but we use cattle pits in most cases.

20119. You say that the whole of the receipts from the lines are passed through the Treasury and form part of the general revenue of the State, and that each year's proposed expenditure is placed before Parliament and voted?—That is exactly like the system of the English Post Office?—Yes.

20120. You know that the Swiss have nationalised their railways within the last year or two?—No, I did not know that.

20121. Well, they have done. They, having seen what had been happening in the rest of the world, made it a part of the law that the railway budget should be kept entirely separate from the budget of the country. Which do you think is the right system?—It depends on the country, but certainly, in my opinion, our system is the better one.

20122. That Parliament should control and vote the salaries of the stationmasters and vote the rates for grain?—Except that Parliament does not go into details; it could not possibly go into details, but they have the right to do so.

20123. I want to ask some questions on that presently. All these questions could, of course, be raised on the railway budget?—They could.

20124. You could move that in the opinion of the House the grain rates ought to be reduced, or that no stationmaster ought to get less than £3 a week, or anything of that kind?—Yes.

20125. You think on the whole that has more advantages than the other system?—I think so. I think it gives a power of interference which naturally would not be taken advantage of unless there were reason for it.

20126. You spoke of these large reductions in the grain rates and other rates. Are those borne on the railway systems; does the railway stand the racket of that?—Yes.

20127. You know, no doubt, the Victorian system, under which if the Commissioners say, "We think the rates are low enough," and Parliament says, "We think they ought to be lower," then the Commissioners say, "The difference will mean £10,000 a year, and you must vote £10,000 a year subsidy to the railway budget." You know that system?—May I point out that the Commissioners were appointed there to undertake the railways at a time when they were very badly off, and the country was prepared to submit to anything, the railways were not paying at all, and, therefore, it has not been a case of handing over surplus revenue, but of making the railways pay. We are in a more fortunate position.

20128. And under that other system Parliament voted last year or the year before in Victoria to reduce the rates for coal from ¾*d.* to ½*d.*; the railways are getting ¾*d.*, but the people are paying a ½*d.*, and Parliament makes up the other farthing?—That is very likely to benefit that particular industry.

20129. Similarly, they are now going to vote a reduction of the grain rate. Do you think that is a good system, or would you rather leave it without any special regulation?—No; I would rather see Parliamentary control than have anyone absolutely independent.

20130. I see. In fact you prefer the Parliamentary system to the Commissioners' system?—No; I prefer a Commissioner to a certain extent with full powers; but, on the other hand, with reserve powers for Parliament to interfere if necessary.

20131. You recognise, of course, that this is really one of the cruxes of the matter—what is to be the power of each?—I quite recognise that.

20132. And I gather that you think that the Commissioner ought to be under the Minister for Railways?—Yes; which Minister for Railways would be responsible to Parliament.

20133. And would you give the Commissioner definite limits within which he could do what he liked, or would the Minister always have to control him?—Give the Commissioner full powers subject to revision by the Minister when there was necessity.

20134. That means to say that the Minister can always interfere if he chooses?—If he chooses.

20135. I only want to understand where you are. You said that in 1902 the management was directly controlled by the Minister responsible to Parliament, and that since that time Parliament has ceased to have detailed control, and powers have been vested in an independent head called a Commissioner?—That is so. That appears to be very largely what I have been saying as to what I think is the correct way. The Minister does not interfere with the Commissioner except when there is special reason to do so.

20136. Why was the change from one system to the other made in 1902?—Because there was too much interference in the previous case. It was acknowledged that there was a right to interfere the whole time and every time, and that was taken advantage of politically.

20137. Do I understand that there was too much political interference?—There was.

20138. And accordingly a barrier was erected in the shape of a Commissioner?—That is so.

20139. Can the Minister now interfere if he likes?—Yes, that is my opinion.

20140. And that is the legal position?—Yes in my opinion.

20141. Is the difference that "Commissioner" sounds a bigger person than "General Manager" and Ministers are afraid of him, or what makes the difference?—No. Parliament has now definitely placed a certain responsibility on the Commissioner which was not on the general manager, who was supposed to be an officer entirely subordinate to the Minister at all times.

20142. Taking it as a broad question, in practically every State of the Commonwealth they have gone through one, or two, or three phases; first of all, they were under Parliament?—Yes.

20143. Then, to use your own phrase, confessedly for the purpose of escaping from political influence they set up a Commissioner?—Yes.

20144. In New Zealand and South Australia I think they pulled him down again?—South Australia still has a Commissioner.

20145. They pretty well pulled him down again in New South Wales, I think. Then in New Zealand they pulled him down again?—Yes.

20146. Do you think they are likely to put him up again when there is confessedly too much political influence again?—It depends there now on the Government again. If you have a strong Government and a strong Minister that influence cannot obtain.

20147. If, on the other hand, you have a strong Commissioner, he will keep it down?—Yes.

20148. But if you have not, it may get in?—The great strength of the Commissioner's position is that he is not dependent on the public vote.

20149. I think in no case is he appointed for more than five years, is he?—I think not.

20150. So that he is to some extent dependent on the public vote?—I would not admit that, because the Government have power, and actually have done so, to appoint and re-appoint a Commissioner without its being made public; they have an absolute right to do that.

20151. He has to be reappointed; we can draw our own inference as to what that means.

20152. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Is he removable after five years?—No. The appointment simply terminates if not renewed, I believe.

20153. *Mr. Aspinall.*—By a vote of both Houses?—I think that is not the case with our Commissioner unless he is found incapable or something of that sort.

20154. *Mr. Acworth.*—I do not know whether your attention was ever called to it, but I have been reminded of it in this inquiry. Were you in Australia with Sir Robert Hamilton, who, curiously enough, had been Under-Secretary for Ireland, and went out there as Governor of Tasmania?—I was there in 1894.

20155. In the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1892, he talks of the difficulty of the Commissioners—the difficulty that there has been money spent which ought not to have been spent, and he speaks of how the Commissioners were set up to stop it. The point he raises is this: "Our Parliamentary representatives are the guards, and I believe that any guard upon them in the shape of permanent Commissioners appointed by them to exercise their powers must, as experience appears to be already showing, break down." Would you agree with that—

June 6, 1907.

Mr. C. S. R. Palmer, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer for the Western Australian Government.

The extent to which the Railway Commissioner's powers should be independent of Parliamentary interference.

The experiences of other Australian Colonies of the system of control of the railways by a Commissioner.

June 6, 1907.

Mr. C. S. R. Palmer, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer for the Western Australian Government.

The position and powers of the Railway Commissioner.

if the railways belong to the State, Parliament does represent the owners?—That is so.

20156. And Parliament is the right body to control?—Yes.

20157. If the people control, they must control?—Yes.

20158. And I gather your attitude to be that you would agree with Sir Robert Hamilton, that you cannot put up a Commissioner to protect the people from themselves?—You can to a certain extent, but the Commissioner might go to a further extent than is necessary; in that case you ought to guard yourself from the Commissioner.

20159. If the people own the railways, in the long run, the people must have the power to run them, and the Commissioner could only be an obstacle to a certain extent; that is what you think, I gather?—Yes.

20160. He may be an obstacle to prevent good as well as to prevent evil?—He can be certainly.

20161. So that in the long run you come back to this, that no machinery can protect the owners of the railways from mismanaging them if they like?—No, but the Commissioner could put on a considerable braking effect.

20162. That really is the point, I think. I wanted to ask you about the rates. You do not know in any shape what the reductions you speak of are going to work out at?—No, not at present.

20163. You cannot do it in money, in percentage, or any way?—The only thing I can tell you that I know is that the profit was £100,000 over and above interest, and that £16,000 of that has been conceded at once to the timber trade.

20164. There are other reductions, but you could not price them?—No.

Particulars of ton-mile rates on Australian railways not available.

20165. In Western Australia you do not publish ton mile figures?—I do not think they do in any of the Colonies.

20166. They have them in some?—They may have, but I have never seen them.

20167. Do you know whether they have them in Western Australia?—They have not.

20168. So that in taking the specimen rates, we cannot tell what really the average charge is?—No.

20169. We cannot compare it with other countries, where they exist?—No.

20170. *Mr. Aspinall.*—They have them in Victoria?—Possibly, but they are not published.

20171. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you, in any way, give an idea of what you believe the average length haul to be; it must very much affect the question of rates. The only railway that ever got it out in this country got out an average haul of twenty-two miles as against about 80 in Germany, and 140 in America?—All I can tell you is our distances, and where, approximately speaking, the main industries are located.

Question of the average length haul of traffic in Australia.

20172. Is there much local traffic—that is to say, traffic that originates fifty miles from Perth and goes 100 miles, or is it nearly all backwards and forwards to Perth or Albany?—No; there is a very great deal of local traffic.

20173. There is?—Yes. There is also a great deal of traffic between Perth and the port, which is only twelve miles.

20174. Do you mean that it starts from Perth and goes to the port?—It starts at Fremantle and goes into Perth.

20175. And does not go further?—And does not go further. That feeds perhaps one-third of the population of the whole State.

20176. Goods for consumption in Perth would not go beyond?—No.

20176A. You would not care to suggest any figure which you think would represent the average haul?—I have never attempted to get it out.

Percentage of short and long distance passenger traffic.

20177. With regard to passengers, is the suburban short distance traffic a very large percentage?—There is a large percentage, because Perth and Fremantle represent one-third of the population; then, again, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, where again the suburban traffic is large, and Boulder, represent another one-sixth or one-seventh of the population.

20178. So that those two places have a very considerable local traffic between themselves?—Yes.

20179. How long does it take to get from Coolgardie to Perth?—It is about twenty miles an hour, all stoppages included.

20180. That is a through train?—Yes, from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

20181. What bearing has your system of management of Government control got upon labour questions in this sense; if you have a demand on the part of the men for an increase of ten per cent., or whatever it may be, can the Commissioner decide that?—Yes.

20182. Absolutely?—Yes.

20183. So that he has not to go to the Minister at all?—Not necessarily.

20184. If that results in an increased expenditure which is abnormal in relation to the working of the railway, what would happen to the Commissioner?—I suppose he would be found incapable.

20185. But he cannot be removed, can he?—Yes, he can, for being wanting in capability.

20186. How can he be removed; what is the method of procedure?—It is part of his contract, as far as I know; they have the power of removing him, but, of course; it is a power which it is very difficult to exercise.

20187. But am I not right in saying that in Victoria he is practically appointed for life, except in case of misconduct, and then if he is removed he has to be removed on a vote of both Houses of Parliament?—I could not tell you.

20188. Assuming that you have the other method of control, where the Commissioner is not responsible, have you no cases where any great pressure has been brought to bear on the Commissioner to employ a number of men through political influence?—Yes. There are more or less constant requests for employment, but I should not like to say that it was any form of political dishonesty at all.

20189. Was not that a source of complaint in New South Wales some years ago?—Yes, and not so very long ago, that men have been employed at higher rates, but I do not think that affected the railways.

20190. Before the appointment of the Chief Commissioner in New South Wales, was there not a very strong complaint that political influence resulted in large numbers of men being employed who were not necessarily required for railway work?—I believe that was the case in New South Wales.

20191. That, therefore, is a danger which has to be guarded against in some way?—I think the Commissioner would guard against that danger.

20192. Therefore, the Commissioner must be an exceptionally strong man to withstand any Parliamentary influence?—Not quite. I think his mere position gives him a power of withstanding Parliamentary influence that anyone directly elected by the people can never have.

20193. But you like the present system under which you are working?—Yes, I think so.

20194. You are quite satisfied with that?—Yes. There has been no complaint about it except the one that I have spoken of, namely, that the Commissioner is trying to make too much money.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POE.

20195. I think you said that the public were rather complaining that the Commissioner was making too much money, and that that was practically the only charge they had against him?—Yes.

20196. In such a case, I presume, though the Minister for Railways presents the estimates to Parliament, they are practically framed by the Commissioner, to a great extent?—Yes.

20197. He is an expert, and the Minister for Railways may or may not be an expert?—Yes.

20198. And he depends upon the Commissioner for the preparation of the estimates which he submits to Parliament?—Yes.

20199. Therefore, naturally if he is prepared to support him he must be largely guided in any statement he makes to the House by the estimate which has been given him by the Commissioner?—That is so.

20200. To take an extreme view. Supposing, in the opinion of the Commissioner, he had gone as far as was necessary in the matter of reduction of rates and charges, and that the House was opposed to the view that he took, and that the Minister took the same view as the House; in such a case would there not be great risk of the Commissioner being thrown to the dogs; I mean if the Minister took the same view as the House, that the charges were too high, and that there were undue profits, and the Commissioner said that in his opinion he considered the estimates he had framed were necessary and could not be legitimately reduced?—There are two ways of answering

that. One is that if the Commissioner was wrong in his figures he is an incapable man.

20201. Quite so; but I am assuming that he is a capable man?—The other is that the profits must come out, and if it is laid down that the Commissioner must not earn more than a certain percentage, it would solve itself in that way.

20202. If it is a case of profits only; but there might be other questions upon which the Commissioner expressed strong views, as to the working lines on which he should administer the railways, and those views might be antagonistic to the majority of the House. Is it your experience that in such a case the Minister, if he has confidence in the Commissioner, would support him against the views of the House?—I think so; yes.

20203. That is your opinion?—Yes.

20204. In that way the Minister for Railways acts more as a buffer to protect the Commissioner against the despotic exercise of the powers which the House would possess?—Yes.

20205. And that has been your experience in Western Australia?—Yes.

20206. With regard to the profits themselves, we had before us Mr. Anderson, a gentleman who gave us interesting evidence with regard to Australian railways, and he said that the policy had been that two-thirds of any surplus profits were devoted to the reduction of rates and charges, and one-third to increasing the salaries of the railway employees. Is there anything of that kind in Western Australia?—No.

20207. You do not give any portion of your surplus profits to increasing the salaries of the staff?—No, we have nothing of that sort.

20208. *Chairman.*—I think the statement about giving a portion of the surplus to the staff referred to New Zealand.

20209. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think it applied also to Australia, because Sir Joseph Ward said that the whole of the surplus was given in one year. —(*Witness*).—At any rate, there is nothing of that kind with us.

20210. There is nothing of that kind in the other Colonies?—Not that I know of. May I just point this out? I have seen that point in Mr. Anderson's evidence as published in the papers, and the question of staff there refers to the wages staff; I do not think he was referring to the salaried staff.

20211. Is there anything of that kind in Australia?—Not that I know of.

20212. You do not think there has been any increase given to the wages staff?—I think not. With us we have the Arbitration Act, and of course the men could always claim an increase under that.

20213. With regard to new works, I understand that they are under a different minister entirely?—Entirely.

20214. Are they under a commissioner, under a minister?—No, the engineer-in-chief.

20215. He is responsible for the preparation of the estimates, and they are dealt with by another minister in the House. I suppose there is not likely to be any undue pressure brought to bear upon the Minister by the House itself as regards that; they are not likely to oppose anything, to bring political or any other pressure to bear upon him?—Not as regards the cost of construction, but as to whether a railway should or should not be constructed, the House has to vote the funds, and pass the Bill.

20216. As a rule, does that lead to any friction or differences of opinion?—No, not to any extent. These things are so largely thrashed out beforehand, that they very seldom lead to any friction.

20217. With regard to these cheap railways, that have been constructed at £1,000 to £1,200 per mile. I take it that they are of a temporary nature?—No, I think they are intended to be permanent.

20218. That is a point upon which Mr. Anderson distinctly said that in Victoria, these lines were cheaply constructed with a view to seeing what possibilities there were for traffic, and that subsequently as time went on, it was intended to replace them by more solid lines?—I consider that is not the case here. The 45-lb. rails have carried a very large amount of traffic in Australia, and the sleepers that we use are permanent ones. The only thing is the ballasting and giving more facilities.

20219. In other words, you think the rails as laid are perfectly able to cope with the traffic as it develops in that particular district?—Yes.

20220. *Mr. Acworth.*—What weight do you allow on these rails?—We follow the English rule of so many lbs. per ton in weight. There are twelve tons to a 60-lb. rail.

Weight of rails used on the West Australian railways and speed limits.

20221. Twelve tons per axle, and what on a 45-lb. rail?—Nine.

20222. *Chairman.*—There would be a speed limit, I suppose?—It depends on the speed. On our Southern Railway, 280 miles long, the rails are 46½ lb. to the yard; the heaviest loco axle weighs 10 tons 1 cwt., and the speed of passenger trains, exclusive of timed stops, but not of optional stops, is twenty-five miles an hour on the average. Similarly on 58lb. rails the axle weight is 12 tons 12 cwt., and the speed twenty-four miles on the average in a run of 170 miles.

20223. But there is a speed limit?—We have a speed limit.

20223A. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Is there any public authority in Western Australia similar to the Board of Trade in this country?—No.

The Commissioner and Minister of Public Works the judges of construction, safety, &c., of the lines.

20224. So that any provision as regards safety, speed limits, signalling, and so on, is entirely in the hands of the Commissioner and Minister?—Yes. The safeguard is that the Public Works constructs the railways and the Commissioner has to certify that they are fit for public traffic.

Preferential rates given to Colonial produce.

20225. With regard to rates of produce, do you give preferential rates from inland stations as against seaboard produce?—We always try to do so if we can, but Federation with a possible Inter-State Commission has been called into existence, and it is not quite possible to do it. For instance, there are two coals in use in Western Australia, one from the eastern seaboard and one our own. We used to give a preferential rate to our own, but now the rates of carriage for both are the same.

20226. Is that the policy in Australia generally?—It is a policy which has to be adopted wherever it is drawn attention to.

20227. In Victoria they have a ½*d.* a mile rate for Colonially-produced coal and one penny for sea-borne coal?—I do not think we are allowed to do that now; we are not supposed to; since we were federated we are not allowed to give preference to our own over other Colonial goods.

20228. *Chairman.*—I think that is what you wanted Colonel Poë; you mean where there is a differential rate for sea-borne traffic as compared with inland traffic?—(*Witness*)—As regards export traffic to other parts, to England for example, we would certainly give preferential rates wherever it benefited us.

20229. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do you actually give them in practice?—We do; we have started to give preferential rates with grain.

20230. *Chairman.*—Exported grain?—Exported grain.

20231. Of course, you do not import grain; you grow your own?—We have advanced so rapidly in our industries that we are just overtaking our own consumption of grain, and now we have started to export; our first ship load came away last year.

The West Australian railways treated financially as a whole, the more profitable districts helping to pay for the less prosperous.

20232. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think you spoke of one line which is working really at a loss of about 25 per cent.?—I gave that as an instance.

20233. But I take it that though possibly the railways in Western Australia have barely sufficed to pay interest on capital the policy of the State is to incur a loss in certain directions and let that loss be borne by the earnings of the other lines?—Yes.

20234. If by so doing the development of a particular district would be served?—Yes; the railways are treated as a whole.

20235. The earnings of one make up for losses on another?—Yes.

20236. And you even go further and give that other line any benefit in the way of reduction of rates which you give to the rest of the system?—Certainly.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

Gauges of the Australian railways.

20237. May I ask just two or three questions? The gauge in your State is 3 ft. 6 in.; in the other States I think it is different?—In Queensland it is 3 ft. 6 in., in South Australia 3 ft. 6 in., in New South Wales 4 ft. 8½ in., and in Victoria 5 ft. 3 in.

Each State's railways a separate undertaking.

20238. Have you any junction with any other railways, or are your railways self-contained?—We have none.

20239. Therefore, you have no questions arising as to through rates. When you made the railways for

June 6, 1907.

Mr. C. S. R. Palmer, M.Inst. C.E., Engineer for the Western Australian Government.

the State did you get the land for nothing?—There has been a payment.

20240. But it is nominal?—There has been a heavy payment in certain cases, but there is nothing like what has occurred here.

20241. Going into Perth, for instance?—Going into townships, yes. There has been a great deal of land alienated.

Initial cost of land and promotion expenses.

20242. There were no Parliamentary expenses in connection with the promotion of railways?—No.

20243. A shilling an hour is the minimum wage, you say?—Yes.

20244. Is that determined by Parliament?—No.

20245. By the Commissioner?—No. That is the custom of the country; you cannot get a labourer for less.

20246. There must be some prohibition?—No; it is a case of supply and demand.

Decisions as to rate of pay and hours of employment of workmen subject to court of arbitration.

20247. Is there a maximum day with regard to the number of hours?—Yes, eight.

20248. Then you have the Arbitration Act, which enables the workers to go before a Court or Judge to have a rate raised or reduced, as the case may be, but generally raised, I suppose?—Mostly.

20249. And the railway officials or the railway workmen might go before that Court?—Certainly.

20250. Then the Court or Judge could decide that altogether independently of the Commissioner or Parliament?—Yes.

20251. You said that large reductions had been made in rates, and you added—which I am not certain that the Commissioners quite caught—mainly on industries which require help?—Yes.

Government enforcement of rate reductions to encourage industries where necessary.

20252. Who determined the question as to whether the reduction was to be made?—Perhaps that was not put as clearly as it ought to have been. Generally speaking, reductions have been made, but in addition there have been heavier reductions on certain industries which, in the opinion of the Government, required help, and it is the Government which made the reductions on that particular industry.

20253. I quite understand that if it was done by the Government it was done independently of the Railway Commissioner. The Government indicated, we will say, that a certain trade required assistance, and that trade had a reduction?—Yes.

20254. In Free Trade England that would be impossible, I take it?—I do not know about Protection versus Free Trade.

20255. But that is in the nature of Protection?—Yes.

20256. You said that the complaint against the Commissioner was that he was making too much money out of the railways for the State?—Perhaps I should not have said that the complaint was made of the Commissioner; it was made of the fact.

20257. It is quite natural that he should do the best he could with the railways?—Yes.

20258. You also said that the matter was taken in hand by the Government, so that the question of making too much at once became a political question?—I do not think so, any more than in the case of the Post Office here.

20259. But are not the wages of postal employes apt to become a political question?—Yes; but on the other hand our Arbitration Court takes that away from Parliament.

20260. I daresay you know that the Arbitration Court in New Zealand while it was scaling up wages was very successful, but now that it seeks to scale them down it is a question whether it is to be continued; do you know that?—Yes, possibly.

20261. Then about the rates. I have worked out one rate in Ireland as against your coal rate. 1*s.* 3*d* for five miles and ½*d*. a ton after for a distance of 49 miles brings out 3*s*. 1*d*. You may take that from me. It is simply a question of arithmetic. The Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties Railway carries 49 miles for 2*s*. 6*d*., so that in that case the benefit is on our side?—Yes, but our rates apply all over the State and our wages scale is high.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

THIRTY-SIXTH PUBLIC SITTING.—FRIDAY, JUNE 7TH, 1907.

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminister, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH, and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Chairman.—I think Sir George Holmes has an application to make.

Sir George C. V. Holmes, K.C.V.O., C.B. (*Chairman of the Irish Board of Works*).—Mr. Chairman, we at the Board of Works find great fault with the accuracy of the evidence given before this Commission by Mr. Spence and Mr. M'Farland on behalf of the Lough Swilly Company. I ask permission to put in a rebutting statement, which I hold in my hand, and which covers the whole case.

Chairman.—I think I had better say at once that the Commissioners have looked through the rebutting statement, and they are of opinion that it should not be received. But they are quite willing that a letter, dated the 23rd October, 1903, sent by the Board of Works to the Lough Swilly Railway Company (which has not been brought officially before the Commission) should be printed as part of our proceedings. I think, however, that we must decline to receive any further rebutting evidence with regard to the Lough Swilly Railway Company.

Sir George Holmes.—In that case, sir, I formally tender the letter in question.

The letter was handed in, and is as follows:—

14,747/03.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS,

DUBLIN, *23rd October,* 1903.

SIR,—I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 26th ultimo, received in this office on 29th, two days after a Dublin paper had refused to publish it. The Commissioners consider that the letter is inaccurate in several respects; that you have omitted to mention important facts, and that it is calculated to create prejudice.

You state (1) "that the engines were supplied contrary to the best expert advice." They were supplied upon the advice of Mr. Livesey, the Locomotive Superintendent and Manager of the longest narrow gauge line in Ireland, a gentleman who was trained as a locomotive engineer, and who has had a quarter of a century's experience as Locomotive Superintendent on narrow gauge lines. You describe this gentleman as "only an amateur in locomotive engineering." As you have brought the question of his qualifications forward, the Commissioners would be pleased to learn if you employ the services of a qualified engineer as Locomotive Superintendent. They are informed that the gentleman who serves you in that capacity was the foreman in the engine shed of the Donegal Railway Company, under Mr. Livesey.

You state (2) "That their performance has fully shown the accuracy of this advice, and the folly of disregarding it." The Commissioners, as soon as they became aware that you were having trouble with the locomotives employed Mr. Basil Hope of the Midland Great Western Railway to investigate the matter. His report shows that the condition of the engines was disgraceful, that it was due altogether to the incapacity of some of the drivers, and to the lack of proper supervision and control. The Board have, since the receipt of your letter, conferred with Mr. Hope, who confirms these statements, and explicitly informs the Commissioners that the type of the engines is in no way to blame for their bad performance.

On the 7th July the Board communicated to you the substance of Mr. Hope's report. After quoting numerous instances of gross incompetency on the part of some of the drivers he summarizes the causes of failure in these words:—

"Briefly these three heads are the causes of failure:—

"Firstly. The qualifications of the drivers.
"Secondly. The mode of washing out the boilers.
"Thirdly. The mode of coaling."

Your Company was so impressed by Mr. Hope's statements that you wrote to the Board on the 13th July in the following words:—"On the general question I am to state that my Directors have taken very serious notice of the failures in the Locomotive Department so far as they have been found to be of an avoidable nature." You dismissed one of the drivers who, on the 6th June, with the 6.45 p.m. train, Letterkenny to Burtonport, Engine No. 3, having forgotten to take water at Letterkenny, after an hour's shunting, had to stop between Kilmacrennan and Creeslough to bucket water into his tanks, and who, two days subsequently, with the same engine and train, melted out his fusible plugs, showing that he had allowed his furnace crown to become bare of water. On the other hand you retained in your service another driver who failed to get up steam on the 18th June, and who on the 22nd of that month melted both his fusible plugs when driving No. 2 engine with the 7.50 a.m. train from Burtonport to Letterkenny. The first driver referred to had been dismissed from the Cavan and Leitrim Railway for a similar offence, and nevertheless with a full knowledge of the facts that he had been dismissed for a fault, you had taken him into your service and entrusted the lives of your passengers and the safety of property, confided to your care by the State, to his safe keeping. It is somewhat astonishing, in the face of these facts, and of the refusal of Mr. Hope to modify his opinion as to the causes of failure, that you should continue to ascribe the bad performances of the engines to other than the true causes.

You have been good enough to forward to the Board extracts of Mr. Malcolm's recent reports on the condition and the unsuitability of the engines. I am to inquire whether you placed before that gentleman the conclusions at which Mr. Hope had arrived; whether you informed him of the incompetence of the drivers above referred to, and whether you further informed him that you had taken into your employ two other men dismissed from the Donegal Railway for incompetence. One of these men understood his duties so imperfectly that you had to dismiss him for hooking off his engine and leaving his train standing on a bank while he went for water.

The Commissioners will be glad to learn if you consider that the engines have had a fair trial and fair treatment in the hands of drivers such as these, and they also wish to know if you can quote any instances of the engines having failed to do their work when in proper condition, in the hands of competent drivers, and supplied with good coal. Have they ever, under such conditions, arrived at Creeslough short of water,

June 7, 1907.

Letter dated 23rdOct.,1903, sent by the Irish Board of Works to the Lough Swilly Railway Co.

Investigation by Mr. Basil Hope, M.G.W. Railway.

The suitability of the engines supplied to work the Burtonport line and the causes of failures.

June 7, 1907.

Letter dated 23rd Oct., 1903, sent by the Irish Board of Works to the Lough Swilly Railway Co.

The suitability of the engines supplied to work the Burtonport line, and the causes of the failures.

or at their destinations short of water, or of fuel? If so, will you be good enough to give instances and dates. When the engines are allowed to leak at every tube end, and when you provide coal, such as the Chairman of this Board, Mr. Batchen, and Mr. Robertson saw at Pennyburn and Burtonport on their recent visit, it is not to be wondered at if they run short of both fuel and water.

In connection with the question of fuel, I am to inform you that Mr. Basil Hope did not suggest that bags of coal should be kept at roadside stations to replenish the bunkers. What he did suggest was, that the coal at terminal stations should be kept in bags, because the quality you supplied was so inferior that when kept, as at present, in bulk, all the good fuel was picked out by the drivers who first served themselves, and little but slack and dross was left for those who came after them. The suggestion that you should keep coal in bags in roadside stations was made by this Board to meet the difficulties due to the condition of the locomotives as an alternative to the method adopted by you of running a wagon of coal, often in the rear of the train, and relying on the assistance of your passengers to bring the fuel to the engines.

You charge the Board with trying to force an interpretation on a portion of Mr. Malcolm's report by publishing a "truncated" sentence in which he admits that the line from Letterkenny to Burtonport could be worked by tank engines, and goes on to state his preference for tender locomotives, but you appear to forget that there was no necessity for the Board to call your attention to this preference because it was communicated by Mr. Malcolm to yourselves. The object of the Commissioners was to show you that Mr. Malcolm admitted to them that the line could be worked by tank engines, and this admission having been made, they saw no further reason for disregarding the advice given to them by a Locomotive Superintendent and Railway Manager so experienced in the working of light railways as Mr. Livesey. The interpretation which you have forced on Mr. Malcolm's statement, that it was to be taken in the same sense as an admission that the line could be worked by horses, is contradicted by the context, and is, moreover, one which the Board, entertaining as they do the highest respect for Mr. Malcolm, cannot insult him by adopting.

The Board were informed, independently, by both their representatives at the Conference that Mr. Malcolm's views on the type of engine were largely determined by the consideration that it was desirable to run the engines right through from Londonderry to Burtonport, and *vice versa*, and in his letter to this Board Mr. Malcolm himself uses the following words:—

> "I may mention that when considering this matter I have not overlooked the fact that for the efficient and economical working of the line it will be necessary to use engines capable of running through from Burtonport to Londonderry, a distance of seventy-four miles."

But your Directors must be aware that, however desirable you may consider it, from the point of view of the convenient working of the line, to use the Burtonport engines between Londonderry and Letterkenny, it is not possible to do so with due regard to the safety of the public, because the Letterkenny line is laid with rails too light to admit of such heavy engines passing over them continually. Furthermore, even if the rails of this line were of the same section as those on the Burtonport line, you could not, under the agreement with the Treasury, use the engines belonging to the latter line over your own system. This difficulty could only be met by your company providing additional engines suitable for interchanging, and in number proportionate to the increased mileage, for assuredly you could not expect the State to provide you with hauling power over your own system. A similar remark applies to passenger carriages and other rolling stock. If there is to be interchange of rolling stock you must contribute your proportionate quota, a fact which you appear to have lost sight of in recent correspondence.

Before leaving the subject of the locomotives I am to refer to your statement that the tender engines recommended by you could have been obtained at a cost of only £5 each in excess of the price ultimately paid by the Board for those supplied by them. The Commissioners were at a loss to understand on what figure you could have based such a remarkable statement. They have, however, accidentally discovered that, under the pretext of asking their contractors to quote for an extra engine of the same type as those supplied for the Burtonport line, you obtained a quotation by making use of the Board's name. The correspondence has been sent to them. I am to inform you that the figure given to you is not even approximately the same as that paid by the Board, though no doubt the Commissioners would have to pay the figure quoted if they were now to order a single engine. Hence you have been led into a serious error and your deductions are entirely wrong. I am also to remind you that the Board were advised that the type of engine recommended by you would have been unsafe for use on the Burtonport line, unless a leading bogey were fitted at considerable extra cost. The true figures were communicated to you in the Board's letter of the 29th August, 1901. The difference in cost between the tank and tender types for four engines would have amounted to, not £20, but £1,344.

In regard to your strictures on the quality of the material used in the engines, I am to inform you that the Board's Inspector, who carefully tested all the materials used, reports that everything was of the best quality. The tyres, of which you cannot find the maker's name, were manufactured by the eminent firm of John Brown and Company, of Sheffield, and if you look a little more closely you will probably find the name partially concealed by paint. The draw pins which broke were, at your request, made of the very best iron. The Commissioners are not surprised at drawpins breaking when some of the engines are in the care of drivers who charge through gates at level crossings, who overrun their stations, knock out the ends of carriage and engine sheds, and even demolish heavy stops.

The Commissioners are perfectly satisfied with the capacity of Messrs. Barclay, Sons, and Co., Limited, the contractors for the locomotives. Before placing the order with that firm they made ample inquiries, and received strong recommendation in their favour from some of the leading Scotch railway companies.

As to the annual mileage, viz., 15,000, which you say is sufficient for narrow gauge engines, I am to inform you that on the Donegal line, under the management of a skilled locomotive superintendent, with drivers who know their business and who are carefully supervised, several engines have accomplished with perfect success considerably over 30,000 miles per annum, and in one case as much as 37,776. These figures are exclusive of shunting, ballasting, and piloting. The average *train* miles for the four years 1899 to 1902 of the six engines less than 22 years old which had been running throughout that period were—

Engine,	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7	No. 8	No. 9
Train miles,	19310	22877	29189	22568	27583	21834

It is not necessary further to labour this point, as the Board have already requested you to furnish them with full information on the subject of the traffic and the suitability of the time tables, in order that they may be enabled to arrive at a fair conclusion. The Board will require to know, amongst other things, if, in the opinion of your directors, the third train per day, in each direction, will be made permanent.

With reference to your remarks relating to the Board's urgent recommendations to your directors to put on the third train per day in each direction, I am to state that you apparently endeavour to raise a point against the Board by "truncating" one of the sentences in their letter to you of the 21st ultimo. Had you published the sentence in full you would have failed to make your point against this Department.

In the same paragraph of your letter you resort to still more questionable methods of effecting the same object, for you state that your company received about the time of the opening of the line a time-table prepared by the Board's "railway experts," which, amongst other objectionable features, would have involved a daily collision between trains travelling in opposite directions. I am to state positively that your company neither asked for nor received any such document. On probing the matter the Board have ascertained that one of your employees, in order to assist himself in the preparation of a time-table, privately asked the Board's railway engineer to lend him a copy of a time-table which had been prepared some years ago, not for the purpose of working the line, but of forming an estimate of the amount of rolling stock

that would be required in certain assumptions. You have consequently made use of the good nature and desire to assist a member of your staff of one of the Board's employees in order to create prejudice against the Department. Apart from the above circumstance, you apparently forget that the Burtonport line is equipped with the electric block system, and that a collision is not possible unless your drivers run their engines without the train staff, an irregularity which I am to remind you one of the drivers has recently been guilty of, as has been pointed out to you in the Board's letter of the 5th ult. On the occasion in question the driver of the 1.10 p.m. up train from Burtonport started his train from Churchill Station without taking the staff, and upon reaching Foxhall he sent his fireman back for the staff, while he himself proceeded to work the train singlehanded into Letterkenny. The fireman was obliged to walk into Letterkenny with the staff, with the consequence that the trains were delayed for two hours.

Your statement that an urgent letter of your Directors on the subject of the sufficiency of rolling stock was not replied to for five months is perfectly true. During the intervening months the Commissioners were collecting information from other narrow gauge railways in Ireland for which they were dependent on the courtesy of the officials of those lines. I am to point out that you have been engaged, by your own admission, for the last three-and-a-half months in making similar inquiries, and that your information is not yet complete. Apart, however, from this consideration the Commissioners are of opinion that your Directors are hardly entitled to make a complaint as to delay in answering correspondence, seeing that at the date on which your letter was published no less than twenty-four letters of the Board to you remained unanswered (notwithstanding repeated reminders), some of them dating as far back as May, 1902.

On the subject of the delay in watering engines and your statement that on the 28th February, 1899, your former general manager wrote to Mr. Radcliff strongly objecting to the use of four-inch stand-pipes (which had been fixed on by your company), and demanding that they should be made six-inch, you omitted to mention that Mr. Radcliff in his reply pointed out that it was then too late to make alterations, as all documents were in the contractor's hands. Your chairman's statement that it takes on the average fifteen minutes to water the engines is not borne out by the report of our agent on the line, who has been instructed to inquire carefully into this question. He reports on the 2nd inst. that he has never observed that more than from four to seven minutes were spent in watering, and that sometimes it can be done in three minutes. In this connection I am to refer to your challenge of the accuracy of our inspector's report on the abundant supply of water in the engine tanks both on arriving at Creeslough and Burtonport on the occasion of his recent visit, and to inform you that you are inaccurate in stating that he failed to take account of the height of the feed pipes, etc., that on the contrary, he took full account of all those factors, and that his original statement was perfectly accurate.

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Letter dated 23rd Oct., 1903, sent by the Irish Board of Works to the Lough Swilly Railway Co.

Before concluding I am to refer to your statement that "as regards the design and construction of the "railway, the question of this company's responsi- "bility for the plans and specification, and the ex- "tent to which they were departed from in some cases "and not in others, and the reasons why, will shortly "form the subject of an arbitration *asked for by us* "in accordance with the terms of the Treasury agree- "ment," and to inform you that the Board have not, so far, received any request whatever for arbitration from your Directors. It is true that they offered you arbitration on certain limited matters, to which offer they have not yet received a reply. The Board must not be taken as assenting to the admissibility of arbitration until they learn definitely from you the points on which you seek arbitration. On this subject I am to refer to the Board's letter of the 31st July, 1903, in which it was stated that your company must specify the points that they wish brought before the arbitrator, and that they should not be allowed to delay doing so indefinitely.

Question of the design and construction generally of the Burtonport Railway.

While the Commissioners have no desire to prolong this controversy in the public Press, I am directed to state that they give you full permission to publish this letter provided it appears *in extenso*, if your directors are of opinion that it will serve their interests to do so, and they have so informed all those newspapers which published your letter of the 26th ultimo.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

H. WILLIAMS,

Secretary.

The Secretary,
Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway
Company, Londonderry.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL, B.L., M.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

20262. You are a member of Parliament?—Yes.

20263. And Chairman of the Tralee and Dingle Railway?—Yes.

20264. What particular trade or industry do you represent this morning before this Commission?—I am not myself, unfortunately, engaged in any industry, but the railway which runs from Tralee to Dingle passes through a district which is engaged largely in the fishing industry, and of course we have the ordinary trade of most agricultural countries. We have cattle, sheep, and pigs; we export them very largely. In addition, of course, we have eggs, and poultry is a very important industry; we export them to English markets—Liverpool, London. But the main industry is the fishing, and that is the one which of course is most largely concerned with railway fares.

20265. Now, this little Tralee and Dingle Railway, how long has it been open?—It was opened in 1891.

20266. Before it was opened how was this fish business dealt with?—Before the opening of this railway the fishing industry could not really be developed at all, and no fresh fish could properly be sent to the English market.

20267. What was the nearest railway station?—The nearest railway station was Tralee, a distance of over 32 miles, and it was impossible to carry fish by road.

20268. This little railway has really developed the fishing industry?—Naturally it has done a great deal, but then we had a long way ahead to start.

20269. Have you formed any opinion as to the benefit, as far as reduction in cost was concerned, in dealing with traffic from this district since the railway was opened?—Reduction in cost of what?

Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, B.L., M.P., Chairman of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway.

20270. Of transit by rail as compared with road?—Well, taking the flour, meal, and other articles of consumption in the district that had to be taken on to Dingle and Castlegregory, of course they are brought considerably cheaper by rail now than they formerly were by road.

Reduction in cost of conveyance of goods between Dingle and Tralee since opening of railway.

20271. Have you any figures?—For flour stuffs from Tralee to Dingle, before our railway was opened, the cost was £1 per ton; now it is, roughly, one-fourth of that. Fresh mackerel used to be sometimes taken at the same rate; now it is 12*s.* 5*d.* per ton, and of course it has the advantage of being delivered earlier in the English market—it makes a difference of half a day or a day.

20272. And it means getting better prices for the article?—Certainly. Then the salt for the curing of the fish is also brought over the railway.

20273. Where is the curing done?—Locally. We have in Dingle and the district one-seventh of all the fishermen engaged in all Ireland. When I say engaged in Dingle and district I mean the peninsula of Dingle. We have one-seventh of all the fishermen—of all the different classes of men engaged in the fishing industry engaged in that coast district.

Extent of the fishing industry of Dingle peninsula.

20274. *Mr. Acworth.*—Would you give the numbers?—I can get the numbers for you possibly more accurately from the returns the Fishery Board has.

20275. Could you give it roughly—when you say one-seventh, one-seventh of what?—The

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Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, B.L., M.P., Chairman of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway.

total of the whole number of fishermen in Ireland is, I believe, more than 20,000, and I should say we have in that district nearly 2,500.

Trade with French and English fish markets opened up.

20276. *Chairman.*—Of course, all that employment given to these people, and, in fact, all that industry, has been developed by the construction of that railway?—Considerably so; before the railway came they used to cure the fish and send it off by steamer. Now they cure also, but we send off a considerable share of the fish fresh to the French and English markets; before the railway was opened we could not do that.

20277. Before the railway was opened that was impossible?—Impossible.

20278. How did you deal with the passengers?—Before the railway passengers were very rare, especially in the winter period of the year. It meant driving on an open car thirty miles, so that very few would travel. In addition, of course, the fare was very high. Now it is one-quarter of what it was then, and of course there are considerable advantages in other respects.

Development of passenger traffic in the district.

20279. Do you issue cheap tickets in addition to the ordinary tickets on that railway?—Oh, yes, we have market fares three days in the week, and in addition, during the summer months, we give exceedingly cheap fares to Castlegregory, which is not only a fishing town, but a sea-bathing town with a lake fishing beside it—trout-fishing. We issue tickets at 8*d.* return for sixteen miles—that is to say thirty-two miles the double journey—a farthing per mile.

20280. Do you say that markets are held on three days a week?—Yes—Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

20281. When did you say the railway was opened?—In March, 1891.

Length of railway.

20282. What is the length?—There is a junction at Camp. The total distance from Tralee to Dingle is thirty-one miles, and there is a little junction of six miles—about thirty-seven and a half miles altogether.

20283. That is the total length of the railway?—That is the total length of the railway.

Guaranteed capital of line and its allocation between the baronies.

20284. Do you remember what the total capital of the railway was?—This is a guaranteed line; some of the baronies of the county had to guarantee the capital before the line was built. The guaranteed capital was £120,000.

20285. Will you just explain, in order to get it clear on the notes, how that capital is allocated to the different districts?—Between the different baronies; Corkaguiny (that is, of course, the barony through which the line runs) contributed £60,000, or one-half of the whole; Trughenackmy, £39,000; Clanmaurice, £15,000; and Tralee Urban District, £6,000—all paying interest at 4 per cent.

Liability of the baronies.

20286. Are these guaranteed areas liable for the loss on working?—Yes; in addition to the rating for the interest on £120,000, they are also liable for any deficiency per year.

Cost per mile for the construction and equipment of the railway.

20287. What was the average cost per mile?—The average cost per mile in our line (that is, including all expenses, buildings, rolling stock, and all), was £2,400, which, of course, means that the line must be very imperfectly laid.

20288. Are you right about that figure?—I got it from the engineer—the gentleman who is our engineer at the present time, and who was also engineer at the time the line was being promoted.

20289. I have another figure here?—I have tried my best to get the correct information—it is £2,700.

20290. You said £2,400?—I beg your pardon—it is £2,700.

20291. That seems a very low price?—It does. I do not think it would be regarded as too low if the condition of the line after it was built were taken into account.

20292. Did the Government give any free grant to that railway?—No; the Government gave no free grant.

Government's aid to the railway.

20293. What was the Government's assistance then—just say what it was?—We had a guaranteed capital of £120,000, and half of that, or, we will say, 2 per cent. on the £120,000, was to be borne by the rates of the guaranteeing baronies, and the 2 per cent. on the £120,000 was to be borne by the Exchequer—£2,400 a year by the baronies and £2,400 a year by the Exchequer. The baronies may be called upon for any amount in addition to that £2,400. You will see that after the Act of 1895——

20294. One minute. Was this railway built under the Tramways Act?—Under the Tramways Act of 1883.

20295. Not under the Light Railways Act?—No; it was before that; we were unfortunately too early. Under the Act of 1895 (which gave certain enabling powers to districts such as ours, where the line was not paying, and the guaranteeing areas had to find more than the interest) we got the Government to redeem their annuity of £2,400 at thirty-three and one-third years' purchase, and they paid us £80,000, which we placed to the redemption of capital, and thus our guaranteed capital then stood at £40,000 instead of, as previously, at £120,000. We undoubtedly made a saving—we paid 4 per cent. then on £40,000 instead of 2 per cent. on £120,000, so that we made a saving of about £800 a year on that particular transaction, and the Government also made something, because Consols were then pretty high—about 112.

20296. That went to the benefit of the baronies?—That went to the benefit of the baronies.

20297. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—When was that carried out?—In 1897 or 1898.

20298. *Chairman.*—You have referred to the very small cost per mile of this railway. I suppose it was not very well constructed, was it?—No, that is unfortunately the cause of accidents that have occurred, and of the great outlay in the upkeep of the line since it has been taken over by the county authorities. We believe—in fact, it has been reported by Board of Trade officers—that the accident was entirely due to the original faulty construction.

20299. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is the Camp accident?—The Camp accident.

20300. *Chairman.*—I suppose a good part of that railway was laid on the public road?—Sixteen miles of the whole length—nearly half—was laid down the public roads.

20301. Simply sleepers laid down and rails put on them?—Yes; we have done great execution amongst the hens and poultry.

20302. Were they Baltic sleepers?—I could not say that. I am told plain wood sleepers, but I cannot speak personally as to that.

20303. What are the worst gradients?—I think our line—it is rather hard to advertise the fact here, because we have a district which, if properly supplied by railways, would be one of the most interesting in the British Isles at the present day, so far as scenery, and antiquities, and everything else is concerned; still, we have to advertise the truth, and I think the gradients are absolutely the worst in the United Kingdom.

20304. What is the worst gradient?—The worst is put down at one in thirty, but I think part is under one in thirty, and that continues for three and a half miles—that is the Camp gradient—and at the end of the gradient there is a very high bridge passing over one of the mountain gorges, and the curve on that bridge is a three-chain curve. It was there the famous and disastrous accident occurred in 1893.

20305. Were there many lives lost?—There were three lives lost, and a couple of men very seriously injured, and any amount of damage done to stock on travelling the line.

20306. And that, after investigation was found to be attributable to the faulty construction originally of the railway?—Yes.

20307. Of course the faulty construction and insufficient rolling stock in the beginning has landed you in a very large expense, I suppose, in keeping the road up?—An exceedingly large expense. Of course after this accident it was necessary to do everything in our power to keep the rolling stock, engines, and permanent way in the best possible condition so as to ensure against a further accident, and the county authorities who are now managing the line (it is under the control of the County Council) have spent on the line a net amount—not including the Government grant—of £110,000.

20308. What did the Camp accident cost you?—It cost a considerable amount. We paid £5,000 for compensation alone to those parties who were injured, and for cattle, pigs, flour, and other articles destroyed; but it cost us fully £5,000 more before we had the carriages, engines, etc., put right.

20309. Well on to £10,000?—Well on to £10,000.

20310. In addition, you say you spent out of revenue £110,000 in necessary improvements?—Absolutely necessary.

20311. Necessary improvements, I mean, in the interests of safety?—Yes; almost the amount of the original capital of the line.

20312. Just tell us, if you can, the rates paid in the barony for this Dingle Railway. You might as well give us the figures since the opening—have you got them there?—Yes. The rate—that is, the charges paid by the barony of Corkaguiny in their annual rate—in 1891, was 1*s.* 3·99*d.*

20313. That is 1*s.* 4*d.*, roughly?—Roughly 1*s.* 4*d.* In 1892 is was 2*s.* 3½*d.*; in 1893 it was 2*s* 5½*d.*; in 1894 (that was after the accident) it was 3*s.* 10½*d.*; in 1895 it was 3*s.* 6½*d.*; in 1896 it was 2*s.* 3¾*d.*; in 1897 it was 1*s.* 5¼*d.*; in 1898 it was 2*s.* 1½*d.*; in 1899 it was 1*s.* 7¾*d.*; in 1900 it was 2*s.* 10½*d.*; in 1901 it was 9½*d.*; in 1902 it was 10¾*d.*; in 1903 it was 1*s.* 10¾*d.*; in 1904 it was 1*s.* 6½*d.*; in 1905 is was 1*s.* 11*d.*; in 1906 it was 2*s.*; and in 1907—which you have not got there, but which I know now, because the rate has been struck—it is 4¼*d.*

20314. I see it was brought down in 1901 from 2*s.* 10½*d.* to 9½*d.*?—That was not due to any saving in the railway expenses; there was an old balance of a Treasury grant which the county then got of £2,500, and that was allocated that particular year to the relief of the rates.

20315. In 1902 it was also very low—10¾*d.*?—Yes; that was due to the amalgamation of the Great Southern Railway and the Waterford and Limerick. We got a refund of £33,000 as our part of the bargain—the county authorities did. They had been guaranteeing this line for a considerable number of years, and had paid this amount, and this line got its part of this refund, reducing the rate to 10*d.*

20316. I think you told us just now that after the Camp accident a Board of Trade Inquiry was held?—Yes.

20317. What recommendations, do you remember, did they make in connection with the line?—They made a number of recommendations. Major Marindin and Judge Adams held the Inquiry.

20318. Was he an Irish judge?—A County Court Judge in Limerick. They recommended the expenditure of £12,800 as absolutely necessary, and immediately necessary, to alter curves and gradients. We are making some of these now. We have got a grant of £23,000 recently. They also spoke with regard to Glenagalt, where this gradient of one in thirty continues for three and a half miles. Mr. Barton, who spoke at the time——

20319. Who is he?—I think he was an engineer who was with those gentlemen at the time.

20320. Quite right?—He, reporting on this, said—"It would effect a saving of coal and wear in every train, and would no doubt be a great improvement and facilitate regularity in all weather"; and he estimated the cost as £22,000, and we believe that this tunnel is absolutely necessary in order to make the line safe, or to enable us to work the line cheaply.

20321. That is a tunnel in substitution of the excessive gradient?—Of the excessive gradient.

20322. And that has not been carried out, of course?—No; the English Treasury would not give us the money.

20323. You have applied to them?—Oh, several times; it is not for want of applying that we have not got it.

20324. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Where did the grant of £23,000 come from?—That did not touch the tunnel; that is from Irish money, not from the Treasury; the Treasury had nothing to do with it—it is from the Development Grant.

20325. *Chairman.*—I think there is a celebrated judge on your Bench in Ireland who has given an opinion on this question?—He spoke very strongly.

20326. That would be in connection with the accident?—Yes. An action was taken by those men who were injured for the recovery of damages, and he spoke pretty strongly of the Board of Trade.

20327. *Lord Pirrie.*—Of the Board of Trade?—Of the Board of Trade, yes.

20328. *Chairman.*—Just read what he did say?—This is just an extract from what he said:—"The law provides a certain inspection of railways, and the regulations of the Board of Trade impose certain restraints on the construction of railways, and require certain conditions to be satisfied, and it is quite clear that either from the defective inspection of the Board of Trade or want of vigilance in the supervision of construction of that line, this great loss has fallen on the county." Of course, this district is an extremely congested and poor, mountainous district, and these heavy rates in a rich district, of course, would not represent the same relative burden as they do in a poor district such as this. He further said, "It is a terrible thing to think of the great burden this line has cast on the barony through which this railway passes—£2,500" (of course this was a half-year's levy) "to be levied upon such a poor class of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits—persons really, I am sure, whose humble condition and the hardest degree of self-denial and industry represents scarcely a margin for existence."

Hardships entailed on the taxpayers by reason of the heavy railway charge.

20329. That is very strong language, but I suppose it was justified at the time?—He knew the district.

20330. I do not think we need refer to the other opinions that you quote here?—No.

20331. These ratepayers that the Judge refers to have been paying these rates now for the last fifteen years?—Yes; the rates which I mentioned a little while ago.

20332. Of course, you have told us that they have to pay also any loss on working expenses; but, as a matter of fact, have there been any losses?—Oh, yes, certainly—unfortunately, every year from the beginning.

Annual loss on working expenses since opening of Tralee and Dingle line.

20333. But now, recently?—Yes. I have here a table showing the losses from 1900 to 1906. It is at page 7.

20334. I will come to that later—I have overlooked that. Of course, as Chairman of the railway you know all about it and the circumstances of the district. Is it your opinion that it is impossible to make that line pay except those gradients are altered?—I am perfectly positive of that; I have got all the expert evidence it is possible to get.

Improvements in construction a necessity to the railway paying.

20335. And you further say, I suppose, that it is practically impossible for the district to raise the money?—Oh, impossible; we are paying £20,000 a year for railways and harbours.

20336. Now?—At the present moment. Of course we get a refund out of the local taxation account, The county pays, roughly, an average of 1*s.* in the pound for the railways of the county, but then, of course, that is not evenly distributed—the parts adjoining the sea pay more.

Inability of the district to provide the money necessary for improvements.

20337. The poorer pay the larger percentage?—And they can least afford it.

20338. I gather it would be a great benefit to the district and the industries of the district if this money could be found for making the tunnel, and to obviate the expense of working the railways over these steep gradients?—I believe it would be of the greatest possible advantage to the district. Dingle has two great industries, as I have said—its cattle fairs are the largest, certainly, in Kerry, and they are a splendid breed of cattle; they thrive very well in all the better lands of the county, and when we try to bring their cattle on fair days, we have the greatest possible difficulty—our trains must necessarily be small, passing over this high gradient, and we cannot accommodate the buyers. Then there is the fish—we have to go very slowly, and have to take small loads; our load is very limited. The result is, of course, that these men are not nearly so well accommodated in the carriage of their fish as they would be if the line were of a different gradient.

Development of industries retarded owing to the present condition of the line.

20339. Would you just tell us what you referred to a moment ago with reference to the receipts and expenditure of the railway just over the last three or four years?—Yes; these are half-yearly receipts, taking 1900 as the first—they are the half-yearly receipts. Of course each half-year is practically the same as the next half-year.

20340. Which half-year have you taken?—The December half-year.

20341. Then we understand that the receipts and expenditure you are now going to mention are for the half-years ending December in each year?—Yes. In 1900 the receipts were £3,663.

Receipts and expenditure for years 1900 and 1903.

20342. Why did you not give the figures for the year?—There is really no difference between them.

20343. Shall we assume that the deficit is £2,000?—Practically double it.

20344. Then as long as we know that you need not give the figure?—The receipts were £3,663, the expenditure, £6,066, and the deficit, £2,403.

20345. Now let us go to 1903?—In 1903 the receipts were £4,160, the expenditure, £7,019, and the deficit, £2,859.

June 7, 1907.

Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, B.L., M.P., Chairman of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway

Receipts and expenditure for years 1904 and 1906.

20346. Now take the year of the accident?—The accident was previous to all these years.

20347. Oh yes, I see—you are quite right. Take 1904, then?—The receipts for the half-year were £4,343, the expenditure, £8,339, and the deficit for the half-year £3,995.

20348. Now take the last year?—In the last year—1906—the receipts were £4,441, the expenditure, £5,298, and the deficit, £856 for the half-year.

20349. Then that seems to have been the best half-year you have had?—Well, it is the best in the matter of expenditure very considerably, of course. It is slightly better in receipts, but scarcely appreciably better.

20350. But it has the largest receipts?—Naturally the largest receipts from the beginning.

20351. And the smallest expenditure?—Yes.

Train accident on a steep gradient in year 1907.

20352. I see you have had an accident in 1907—what was that?—We had an accident just in one of those same gradients—those 1 in 30 gradients. It is a part of the line where we have only nine curves passing over a gradient of 1 in 30, and also ending in a bridge.

20353. That is where the accident happened?—The brake-rod broke, and immediately the train went down. Fortunately there were no passengers.

Decreased deficit on working in 1906 alleged to be due to control exercised by the County Council over the management of the line.

20354. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is that on the road?—No; it is not. I might mention with regard to the deficit of 1906, it is, of course, considerably less than it was in any previous year. That is due largely to the control exercised by the County Council. It was then that it really got into county control, and expenditure was considerably reduced; men were sent to do something else, and other expenditure was cut down.

20355. But not at the expense of the efficiency?—No; there was an increase in efficiency, and a decrease in expenditure.

20356. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Comparing the table on page 4 with the table on page 7, I see that in 1906, the year in which the deficit was so small, the rate of the barony was 2*s.*?—Yes; I will explain that. Of course you will understand that the rates are estimates for the current year, and are based on the previous year.

20357. And that, perhaps also accounts for the very small rate in the current year?—Yes.

20358. *Mr. Acworth.*—And the 4½*d.* for 1907 is based on the large reduction in the expenditure of 1906?—Exactly.

Heavy payments of railway guaranteed by Kerry county.

20359. *Chairman.*—I think we have heard sufficient about the particular railway with which you are connected. Now two or three general questions about the railways in the County of Kerry. I think you are of opinion that the ratepayers of Kerry have done considerably more than ratepayers in other counties in connection with these railways?—I think so, and I think the returns of the Board of Trade show that.

Railways a necessity for proper development.

20360. Still, you are of opinion that it has been a great boon and a great advantage to the district to have the railways?—I believe that any country that wants to progress must do all in its power to get facilities of this kind, and even though we have had to pay for railways, we believe they are worth it, though we would rather somebody else paid.

£20,000, or one-third of the total railway guarantees for Ireland (excluding Co. Cork), paid by Kerry in 1906.

20361. What is the total amount that ratepayers of the County Kerry have had to pay?—The gross for the last year I have been able to get is, roughly, about £20,000.

20362. That is to say, the ratepayers of the County Kerry?—They get a refund from the local taxation account, of course. Under the Local Government Act of 1898, wherever the rates on a particular barony exceed 6*d.* in the pound for these purposes, one-half that excess is refunded by the Treasury to the County Authorities, so that out of £20,000 gross levy we get back from £5,000 to £6,000 per annum.

20363. That leaves £14,000 or £15,000 about?—Yes.

20364. That is in your county alone?—In my county alone.

20365. What is it in the whole of Ireland?—Cork is, of course, a very large and rich county, with a high population, but if you exclude Cork the gross total for the whole of Ireland is only £60,000, and our gross total, as I have said, is £20,000.

20366. That is to say, excluding Cork and taking all the other counties in Ireland, the gross amount is £60,000?—That is roughly, of course.

20367. As compared with the £20,000 in the County Kerry?—Yes, that is right.

20368. What was the total amount of railway guarantees in Ireland in 1899?—In 1899 the total amount of railway guarantees, up to 1899, was £1,068,910. That was the total amount paid out of the rates for railway guarantees, and Kerry had paid up to the same year out of its rates £189,157, or one-sixth of the total for all Ireland. Taking the individual year, the amount paid for all Ireland for 1898 (the last year given in the return was £99,539, and Kerry paid in that year £19,103, or about one-fifth of the whole.

20369. Just mention so as to get it on the notes the free grants as well as the 2 per cent. interest on the guarantees given to the various railways that you have taken out. Take first the Downpatrick and Ardglass?—The free grant in that case was £29,980. That I have got from the returns.

20370. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think Mr. O'Donnell has made a mistake in saying that the guarantees were in respect of all these railways mentioned?—Did I say that?

20371. Yes, you say free grants as well as 2 per cent. interest?—I do not think I could have said that. Some guarantees were given, but I do not think for all. I did not mean that the guarantee was for all. In the case of the Downpatrick and Ardglass, the free grant was £29,980; in the case of the Baltimore and Skibbereen, £56,700; the Bantry free grant was £14,940; the Donegal and Killybegs, £121,436; the Stranorlar and Glenties, £123,886; the Killorglin and Valentia, £85,000; the Headford and Kenmare, £49,984; the Ballina and Killala, £44,000; the Westport and Mallaranny, £131,400; the Achill Extension, £72,578; the Galway and Clifden, £264,600 (as usual Connaught comes off well); the Collooney and Swinford, and the Claremorris and Swinford, £146,042; and Expenses, etc., £7,321—making a total of £1,147,867.

20372. *Mr. Acworth.*—These are outside Kerry?—Oh, no; there are in Kerry the Killorglin and Valentia, and the Headford and Kenmare.

20373. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Perhaps Mr. O'Donnell would now give the lines on which there is a Treasury contribution?—The Donegal and Killybegs, £1,000; the Stranorlar and Glenties, £1,000; the Headford and Kenmare, £60,000; the Killorglin and Valentia, £70,000; the Collooney and Swinford, £80,000; and the Claremorris and Swinford, £40,000. These are in addition to the free grant. I might explain that the interest on the £70,000, the capital of these lines, was framed at a certain amount; the Government, in addition to giving a free grant, said, "We will give interest at 2 per cent. on a certain capital," fixing the capital for the Killorglin and Valentia at £70,000.

20374. *Mr. Acworth.*—That was one of the Balfour lines?—There is no Treasury contribution at all in that.

20375. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The note at the bottom of page 8 of your proof was that a free grant was given as well as the 2 per cent. to all railways. That is the point I wanted to make clear?—Not to all of them.

20376. *Chairman.*—I do not know whether it is necessary to go into this next paper. I think we will leave that. Now we come to another general question which I will put to you. Have you considered the question which we have heard so much about—the nationalisation of railways in Ireland?—Might I, before we pass to that, deal with a question which we would regard in Kerry as getting rid of our guarantee under the Act of 1895, as we have done with the Dingle Railway. I deal with it shortly in page 10. We are paying a guarantee of 2 per cent. on the Headford and Kenmare line of £105,000, and the Treasury is also paying a guarantee, we are also paying a guarantee of 2 per cent. on £70,000 in the case of the Killorglin and Valentia line, and we believe by arrangement with the Great Southern, and with the Treasury, we could capitalise and make a saving each year of roughly, I calculate, about £1,100 to the county.

20377. How do you suggest that that should be done?—Of course, the Great Southern and Western Railway is the company to which the county pays this interest at the present moment. We, the county, guarantee interest at 2 per cent. on £175,000 to the Great Southern in Kerry, and the Treasury also gives an annual sum of 2 per cent. interest on the same amount. That is £3,500 from the county, and £3,500 from the Treasury per annum to the Great Southern; and if that were capitalised at the number of years in the Act it would mean really about £116,000, which the Great Southern would be expected to take instead

of the annual amount they get of £7,000. That would leave to the county roughly about £60,000 to pay interest on. That would be only £2,400 per annum that the county would have to pay if that were done, whereas now we pay £3,500. That would give a gain to the county of £1,100, and we believe the Great Southern would gain also in the matter.

20378. At any rate they would not lose?—Certainly not, and I think the Treasury, with their usual generosity, would be only too ready to join if the Great Southern and Western and ourselves did.

20379. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You say the guarantee in respect of the Headford and Kenmare line is upon £165,000?—It is a barony guarantee.

20380. Is not that, properly speaking, only in respect of £60,000?—No, it is considerably more in our guarantee books.

20381. I think it is only £60,000.

Mr. Shanahan.—Yes. It is only on a portion of the capital.

Witness.—We pay on that amount to the Great Southern, I think.

20382. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The Treasury guarantee is in respect of only £60,000?—I cannot say as to the Treasury guarantee.

20383. But the difference between £60,000 and £165,000 you are liable for?—I only assume the Treasury guarantee was for the same amount.

20384. *Chairman.*—Would you suggest that if the amounts were capitalised in the way you speak of there would be an immediate saving to the county of £1,100 per annum?—Yes.

20385. Unless you wish to say anything more on that we will go on to the general question. Do you wish to say anything more upon that?—No, I think not.

20386. Then I repeat the question I put to you just now with reference to the consideration you have given to the nationalisation of the Irish railways?—Well, of course, the nationalisation of the railways is a very large question, and men would hold very different views upon that matter; both in Ireland and in England at the present time we seem to be groping in the dark so far. I must state at the outset that if our railways in Ireland are to be nationalised, as I hope they will be, I hope that they will be nationalised under an Irish State Government, and that we would not have to apply to the English Treasury for money when we wanted it. But I think, speaking on the general principle of the advantages which a country does derive from the control of its own railways, the example of all other countries where it has been tried and properly worked is in itself a proof, and a conclusive proof, that it is a great advantage to any country. And so far as we in Ireland are concerned, I think that most people who know Irishmen will believe that with this control we should turn it to good account and do as much good for the people of our country as any other country has done where this system has been adopted.

20387. Are you acquainted with any of the colonies where the Government own the railways?—Well, I do not say that I am personally acquainted.

20388. I did not know whether you had been to any of the colonies?—I have travelled over the Canadian railways; but I could not say that I have sufficient knowledge to give evidence about them.

20389. Did you see the report of the evidence given by Sir Joseph Ward before this Commission with reference to the New Zealand railways?—I do not know that I specially directed my attention to his evidence. Of course I have read a great deal about all these systems; and I see the great advantages in the case of the carriage of goods and in the case of passenger fares. I think the accommodation is quite equal to the best that can be got where so-called competition exists in railways.

20390. I think you have really covered the ground in the general answer you have given, so that we need not go into all these details. Of course we have had before us the question of capital and everything of that sort, and I do not think it is necessary to go into all that. But you are clearly of opinion, I suppose, that it would be in the interests of Ireland generally if the railways were owned by the State and managed by some Irish authority?—Undoubtedly. I have no second opinion on that matter.

20391. As to the detail of how it should be done, that you have not considered?—Well, of course, that is a matter for after consideration. I have not given this information in my notes, but I wanted to see the Belgian State Railways, and I paid them a visit just in preparation for the evidence I was to give here, because I think the Belgian system is about the best example that any person could have of the advantage to a country of a system of railways owned by the State.

20392. Are all the railways in Belgium owned by the State?—Not all absolutely owned, but they are all controlled.

20393. We should like to hear what you have to say upon that question?—First of all, of course, the natural question would be—How does Belgium stand with regard to the transit of goods on those State-owned railways. They divide their goods, as of course you are aware, into four classes: I will take the fourth class, coal and other stuffs of that class.

The Belgian State-controlled railways:—Instances of low goods rates.

20394. The classes in Belgium are just the reverse of the classes in England, that is, their fourth class is our first class?—Yes. A ten-ton load would be carried at 5*f.* 11*c.* for 100 miles; and for 200 miles 6*f.* 7*c.* Then I will take the third class, flour and meal; for 100 miles a ten-ton lot would be carried at 7*f.* 11*c.* per ton—roughly 6*s.*; and for 200 miles it would be carried for 8*f.* 72*c.*

20395. When you say a ten-ton lot, do you not mean ten tons in a wagon?—Well, that would be for the company; I do not know if their wagons do actually carry ten tons.

20396. But if they do not carry ten tons you will find those rates very much exceeded?—The company in their tables have stated——

20397. Is it not what is called a complete and an incomplete load?—An incomplete load would be, of course, different and a higher rate.

20398. Certainly?—But in their tariff they have given these figures.

20399. I know, for a complete load; but you must have ten tons in order to be charged for ten tons. If you put only eight tons in a wagon you are charged for ten tons, are you not?—I cannot possibly answer that.

20400. That is my recollection of what was the custom years ago; I do not know what it is now. Very well, you have given us the grain and you have given us the coal. What is the next?—Take earthenware, fruit, fish, salt, etc.

20401. What is the load there?—I am taking a five or ten-ton lot.

20402. Take a five-ton lot?—The five-ton lot is the same as the ten-ton lot, so I think that gets rid of the other point: For 100 miles the charge is 9*f.* 72*c.* per ton; and for 200 miles 12*f.* 94*c.* per ton. Then, of course, in the first class various articles are pretty dear: for five-ton lots it would be 15*f.* 26*c.* for 100 miles; and for 200 miles 22*f.* 48*c.* Then I will take lesser distances; for, say, ten miles and anything under five tons the rate varies, according to class, from 1*f.* 46*c.* for the lowest class to 2*f.* 70*c.* for the highest class; that is per ton per ten miles. Also I may mention what seemed to me an interesting fact, that is to say, that in the case of parcels prepaid you can get in Belgium by fast goods trains, travelling about twenty-five miles an hour (and the trains go several times a day), 1 cwt. of goods carriage any distance up to 250 miles for one franc.

20403. Station to station?—Any distance.

20404. But it is station to station—it is not delivered?—Oh, no.

20405. But parcels in this country are delivered, are they not?—In England?

20406. Yes?—Oh, I expect so.

20407. Collected and delivered?—This is not delivered.

20408. No, it is station to station?—Station to station. That is all I have to say with regard to goods; of course it is only a rough general list.

20409. You think those low rates are the result of State ownership?—I do.

Reference to low passenger fares.

20410. And that private enterprise could not work the railways and charge such rates?—I do not think it could where you have, as we have in Ireland, forty companies worked and managed each by a separate Board. I do not think it would be possible. Then take the passenger rates. Of course upon the general question of passenger rates it is a matter of public knowledge that passenger rates are considerably lower in Belgium than in this country. There is one rate which must strike any person as rather interesting, and that is the tickets which are issued for five days or fifteen days by which you can travel over the whole of the Belgian lines (somewhere about 2,800 miles) third class for 9*s.* 9*d.*

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20411. For a week?—Five days. Another interesting thing is the tickets that they give to boys going to schools which enable them to come in from the country and attend a university or a higher school. I think that is an excellent thing, and certainly it would be of the greatest possible advantage if we had it in Ireland, because I believe our boys would be extremely anxious to avail themselves of secondary education if they could get cheaply by railway to these university colleges and higher schools. Certainly in Belgium the system is availed of very largely. Undoubtedly it has operated in helping to make Belgium the industrial and progressive nation they are. I do not think companies could do it. We have done it, but then we have the rates of the county to draw upon.

Reduced fares charged to school boys.

20412. Will you give us the rate charged to these boys?—It is extremely low. For the whole year a journey of twenty kilometres third class would be 160*f.* A journey of 120 kilometres would be about seventy-two miles, and 160 francs would be just about six guineas. Of course 120 kilometres is a pretty long journey—quite as long as would be required.

20413. Have you any of the rates for shorter distances?—Oh, yes; a journey of ten kilometres would cost thirty francs for the whole year.

Workmen's fares.

20414. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And the first class would be fifty-six francs?—Well, I do not think that children travel much first class. Then there is also the workman's ticket, which I consider of the greatest possible advantage to Belgium, and certainly it would be of the greatest possible advantage in England if you were considering that question, and in Ireland also. A workman who works in a town can go out into the country; he can go, we will say, five kilometres for ninety-five centimes, or three miles for 9½*d.*, every day in the week and get home at night. He can go a distance of sixty-two miles into the country at night——

20415. I think that is out of the question?—Of course; I put it as a maximum.

20416. *Mr. Acworth.*—Mr. O'Donnell is quite right—a large number do live habitually sixty-two miles away from their work. Did you happen to see in a recent number of the *Economic Journal* an account of these Belgian fares by a Belgian professor?—I did not see that.

20417. He says that quite a number of workmen are away from their homes for about eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, living at those distances?—I do not give the sixty-two miles as being at all common, but a large number do live out ten or twenty miles.

20418. *Chairman.*—They do in England. Give us the short distance workmen's fares?—Ninety-five centimes, or roughly 9½*d.*, will take them three miles out from the town, travelling six days a week.

20419. That is for a week?—For a whole week. Then if you take a worker who is six miles out, or ten kilometres, he gets a ticket which takes him in and out each morning and evening for one shilling a week.

20420. Those are the most interesting figures. Will you go up to twenty kilometres?—For twenty kilometres, or twelve and a half miles roughly, he gets a ticket for 1*s.* 2½*d.* Take thirty kilometres—that would be eighteen miles roughly. For that he pays 1*f.* 75*c.*, or about 1*s.* 5*d.* Then take thirty-one miles—that would be 1*s.* 9½*d.* for a week, or 372 miles total travel for 1*s.* 9½*d.*; and for 2*s.* 6*d.* a man can travel on a labourer's ticket 744 miles.

20421. That is including the double journey each day?—Oh, certainly. That is the total number of miles travelled.

20422. Did you in the course of your inquiries ascertain or make any inquiries in reference to their system of export and import goods traffic?—No; these are all inland rates.

Statistics showing the commercial growth of Belgium under the State railway system.

20423. I know; but did you inquire further?—No, I did not. I do not want to speak of things I have not inquired into. Of course I did look up the growth of Belgium. I do not mean to say that the growth of Belgium is entirely due to these State railways, but the system of State control has no doubt largely entered into and helped the undoubted growth of Belgium. At the time it started these railways its imports were £8,000,000 and its exports 6¼ millions, and if you take 1904 its imports are £177,000,000 and its exports £154,000,000. So that in this period its trade increased twenty-three-fold. Its population doubled in that period.

20424. Of course you know that the exports and imports of Belgium are mostly transit traffic?—I will give you the home traffic. In 1835 their special home-import traffic, quite apart from the international, was £6,000,000, and the exports £5,000,000. In 1904 the imports were £110,000,000 and the exports £88,000,000—on their home traffic imports and exports were, roughly, £200,000,000.

20425. That is Belgian traffic proper?—That is Belgian traffic proper.

20426. Those are official figures?—Yes. Or, roughly, for home consumption, taking imports and exports, the value amounted to £28 per head of the population; and seventy years ago it was only £2 19*s.* per head of the population. The same home traffic of England is only £20 per head of the population, and of Germany £9 13*s.* With regard to the coal, at the beginning of this national railway system its value was only about £1,000,000.

20427. Is that coal exported?—Coal produced. Its value in 1904 was £16,000,000, roughly. As to the number of passengers carried, I think it is the largest for any country of its size—152,000,000 passengers travelled in 1904. The number of trains over the system is undoubtedly the largest—nearly one million trains went over the system in the year 1905. Another interesting thing, certainly, with regard to Belgium is that its National Debt is, roughly, £120,000,000, and if you take its railways and canals, it is a free country—there is no debt. I should like Ireland to be in that condition.

Chairman.—Those are all very interesting figures.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

20428. Do you happen to know whether the workmen carried at these extremely low fares are at liberty to use any train in the day; or are they restricted to particular trains running at specified times?—It would not be natural to expect that a workman should use any train; he would only use those trains which would suit his hours of work.

20429. But, is it open to him to do so?—I could not say as to that.

20430. Do you know whether there are any means of restricting those privileges to *bonâ fide* workmen; or, whether they can be enjoyed by anyone who chooses to call himself a workman?—A man cannot travel by a workman's train if he earns more than 35*s.* a week.

20431. But he may be a clerk, or anything else?—Yes, a clerk or anything else.

20432. *Mr. Acworth.*—I think you are wrong about that, and I think you will find that clerks cannot use those trains. I will not say positively, but I am pretty sure that I am right?—But I think they give a fairly liberal meaning to the word "workman."

20433. It is restricted to, what one may call, the rough-coated people, I think?—But I know that it goes up to 35*s.* a week.

20434. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Do they take steps to ascertain what the earnings of these people are, who take those tickets?—I should say they do; but I do not think they push it too far.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

20435. I think your connection with the Tralee and Dingle Railway is recent?—It has extended just over two years.

20436. You knew that district before that, did you not?—I was born there.

20437. You were there when the line was promoted, I suppose?—Yes.

20438. It was constructed under the Act of 1883, was it not?—Yes.

20439. And under that Act the estimates and the preliminary expenses are chargeable on the local authorities in the first instance?—Yes.

20440. Subsequently, the engineering questions had to be considered by the Board of Works, and, when they were approved, the plans were submitted to the Grand Jury, and subsequently went before the Privy Council?—Yes.

20441. How came it that, when that line was under discussion, such an extraordinary sum was estimated

as £120,000 for a line practically forty miles in length involving a cost of about £2,700 a mile—how came the Grand Jury to entertain the line at such a low cost?—Really, it is very hard to explain, and I do not know that I can give any explanation; but I might submit as a possible one, that the Grand Jury were very anxious to get the line, and possibly they could not find more capital.

20442. I think that under the Act of 1883 the Board of Works had to submit an estimate as to the capital expnediture required?—Yes, I think so.

20443. So that, to a certain extent, I suppose, they were answerable for the extraordinarily low price at which that line was proposed to be built?—I do not think we have any cause to be thankful for the action of the Board of Works at that particular period.

20444. At any rate, supposing the line had to be rebuilt, no such absurd estimate would be adopted for its re-construction?—Oh, no. I think that if there was any law in the country which would take up the Boards and deal with them criminally, the Board of Works would be indicted, and convicted. We would convict them, at any rate—a jury of Kerry men.

20445. I think you said the capital of that line was £120,000, and that the cost of the line was, roughly speaking, £2,700 a mile; in other words, that the actual cost, exclusive of promotion, expenses, and law costs, was £100,000?—Yes.

20446. So that, practically, out of the amount of £120,000, £20,000 went in the shape of promotion and legal expenses?—An enormous amount.

20447. It works out at £20,000 all but a few shillings. On a capital expenditure of £120,000, £20,000 went in promotion and legal expenses?—Yes.

20448. However, I take it that assuming the line had cost twice the amount it did—supposing it had cost £5,400 a mile, which is rather less than the average cost of construction in Ireland, the capital promotion and legal expenditure would have remained constant, and the total capital you would have been called upon to bear would have been something like £220,000?—Yes.

20449. That would have involved a guarantee on behalf of the baronies of £8,800?—Yes.

20450. Whereas the guarantee that you were called upon to pay was £4,800?—Yes.

20451. Of which the Treasury recouped you half?—Yes.

20452. Or, in other words, if the line had been properly constructed, your county and the guaranteeing areas would have had to pay double the guarantee you were called upon to pay all those years?—Yes.

20453. So that that must be taken into account?—Yes; but I might remark that the guarantee itself is really small as compared with the amount of our working expenses.

20454. Quite so?—We believe that if the line had been properly constructed at the beginning, although some of the £110,000 which we have since had to expend upon the improvement of the line would have had to be spent, not nearly so much would have had to be spent. And we further believe that the fish traffic, which now gets on to Cahirciveen because they can carry it quicker and at a cheaper rate, would have come over our line and have made our receipts greater.

20455. *Chairman.*—And the working expenses would have been considerably less?—Yes.

20456. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Taking the figures you have given us for the five years ending 1895, the average of the baronial contributions works out at £6,492—the average yearly contributions?—About that.

20457. Of which £2,400 is in respect of the guarantee?—Yes.

20458. In other words, for those five years, there was an annual deficit on the working expenses of £4,092 a year?—Yes; but we have changed it since then.

20459. I know; I am coming to that. For the five years ending 1905, the average annual deficit on working expenses came to £2,721?—Yes, about that.

20460. And your baronial contribution now, since the Treasury liability has been redeemed, comes to £1,600?—Yes.

20461. So that your total contributions come to £4,321 for the last four years, as against £6,490?—Yes.

20462. That is really what it comes to; and I think that involves in respect of one of the baronies a levy of 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound?—It has averaged during the fifteen years a little over half-a-crown.

20463. And that, I think, looking at the Board of Trade Returns, is considerably more than double the levy in respect of any other railway built in Ireland under any of those Acts?—Yes.

20464. I think the highest other levy is in respect of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway and amounts to 1*s.* 2½*d.*?—Yes.

Average baronial levy since opening of Tralee and Dingle line the highest in Ireland for Light Railways under Act, 1883.

20465. But this is 2*s.* 6*d.*, which is, of course, an enormous rate to levy. Looking at your proof, you say that since the opening of the line, in 1891, that is practically fifteen years, the net amount levied, after deducting the local taxation re-fund, was £92,000 for a period of fifteen years; and that practically works out at £6,000 a year for the whole time?—Yes.

20466. And, if it had not been for the Local Government Act of 1898 and the re-fund to which you were entitled under that Act, you would have been swamped out of existence?—Yes, we could not have stood it; and we should have been inclined to have torn up the line.

Inefficient working and heavy liability on guarantors the result of original faulty construction of line.

20467. I think it goes without saying then, although it has been argued before us sometimes that the cost involved in the construction of these different railways under various Acts has been very excessive, that this is an object-lesson showing that where a line has been constructed on manifestly a very low estimate, as in this case, the result is—inefficient working and ultimate heavy liability both on the part of the contributing areas and also, eventually, on the part of the Treasury?—Undoubtedly; nobody would deny it. Cheap construction can be carried too far.

Necessity for some relief to be afforded the ratepayers by the Treasury redemption of other guarantees in Kerry urged.

20468. And you consider, of course, arguing on the same basis, that as you have been relieved of your liability in consequence of the Treasury redemption in the case of the Tralee and Dingle line to the extent of a reduction from £6,490 to £4,321 a year, some relief would also be afforded if the Treasury would agree to capitalise some of their other guarantees?—It would mean a saving of over £1,000 a year; and, in a county so severely taxed as Kerry, that would be a very important consideration.

Impossibility of any large reductions of rates and fares under the existing railway system.

20469. I quite agree, it would relieve you very appreciably. As regards the general question, I presume you admit that under the present system it is impossible that there could be any very large diminution or reduction in either passenger fares or goods rates?—I do not think it is possible. Companies have to look after the interests of their shareholders, and I do not think it is a question of blaming them at all.

20470. You do not consider that under the circumstances either the passenger fares or the goods rates on the Irish railways are, in your experience, unduly high, taking into consideration that they have to pay their shareholders, not a large dividend, but at any rate a reasonable dividend?—I do not think they could be reduced much.

State purchase of Irish railways would induce large savings, which would be applied to reductions in rates and fares with consequent development and increase of traffic.

20471. That is one argument why you think that if the State were to take over the railways it might possibly be prepared, in the interests of the country, and especially a backward country like Ireland, to undergo some loss at first?—If the State takes over the railways and manages them as one body, there is no doubt about it; there will be considerable saving in the working of the lines; and it is also a fact that when better facilities are given to people to travel—and now that the Irish tenant-farmer has purchased his land and is more anxious to improve his methods of tillage and to produce crops and articles for sale that he did not produce before, something of that sort might be done. I think if fares and rates were reduced there would be more travelling and more traffic on the lines; that has been the experience of Germany. And also if you reduced the rates for goods to cross over to England—whether it be market-garden produce, butter, eggs, small parcels, or what not, I believe the farmer would produce more; and I do not believe the State would be called upon for a great deal, if anything at all, in the nature of loss.

20472. But, granted even that all these assumptions of yours would be verified, it can hardly be expected that a railway company should experimentalise in that direction?—I do not think any sensible man expects that.

20472A. You do not give us particulars; but, if you will refer to your notes, I would rather take them

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from you. Have you ever heard of the growth of traffic which has resulted in Belgium in consequence of the operation of the extraordinary system of fifteen-day and five-day tickets, which you mentioned?—Oh, yes, I have it somewhere.

20473. I think that in 1893 the fifteen-day ticket was introduced, and perhaps you will give us those figures?—The number of passengers was 19,828; and the total receipts, 632,724 francs.

Reference to the great growth in passenger traffic in Belgium following concessions in fares.

20474. Those figures show the growth of the traffic that has ensued in consequence of putting into force the fifteen-day and the five-day tickets. That is the number of passengers who have taken those tickets in the year when the fifteen-day ticket was introduced?—Yes. In 1900 there were 72,944——

20475. *Chairman.*—Why not go to the last year?—In 1904 there were 75,604 passengers with total receipts of 2,182,137 francs.

20475A. That is an enormous growth?—It is enormous.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That is about £80,000 for 75,604 passengers.

20476. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is an average of over £1 a passenger?—There are first, second, and third-class. Of course, the first-class passenger will pay more. The figures I gave were only for third-class.

20477. The people you gave were five-day ticket passengers?—Yes.

20478. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The price of the first-class fifteen-day ticket is 51*s.* 3*d.*; second-class, 34*s.* 2*d.*; and third-class, 19*s.* 7*d.* The first-class five-day ticket is 25*s.* 7½*d.*; second-class, 17*s.*; and third-class, 9*s.* 9½*d.*; is that so?—Yes. The number of passengers in 1903 on the five-day ticket was 67,698; and the receipts 936,715 francs. In the next year, 1904, there were 137,375 passengers, with receipts of 1,913,524 francs. That is for five-day tickets. For third-class ordinary passengers the fares are §*d.* per mile; for the second-class, 1*d.*; and for the first-class, 1½*d.* per mile, with a reduction of 20 per cent. on return tickets.

20479. *Chairman.*—Those are the ordinary fares charged in Belgium, are they?—Yes, on the ordinary tickets.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

Estimated amount necessary for improvements on Tralee and Dingle line.

20480. In your proof you speak of £30,000 as being necessary for some improvements?—Yes.

20481. And you seem to be satisfied that you would get considerable savings if that money were spent in that way?—Yes.

20482. Do you feel quite certain that you would get, say, the £1,000 per annum which would be necessary to produce the interest upon that?—Well, we have gone into it—I have got the Manager, the Engineer, and our Locomotive Superintendent each to work out his own particular side of the case; and I have taken all three results myself, and with my lay knowledge have tried to find how it would work out. And we have undoubtedly come to the conclusion that we would be able to make the extra amount of money which would pay the interest on that amount. £7,000 is only half a year's expenditure.

Prospects of saving in expenses and increase in traffic discussed.

20483. It is a large proportion of your working expenses. You spend something under £14,000 a year; and, to hope that you would be able to reduce your expenditure by £1,000 a year is a little sanguine, is it not?—We did reduce our expenses in one year by £3,200. I am but two years Chairman, and we have reduced our expenditure to that extent.

20484. Have you any great hope of increasing your receipts upon this line?—That is the great point to which we look for improvement. As I have said, a great number of cattle are at the present time driven along the roads, instead of being taken by our trains; and the fish traffic, which at present goes by the Great Southern to Cahirciveen, would undoubtedly go over our line; and, as for passenger traffic, a number of passengers at the present time will not travel by it on account of the name the line has got for accidents.

20485. I see that you speak in your proof of the difficulty of doing your repairs at the end of a little light railway?—Yes.

Necessity for a central works in Ireland for building and repairing the rolling stock of small lines.

20486. I suppose you have to do everything there of an ordinary character, but anything you require of a heavy character you have to bring to England?—Yes.

20487. While agreeing generally with you that it would be far better for that work to be done on the line itself, if you could possibly get it done, would not that difficulty be met if you were permitted to get the work done at some of the larger works of the larger railways of Ireland, and if you were able to put your narrow gauge engine on to a truck and send it either to Broadstone or to Dundalk or to Inchicore, as the case might be, and get the repairs done in Ireland. Your object is to get the work done and the money spent in Ireland?—Yes.

20488. That you cannot do under the present state of the law?—No.

20489. Therefore, if some trivial alteration were made in the law it would achieve what you want?—Well, it would be a considerable advantage I feel if we could be relieved of the expense of attempting to build and repair engines and carriages, which must necessarily be badly equipped. In the case of all small lines with small capital and with very bad equipment in their shops, it is impossible for them to do proper work in those shops; and, of course, if something like that could be done with some central place, such as Dublin, I suggest that would be a considerable advantage over the present system.

20490. The general question of construction of rolling stock has been mentioned by several witnesses who have come before us; and, in looking through the Board of Trade Returns, and taking out the rolling stock which has been added to the capital stock of the railways of Ireland during the last ten years, and looking at it with some knowledge of the amount of money which could be spent in wages in Ireland upon the construction of that rolling stock, I find that even had all that rolling stock been built in England and not in Ireland—though we know that a very large quantity of it has been built in Ireland—unless my figures are very wrong, the amount of wages which it represents that could be spent in Ireland only comes to about £10,000 a year?—Only in the matter of carriages and engines. Do you refer to the extra money spent on building carriages and engines?

20491. Additional carriages, wagons, and engines.—all kinds of wagons and carriages?—It may be so.

20491A. It is really a much smaller thing than at first sight it appears to be, as so much is already done by the larger railway companies in Ireland in building their own rolling stock both on renewal and on capital account.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

20492. Your railway was built under the Tramways and Light Railways Act, 1883; was it not?—Yes.

20493. That is dead and buried, and nobody is ever likely to build another railway under it?—I do not think so.

20494. So that it is hardly worth abusing it?—No.

20495. Nobody has ever defended it for many years past. Am I to understand that your position is practically this:—Would it be fair to say that the Dingle Peninsula is just as poor a part of the country as Achill or Galway?—No, I do not think so.

20496. Not as poor?—No, not as poor.

20947. Is it as poor as many of the parts that under the Balfour Grants of 1890 got railways free, gratis, and for nothing?—Yes. I think that in the list I gave there are some districts that got railways free, gratis, and for nothing which really could not, from the point of view of the necessitousness of the district, make out a better case than could this district.

20498. What about the Letterkenny and Burtonport line—that is an example of the Balfour policy?—I have not that case before me.

20499. Without giving an instance then, I gather your position is, that some lines, in districts not more necessitous than is the Dingle Peninsula, were made free, gratis, and for nothing by the Government?—Yes.

20500. If that be true, you are penalised because you were more energetic and went ahead?—That is so.

20501. And your argument would be, that you having borne a burthen for many years that they have never borne at all, you ought to be relieved now in part, or in whole, if you can get it?—Yes.

20502. That is what I understand is your position as far as that is concerned?—Yes.

20503. Your line is under the control of the County Council, is it not?—Yes, entirely.

20504. Are you Chairman of the County Council Committee?—No, I am not a County Councillor at all. I am Chairman of the Railway Committee appointed by the County Council; they appoint the Committee.

20505. Did the County Council make a representation to the Lord Lieutenant that the line was inefficiently worked?—The Grand Jury had got it for some years before County Councils were established. I think the company did not exist more than the legal two years' limit; and after that it was taken over by the Grand Jury and afterwards by the County Council.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think that was under the clause by which, if the receipts did not cover the working expenses for two years in succession, it then fell automatically into their hands.

20505A. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is there any other instance in Ireland of that sort.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I do not think there is.

Mr. Shanahan.—Yes, there are several; there is the Donoughmore Extension of the Cork and Muskerry, and there are the Timoleague and Courtmacsherry and the Schull and Skibbereen, all in County Cork. There are those three at least.

Witness.—I wonder if they are completely and solely under the control of the County Council without any of the old directors?

Mr. Shanahan.—Yes, solely and completely.

20506. *Mr. Acworth.*—The Grand Jury, now the County Council, have the control, and they have appointed a Railway Committee?—Yes.

20507. Independent of the shareholders; they may, or may not be shareholders, but they can appoint anybody they please?—Yes.

20508. Not necessarily members of their own body?—Not necessarily.

20509. Whom have they appointed in your county—who are they?—As a rule, of course, since the County Council came into operation and got control of the line, they have always looked to the guaranteeing districts; they do not appoint men outside the guaranteeing districts. I am Chairman of the Committee, and I represent that district in Parliament; and then there are in the barony County Councillors for the districts concerned; they are also members. Then, the Urban Council of Tralee appoints the Chairman, and he *ipso facto* gets in. Then, I think, there is another man, the Rev. Canon O'Leary, of Dingle, which is the capital of the barony—the parish priest.

20510. The people whom the County Council have appointed are people appointed as representatives of the district and of the interests of the ratepayers and of customers, not people supposed to know anything about railway management?—Not necessarily.

20511. I mean, with great respect to the Chairman and the Council, they would not presumably be experts?—They are not selected for that reason.

20512. And that, obviously, must be the weakness of the situation?—Possibly, but I do not think so.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I see, sir, now that you are upon the point, that the names of the Committee of Management are given in a Report which I have, and also the names of the Arbitrators appointed by the Board of Trade. You might elicit who they are.

20513. *Mr. Acworth.*—Would you go on and tell us that, because I think this is all new to the Commission?—At the end of each year when making up our minds as to allocating our deficit plus the baronial guarantee, we have to allocate it for the guaranteeing areas, which I gave at the beginning, half to one barony, and so on. The Board of Trade then has two arbitrators appointed to inspect our accounts, and to see if the figures are right, and, if they are, divided between the different baronies properly according to the original schedule of distribution.

20514. Those are more in the nature of auditors; they are practically not concerned with the earning of the money, but only with its apportionment?—Yes.

Mr. Shanahan.—These arbitrations are statutory under the Act of 1883 in every case.

20515. *Mr. Acworth.*—I want you to tell me how you explain the fact that the receipts are pretty nearly stationary?—Well, I am afraid it is due to the fact that our line has remained in almost the same condition. I said a while ago that the receipts from our passengers had not gone up as much as we would expect. Tralee is at one end of the railway, a fairly good business town; and Dingle at the other. People do not like to travel over the mountain, a high gradient with a bridge at the end of it; and if they are coming to Tralee from within ten miles they will take a car; and the same on the other side. But I believe that if this line were made safe for the travelling public it would be considerably patronised. As I said before, it passes through a very interesting peninsula with beautiful mountainous scenery, and there are numerous fine old buildings, which are most interesting. I believe we would have a splendid passenger and tourist traffic. No tourists will touch us now.

20516. Then you think really the line has such a bad name that they say, "Hang it," practically?—Yes, I believe that is so.

Alleged diversion of fish traffic from Dingle.

20517. But, what about the goods; is not the fish traffic from Dingle increasing?—Yes; I said with regard to that—you will pardon my mentioning a point which I think I forgot—Caherciveen and Dingle are on opposite sides of Dingle Bay, in which the fish are caught. In Dingle Harbour the line comes down just into the Harbour, and it is the only place for vessels to come in with their fish; it is beautifully land-locked and a very safe harbour. We have to compete with Caherciveen on the other side of the bay, and vessels will come in from the bay and bring their fish into Caherciveen and have it conveyed over the Great Southern—whereas if we had a proper railway on our side, on account of the harbour being better, they would come to our side. To show you the disadvantage which the fishing district suffers from that, Cahirciveen is able to send its fish to English markets, say, to London, at owner's risk at 4*s.* per cwt. The ordinary rate is 6*s.* 2*d.* from those places; and from Dingle to London the fare would be, at owner's risk, 4*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., and the ordinary rate is 6*s.* 11*d.*

20518. Yes, it is a little additional. But the Killorglin and Valentia is a broad gauge, is it not?—Yes, a splendid line, under the control of the Great Southern Company.

20519. You are not proposing to make your line a broad gauge line, are you?—No, we are not.

20520. I presume you think it ought to be thrown into a big system in some shape or form?—I should like to see that, if it could be done.

20521. Even supposing the railways of Ireland were not nationalised, you would still desire that the independence of it should be swept away?—If we had a nationalised system——

20522. Then it would go—that is clear?—Yes.

Amalgamation of the Tralee and Dingle line with the Great Southern and Western Railway disapproved.

20523. But supposing, on the other hand, you did not have a national system, but remained under private ownership, I suppose you would still desire that this little line should be part of a big system, on financial grounds?—I do not think so. If the present system of company management does remain, I do not think the county, even with the heavy charge it has to pay, would give the line over to the management of any company.

20524. You would really prefer the independence of this small line?—We are a very liberty-loving people in Ireland.

20525. I will not argue about it; I only want to get the facts. You are not proposing to broad gauge it?—No.

20526. Then, in that case, you would remain narrow gauge?—Yes.

20527. You would remain an independent company with not the same influence in getting traffic as a great company like the Great Southern, for instance?—The Great Southern gives us every assistance in the matter, I am happy to say.

20528. But they would, of course, prefer to get it for themselves?—They get everything; we are really their feeders, and that is a great advantage to the Great Southern.

20529. But you agree that they would rather the traffic came to Valentia?—Naturally.

Nationalisation of the railways under an Irish statutory authority urged.

20530. But, of course, what you desire is that the railways should be nationalised under, as you said, the Irish Government?—Yes.

20531. I do not know whether I quite understand what that means. Does that mean that you propose that Ireland should take its own responsibilities independently of Great Britain?—Well, we will not enter into that larger question.

20532. What I mean is: supposing the railways are to be bought, there will be a sum of money to be found?—Apart altogether from the control of other

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Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, B.L., M.P., Chairman of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway.

national questions, I would assume that, if we did not have general control of Irish affairs until this event does come about, there should be established in Dublin a Department, added to the present large number of Departments, which would have the control of the railways.

20533. Yes. Assuming that, what I want to understand is, would it rest financially on the British Treasury, or would it rest financially on Ireland, and on Ireland alone?—Well, I certainly would not wish to be dependent on the British Treasury. I should say that, in the beginning, some arrangements should be made to finance the Department in Dublin, which would have this control; and that if they were put on a proper basis at the beginning I do not believe they would ever have to appeal to the British Treasury.

The method of guaranteeing the purchase price of the Irish railways.

20534. Is it your view that Ireland ought to be left to "dree its own weird," as they say in Scotland, and to be responsible—that, having been started, they should take the consequences entirely; or would you rather have the British Treasury in the background?—I think that England need not be troubled with any fears of further applications being made to her in future years if, at the beginning, she deals fairly with Ireland.

Guarantee of British Government not required.

20535. Supposing such a Department were started on the basis you have suggested, would it be your view that the English Treasury ought not to be asked to guarantee any loan of money, but that it ought to rely solely upon an Irish guarantee?—Well, as I said, if the thing is properly started, I am perfectly satisfied that the working of the railway would be properly carried on, and that if there were a loss, which is a doubtful question, the Irish people would be quite prepared to bear that loss themselves, seeing that the scheme would be to the advantage of the country. But as to the question of loans, of course your market is an excellent market for borrowing money in, or it used to be, and I do not think you would exclude us from the advantages of that market, if there were any in the future, seeing that it would be no burden to yourselves.

20536. Clearly, Ireland would be as well entitled to float a loan on the London market as Kent or any other county; but would that be a loan secured on particular revenues or on the guarantee of the British Government?—I do not think we should ask the British Government to become guarantors.

20537. You think that if there was a loss, and if the lines did not immediately pay, Ireland would be prepared to take it up?—Yes, I think Ireland would be only too ready to do so. Already in the poorest county in Ireland we are paying 2*s.* 6*d.* in the £.

20538. And, as I gather, you say that, in spite of that cruelly heavy contribution, you are better off than if you had not the railway?—We feel that in the struggle we are better off by taking risks ourselves.

The probability of effecting economies under unified management.

20539. You spoke of unification and of the economy you were going to gain from putting the railways together?—That was an estimate, of course.

20540. You are a member of Parliament, and you know something about what is going on on the other side of the road; you have had your attention called, no doubt, to the London Water Board?—I have heard something about it.

20541. You remember that, three or four years ago, eight individual companies in London were bought up and converted into one London public system?—Yes.

20542. One of the arguments for that was that there was going to be great economy in management. Do you know that evidence was given a week or two ago across the road that that unified system was costing as much in management as the original eight companies cost?—Well, of course that may be so; but I do not think that particular instance is of itself sufficient to disprove my argument that unification would be an economy.

20543. Of course not; but it is an instance of where expectations were disappointed?—And while human nature remains as it is expectations will be disappointed. But, with great respect, London is not to be compared with Ireland in this matter at the present moment. I must not be taken as saying anything reflecting on London; but still those who know Ireland at the present day feel that there is a great desire on the part of everybody, all classes and all sections, to do something to help towards the industrial and material advantage of the country; and I do believe—I think our County Councils have proved—that when they have got control of these affairs they have done their work pretty well.

20544. Please do not think that I am wishing to say anything in contradiction of that?—No, I quite understand; I am only arguing the point.

20545. Yesterday we had Mr. Palmer, from Australia, who told us that he was greatly in favour of State ownership, but admitted that State management was more expensive than private ownership?—I do not think that is the experience of Europe; I think the figures for France and Belgium do not bear that out.

20546. Let me take you on that point. As you no doubt know, the Northern of France Railway runs into Belgium?—Yes.

20547. They have, I forget exactly what, but, 200 or 300 miles, if I remember rightly, of line in Belgium running into the Belgian State Railway system?—Yes.

20548. There was a very elaborate calculation made by an expert a few years ago showing how very much more economically the Northern of France was operated alongside the Belgian State Railway system. Has your attention been called to that?—No.

20549. Well, that is another instance of expectations being disappointed. Now, just one other thing. Did you, when in Belgium, pay attention to the light railway system there?—No, I did not; I had not sufficient time.

20550. I will just ask you this. You would not suggest that Ireland is lucky enough to have coal, butter, meal, or anything of that kind carried 200 miles?—I have been looking over Mr. Drummond's report, which is a very interesting report; and in that report the country is divided up. Not only does it deal with the question from a railway engineering point of view, but also from the point of view of the possibility of coal and other commodities; and it is very interesting to see the prospects held out in various parts of Ireland as to the finding of coal and so on: but I do not think we know much more on that subject now.

20551. But supposing you worked coal to any considerable extent at any of those places in Ireland, you would not have got a 200 miles' haul, from the nature of the country?—Certainly not; but we should have a larger haul than the Belgians have.

20552. Not as long a haul as the Belgians have?—Oh, yes.

20553. I think you will find, if you look at Belgium, that a very large amount of the traffic starts right away at Liege, and comes the whole length of the country?—But it is not a third the length of our country.

20554. I think you will find that they must have a longer haul, from the nature of the country; everything comes from or goes to the nearest point of the sea?—In my own country I have got lots of men who tell me that it has great possibilities. An expert, from Klondyke, who was talking to me the other day, inspected our mountains and the district generally; he took me down to the river, and he guaranteed to find a bit of gold. I laughed; but we walked along, and he picked up sundry pieces of quartz; and at last he picked up one piece of quartz with a bit of gold right in the centre. He had been to the mountains, and he told me that undoubtedly coal is to be found. This was in Kerry. I do not assume that we are going to make a lot out of it at present; but that coal is to be found in Kerry and places like it is undoubted; and we might haul that to Londonderry or to Belfast.

20555. Would it not go from Tralee to Belfast by steamer?—Possibly; it would go the cheapest way, of course.

20556. In mentioning the Belgian rates, are you suggesting that under the circumstances of Ireland it would be ever possible that you could have the Belgian rates?—I am, certainly. I think that with the present system of company management of railways in Ireland some parts of Ireland are unknown to other parts; and that, so far as inter-trade communication, we will say between Tyrone and the southern parts of Ireland is concerned, we live almost in different countries; and the man from Londonderry and the man from Belfast will seek his market abroad rather than in the South of Ireland. I say that all that would be changed, and we would travel from North to South, meet and mix together, and send our goods in the same way from one part to the other. I think the State control of the railways would bring about

as great advantages to the people of Ireland as it has done in Belgium.

20557. I will not argue it?—That is my belief.

20558. Your belief is that you could develop in Ireland the intense trade that there is in a closely settled country like Belgium, and that therefore you could get something like Belgian rates?—I do think that.

20559. Now, I would just like to ask you about the workmen's tickets, because that is very interesting. You mentioned sixty-two miles. Now, I happen to know, as I said before, that that is a thing that actually exists: a man living sixty miles off his work at, say, Liege—he works for perhaps a few months in the year when the works are particularly busy; he leaves home every morning at two o'clock and gets back at ten o'clock at night; and that goes on for some time. But he remains a peasant and lives in his own house in the country which belongs to him; and when the work gets less pressing at the town centres he relapses into being a peasant?—Yes.

20560. Do you really think that that could have any application to Ireland?—I believe that in Ireland we suffer from a great drain of emigration from the country—of course, that applies to most countries at the present day—the people desire to run away from the country and get into the towns. But, unfortunately, the Irish people who run away from the land do not get into our towns, but they get into American towns. So that we are worse off than other countries in that respect. But still the towns are undoubtedly crowded in Ireland and slums do exist. If facilities were given for the people who earn small wages, anything from 15*s.* to 20*s.* a week, to travel out of those districts at the cheap rates of Belgium, I do believe that after a while—of course, it would not come suddenly—the condition of the poorer classes in the towns would be considerably better, and that numbers of those people would go to the country.

20561. Taking the big towns, such as Dublin City, Cork, or Belfast, there is quite enough labour there to do the work of the towns, is there not?—Yes.

20562. There is rather a surplus of labour than otherwise, certainly in Dublin and Cork?—Yes.

20563. It seems to me that they do not really want to bring in extra workmen from outside?—But my idea would be to get the men who are at present in the towns to go out into the country.

20564. Then your idea is that the effect of those workmen's trains would be rather to depopulate the towns?—To depopulate the towns at night.

20565. And that, you think, would have a good economic result?—Undoubtedly.

20566. Because the people would get more wholesome surroundings, and get to a place where they could obtain employment upon their own farms when they were not engaged in the towns?—Yes, in the idle times.

20567. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do I correctly understand you to say that failing, or pending, any general transfer of the control of local affairs to Ireland, in the event of the State being willing to take over the lines of the Irish railways on satisfactory terms to the shareholders, you would have no objection to another Department, a Railway Department, under the State, and analogous to the present Departments being added to the existing Departments?—So anxious am I for the establishment of a State system of railways in Ireland that I would go any distance in order to have it established; and, even although my disbelief in the generosity of the English Treasury to Ireland is great——

20568. You would not see any objection to another Department being added?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

20569. I should like to ask a few questions, sir, if I may. Besides Valentia is there also a harbour at Fenit?—Yes, that is eight miles from Tralee. I have mentioned that in my list here.

20570. And is there a broad gauge line running to Fenit?—Yes.

20571. And your line, of course, is a narrow gauge line?—Yes.

20572. Therefore, of course, you are under a disability as to carrying fish rapidly to centres like Dublin—I am only speaking of the present conditions?—Oh, yes; that is so.

20573. Just a question or two about Belgium. Belgium is, of course, an industrial country?—It has become one.

20574. Quite so; and it has the two great elements of which industry is made up—coal and iron?—Recently developed.

20575. Well, we hope, of course, for development in Ireland; but, in the meantime, you cannot call Ireland a coal and iron country, can you?—Not for the present.

20576. Now, you gave some illustrations of 200 miles' rates. As Mr. Acworth has already elicited, at the present time in Ireland there are no such rates?—I gave 100 miles' rates.

20577. I know; but do you know that the average carrying in Ireland would be from 15 to 50 miles?—Possibly.

20578. Because, of course, in the meantime seeing that it is not an industrial country it is only for distribution that they carry?—I think that would be too small.

20579. Upon the question of State-owned railways as compared with privately-owned railways, do you know that the Belgian privately-owned railways are worked at a less percentage of the receipts than the Belgian State-owned railways.

20580. *Mr. Acworth.*—What private railways are you speaking of?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—We have taken the private railways in Belgium, and we find that the percentage is less?—Is that a proper test?

20581. I do not know that it is a proper test, but it really bears upon the question whether the gentleman who spoke yesterday about the Australian railways was correct when he said that privately-owned railways were less costly than State railways. At the present time you have no workmen travelling backwards and forwards on the lines in the South of Ireland, have you?—I should like to see them travel twenty times as much, but that must be encouraged by cheap fares.

20582. You took Belgium as a good illustration of cheap fares, and you also said that you had travelled upon the Canadian railways; they are not State-owned, are they?—My travelling was only through the country, and I have no special knowledge of the Canadian railways.

20583. But, of course, they are owned by companies. I have here a statement recently made by the President of the Brussels Chamber of Commerce, and I daresay he is a great authority, is he not?—I should think so. I hope politics did not enter into his statement.

20584. I am sure politics do not enter into my questions to you—you will admit that I have avoided both the larger and the smaller questions. This is what the President of that Chamber said:—"Our Chamber does not regard with favour the way in which railways are administered in this country; for, if we compare what passes at home with what passes in surrounding countries, we see that we have much to learn in regard to many of our railways and to everything that is here administered by the State"?—Well, I think my previous remark answers that. I am afraid politics did enter into that.

Then I will put his politics against your politics; you shall pair.

Chairman.—May I say, Mr. O'Donnell, that the Commissioners have been very much interested and pleased with your evidence, and we thank you for the information you have given us. We are very much obliged to you.

The analogy between the conditions in Belgium and Ireland as regards traffic.

Mr. Thomas Corscadden, J.P., Cattle Trader, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim.

20585. Mr. Corscadden, you are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

20586. And you are from Manorhamilton, County Leitrim?—Yes.

20587. And what trade or industry in Ireland do you represent before us to-day?—The cattle trade particularly.

20588. And what particular district?—Manorhamilton principally, and some in Cavan.

20589. I think you are more particularly identified with the cattle traffic?—Well, not more particularly, but I have a good deal to do with it.

Complaint of delay to cattle in transit between Westport and Manorhamilton.

20590. I think you want to give us some information with regard to the transit of cattle in Ireland?—Yes. I think it is not at all satisfactory. I have an instance where I myself sent cattle into Westport; I put them on rail at Westport to be sent to Enniskillen or to Manorhamilton on the line between Sligo and Enniskillen. Instead of that they kept them all night at Claremorris and sent them on to Mullingar, and sent them down next day, the cattle being all night in the wagons, and one of them died a few days afterwards, or at any rate sometime afterwards, though I do not say it was in consequence. But the cattle were greatly deteriorated, and the distance travelled was 110 miles more than necessary.

20591. How long were they in the wagons altogether?—They were in the wagons from, I suppose, 12 o'clock in the day or 11.30 until 5 o'clock the next day, and at that time they got them off.

20592. According to that they were in the wagons about twenty-eight hours?—Yes.

20593. And, of course, all through that time they were without food or water?—Yes.

20594. What railway company was that?—The Midland all through.

20595. Had you a through rate for the cattle?—Not at all; in the ordinary way I do not deal in cattle.

20596. Did you communicate that complaint to the railway company?—I did not. I refused to pay at first, but the stationmaster was so pressing that I sent them on a cheque. It was only £3 something.

20597. But you paid whatever it was?—Whatever the charge was I paid.

20598. I suppose this was quite an exceptional case?—I think it is not an exceptional case, or I would not have been here to say anything about it. But I was telling this to some of the principal dealers in Edinboro', I think it was, and they asked me to put it before the Commission. I wrote to the Secretary and he arranged that I should be examined as a witness.

20599. What date was that?—In 1902, I think.

20600. Have you had any dealings in cattle since then?—Yes, but I was not aware until I got the cattle home, where they had gone to, but they came home, and I did not say anything about it. The last time I bought two beasts in Westport I put them on in the usual way for Claremorris, and the booking-clerk said that they could not book them further than Claremorris, and when I came to Claremorris I said to the stationmaster: "You sent my cattle to Mullingar and kept them twenty-eight hours; if you do not send these properly I will take action against the company. I will not be accountable for any damage," and the cattle were home at Manorhamilton by the Sligo-Leitrim line by seven o'clock.

20601. You have no complaint with reference to that?—I have not with reference to that. On the contrary, I thought it was doing splendidly.

20602. Have you any recent complaints?—No, I have no recent complaints.

20603. Do you pay for cattle so much per wagon, or so much per head?—So much per wagon.

20604. Do you approve of that arrangement?—Certainly not.

Proposal to substitute a rate per head for cattle for the wagon rates.

20605. What is your suggestion?—I think cattle should be carried at so much per head, at the same rate as a wagon will take, and it should be seen that more were not put into a wagon than it is able to carry. It would be far more satisfactory to pay so much a head. Small dealers go to fairs, and if they only buy two beasts they have to amalgamate and get up to ten so as to take a wagon.

20606. Do you suggest that the railway companies should find a wagon for one beast, at the same rate?—I do not see why they should not find a wagon for one, as well as they find a carriage for one person or for two. I know that a wagon sometimes goes quite empty; cattle are crowded ten or twelve into a wagon while the next wagon is quite empty.

20607. But there are half-wagon rates, are there not?—Yes.

20608. But nothing lower?—Nothing lower than a half-wagon; it is very exorbitant.

20609. And your suggestion, in the interests of the dealers, is that it would be much better if there was a rate at so much per head instead of the half-wagon rate, or the wagon rate?—Yes.

20610. At a *pro rata* charge?—At a *pro rata* charge.

20611. That is your idea?—Yes, I think there would be far more cattle bought if that was the case.

20612. Have you anything to say with reference to the local goods rate from small stations to other small stations?—I should like to say that I think there is too much cruelty used in putting cattle on the rail; I have seen them beaten terribly.

20613. We have had evidence before us to show that a vast improvement has taken place in recent years in the loading and unloading of cattle?—I should say that it requires improving still.

20614. Still further?—It requires further improvement.

20615. You know that there is a Government Department that send inspectors round the various fairs to see that cattle are properly treated?—I have never seen them in my part of Ireland.

20616. We have had evidence that inspectors were sent round to fairs, and that a vast improvement during the last few years had taken place in the transit of cattle in Ireland?—The police used to sometimes, but they do not attend the stations now.

20617. There was an order issued by the Agricultural Department, I think?—There may have been, but it is contrary to my knowledge; I have never seen them at Sligo or Collooney or the other principal places.

20618. Are you speaking of quite recent instances?—I have not seen them.

20619. But are you speaking of recent instances of cruelty to cattle?—Decidedly, every day.

20620. Every day?—Yes.

20621. Will you give us one instance of cruelty such as you suggest?—I have seen half-a-dozen whips at one unfortunate horse that would not go into the wagon. Perhaps I would not say half-a-dozen, but it was beaten until it had to go in. I have seen that on the Midland and the Sligo and Leitrim. That is a year ago, I think.

20622. But you have no special instance?—I have had instances myself. One time going down to Derry, some cattle got down in the wagon, the smaller beasts got down under the others, and I said to the guard that the bullocks would be killed, and we had to take them out at Newtownstewart, and a bullock was so exhausted that they had to blow tobacco in his eyes to make him get up in the wagon. That is an instance where they were too much crowded.

20623. Have you ever represented these instances to the railway company?—I never have.

20624. You have never mentioned them?—No.

20625. Either verbally or by correspondence?—No; the fact is, that all parties who put cattle on the rail are anxious to put in as many as they can, and they sometimes put in too many. In this instance there were too many put in the wagon.

20626. Do you not think that that is the fault of the sender?—It was the fault of the sender in that instance, I admit. But it is a common thing for cattle to be got down in the wagons.

20627. But that happens in every country?—I suppose it does, but I cannot speak for any country except my own.

20628. You say that the average load is about ten in a wagon?—About ten.

20629. Suppose a dealer has got eleven; do you not think that he would try to get the eleven into one wagon so as to save the extra wagon?—Decidedly.

20630. What has the railway company got to do with that?—I do not say they have anything to do with it.

20631. Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought you were complaining of the railway company?—I say that it is cruelty. It is the fault of the dealers.

20632. You are not reflecting on the railway company?—Not in that case; decidedly not.

20633. What have you to say about the local goods rates at small stations?—I think that is in connection with through rates.

20634. Yes?—I think through rates between the larger towns and the smaller are not doing any good service, but the reverse. It is handicapping the smaller towns. For instance, the town in which I live myself, one of the principal merchants told me—he is dead now, poor fellow—that he could take his porter cheaper from Sligo in his own carts, which is fourteen miles further, than he could take it off at Manorhamilton in consequence of the through rates.

20635. The through rates were too high?—No, the through rates were too low, and the goods were sent to merchants in Sligo, and he had to pay the extra cost of carrying from Sligo to Manorhamilton; it went through Manorhamilton.

20636. Your complaint is that to large towns there may be a through rate which is lower than would apply to intermediate stations?—Yes, that is what I mean.

20637. *Mr. Acworth.*—Where was that coming from?—I should say it was from Dublin.

20638. But you do not know?—I do not know, but I should say it was from Dublin—from Guinness's.

20639. In that case, it might not have gone through Manorhamilton.

20640. *Chairman.*—I gather that you are in favour of equal mileage rates?—I am in favour of equal mileage rates.

20641. In all circumstances?—In all circumstances. I think the small towns should have as good a rate as the large towns.

20642. That is your suggestion?—That would be my suggestion.

20643. And that through rates should be given to all these small stations?—That a fair rate should be given.

20644. A through rate, I said, so that the traffic is not sent to one station and re-booked to another?—That would be my suggestion.

20645. Then what about passenger fares?—Passenger fares, I think, on the whole, are very reasonable. If a person can be carried for a penny a mile in rural districts like parts of Connaught and parts of Ulster, I do not think they should be carried more cheaply.

20646. Very well, then, we will leave that?—But I think the second-class fares are far too high. I believe there are parts of England where they only charge twenty or twenty-five per cent. over third-class fares. But in some of the districts of Connaught it is very hard for a woman to travel in the third-class carriages, and they cannot afford to pay second-class fares.

20647. Second-class fares being about fifty per cent. more than third-class, I suppose?—I think it is far more than that; it is sometimes nearly double. The second is about double the third, and the first about three times. That is my opinion.

20648. According to what you say, the third-class are about a penny a mile, second-class twopence, and first-class threepence?—I think so.

20649. But you have not any instances?—No, I have no instances at all.

20650. Are you sure that threepence a mile is charged for first-class?—I am not sure; I did not look it up. I am only giving my evidence as an ordinary individual living in the country.

20651. But your suggestion is that the second-class fares should be a small percentage above the third?—Well, a fair percentage above the third.

20652. What do you call a fair percentage?—Twenty-five per cent.; I would be glad to pay that myself.

20653. Do you think that would encourage travelling in Ireland?—I think so; and I think the railway companies would not lose anything by it, because I know there are a great many people would travel second who are now compelled to go third.

20654. I do not think you have any complaints to make with reference to the service of trains?—I do not think so; I think we are well enough supplied with trains.

20655. I do not think we can deal with your suggestion with reference to canals, that is rather beyond the scope of our inquiry?—I was asked to mention some of the canals in Leitrim, not in my own part, but in the southern part.

20656. By some public body?—No, by private individuals. The Keenagh Coal Mines are within two miles of the canal, and could be put in perfect order, I was told, for £3,000.

Improved transit facilities sought for Keenagh coal mines. Extension of the canal suggested.

20657. Is there not some proposal for a railway to Keenagh now?—Yes, but the canal would be much cheaper.

20658. Your suggestion is that the canal might be extended to the coal mines, is it?—It is extended within, I think, 2½ miles from the coal mines.

20659. But you are suggesting that the canal should be extended?—Not extended to the coal mines, but that there should be some facilities. If the canal was in working order, coal could be carted from the mines, and it could go down to Limerick or to the northern counties.

20660. What is your knowledge with reference to what you call undue preferential rates?—The instance I mentioned with regard to porter—that is an undue preferential rate.

Equal mileage rates between all stations advocated.

20661. Then you come back to your suggestion as to a mileage rate?—Yes.

20662. And that would do away with what you call preferential rates?—Yes

20663. That is your suggestion?—Yes. If some Sligo merchants want to get their goods cheap they could get a special train for them, but not at the expense of Manorhamilton and of these other towns.

20664. I understand what you suggest perfectly well—that these smaller towns should have just the same mileage rates as the larger towns?—Yes. It does not apply to porter specially. The same thing applies to all heavy goods—coal and everything else.

Amalgamation of the railways approved.

20665. I understand that. On the whole, I gather that you have no really serious complaints against the management of the Irish railways?—Oh, on the contrary, the only complaint I have is that the managers are too anxious to make their own lines pay, and that if there was an amalgamation of some kind it would be far better; for instance, our line from Sligo to Enniskillen is practically a feeder for the Great Northern.

20666. You are of opinion, I believe, that a motor service might be established with advantage in those districts where there are at present no railways?—I think so. I think it would be a great advantage.

Motor services between Bundoran and Manorhamilton, and between Sligo and Bundoran suggested.

20667. You think it would tend to develop the industries of the particular districts?—I think so. I could give you instances. From Bundoran to Manorhamilton is about fourteen miles, and of my own knowledge there are half-a-dozen cars going now on market days, and a great number of parties would take advantage of such a service, I think, and it would tell whether a railway would pay or not. Then there is from Sligo to Bundoran. One place is the terminus of the Northern and the Midland and the Southern and Western, and the Sligo and Leitrim has its terminus at Sligo, and such a service would be a great advantage there, as people would be able to get to the railway. Then I recollect that since the Midland was made they have advocated a railway being made there, and there is a very large population and a great deal of business done.

20668. Do you suggest that these motor cars should be supplied by the railway companies?—I have never thought about by whom they should be supplied.

20669. But you consider that such a service would be of value?—I think it would develop the country very much.

20670. And benefit the railways?—And benefit the railways besides.

20671. But as to how they are to be provided, you have not considered?—No, I have never thought of it.

Amalgamation of the smaller with the larger railways considered advisable.

20672. Do you consider that it would be advisable for the larger railways to take over these smaller companies?—I think so, decidedly.

20673. Do you consider it advisable, for example, for an authority to take over the large railways?—That would be another question. I think it is too big a question for an ordinary man like me to answer.

20674. You have not considered the question?—Oh, I have considered it, and I have my own opinion.

20675. And you are here to give us your opinion?—With regard to State purchase?

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Mr. Thomas Corscadden, J.P., Cattle Trader, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim.

20676. Yes?—I think it is too big a question for me; it would be a question that would take a great deal of consideration from all parties. But if I had railway shares, and I thought the railway was to be given over to the State, I would sell them at once; I would sell them before I left London; I would have nothing to do with it.

State purchase of the railways objected to.

20677. In other words, you are against State purchase?—Decidedly. I do not like to mention politics, but I am afraid it would be made a political business.

20678. You have considered the question, and you are very strongly of opinion that the country would not be benefited by the State purchase of railways?—On the contrary, I think it would be only a disadvantage.

20679. Do you agree with the present system of appeal to the Board of Trade with reference to complaints against railway companies?—I think it is too cumbrous.

20680. I am speaking of applications to the Board of Trade, which only cost a penny postage?—The impression is that it is very hard to get to the Board of Trade.

20681. Why?—For any complaint and anything of that sort.

20682. Are you not confusing two things?—I am speaking of the Board of Trade in this country.

20683. Anybody in Ireland could write a letter to the Board of Trade?—But they cannot get satisfaction from them.

Alleged difficulty in moving the Board of Trade to deal with complaints.

20684. I think we have had instances of a great many complaints having been satisfactorily dealt with by the Board of Trade?—The impression that ordinary individuals in Ireland have is that the Board of Trade is very hard to move.

20685. Evidently they do not know anything about the Board of Trade?—I do not know anything about them.

20686. Are you not confounding the Board of Trade with the Railway Commission?—No; I am not.

20687. Do you know anything about the Railway Commission?—I do not.

20688. Then we will not ask you anything about it. What do you suggest would be the best means of settling grievances between the public and the railway companies? Supposing you had a grievance and wanted to settle it, and could not settle it with the railway companies, what would be your suggestion as to a tribunal in this country to settle it?—I think the best way would be for the large railways to take over the small ones.

20689. That is one way. But if you had a complaint against a large railway company, what do you suggest as a remedy?—I am sure that if the large railway companies took over the small railway companies they would work them to advantage, and if they were open to criticism with regard to rates or anything, they would not charge unduly.

20690. But supposing they did. Supposing they charged something which you considered was too high?—There should be an appeal to some court—something like the Board of Trade, or a similar body that could be easily approached.

20691. In Ireland?—Something like the County Court.

Necessity for a cheap and easily accessible court to settle complaints urged.

20692. You would be satisfied to go to the County Court to settle any difference you might have between yourself and a large railway company?—Well, they do not always settle questions to my satisfaction, but I think something like that would be better.

20693. What you mean really is that you would like some cheap and easy court to which you could go?—Yes, decidedly.

20694. Without incurring any great expense?—Yes.

20695. But you are of opinion that if the large railway companies took over the smaller companies you would have no complaints, but that the railway companies would do what was right and fair?—I think they would; I am quite sure they would

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

20696. When coal is got on to the canal at Keenagh where does it go to?—It goes down to the Shannon.

20697. That would not take you to the North of Ireland?—I think it could by the Ulster Railway.

20698. But you would have to put it on the railway again afterwards, or do you mean the Ulster Canal?—I am not sure, but I think the canal opens up to the Shannon.

20699. When it gets to the Shannon that will not take the coal to Derry?—No.

20700. You would have to get it on to a railway?—Yes.

20701. Would it not be simpler to make the railway there at once?—I do not know; that is a question of money.

20702. You are, say, 500 miles from London?—Yes.

20703. And you send beasts to be sold in the London cattle markets?—I have very seldom sent them so far.

20704. Where do you send them then?—To Liverpool and Glasgow; they are the principal markets.

20705. But they go beyond that; they go to York and Wakefield, do they not?—Yes.

20706. Take York and Wakefield; I suppose they are 350 miles off, or something like that?—I do not know the distance.

20707. Supposing there is another man in the East Riding of Yorkshire who is twenty miles from York. Would you like to pay a rate twenty times as high as his?—I would not.

20708. Then how about equal mileage, if he is one-tenth of your distance from York he would pay one-tenth of the rate?—He would, but there are special rates to York.

20709. Do you want to keep the special rates?—I never thought of that. You are too clever for me in that way. I would not like the York Market to be broken up, because I send a great deal of cattle to York.

20710. You would like what is sauce for the goose not to be sauce for the gander?—No, I would like what is fair for both.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

20711. You spoke of the canal as being a factor in the situation—that it would be a considerable factor in regard to the coal traffic if extended?—Yes.

20712. As a matter of fact, is not the whole service by the canal down to the Shannon at the present moment very unsatisfactory?—Very unsatisfactory.

20713. Do you think there is room for the canal system and the railway system in Ireland side by side, or that any considerable expenditure would be justified in putting that and other canals into an efficient condition?—I think so, on the ground that water carriage is far cheaper than rail carriage.

20714. Granted, but in Ireland, with small traffic and few industries, do you think there is room for both canals and railways?—I do not think there is room for both, but if the canals could carry more cheaply than the railways I do not see why they should not be used. For instance, it is the impression that the canal from Dublin to Mullingar has been closed up by the Midland Railway for the purpose of doing a service to the Railway Company, and that it is not used as much as it should be,

20715. I do not want to go into the question, because it is not strictly within the terms of reference of this Commission, but, incidentally, I wish to ask your opinion as to whether you think there is sufficient trade and traffic in Ireland to justify expenditure on both canals and railways. It is manifest that to make them both efficient money will be required?—That is a question I could not answer, but I think that it is not right that canals should be made, and then left to be shut up.

20716. I daresay you have followed the evidence given before the Canals Commission?—No. I have not.

20717. Speaking generally, the evidence is that a considerable expenditure of money would be required to make the canal service really efficient?—I do not come here as an expert by any means, but just as an ordinary resident in the country.

20718. But assuming that both the railway service and the canal service require money, and that there is not sufficient money to provide for both, would you be in favour of the money being spent on the railway system rather than on the canal system?—I think I would put it on the railway system.

20719. Of course, you must admit that except for heavy articles, that do not require quick service, the bulk of traders must be depending on rapid transit?—Decidedly, it is for the heavy traffic I should have thought it would be of great service to have canals.

20720. Now, with regard to the motor service. Do you know that the Great Southern and Western Railway Company did put on a motor service, and that they had to take it off, after a year or so, because of the opposition they met with from those in whose interests it was provided?—I never heard that they had to take it off.

20721. It was boycotted?—I do not think it would be in the district in which I live. But I do not see why they should have been allowed to take it off.

20722. But it was given in evidence before us?—I think the Government should step in in a case of that sort, and say, "You shall not take it off."

20723. We have had evidence with regard to the Cavan and Leitrim Railway and the proposed grant of public money for the extension of the railway to the Arigna Coal Mines, and that grant fell through owing to opposition, and the pressure brought to bear by the local carters, and other people who carried the coal; they brought so much pressure to bear on the Leitrim and Cavan County Councils that they practically forewent that grant of public money?—That was the grant of £23,000.

20724. £24,000?—I know that it fell through, but I do not think that that was the whole story.

20725. It had a great deal to do with it, had it not?—It had a little to do with it—not a great deal. Only five or six men who owned horses were concerned in that.

20726. Did not the Leitrim and the Cavan County Councils approve of the grant and the guarantee?—I know the circumstances of that, and that is not all in connection with it. The circumstances were these. I was on the Grand Jury at the time the guarantee was granted for that, and the Bill said, if I recollect aright, that 5 per cent. was to be paid to the shareholders in the first instance, and then that the rest would be made up by a Baronial Guarantee. It did not turn out as we expected, and the Baronial Guarantee went down to two shillings in the pound, and to one shilling.

20727. We are on a rather different point. I am talking of the extension of the Cavan and Leitrim system?—This is in connection with that. In consequence of that they got into such a terror in connection with the guarantee that they went in their hundreds to the County Council and actually made the men who voted for the guarantee in the first place vote against it. Then another railway, the Sligo and Leitrim, with which I was connected. I am asked by a good many of the Guarantors to mention that. They were deterred so very much by the very name of a guarantee that if it were a farthing in the pound they would not give it.

20728. They were not really asked in the last instance to give any guarantee?—But they were afraid they would be.

20729. I think you are aware that when the last offer was made it was simply contingent—that in the event of the £24,000 not being sufficient to fully build the line, they would make good the deficiency; that is a very indirect guarantee. The promoters said it would be ample, and it was only in the event of its not being sufficient that they were asked to agree to make good the deficiency, and they refused to give such a guarantee. But you say there was considerable opposition on the part of the carters?—On the part of the cesspayers generally.

20730. With regard to this motor service; do you not think there would be opposition on the part of carters generally?—I do not think so.

20731. That was the experience in the south?—I do not think it would be, so far as Sligo and Bundoran are concerned, or any part of Leitrim. I think a great deal with regard to that outrage—for it was nothing but an outrage, I think—there was a great deal of private spleen connected with it.

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Mr. Thomas Corscadden, J.P., cattle trader, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.

20732. I am afraid they are too conservative. If you want to do anything to benefit them there is great difficulty in overcoming their conservatism?—Conservatism cuts both ways, I suppose.

20733. I understand you to say that you would be opposed to State purchase if it would place the railways under an Irish authority?—Yes, decidedly.

20734. That is quite intelligible from your point of view, but would you have the same disinclination to State purchase if the control of the Irish system were placed under an English Department similar to one of the Departments in Dublin at present?—I would rather have it in England than in Ireland.

Amalgamation of the railways with retention of present system of management preferred to State ownership.

20735. We will not discuss the Irish authority; I will only say that you have an objection to an Irish authority?—Yes.

20736. Have you the same objection to an English authority?—I think it would be too cumbrous for them to manage.

20737. You would be in favour of amalgamating the smaller lines with the larger?—Yes.

20738. One effect of that would be that if there were an amalgamation of the Irish systems you might not have such instances of cattle being dragged round by Mullingar. Naturally, it was the interest of the Midland Railway to carry them the whole way on their system?—Yes.

20739. Your cattle went round the country by the Midland instead of going by the Great Southern and Western?—Yes.

20740. I presume one effect of amalgamation would be that it would prevent such a possibility?—They would be carried at a fair rate in every way. The larger line would carry at a fair rate, and if they would not it would be open to somebody to show that they must carry them at a fair rate.

20741. Do you say there are actually no through rates between the Midland and the Great Southern and Western; you said that you booked to Claremorris and that they had to be re-booked?—I am not sure.

20742. I think it must be a mistake?—Through rates or not, they had no right to send the cattle 110 miles round.

20743. That probably was due to some error. I think you must be in error in saying that there are no through rates.

20744. *Lord Pirrie.*—But you do not say there were no through rates?—Not at all.

20745. *Col. Hutcheson Poë.*—Not for cattle; he said that he was told by the booking-clerk that he could not book them further than Claremorris?—Then there could not have been through rates.

20746. *Mr. Acworth.*—Supposing you amalgamate the Sligo and Leitrim and Northern Counties, to whom do you want to go; what railway do you want to take you over. The Great Northern, the Midland, or the Great Southern?—The Great Northern would be the natural line to take it over.

Protest on behalf of the Guarantors of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway of unfair treatment in the matter of State aid.

20747. To bring the Great Northern on to Collooney?—Yes. I am asked by some of the guarantors of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway to mention that a large guarantee was paid for the railway, and we think we have been badly treated. They paid £60,000 to build; the Sligo, Leitrim, and Northern Counties Railway got a free grant, and the line in Donegal got a free grant, but we have been very badly treated.

20748. *Lord Pirrie.*—You have been asked to say that?—Yes.

Mr. John Carvill examined by Lord Pirrie (in the Chair).

Mr. John Carvill, representative of the Newry Urban District Council.

20749. You are a large merchant in Newry?—I would not say a "large" merchant.

20750. And you are a timber merchant?—Yes.

20751. You are also a member of the Newry port and Harbour Trust?—Yes.

20752. You are also a member of the Carlingford Lough Commission?—Yes.

20753. Are you connected with any other public body?—I am not.

20754. Whom are you asked to represent here?—I have been asked by the Urban District Council of Newry to give some evidence before the Commission.

The evidence of a previous witness (Mr. Currie, Belfast) discussed.

20755. What class of evidence do you want to give?—Mr. Currie, who represented the Belfast Harbour Board, gave evidence before the Commission, and made a statement that Newry was getting preferential treatment as against Belfast, and I think that that statement gave rise to my coming here to start with. It is principally with regard to that I come on behalf of the Urban District Council of Newry. At the same time, if I may be permitted, I would like to divide my evidence into two parts. The first part will have reference principally to Mr. Currie's evidence.

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Mr. John Carvill, representative of the Newry Urban District Council.

20756. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you give us the date of Mr. Currie's evidence?

Mr. Shanahan.—It was the 14th of March.

(*Witness*).—The first part will have reference principally to Mr. Currie's suggestion that Newry received preferential treatment in railway rates over Belfast, and that in consequence the imports of coal to Newry have increased by thirty-four per cent. since 1900, while those from Belfast have only increased by about two and a half per cent. during the same period.

20757. You do not object to that, do you?—I am not objecting to it.

Suggestion that Newry gets preferential treatment by the Great Northern Railway as against Belfast in the matter of coal rates contradicted.

20758. Why do you wish to give evidence here if you are getting such a benefit; do you want to drive the trade to Belfast?—No, but the evidence suggested that that increase of traffic in Newry was owing to the preferential treatment of Newry, and it is rather to combat the idea that we are getting preferential treatment in Newry that I have come here to-day.

20759. But have you got that increase of thirty-four per cent.?—He is correct in stating that.

20760. And you are not afraid of interfering with that traffic; would you not be wiser to leave it as it is?—We suggest that we are not getting preferential treatment, but rather the reverse.

20761. In other words, if you got fair treatment you think you would have increased beyond that thirty-four per cent.—to fifty or sixty per cent.?—That increase is not due to any preferential treatment shown to Newry.

20762. What is the second part of your evidence?—The second part will have reference to some questions regarding the control and management of Irish railways generally, and will be the expression of my individual opinion only, the Urban District Council not having given me any expression of opinion on these matters one way or the other.

20763. That portion of your evidence will be your own purely?—Yes.

Comparison of distances from Newry and from Belfast to Armagh, Portadown, and Banbridge.

20764. You have some figures in regard to mileage which you want to put forward, have you not?—I do not know whether it will be allowable for me to read what I have stated in my proof, but to help me in placing my evidence before the Commission it will be well to remember the distances from Newry and from Belfast to certain important points through which all, or nearly all, competitive traffic from Newry and Belfast must pass. The distance from Newry (Edward-street) to Armagh is twenty miles sixty-nine chains.

20765. Just state mileage only?—To Portadown, eighteen miles; to Banbridge, seventeen miles. From the Albert Basin-quay it is about three-quarters of a mile more than those distances.

20766. That is from Belfast?—No, from Newry and the point at which coal is shipped from Newry. From Belfast (Grosvenor-street terminus) it is thirty-five and a half miles to Armagh as against twenty and a half from Newry; it is twenty-five to Portadown and twenty-four to Banbridge. From these figures it will be seen that Newry in every case is a shorter distance from these points than Belfast. To assist me in making my statement as intelligible as I can, it will be necessary for me to give as short an account as practicable of the relations that existed between the town of Newry and the Great Northern Railway Company, and the litigation that has taken place between that company and the Newry Town Commissioners—now the Urban District Council of Newry.

20767. Did the opening of the Newry and Armagh Railway in any way affect you?—The Newry and Armagh Railway was opened with great expectations. However, it was a line only to Armagh. I suppose the Great Northern Railway Company or the lines that now compose the Great Northern Railway Company, were too strong for a short railway, and by their harassing that railway I suppose it proved of little use to the Newry people. They were compelled to confine the advantages of the railway to Newry; they stopped the advantages at Armagh. Of course, it shortened the distance to Armagh as against the old route *via* Portadown by a good many miles.

History of the Newry and Armagh Railway and of its subsequent absorption by the Great Northern (Ireland) Railway.

20768. Do you remember by how many?—By about eight miles. They eventually bought the railway for about £225,000; I am not quite sure about the figure.

20769. You do not give that figure as the actual figure?—I think that figure is correct. I think it cost about twice that sum.

20778. Did that make the Newry people feel more disheartened?—I suppose it did not put them in any better heart any way. The Great Northern Railway were perfectly entitled to harass the Newry and Armagh Railway if they liked while it was an independent railway. I do not complain of that in the least.

20771. You do not?—They were absolutely entitled to do that while it was an independent railway. It is after it became a part of their system that the point arises.

20772. You consider now that it is a part of their system that they are not treating Newry properly?—I will give you the history of what they have done, and you will be better able to follow what they are doing.

20773. Put it as shortly as you can?—Eventually, in 1879, the Great Northern Railway Company bought the Newry and Armagh Railway, and so it became a part of their system, and up to 1889, a period of ten years, they pursued a policy of preferential treatment to Armagh, as well as other towns, in favour of traffic from Belfast as against that from Newry. In 1888 the Railway and Canal Traffic Act was passed, enabling town boards and other bodies to cite railway companies before the Railway Commissioners. Exasperated by the unfair treatment that their town had been so long subject to, the then Newry Town Commissioners cited the Great Northern Railway Company before the Railway Commissioners, and, after a protracted hearing of many days, in which the railway company sought to justify their position by alleging extra expenses in working caused by gradients, etc., on the route *via* Market Hill, an order was made by the Railway Commissioners (a copy of the final paragraph of which is given on the last page of my proof) directing the Great Northern Railway Company to desist from giving Belfast preferential treatment as against Newry, and thus was swept away, in part at least, the old preferential rates from Belfast to Armagh, Portadown, Banbridge, and all towns served through these points, the removal of which Armagh rates from the rate-book was so much deplored by Mr. Currie in his evidence before this Commission.

20774. What happened after that decision?—Shortly after that decision the Great Northern Railway Company issued new rates based on a charge of three miles (over and above the actual distance) for gradients, etc., on traffic from Newry to Armagh *via* Market Hill. The Newry Town Commissioners refused to accept this as a compliance with the Order of the Railway Commissioners, and a correspondence ensued between the parties without any practical result. Eventually, wishing to avoid further litigation, the Newry Town Commissioners invited the Railway Company to appear before the Board of Trade, who appear to have had some conciliatory authority in such matters. The meeting took place before Mr. Courtney Boyle on the 21st of October, 1890, and a short time after the Board sent a written communication, dated 12th December, 1890 (a copy at the same time being sent to the Great Northern Railway Company), the concluding paragraph of which communication is as follows:—"After careful consideration of all the circumstances referred to in the correspondence on the subject with this Department, and stated at the interview already alluded to, the Board of Trade are of opinion that the addition of three miles to the actual mileage results in the present case is a charge that is not fair or reasonable."

20775. Did the Railway Company admit that after that they had no such charge on any other part of their system?—I do not understand you.

20776. What followed after that?—The Great Northern Railway Company appear to have received the decision of the Board of Trade with indifference, or perhaps contempt, and again a correspondence ensued between them and the Newry Town Commissioners. Finally, getting no satisfaction from the Railway Company, they again cited them before the Railway Commissioners. That was to carry out the Order of a year and a half previously. The Railway Company replied with an explanation (and a further amendment of rates, I believe) to the effect that their rates were amended and based on the assumption of Newry (Edward-street) being fourteen miles nearer Armagh than Belfast (Grosvenor-street Terminus) is to the same town (the real difference being, however, fourteen miles sixty chains), with an added charge of 2*d.* per ton on first class traffic under the old

classification, and 3*d.* per ton on second class traffic, and 4*d.* a ton on third, fourth, fifth, and sixth class traffic. The case went to hearing, and in the result the Railway Commissioners confirmed these charges, but marked their sympathy with the Newry Town Commissioners by refusing to give the Great Northern Railway Company any costs against them.

20777. They admitted that the charges were correct?—Yes, but the Great Northern Company had to pay their own costs. The net result of this litigation, spread over nearly two years, was that the Great Northern Railway Company were forced to fix the rate from Newry (Edward-street) to Armagh at, roughly speaking, twenty per cent. below the rates from Belfast (Grosvenor-street Terminus), and to similarly fix the rates from Newry to Portadown and Banbridge at reductions on their former practice as compared with the rates from Belfast. There was a general system on the Great Northern Company to send goods from Belfast to these towns which were nearer Newry at preferential rates as against Newry.

20778. The Railway Company did that?—Yes, because, as you will see, that in the final paragraph of the Railway Commissioners' Order they referred to the towns of Armagh, Portadown, Dungannon, Cookstown, Omagh, and Banbridge.

20779. Have the Railway Company recently told you anything, or informed you in any way about these rates?—I got into some communication with them when I was appointed by the Newry Town Commissioners to come here, and I asked them whether they were carrying out the Order of the Railway Commission—at least, were they continuing to give Newry the advantages under the decision of the Railway Commissioners, and, as far as I can recollect, they told me that they had been practically maintained.

20780. Are you satisfied, from the investigation you have made, that Belfast is getting yet some slight advantages over Newry?—I am satisfied of that, if my information is correct, and I have taken infinite pains to ascertain it.

20781. Can you give us any accurate statement or any example of what takes place?—I may inform you that I asked for a list of rates, and I was refused them. I was told that I must get them in the ordinary course. They are perfectly entitled to do that, but I think they might have given the rates in a case of this sort.

20782. Are you entitled to go to your own station and look at the rates?—Yes, but that led to a considerable loss of time at the hearing before the Railway Commission. There were several days lost, and the judge specially referred to it.

20783. But you would not have lost time?—I had to go to Belfast five times to get the information, and very often, if you are not an expert in rates, when you go to get the list and get back you find you have forgotten to look up something else that is suggested by the rates you have got.

20784. Will you give us an instance?—The first is coal to Stewartstown—six tons. This coal goes through Portadown in both instances from Belfast, and the distance from Newry is about six miles less. Portadown, through which this traffic all goes, is about six miles nearer Newry than it is to Belfast.

20785. In other words, it is forty-eight miles from Belfast and forty-two miles from Newry?—The distance from Newry is forty-two miles fifty-five chains. These chains sometimes make a difference in the rate. From Newry (Albert Basin-quay) the class rate is 4*s.* 5*d.* to Stewartstown, and the actual rate is 4*s.* 5*d.* From Belfast (Queen's-quay) the class rate is 5*s.* 5*d.*

20786. What is the actual rate?—The actual rate is 4*s.* 8*d.* I took considerable trouble to find out what the actual rates were by going to the station in Belfast and inquiring.

20787. You based your figures on the information you received?—From a young man going to the point and getting the rate.

20788. *Mr. Acworth.*—When you say "actual rate," do you mean the special rate recorded in the rate-book?—Yes, recorded in the rate-book.

20789. You found a rate in the rate-book of 4*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes, from Newry, as against 4*s.* 8*d.* from Belfast.

20790. Take Newry for example. You found no rate in the rate-book except 4*s.* 5*d.*?—That is all.

20791. When you came to Belfast you found two rates in the rate-book?—The class rate and what you call the actual rate.

20792. The class rate would be 5*s.* 5*d.*?—Yes.

20793. You also found in the rate-book, as I understand, a special rate for coal at 4*s.* 8*d.*?—That is right.

20794. You do not know what is actually paid by a trader; it might be something different from that; you are not giving evidence on that?—I have not got that. The only evidence I am giving is that I have inquired for the rates as far as I could. I went to the railway station.

20795. When you say "actual rate," you mean the rate recorded in the rate-book; you do not mean that you are giving evidence that somebody paid it?—No.

20796. *Lord Pirrie.*—If you go back to 1894 do you find any difference in the rate?—I find that for this traffic in 1894 the actual rates were from Newry (Albert Basin-quay), 4*s.* 5*d.* I can give you the actual document for that if you want it.

Coal rates, Newry and Belfast to Stewartstown.

20797. We will accept that as being correct?—It is to be noted that Newry Quay is five miles sixty chains nearer Stewartstown than Belfast (Grosvenor-street). Therefore, to the charge for this difference in distance there should be added the charges for the Belfast Central Railway. I think there is a general added charge for traffic over the Belfast Central Railway of about 7*d.* on this traffic.

20798. You mean ordinary traffic?—Yes; low class traffic.

20799. Do you know that yourself?—I have got it from the rate book. I will perhaps show that later.

Timber rates from Newry and from Belfast to Ballyroney and Cootehill.

20800. Have you any case of timber or any other commodity?—Timber to Ballyroney five tons. From Newry (Edward-street) the distance is 26 miles 75 chains; the class rate is 5*s.* 6*d.*, and the actual rate 5*s.* 6*d.*

20801. Now, again, you are speaking from the rate book?—I am speaking from information from the rate books in Belfast.

20802. Being a timber merchant, I thought these were actual rates you were actually paying?—We do not pay carriage. The consignee pays carriage. From Belfast (Grosvenor-street) the distance is thirty-three miles thirty-six chains. The class rate is 6*s.* 3*d.*, and the special rate is 5*s.* That means that the distance is greater and the rate is less.

20803. It is actually less in this case?—And the distance is greater.

20803A. Have you timber to other parts of the line?—The next place is Cootehill. The distance from Newry (Edward-street) is 54 miles 66 chains.

20804. What is the class rate there?—8*s.* 6*d.*

20805. And the actual rate?—7*s.* 8*d.*

20806. What percentage of the class rate is 90·2?—From Belfast (Grosvenor-street) the distance is 88 miles 28 chains, and the class rate is 11*s.* 8*d.*

20807. What is the actual rate in that case?—The actual rate is 10*s.*, so that the percentage of the class rate is 85·7 as against 90·2 in the Newry case.

20807A. In that case Newry has the cheaper rate?—Yes; but it is not a similar percentage.

Cement rates from Newry and from Belfast to Ballyroney and Portadown.

20808. You have given us coal and timber. Have you any other commodity?—Here is cement to Ballyroney. From Newry (Edward-street) the distance to Ballyroney is 26 miles 75 chains. The class rate is 5*s.* 6*d.*, and the actual rate is 4*s.* 9*d.*, the percentage of the class rate being 86·4.

20809. What is Belfast?—The distance from Belfast to Ballyroney is 33 miles 36 chains. The class rate is 6*s.* 3*d.*, and the actual rate is 5*s.*, so that the percentage of the class rate from Belfast is 80 as against 86 from Newry.

20810. I think we will pass on. You need not go into other instances?—They are details, and if you want more we can supply them. The rates I have bothered about are only connected with my own trade, so that if others are not given it does not show that they do not exist. But there is the Portadown rate that I should like to call your attention to.

20811. This is one of the towns mentioned in the decision of the Railway Commissioners?—Yes. From Newry (Edward-street), the distance is 18 miles 63 chains. The class rate for cement is 4*s.* 6*d.*, and the actual rate is 3*s.* 4*d.*, which is a percentage of 74 of the class rate. From Belfast (Grosvenor-street) the distance is 25 miles 30 chains. The class rate is 5*s.* 3*d.* and the actual rate is 3*s.* 6*d.*, which is 66·6 per cent. of the class rate. That is one of the towns specially mentioned in the decision of the Railway Comissioners. That means that there is an overcharge of 11 per cent. so far as Newry is concerned.

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20812. But you still keep below Belfast as far as the rate is concerned?—Yes. But we do not look upon that as carrying out the decision of the Railway Commissioners.

20813. We will assume that these other rates are correct. Have you any other point you wish to mention as regards Belfast?—I am inclined to think that Newry is the step-child of the Great Northern Railway Company generally. I think there is a tendency as far as I can see in fixing these rates that in arranging the proportion we should get rather the worst of it generally.

20814. But have you as many large steamers trading into Newry, whether carrying timber or cement, or coal, and if you have sufficient to make train loads, would it not be cheaper for the railway company to carry to Belfast, the longer distance?—My trade is not carried in train loads.

20815. Do you mean to say that you are speaking merely of six-ton lots?—In Ireland there are very few train loads unfortunately. Guinness's stout is about the only one.

20816. You do not think the difference should make any difference to the railway company?—The traffic in timber and cement and all these things is not carried in train loads.

The rates issued in connection with a new station opened at Belfast alleged to be unfair to Newry traders.

20817. Have you anything to say about the Great Northern Railway Company opening a station at Belfast for any special purpose?—They have a new station at Belfast, and it seems to me that it is not fair to Newry, because it shortens the carriage for the merchants in Belfast and it lengthens the distance for the railway company.

20818. But it is a convenience for the traders?—Yes; and, therefore, they ought to pay for it in the railway rate.

20819. But it is against the interest of Newry?—Yes. That station has been opened on the Great Northern Railway, and they got special maximum powers to charge high rates, and yet they seem to throw that in with the traffic that comes from Belfast, as if it were of no account whatever.

Complaint of insufficient passenger train service between Newry and Bessbrook.

20820. The Urban District Council of Newry asked you to call special attention to certain matters. I should like to hear what they want you to call our attention to?—They are important from our point of view. The Bessbrook Station from the Newry passenger point of view is important, and it is especially important to the Bessbrook Spinning Company. I think this point was suggested by them because they do not feel that they are sufficiently catered for in trains stopping at Bessbrook Station. I understand from them that only two trains in the day stop at that station, and it is suggested that the 7.30 in the morning should stop there, and that the limited mail from Belfast in the afternoon should also stop there.

20821. That is a suggestion from them. Have they passed any resolution, or have they only verbally told you?—That is verbally given to me.

Alleged excessive charges on nurserymen's exhibits.

20822. Have you any other complaint about another trade, such as the nurserymen?—The nursery people complain that they have to pay passenger rates, whilst in England and Scotland if they are exhibiting at shows they get their exhibits carried at goods rates.

Insufficient supply of wagons at Newry for coal traffic.

20823. Is there a general complaint amongst the Urban District Councillors and others of want of wagons?—The only thing I know is that I see coal constantly thrown on the quay for want of wagons.

20824. Do you know that from your own knowledge?—Yes, I have seen coal on the quay.

20825. Is it not there for the convenience of steamers getting away quickly?—The two things are mixed up together. If there were wagons to take the stuff it would be as easy to put it in the wagons as to throw it on the quay. If there were the wagons it would not be put on the quay, as it means sixpence a ton probably of a loss in one shape or another when it is thrown on the quay.

20826. Have you any other information you wish to give us; have you any special desire to say anything as to any conclusions you have arrived at as regards this mismanagement, as you consider it?—I would not like to say that it was mismanagement, because the railway company have to take care of their shareholders, and perhaps they can see a profit by squeezing Newry as against the bigger port. But as I understand, this inquiry is of a more national nature.

20827. But have you any conclusion after reading the evidence which has been given; you have read a good deal of the evidence, I suppose?—I have read some of it, not all.

20828. Have you come to any conclusion as to what is proper to be done?—These are my own views. I do not suggest that they are the views of the Town Commissioners or anybody else. I cannot say more than I have put in my proof. From the first part of my evidence it will be seen that I submit that Newry has maintained for a long period a most exhausting struggle against the influence of a large station like Belfast operating on an indifferent, if not hostile railway company—as hostile as the Great Northern Railway Company surely was from 1865 to 1891—that is the period up to the Railway Commission decision—and as proof of that hostility I can hardly believe the company would otherwise have so relentlessly sought to charge, and still do charge, for gradient to Armagh had Belfast been Plaintiff in the matter instead of Newry.

20829. Really you have given that so clearly at the beginning of your evidence that I would rather you passed on to your own conclusions?—I think the opening of Maysfield Station in Belfast for receipt of traffic without any extra charge is only a continuance of the same policy.

20830. You have already said that. You have given that in your evidence. Perhaps you will give us your conclusions?—But you need to see the previous part before you can come to the conclusions.

20831. We have already had the previous part so clearly, and some others of the Commissioners will probably wish to ask some questions?—This leads me to the conclusion that unless the Irish railways are in some way more effectually restrained than they are at present the small centres will be sacrificed to the large ones, and in my opinion the process is even now in full swing. Mr. Heyn's evidence disclosed his dislike to a central management of the Irish railways. He looked upon a "boss" official competent to fix rates with him in Belfast as a necessity for progress, but he did not say how other ports were to fare without such a luxury at their door. To prevent this crushing out process, I think the State must become the owners of the railways in Ireland, and if the finding of the Financial Relations Commission some years ago has any force or reality, it is not hard to suggest where the money to buy them should come from. But even failing this, I think the ratepayers of Ireland would be justified, if not wise, in undertaking part of the necessary liability, the price not to exceed 5 or 10 per cent. premium of the average price of the last five years.

20832. That is your own personal view of what you would recommend to be done with the Irish railways?—That is very much my view.

20833. But it is not the opinion of the Corporation or Board which you represent; there was no resolution passed, was there?—No. I do not think the thing was discussed; I never asked about it.

20834. If the railways were bought up by the State you would not dread their being under Irish control?—I really do not care what authority they are under so long as it is a central authority, and so long as the smaller places are not sacrificed to the larger ones, because that seems to me to be the tendency at the present time. In this system of grouping rates the very first-class ports always get the benefit. We in Newry, for instance, are an inland port and have paid for getting into the heart of the country and our position is not recognised.

20835. And you think it will be recognised under a central board or an amalgamation of the railways?—I think it should be.

20836. Supposing it was done, do you suggest any special court to which traders could apply quickly and at little cost to settle any differences?—I think the present Railway Commissioners ought to be open to any trader. So far as my opinion is concerned, I think there should not be any counsel on either side in the first instance.

20837. You would have a County Court Judge?—No; he is totally incompetent for the purpose.

20838. But you would have no counsel or solicitors at all?—No. I think the Railway Commissioners as at present constituted are perfectly competent to inquire into the whole question as it comes before them.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

20839. The whole gist of your evidence, as far as I understand it, is to complain of the pressure and the unjust treatment you have received at the hands of the Great Northern Company?—Yes.

20840. But I understood you to preface your remarks by saying that you considered the Great Northern Company was perfectly justified in using all the pressure they thought fit on the smaller line—the Newry and Armagh line—in order to buy them out?—Up to the time they purchased.

20841. That is a very dangerous doctrine if you follow it to its logical conclusion. You suggest that a big, powerful railway company, such as the Great Northern, is at liberty to use its powers and its large financial means to bring pressure to bear on a small line. If that policy is to be followed by all the other large lines in the country in the way of squeezing the Cavan and Leitrim, the Sligo and Leitrim, and all the small lines throughout the country, that is not likely to conduce either to efficiency, economy, or harmony?—I quite agree, but the difficulty I see is this. They are within their rights in doing so, and I do not want to cringe or cry over things that we could not meet.

20842. But apparently you think they are justified in buying you out on the best terms they can, and having succeeded in effecting their object, it appears that they use their powers to squeeze you still further?—They did until the Railway Commissioners came in, and I believe that even since then the pressure has been more or less going on, influenced, perhaps, by the pressure from Belfast, or I do not know where. At any rate we are not so important as Belfast.

20843. The result in your case has been manifestly to your disadvantage?—That is so.

20844. I think Mr. Greer, who gave evidence before us, said that when the Great Northern Company bought out that line the price they paid was insufficient to discharge the preference shareholders' claim in full. They paid nothing to the ordinary shareholders, and the preference shareholders did not receive the full amount they were entitled to, so that evidently that could not have been a profitable transaction for the shareholders in that line. I thought we had had also from him that he had nothing to complain of as to the rates under the present system; he admitted that in the first instance they had been preferential as regards Belfast, but that subsequently, owing to the action of the Canal Commissioners, that had been remedied. Looking over the rates which you have given us, the first one—coal from Newry to Portadown, I have worked it out to a mileage rate, and it comes to 1·25*d.* per mile for a distance of forty-two miles. Now, with regard to Belfast to Stewartstown, a distance of forty-eight miles, it worked out at 1·18*d.* In other words, there is a difference only of ·07*d.* in favour of Belfast. Certainly the distances are nearly approximate, but when it is only a difference of ·07, which is less than one-tenth of a penny, it is not a very serious inequality to complain of?—In the case of coal the difference of 3*d.* or 6*d.* in the rate would draw the traffic from Newry to Belfast absolutely.

20845. You gave another rate with regard to timber from Newry to Ballyroney. That works out at 2·53*d.* from Newry to 1·80*d.* from Belfast. The difference there is greater undoubtedly. That is a difference of nearly ¾*d.* in favour of Belfast. As far as I can see, that is about the only serious inequality of which I think you have any right to complain?—If these inequalities are extended more or less over a large area they become of importance.

20846. I think that is undoubtedly a very great disparity. But I will take another which is not so favourable to you. It is more favourable to Belfast. Timber to Cootehill works out at 1·70*d.* from Newry and 1·40*d.* from Belfast. That is a difference of a farthing in favour of Belfast. But against that the distance is very nearly double. In one case it is 54 miles, and in the other it is 88, so that, therefore, the longer the haul the less the rate?—May I say that the class rate is reduced in proportion; as the distance increases the class rate is reduced.

20847. I do not think that affects the question in this particular instance, because we are dealing with what is actually charged?—No. The class rates presumably are made up on a fair basis; therefore, if the class rate for 88 miles is fair, the class rate for 45 miles, or whatever our distance is, should also be fair, and the proportionate reduction should be equal if the rates are equal.

20848. It would be largely in your favour to work on the actual rates charged. In that particular instance where you have twice the distance to carry coal, it only amounts to a difference of about a farthing, which is not excessive considering the distance. That would be a fair charge, I think. I only take it for what it is worth. You made some reference to the difficulties of through connections and the disabilities which passengers living at Newry are under in meeting the mail train?—Yes.

20849. That is at Portadown?—No; Bessbrook station is 1¼ miles from Newry, and the connection with Newry to catch the English mail is very awkward, because that mail train passes Bessbrook station about six o'clock in the evening, and that catches the English mail. If you want to catch the English mail from Newry at present you have to leave at a quarter or twenty minutes past three.

20850. *Lord Pirrie.*—You have to go to Dublin?—Yes.

20851. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Has that been represented to the Great Northern Railway Company by the local authority?—Long ago, when I was mixed up in these questions more closely than I am at present—I was in this fight when the Urban Council was at loggerheads with the Great Northern Railway—this point was raised. I believe the Bessbrook Spinning Company, who are the chief people in Bessbrook, have spoken to the Great Northern Railway Company repeatedly about getting more trains from Belfast and Dublin to stop at Bessbrook Station.

Alleged inefficient mail train service for Newry passengers.

20852. But their representations have not led to any improvement?—I believe not. They have generally been answered by—"The Postmaster-General informs us," and so forth. But against that the Great Northern Company have a train running between Belfast and Greenore—the Greenore boat express—that stops three times and does 46 miles and a half, Belfast to Newry, in 59 minutes, so that I cannot see much force in the contention that they cannot stop the limited mail at Bessbrook, which does not go so fast.

20853. With regard to the general question, are you in favour of amalgamation generally of Irish railways, or would you prefer that they should remain in their independent state?—I prefer that they should be under some State control.

20854. You would be in favour of some central State authority taking them over?—Yes. We in the small towns think—or at least I do—that we would get fair treatment as compared with the large towns and would get our fair share of the advantages.

State purchase and control of the railways recommended to ensure fair treatment to all interests.

20855. You would get the benefit of your geographical position, which at present you do not?—Yes.

20856. I do not understand what you mean by saying that the ratepayers in such an event might pay from 5 to 10 per cent. premium on the average price of the last five years?—I mean that the country would have to take all the lines, and the Irish ratepayers at present do take a certain liability for railways, and I thought it might be extended. The chance of their having to pay so severely in the purchase of existing railways which pay a dividend would not be so great as in the exploiting of new railways.

20857. The effect of that would simply be to reduce the financial burden which the State would have to undertake?—Yes. I thought perhaps that if the State as a whole did not undertake it, the Irish ratepayers might go in for it in some shape or form.

20858. That would be a joint undertaking?—Something of the sort.

20859. But you would prefer that the State should undertake the whole responsibility?—I think so. If you can get somebody else to pay over your debts, so much the better.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

Cost of the Newry case before the Railway and Canal Commission.

20860. As I understand, your position is this. You say that you went to the Railway Commissioners. We have heard a good deal about the Newry Railway Commission case. Do you happen to know what it cost—how much did Newry spend on that fight?—We had not to pay our costs, so I cannot tell you.

20861. Anyway, it was not very serious to you then?—It is a very long time ago.

20862. We have heard so much about the tremendous expense of that court, but yours, which was a famous case, did not cost you anything?—That was because we won.

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20863. You went to the Commission, and after a great deal of trouble you got them to lay down a rule which worked out that you were to get something like 15 per cent. advantage over Belfast?—In certain directions.

20864. *Via* Portadown?—No, *via* Armagh, and lesser reductions *via* Portadown and Banbridge, which previously we had not been getting.

20865. You were to get 15 per cent. reduction *via* Armagh?—Yes, something like that.

20866. The special rates, which you have got up with great care and put in come to this. You still get your 15 per cent. by the class rate?—Yes.

20867. But they have put in special rates?—Yes.

20868. And the special rate from Belfast does not give you anything like 15 per cent. preference?—It is whatever this list shows.

Alleged failure of the Great Northern Railway Company to fully comply with the Railway and Canal Commission's decision as to Newry rates.

20869. It shows that you do not get the same percentage of difference where it is a special rate as you do under the class rate?—Precisely. But may I explain? I do not think that in the class rate they charge us the 2*d.* that they are probably entitled to charge, but the quantity of stuff carried at the class rate is infinitesimal—perhaps 5 per cent., so that really they are not giving us anything.

20870. As I understand, taking, for instance, cement to Portadown, from Belfast it is 5*s.* 3*d.*, from Newry 4*s.* 6*d.* on the class rate?—Newry is 4*s.* 6*d.* against Belfast 5*s.* 3*d.*

20871. That, you think, is a fair proportion?—I have not inquired into whether the class rates are fair or not.

20872. Does it seem to you that that carries out the decision of the Commission?—Looking at it casually, I think it does.

Instances of rates alleged to be disproportionate.

20873. When it comes to the actual rate, the difference is only 2*d.*; 3*s.* 4*d.* as against 3*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

20874. Is your complaint that that does not carry out the decision of the Commission?—Yes.

20875. Is that the gist of it?—Yes.

20876. It seems to me that the railway company ought to answer that point.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—There are only two cases where it does not carry out the decision of the Commission, and I think they require explanation.

20877. *Mr. Acworth.*—It does seem to me that that wants explanation. I would like to bring out a point which you did not give in answer to Lord Pirrie. You say that it is true that your coal traffic has increased more rapidly than that of Belfast, but that the reason is that you have put on new steamers and worked much harder to get the traffic?—Yes.

Increase in coal traffic through Newry port; not due to any concessions in rates.

20878. It is not the result of advantage of rates—it is due to working much harder to get the traffic?—Yes.

20879. And that you deserve the credit for your energy, and that it is not the railway rates—that is your point?—Yes.

20880. When you speak of Bessbrook; how far is that from Goraghwood?—About two and a half miles.

20881. Goraghwood is the junction?—Yes.

20882. Does the limited mail not stop there?—No.

20883. You would not expect it to stop at both places?—No. The reason we suggest that it should stop at Bessbrook is that if it stopped at Goraghwood we would have to have a special train to run into Newry, but you can drive down in a car from Bessbrook.

Better mail train connection for Newry urged.

20884. You would leave it to them how to give it, but you think that Newry ought to have the advantage of the limited mail connection?—I think so.

20885. With regard to the Railway Commission, as I understand, you suggest that there should be a Railway Commission without counsel or solicitor, and that then there should be an appeal; to whom should there be an appeal?—To themselves.

20886. To themselves?—Yes.

20887. They are to hear the case twice, once without the help of learned gentlemen, and then when they find they cannot do it in that way, they are to get learned gentlemen to help them?—It is not when they find they cannot do it; it is when some of the litigants are dissatisfied.

Proposal to exclude counsel from Railway Commission Court cases discussed.

20888. That is a new proposal; we have had many proposals before the Commission, but that is quite new?—When a trader goes before the Railway Commission he does not know where it will end. I have been in three railway cases, and, as far as my experience goes, the Commissioners are perfectly competent without any help from any legal gentlemen to decide the points at issue.

20889. Far be it from me to say they would not be. I gather that one of your main reasons for wanting the railway management to be concentrated in Dublin is that you think every part of the country would get fair treatment?—That, roughly speaking, is my idea.

20890. Are you quite sure that Dublin would not tend to get an advantage?—Possibly. Wherever the centre was there might be temptation that way.

20891. You know that there are Government railways in New South Wales?—I imagine that there are.

20892. Do you know that there is a standing complaint in New South Wales that the merchant in Sydney can get through rates, but that if a man in an inland town wants to distribute his goods he has to pay two local rates. Supposing Dublin treated Newry in that way?—Of course that is corrupt.

20893. No, they say it is business?—Ah, no; I do not agree with them. I think it is fraud.

20894. I am sure you would not like to suggest that a State railway would be corrupt?—I do not suggest that.

20895. What do you mean when you say that the railway company ought to be bound to supply a list of rates. I sympathise very much with the difficulty you have in getting the rates you want without a deal of trouble and expense?—If you send to the railway company, and say, "I want to know the rates from Newry to Jericho, or anywhere else," and you pay the money that is necessary for their clerk to supply those rates, I think you ought to be entitled to get them.

20896. Just as you are entitled to go to the Registrar-General and say, "I want the birth certificate of John Jones"?—Precisely.

20897. You agree that you ought to pay for the time of the clerk?—Certainly.

20897A. I have never heard that suggested before, and there is a good deal to be said for it.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—You can do it now. Any person who is intending to send traffic can have the rate by writing to the secretary of the company.

Mr. Acworth.—But supposing I do not intend to send traffic.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Then I do not think you should have it.

Mr. Acworth.—I am proposing to send traffic from Newry to, say, Portadown. What I want to know is not only what I shall be charged, but what the man in Belfast will be charged. I cannot say that I am intending to send traffic from Belfast.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Under those circumstances you could go to the rate book in Belfast and see.

Mr. Acworth.—But you must go to Belfast to get it.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I am not making any suggestion, but would it not be an intolerable thing if you could ask for the rates from every place?

Mr. Acworth.—Not if you were prepared to pay.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Oh, if you pay the expense; I beg your pardon.

Mr. Acworth.—This gentleman has suggested that. It is a new suggestion altogether, but it is one worth considering, because it is a common grievance.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think there would be some reason in it if you paid for it.

Mr. Acworth.—There are many Acts of Parliament which provide that you can have things copied out for you at a price.

Cross-examined by Mr. BALFOUR BROWNE, K.C.

20898. (*To Witness*).—Do you know that quite recently there was a large deputation of chairmen of Chambers of Commerce and others who waited upon the Great Northern Company?—I do, but I was not there; I was asked to go, but I did not.

20899. You could not be there, I think. Do you know that the question of the mail train being stopped was discussed then?—It was not on the Agenda; I did not know that.

20900. Do you know that it was explained that this was a notice train and could only be stopped by permission of the Postmaster-General?—I have heard that answer given so frequently that I am tired of listening to it.

20901. But you must tire of the Postmaster-General and not of us?—The question of the mail train being stopped is mixed up with the arrival in Dublin, and if you are able to run a train over parts of the system sufficiently fast and at such a speed that if you ran the mail train at the same speed you could arrive in Dublin in time, I think that point disappears.

20902. Do you know that we applied to the Postmaster-General and he refused to allow us to stop that train?—I was not aware of that.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It is one of his notice trains, and he declined to allow us to stop it.

Mr. Acworth.—Even if you got to Dublin at the same time.

20903. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—No; we could not do that; we asked extra time for the stop. (*Witness*)—I say that it is unnecessary to have extra time, because the company are running a train at a faster rate.

20904. Is Mr. Irwin Chairman of the Harbour Trust?—He is.

20905. Do you know that he gave evidence before this Commission?—I heard that he did.

20906. Do you know what he said—"The Urban District Council sent out circulars in reference to this inquiry, and the Harbour Board and Trust co-operated with them, and we asked them to state any grievance, to make any objections or any observations as to the objections they had to raise to the service, and there was nothing of the kind"?—I cannot tell you what is in other people's minds.

20907. "We only got one single complaint, and that was with regard to rolling stock"?—I cannot tell you.

Lord Pirrie.—He says he is only giving evidence for himself.

20908. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—I am not objecting. With regard to these rates, do you know that everyone of them except two—that from Newry to Ballyroney, where I think there must be some mistake in the information you have got but we will look into it—and the one with regard to cement to Portadown—in every one the difference between the rates from Belfast to the place of destination and Newry comply with the order of the Commissioners?—I do not know it at all.

Lord Pirrie.—Do you mean the class rate or the actual rate?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—The actual rate.

Lord Pirrie.—How does it go in reference to the 15 per cent.?

20909. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—If you look, there is the rate from Newry 7*s.* 8*d.*, and from Belfast 10*s.*?—What rate is that?

20910. Timber to Cootehill. I ought to remind you that these comparisons are not accurate, because according to the decision of the Railway Commissioners we were entitled to add to the Newry rate a small sum ranging from 2*d.* to 4*d.* according to the class on account of the heavy gradient between Newry and Armagh. That is the position. I am reading from Sir Frederick Peel's decision. In every case you have to add that 2*d.* in order to find whether the rates are comparable or not. But still there is the discrepancy in the two cases I have mentioned?—What is the rate that you are referring to now?

20911. Timber to Cootehill from Newry, 7*s.* 8*d.*, and from Belfast 10*s.*

Lord Pirrie.—That is for timber.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Yes.

20912. *Lord Pirrie.*—Witness stated that he was quite satisfied with that?—(*Witness*).—I do not know that.

20913. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Then I am satisfied? May I make a remark on that?—You are entitled to charge 2*d.* or 3*d.*

20914. 4*d.* according to the Commissioners?—4*d.* is on the higher class. It might be 3*d.* or 2*d.*, but it could not be 4*d.*

20915. Very likely?—If you will observe the difference in the percentage of the class rate is 5 per cent., which, on 120 pence, would be 6*d.* If you take off 3*d.* you will be still charging us 3*d.* too much.

20916. You have not taken off the terminals; you are dividing the whole lot. You must take off the terminals which are common at each end before you can divide?—But your class rates include the terminals.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Certainly.

Mr. Acworth.—As long as you are dealing with class rates, there is a percentage difference of, we will say, fifteen. When you come to compare actual with actual, which I suppose is special rate with special rate, that difference drops to 3, 4, or 5 per cent. Is not that the general impression of the table on your mind?

The percentage difference in the Newry rates to interior stations as compared with the rates from Belfast.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I do not think it is. The difference between 7*s.* 8*d.* and 10*s.* is far more than 2 or 3 per cent.

Lord Pirrie.—Take the case above that—timber to Ballyroney. The actual rate is 5*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—If that is accurate we are entirely wrong; I admit that. I am going to check it and see if it is accurate, because the Belfast rate is absolutely below.

Mr. Acworth.—Take the next one. Timber to Cootehill. You have a difference of 3*s.* 2*d.* between the Newry and Belfast rates?—Yes; that is on the class rates, but on the actual rates you come down to a difference of 2*s.* 4*d.* That is a less percentage difference than on the class rate I think.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It may still be 15 per cent. The difference between the class rates is 23 per cent.

Mr. Acworth. Then take the next one—cement to Ballyroney.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That is wrong; I admit that at once. If these figures are right we are wrong.

Mr. Acworth.—Then, take the next—cement to Portadown. There is a difference of 9*d.* on the class rate, which comes down to 2*d.* on the actual rate.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I do not believe that is so. These are the two cases I am going to inquire into. The others, I say are right.

Mr. Acworth.—Then, cement to Cookstown. Do you give that up?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I have not got that.

Colonel Plews.—May I say that every rate from Newry is made proportionate to the Belfast rate in accordance with the Commissioners' decision?

Lord Pirrie.—In that case these rates must be wrong?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I should say so, but I will have them checked to-night. (See pp. 302 and 313).

Lord Pirrie.—Then, why discuss them to-night?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—We will put in a table showing them exactly.

Lord Pirrie.—There are others besides those we have mentioned.

20917. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Might I have them all?—(*Witness*).—With regard to Cootehill—Mr. Balfour Browne especially challenged me with regard to Cootehill.

20918. *Lord Pirrie.*—No, he did not challenge it?—He said it was a charge for a gradient. This does not go over the gradient at all; it does not go that route, so that the gradient charge is lost, and they have no right to charge for the gradient, so that they are still 5 per cent. against us.

Mr. Acworth.—They agree that you have made a case, and that they have got to answer it.

Lord Pirrie.—They agree that either their figures must be wrong, or that they must explain them?—Here is cement to Portadown. The rates in 1894 were 3*s.* 4*d.* from Newry, and 4*s.* from Belfast, a difference of 8*d.* in a five-ton lot.

Lord Pirrie.—Mr. Balfour Browne agrees that if your figures are right they have to apologise. We cannot put him in a white sheet to-night.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—So far as I see I am wrong in two as they stand.

Mr. Acworth.—You are wrong in more if these figures are right.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—But I have not seen them all.

The Commission then adjourned till Monday, the 10th instant, at 11.30 o'clock.

THIRTY-SEVENTH PUBLIC SITTING.—MONDAY, JUNE 10TH, 1907.

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners Present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. JOHN DAVIES examined by the CHAIRMAN.

June 10, 1907.

Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

20919. You are the General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway?—I am.

20920. How long have you been in that position?—Four and a half years.

20921. What were you before taking that position?—I was General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways for a perioid of ten and a half years.

20922. Then, you had ten and a half years' experience in the Colonies?—I had.

20923. Prior to that, you had general railway knowledge in this country?—Yes; seventeen years.

Population of the various States in Australasia.

20924. I think you are prepared to give us some particulars with reference to the working and management of the railways in Australia, and, first of all, to get it on the Notes, will you just tell us the population of the various States in Australia—I suppose it is according to the last Census returns?—Yes; according to the Victorian Year Book of 1905, the population of Western Australia was 254,874; of South Australia, 374,398; of Victoria, 1,218,571; of New South Wales, 1,491,763; of Queensland, 528,048; of Tasmania, 181,106; and of New Zealand, 882,457.

20925. In Australia proper, that is a population in round figures of four millions?—The Commonwealth of Australia—4,052,570.

20926. That will do as far as that is concerned. Now, with regard to the administration of railways—first of all, in Australia. What was the railway mileage in 1906?—In 1906 the railway mileage was 17,489.

Mileage of Australasian State and privately owned railways in 1906.

20927. That is, in the whole of Australia?—Yes.

20928. Just give us the several totals?—I will give them in the same order as I gave the population. In Western Australia, the railway mileage is 2,260 miles, 1,611 of which are Government, and 649 private. In South Australia, the railway mileage is 1,926, of which 1,746 are Government railways, and 180 privately owned. Victoria has 3,394 miles, all owned by the Government. In New South Wales there are 3,390 miles, all owned by the Government. Queensland has 3,381 miles, 3,138 owned by the Government, and 243 privately owned. Tasmania has 619 miles, 463 owned by the Government, and 156 privately owned. New Zealand has 2,519 miles, 2,406 owned by the Government, and 113 privately owned; making a total of 17,489 miles of railway, 16148 of which are owned by the States, and 1,341 are owned by private companies.

20929. I see Western Australia has the largest proportion of privately-owned railways?—That is so. The Midland Railway, a privately-owned company, which does a fairly large business, is 277 miles long.

20930. We will take the total. There are 1,611 miles of Government railways, and 649 miles of private railway?—Yes.

20931. Now, do you know whether there were any negotiations in reference to the taking over of these railways in Western Australia?—I was going to explain. The Midland Railway is really the only railway that does anything like a large business, and the Government has been negotiating with them for some years with a view to purchasing. The other mileage is made up of about a dozen small companies running into what we call in Australia "the Bush," chiefly for timber purposes, and hauling timber. They cannot be classified quite on the same lines as the Midland Railway, which conveys passengers and general merchandise.

20932. In other words they are what we should call tramways?—That is so.

20933. *Mr. Acworth.*—The same would be true, would it not, of the other private lines—they are tram lines, mineral lines, and so on, very largely?—That is so.

20934. Practically the Midland is the only exception in Australia of a reasonable railway system that is in private hands?—Yes; excepting in New Zealand; there is one private line there of eighty-one miles in length.

20935. *Chairman.*—All the railways worked for goods and passenger traffic, broadly speaking, are in the hands of the Government?—Yes, all the railways that you can reasonably compare with British railways.

20936. What about the gauges of those railways—they vary, do they not?—They vary very considerably. In Western Australia they are all 3 feet 6 inches; in South Australia there are 499 miles with 5 feet 3-inch gauge, and 1,427 miles of 3 feet 6 inches; in Victoria there are 3,313 miles of 5 feet 3-inch gauge, and 81 miles of 2 feet 6-inch.

20937. Those are the little tramways which we have been talking about?—Yes. In New South Wales they are all 4 feet 8½-inch; in Queensland they are all 3 feet 6-inch; in Tasmania, the same, and in New Zealand, the same.

20938. Is it within your knowledge that any effort has been made to have the gauge made uniform in Australia?—No very serious effort has been made, but a good deal of talk and correspondence has taken place with regard to it.

20939. Just let us have a few figures with reference to the capital cost of these railways. First of all, what is the cost, per mile, generally speaking, of the railways in England and Wales—abstracted, of course, from the Board of Trade returns?—For the year 1905 it amounted to £67,618.

20940. It is merely to get these figures on the Notes?—Quite so.

20941. Now, in Scotland?—In Scotland it amounts to £47,501.

20942. And in Ireland?—£11,596.

20943. Now, have you got the average cost per mile of the railways in Australia?—In Western Australia the average cost is £6,186; in South Australia, £7,797; in Victoria, £12,194; in New South Wales, £12,869; in Queensland, £6,930; in Tasmania, £8,490; and in New Zealand, £9,410.

20944. In ascertaining these figures, you have taken into consideration the total mileage in those various Colonies?—I have.

20945. That is what we call the tramway mileage (which are called railways there), and also the Government railways; you have taken the whole of them?—No; I have not. I have given you now the cost per mile of all the Government railways.

20946. That is what I wanted to have clear. So that the tramway lines are not included?—They are not included in the figures I have given.

20947. Then the comparison is the cost per mile of an ordinary railway in Australia and New Zealand as compared with an ordinary railway in Ireland?—Quite.

20948. *Mr. Aspinall.*—That column shows the figure of 16,148 as being the total mileage in the several Colonies?—Of the Government lines—the total of the Government mileages in the different States.

20949. *Mr. Acworth.*—Have you worked out the average?—Not the average for Australia.

20950. I make it £5,600 a mile for the average; you have not checked that?—I have not; no.

20951. I am taking the 16,000 miles at 156 millions; I think I am pretty correct.

Lord Pirrie.—That would be correct.

20952. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—When you say that in those figures you do not include the tramway lines as comparable with the lines of England and Ireland, you do in fact compare with Irish railways, because in Ireland we have a number of 3-feet gauge railways which we call light railways. I presume those figures cover the cost of such lines in Ireland?—No, the figures given cover the cost of the State railways only, because the Bush railways in Australia would not compare favourably with the light railways you have in Ireland.

20953. *Chairman.*—They are simply tramways?—They are practically extended sidings.

20954. You gave an instance of some being only 2-feet gauge?—That is so.

20955. *Mr. Acworth.*—All the Government railways are included?—All the Government railways are included in the figures I have given you.

20956. We had an engineer the other day from West Australia—Mr. Palmer—and he told us that some of the West Australian railways cost as little as £1,100 a mile?—It is an experiment, and they are not included in these figures, because Parliament only authorised the construction of those railways about twelve months ago.

20957. But for instance, what they call the pioneer railways in New South Wales, which are estimated at about £2,000—they are all in—they are ten years old?—They are all in from 1855.

20958. There are some quite as cheap as any of ours?—And some quite as expensive; I can give you details of them.

20959. *Chairman.*—Now, let us have just a few figures with reference to the receipts. As I understand, the last authorised published return is for 1905?—In England?

20960. No, in Australia?—In Australia, 1906.

20961. And the figures for England are for 1905?—Yes. They are latest I could get for Australia.

20962. I do not think we need take the British figures. We will just take the Irish figures. Take the figures for Ireland in the year 1905—what were the total receipts?—For the year 1905 the total receipts amounted to £4,108,678.

20963. Would you just analyse that?—For passengers the railways earned £1,656,753; for parcels, horses, carriages, dogs, and soforth £312,542; for mails, £171,384; making a total for coaching business of £2,140,679.

20964. Now, let us have the goods traffic?—For merchandise, £1,288,908; for live stock, £282,849; for minerals, £255,004; making a total for goods traffic of £1,826,761. Steamboats, canals, harbours, docks, and soforth.

20965. That is the miscellaneous receipts of various railways; those are small figures, but you had better mention them?—£11,626; and for rents, tolls, hotels, and soforth, £129,612; making the total I have already given. The mileage of all the railways amounts to 3,312.

20966. In Ireland?—In Ireland. I mention this because it is a fair comparison with one or two of the States in Australasia.

20967. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Are those the gross receipts?—The gross receipts.

20968. *Chairman.*—Now, having given the receipts in Ireland, just let us see how the receipts compare in Australia. It is a different year, I think?—It is a year later—1906. In West Australia the mileage is 1,611, and the gross receipts £1,634,444.

20969. Now, give us the same analysis as you did with the Irish railways?—For passengers the receipts amounted to £422,113; parcels, horses, carriages, dogs, etc., £66,227; for mails, £18,258; making a total for coaching of £506,598. Merchandise and minerals are lumped together in Western Australia, and the receipts for conveying the same amount to £1,011,813; live stock, £38,890; making a total for conveyance of goods and live stock of £1,050,703. Steamboats, harbours, docks, etc., £33,769; rents and soforth, £46,374, or a grand total of £1,634,444.

20970. Then you keep your accounts practically the same as we do in this country?—Practically the same.

20971. Only you lump together the merchandise and minerals in one?—In one State; in the others we separate them.

20972. Practically the accounts are kept on the same basis?—It is a very fair comparison.

20973. I do not know that it is necessary to go through all the Colonies with these figures?—Shall I give you Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand?

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—New South Wales and Queensland are practically the same length as the Irish railways.

Mileage and Receipts of the Victorian, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand Railways, year 1906.

20974. *Chairman.*—We will take those three, if you please. Take Victoria first?—Victoria.

20975. Yes; I mean I do not want to encumber the Notes with too many figures. Take Victoria; never mind the total figure—just give us the mileage first of Victoria?—3,394 miles.

20976. That is rather an important figure?—Compared with Ireland's 3,312.

20977. That is the mileage. Now, just give us the passengers and goods traffic separately?—Passengers, £1,501,597; parcels, horses, carriages, dogs, etc., £156,528; mails, £61,588; total for the coaching, £1,719,713. Merchandise and minerals (I find Victoria follows the same practice as Western Australia), amount to £1,792,575; live stock, £208,862; total for the goods, £2,001,437. Steamboats, harbours, docks, etc., £10,758; rents, etc., £55,711; making a total of £3,787,619.

20978. That is for the Colony of Victoria?—Yes.

20979. Now New South Wales is about the same mileage, and I think we had better have those figures in the same way?—Yes.

20980. Just in the same order?—New South Wales, 3,390 miles; receipts from passengers, £1,331,696; parcels, etc., £157,365; mails, £74,200; total for the coaching, £1,563,261; merchandise, £1,797,749; live stock, £431,661; minerals, £398,666; total for the goods, £2,628,076. Steamboats, harbours, docks, etc., £6,823; rents and so forth, £36,631; total, £4,234,791.

20981. You might give us Queensland, I think—it is the same mileage, but they are smaller figures?—In Queensland the mileage is 3,138 miles; receipts for passengers, £411,604; parcels, etc., £67,535; mails, £50,000; total coaching receipts, £529,139; Merchandise, £772,058; live stock, £102,562; minerals, £108,200; total goods receipts, £982,820. Steamboats, etc., £20,343; rents and soforth, £13,781; making a total of £1,546,083.

20982. When we had the pleasure of hearing the Premier of New Zealand he was not able to give us the figures, because he had not got them with him, but you have them here, and I think we had better just put those on the Notes for New Zealand. Just give us the figures for New Zealand in the same way as you have given the others?—The New Zealand mileage is 2,406; passenger receipts, £786,872; parcels, mails, etc. (together), £142,643; total coaching receipts, £929,515. Merchandise, minerals, and live stock (all of which are lumped together in New Zealand) amount to £1,346,038; making that the total for goods receipts. Steamboats, etc., come to £38,518; rents are £35,633; making a total of £2,349,704.

20983. What is the grand total for Australia and New Zealand together?—The grand total for Australasia, the mileage——

20984. No, just give the receipts?—The receipts are £15,143,594.

Total of Receipts on Australasian Railways for 1906.

20985. I think that is sufficient. Now, that seems to me to deal very fully with the receipts. Of course, we have not taken all the Colonies, but we have

June 10, 1907.

Mr John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

taken those which approximate more nearly to the mileage of Ireland. Now, with regard to the expenditure, I will take you very shortly through this, I think. First of all, for 1905, what do you find is the percentage of working expenses in England and Wales?—63 per cent.

20986. And in Scotland?—54 per cent.

20987. And in Ireland?—62 per cent.

20988. Now, just go down to Australia. In Western Australia what were the working expenses there, that is for the year 1906 you were dealing with?—Quite 73·53 per cent.

20989. Now, will you give us the other figures—what is the figure for Victoria?—Victoria is 52·78 per cent.

20990. New South Wales?—54·51 per cent.

20991. Queensland?—55·84 per cent.

20992. And New Zealand—69 per cent.

Comparison of percentage of Working Expenses on British and Irish Lines with Australasian Railways.

20993. What is the average of the whole of Australasia?—58·97 per cent.

20994. 59 per cent. practically?—Yes.

20995. I think we had better have these figures on the Notes. The net receipts after paying the working expenses amounted to how much in Australasia—for the year 1906, I mean?—3·96 per cent. for Australasia.

20996. No, the total amount of net receipts; I mean the money?—The net receipts were £6,212,853.

20997. That is the net receipts after paying working expenses?—That is so.

20998. What is the total capital?—£156,767,471.

20999. And what percentage did that work out at?—3·96.

Percentage of Net Earnings to Capital on Australasian Railways.

21000. Nearly four per cent.?—Nearly four per cent.

21001. Upon the whole capital?—Upon the whole capital.

21002. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Taking into account the capital of the English, Scottish, and Irish railways, you have included nominal additions to capital?—Yes.

21003. You are aware that in Ireland we have practically no nominal additions to capital, whereas in England and Scotland there are very large additions, and if those are excluded it makes a very large difference, does it not, in the percentage?—That is right. They are included.

Effect of the inclusion of nominal additions to Capital when comparing the Dividends paid by British Lines with Irish Railways.

21004. Are you aware that it makes a difference if you exclude the nominal additions to capital in the case of Ireland, England, and Scotland, and that although the Board of Trade returns for England show that the Ordinary Stock pays a dividend of 3·46 per cent., including nominal additions, when you exclude the nominal additions, it really pays a dividend of four per cent. Similarly in Scotland, which according to the Board of Trade returns, only pays 2·17 per cent. on Ordinary Stock, including nominal additions, when you exclude the nominal additions it really pays 3·98 per cent. In Ireland practically there is no difference whether you include or exclude nominal additions; the return is 3·98 per cent., and if you take the whole of the capital, including all classes of stock, Guaranteed, Preference, and Ordinary, and Debentures, excluding nominal additions, the figures work out at 4·02 in the case of England, 4·24 in the case of Scotland, and only 3·78 in the case of Ireland, showing that, as a matter of fact, Ireland gives a considerably lower return upon all classes of stock than either England or Scotland, though the Board of Trade returns would rather lead one to infer the contrary?—Taking the Board of Trade returns for 1905, the figures came out at 3·61.

21005. But that includes the nominal additions, which makes a great difference?—Yes, quite so.

Comparisons between British and Irish Lines and Australasian Railways:—(*a*) Total receipts per mile; (*b*) Working cost per mile; (*c*) Coal rates.

21006. *Chairman.*—We will just have two or three figures on the Notes with reference to the receipts per mile. We will not go into details, but take the total receipts per mile of railways in England and Wales?—Yes. They are £5,680.

21007. And in Scotland?—£3,107.

21008. And in Ireland?—£1,198.

21009. Just compare the Australian railways with those figures?—Western Australia is £1,017.

21010. We will take those that we have already dealt with?—Victoria is £1,116.

21011. New South Wales?—£1,258.

21012. Queensland?—£497.

21013. And New Zealand?—£980.

21014. Those are the receipts per mile?—Per mile.

21015. Now, just mention the working cost per mile in England and Wales?—64*d.*

21016. No, the working cost. We have dealt with receipts, you see; now we will take the cost?—£3,645.

21017. Scotland?—£1,740.

21018. Ireland?—£758.

21019. And Western Australia?—£748

21020. Victoria?—£589.

21021. New South Wales?—£686.

21022. Queensland?—£278.

21023. And New Zealand?—£676.

21024. Can you give us any authentic information with reference to the rates charged in Western Australia, as compared with the rates in this country?—Yes.

21025. Let me see how far this will go. Take first of all coal. Say coal for fifty miles—what rate do you consider would be charged in this country for coal carried 50 miles in company's wagons?—About 4*s.* 5*d.* Of course, they vary very considerably in this country, but I have taken the Normanton Conference scale.

21026. That covers nearly all the stations in England, but of course beyond that there are special rates?—Quite.

21027. For instance, coal for export is carried considerably lower than coal for towns?—That is so.

21028. But your calculation is that upon that scale—which is a universal scale in England—it would be 4*s.* 5*d.* a ton in company's wagons?—Yes.

21029. What would the same rate be in Western Australia?—They have two rates in Western Australia—one for locally produced coal and one for imported coal. Practically it is ½*d.* per ton per mile in Western Australia. For fifty miles imported coal would be charged 5*s.* per ton—7*d.* in excess of the British rates, and for the local article 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton lower.

21030. In other words your statement is based on the knowledge that in Western Australia for 50 miles coal would be carried at 3*s.* 2*d.* a ton?—That is so.

21031. Local coal?—Local coal.

21032. In England the rate would be about 4*s.* 5*d.*, and in Western Australia, if the coal is imported, the rate would be 5*s.*?—Yes.

21033. *Mr. Acworth.*—The English rates are purely English, I understand—not Irish; the Normanton scale does not go to Ireland?—The bases do not vary very much, I think; in the case of Ireland it is slightly higher.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—We charge 4*s.* 4d. per ton for fifty miles.

Chairman.—This figure is very near.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Almost the same.

Chairman.—It is not intended to be an accurate statement of fact as to a certain rate—it is an average.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—It is about the same.

Mr. Acworth.—That is a statement, as I understand, of the scale rate for fifty miles in Class A?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Six ton lots, yes.

Mr. Acworth.—Six ton lots?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Yes; we get all coals carried in six ton lots.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—Does that apply to all the Irish railways?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Practically they are all the same; that is the Great Southern and Western scale I am quoting from.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—To Maryborough, for instance?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—That is the scale.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is 5*s.* 6*d.*, I think, to Abbeyleix—only another ten miles on—which is a good deal of difference. That is why I asked you.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—You are taking the North Wall, but that is a special rate. What I have given is the ordinary scale.

21034. *Chairman.*—I do not see that there is any great value to be attached to these figures, except—what shall I say—generally. (*To the Witness*).—Just follow me for one moment. You have given us three figures with reference to coal carried fifty miles. Now, what, in your opinion would be the rate for fifty miles for coal if carried in South Australia?—4*s.* 2*d.*

21035. And in Victoria?—*4s.* 3*d.* They make a reduction in Victoria on locally produced coal. They charge there ½*d.* per ton to the trader; the railway company earn ¾*d.*, ½*d.* of which is contributed by the trader and ¼*d.* by the Government from Consolidated Revenue.

21036. Then the consignee, or consumer, who gets the coal would have to pay ½*d.*, and ¼*d.* is borne by the State?—By the State.

21037. That is spread over the taxation of the country?—That is spread over the whole of the population of course.

21038. Then when you say ½*d.* per ton per mile is there no minimum charge?—The minimum for five miles is 1*s.* 3*d.* in Western Australia.

21039. Western Australia—that is within your own knowledge?—Yes.

21040. What is your initial charge for coal?—The minimum.

21041. Yes?—1*s.* 3*d.* for five miles.

21042. If it is carried two miles it is 1*s.* 3*d.*?—Yes; that is the minimum charge.

21043. Do you find wagons for that?—Yes.

21044. Any labour?—Nothing; it is station to station traffic forwarded by the railway from point A to point B.

21045. After the 1*s.* 3*d.*?—A ½*d.* per mile for each additional mile.

21046. Had we not better take it in that broad manner—that the minimum rate is 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton per mile for any short distance, and beyond that it is ½*d.* per ton per mile—would not that cover it generally?—That is so.

21047. And those rates rule nearly the same in the other Colonies?—They do.

21048. But for home-produced coal the rates are more, the difference of rate being paid by the State?—In Victoria, yes.

21049. Paid to the railway company?—Paid to the railway company. The Railway Commissioners in Victoria are paid ¾*d.* per ton for the hauling of coal—½*d.* by the consumer and ¼*d.* by the Government.

21050. According to those figures the longer the distance the greater seems to be the *pro rata* rate?—Quite so.

Mr. Acworth.—It is a mileage rate, is it not, practically?

Lord Pirrie.—It is the same rate as theirs; we reduce, and they do not reduce.

21051. *Chairman.*—It is coming back to what I said just now—whatever the distance the ½*d.* is added to the 1*s.* 3*d.*?—Per mile.

21052. But in England, as you know, the longer the haul of the traffic the less the rate becomes per mile?—That is the tendency.

21053. But in Australia it is just the reverse?—Not quite the reverse; we do not add quite so high a figure as the distance increases, but certainly we add more than they do in this country.

21054. *Mr. Acworth.*—Look at your own figures in regard to the high class rates in Victoria. Take drapery; 50 miles is charged at 30*s.* 3*d.*; 150 miles, 90*s.* 8*d.*—to make it equal it would be 90*s.* 9*d.*, so you have not made much reduction?—150 miles is not a long distance in Australia when you own 3,000 miles of railway.

21055. That is true?—I have only taken distances here to compare with the average hauling in this country.

21056. Would you carry that a little further then. Up to 150 miles you increase exactly at the same rate per mile in the highest class traffic in Victoria, and very nearly so in South Australia—77*s.* as against 75*s.*, and so on. What would Victoria do if it were 300 miles; would it be 180*s.*—can you tell us that?—I think I can. What distance did you ask me?

21057. *Lord Pirrie.*—300 miles?—£8 4*s.* 8*d.*

21058. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is instead of £9—it is beginning to go down a little when you get as long a distance as 300 miles?—For 400 miles it would be £11 14*s.*

21059. 400 miles on the mileage scale would be £12; what do you say it actually is?—£11 14*s.*

21060. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is not a great reduction?—That is in Victoria. Possibly you will find that in the other States the reduction is greater.

21061. *Mr. Acworth.*—Would it be true to say that there being practically no sea traffic, the traffic being all between the coast and the interior, they can keep up their mileage rates on the mileage basis for any long distance?—They can and do, but there is another reason for it. The longer they travel from, say, Sydney, or Melbourne, or Perth, or Brisbane, the thinner grows the population, and by the time they are at the end of the line they are practically in the country, or in a desert.

21062. The Bush?—Yes. Therefore the man at the end of 600 miles has not so much to offer the railway as they have at half the distance, and consequently they maintain their rates, because the working expenses for distances, say, in excess of 300 miles up to 600 miles, are greater than where the traffic is thicker and heavier.

21063. *Chairman.*—Because the traffic is very lean there?—Very lean.

Mr. Acworth.—It looks rather more like the commercial principle than the principle of the development of the country.

21064. *Chairman.*—Taking the list here and looking at it, I should say the rates, speaking generally, are more favourable in Ireland and in this country than they are in the Colonies?—Decidedly.

21065. I propose, if you do not object, to have all these figures that you have handed in printed in the Appendix, just as they are?—I do not object.

21066. Now with regard to the administration of the railways. We have heard all about New Zealand from the Premier, but now just tell us about the administration of Western Australia. We also heard a good deal about that from Mr. Palmer, you know?—Quite so.

21067. Is there a Commissioner of Railways in Western Australia?—Yes.

21068. What is he called?—There is one Commissioner of Railways.

21069. In Victoria, how many are there?—Three.

21070. There are the Chairman and two others?—The Chairman and practically two Assistant Commissioners.

21071. Two other Commissioners?—Yes.

21072. There are three Railway Commissioners?—Three Railway Commissioners.

21073. Now, in New South Wales?—There are three in New South Wales, and the title there is, "Railway Commissioners."

21074. Just the same?—In Victoria the official title is "Victorian Railway Commissioners."

21075. In Tasmania I see it is different—there they have a General Manager?—A General Manager.

21076. And in Queensland—what do they do there?—They have one Commissioner of Railways.

21077. In Western Australia, when you were there, how was the railway managed? Did you manage it?—Yes; by myself.

21078. Were you under the direct control of any Minister?—Yes; I was under the direction of the Minister of Public Works and Railways. He had the two departments under his control.

21079. Just tell us in your own words. You had the fixing of rates for goods and passengers practically?—The railways were practically vested in me as General Manager, and I was held responsible for rating passengers and goods, and for working the railways subject to the formal approval of the Government to any rates or fares which I recommended.

21080. You mean any increase, I suppose?—No; any fare.

21081. Any new fare or new rating—is that so?—Yes; it must receive the approval of the Governor of any of the States in Executive Council.

21082. The approval of the Governor?—Yes.

21083. In addition to the approval of the Government?—Certainly; they are not legal until they have been approved in "Ex. Co.," as we call it—Executive Council.

21084. During the ten years that you were in Western Australia was there much increase of mileage? That is not in your notes, you know—we want information. Was there any great increase of mileage in Western Australia while you were there?—A very great increase.

21085. I want to know, if I can, how that increase of mileage was brought about. First of all, did you recommend the extension of a railway?—No; invariably the residents in the different parts of the State pressed the Government to construct a railway through a district.

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Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

The necessity for high long distance rates in Australia.

(See Appendix No. 28.)

Method of administering the Australian Railways explained.

Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of Railways.

The fixing of Rates for Goods and Passengers.

Method of securing Rail way Extension in Western Australia.

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21086. For the development of some particular industry, I suppose, or the agricultural interests of the country?—Yes; agriculture or anything else.

21087. That is similar to what is done here—agitation begins in a particular district. Then those applications went to the Government?—They went to the Government.

21088. Then the Government conferred with you as General Manager of the railway as to what you recommended?—The Government would call for an official report, and the General Manager of Railways would make a close inspection of the districts, as to its probabilities, and report thereon.

21089. Was the first consideration with you in making the report whether the extension would pay *per se*, or whether it would be to the advantage of the district to have the railway so as to develop the agriculture of the country?—So long as we could make the whole of the railways remunerative, then a recommendation would be made to construct that particular line, so long as it did not involve the Government in a loss.

Government Policy as to Extension of Railways into poor districts in Australia.

21090. That is to say, if the whole *corpus* paid an interest upon the outlay, then the extension would be made, regardless altogether whether that line *per se* would be remunerative?—Quite so, because I have here an instance where railways have not paid in Australasia.

21091. Go on a little further. During that ten years how many miles of increased railways were constructed? I have no information here before me, but perhaps you can tell us—about?—In 1891, the year that I was appointed, there were 203 miles of line.

21092. In the Colony?—In the Colony.

21093. Government Railways?—Government Railways.

Growth of West Australian Railways for decade ending 1902.

21094. When you left what was the mileage?—On the 30th June, 1902, when I severed my connection, there were 1,356 miles.

21095. At work?—Working—fully working—an abnormal growth.

21096. It would be interesting to know what was the financial condition of those railways when you first joined it—whether there was a loss in working, or a profit?—The total earnings in 1891 amounted to £64,034, but the working expenses to earn the same reached a total of £63,536.

inancial position of these lines in 1891 and

21097. Then there was a loss in working, setting aside altogether interest on outlay?—A very slight gain.

21098. I beg your pardon—there was a very slight margin of receipts over expenditure?—Very slight.

21099. And nothing to pay the interest on the outlay?—No.

21100. *Mr. Acworth.*—What is the date of that?—1891.

21101. Have you not left out a nought—is it not £640,000?—No; they are very astonishing figures. If you will bear with me just for a minute or two, in 1891, the receipts amounted to £64,034; the working expenses, £63,536—the railways in that year were working at a heavy loss financially.

21102. *Chairman.*—How was the interest on the capital paid—by the State?—It was paid by the State.

21103. By the Government?—By the Government—not on the particular amounts spent by the Railway Department, but upon loans borrowed in this country.

21104. At any rate, interest had to be paid, and it was paid by the State?—That is so.

21105. Now we know the state of things when you went?—Yes. The State, I may say, debits the Railway Department with the money it hands over for construction purposes, and they expect the railways to earn sufficient net revenue to pay interest on the capital.

21106. But it did not in that year?—It did not in that year.

21107. Does that appear against the railways in the accounts kept by the Treasury?—No.

21108. Each year stands by itself?—It does.

in 1902.

21109. You were there ten years. We have heard about the increase in the mileage; now what was the increase in receipts?—On the 30th June, 1902, the receipts amounted to £1,521,429.

21110. And the expenses?—The expenditure was £1,256,370.

21111. And what was the net profit?—The net profit was £300,732.

21112. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The difference between £1,520,000 and £1,250,000, roughly speaking, would be £270,000?—£265,059. I have the official report here.

21113. *Chairman.*—That was the net revenue at the period that you mentioned, when you left?—Yes.

21114. What rate of interest did that pay upon the capital?—In 1902, 3·58 per cent., which was the lowest since 1895. I have paid the Government as high as 11·48. per cent.

21115. Profits on the railway?—Yes. That is £11 10*s*. In the following year the Government ordered a reduction in the rates, which represented in money about £250,000.

21116. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Perhaps Mr. Davies will give us some figures to show when the receipts more than covered the working expenses, and when the railways began to grow. In 1891 we find they were practically on an equality; when did they first begin to pay their way?—In 1894.

21117. Three years afterwards?—Yes.

21118. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is not 1891 almost the beginning of the system?—In 1890 the State was granted responsible government.

21119. Yes; and then the system began?—It simply jumped onward.

21120. There were only about 50,000 or 60,000 people in Western Australia before that?—Yes.

21121. Then, of course, the gold was discovered, and the thing went on with a rush; how much was due to the Government and how much to the gold we do not know?—A good deal of it was due to the Government, because they developed the country. The gold might have been there to-day not worked had it not been for a progressive Government.

21122. *Chairman.*—And the making of the railways?—Quite so; they went in for constructing railways at once.

21123. And the construction of the railways led to the development of the great industries—that was to the profit of the State?—Yes. For instance, when we were building 170 miles of railway from Northam to a place called Southern Cross, a goldfields centre, nothing was known of Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie—nothing was known of those places—but immediately prospects of gold were discovered in those neighbourhoods, the Premier, then Sir John Forrest, decided to extend the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, a distance of 120 miles.

21124. We will just go on a little further. In all that period of development of the railways, did you find as a matter of fact any interference—or what you might consider improper interference—on the part of State officials with regard to the management of the railways?—I experienced very little interference for very many years, especially under the premiership of Sir John Forrest and two or three of my ministers; but I experienced a little difficulty with later ministers, who had, I think, promised to the public great concessions.

21125. They made certain promises, and of course they were anxious to carry them out?—A manager is expected to hold the reins pretty tightly.

21126. When did you leave?—In 1902.

21127. Can you tell us whether since then the railways have always paid a fair rate of interest?—The percentages for the following years have been——

21128. Take 1903?—3·75.

21129. The next year, 1904?—4·56.

21130. And the next, 1905?—3·61. Within three points of the year I left.

21131. I suppose the money has been raised at about 3½ or 4 per cent.?—It has. I have the full statement, which averages 3½ per cent.

21132. When the profits begin to increase to, say, about 3½ per cent., is the principle adopted by the Government that of reducing the rates?—It is in all the States; it is not their object to make money by the railways. Immediately the railways earn enough to cover interest on capital, they reduced the rates and fares where they can, and also increase the remuneration given to the staff.

21133. So that the district served by the railway gets the benefit of the increased profits in either a reduction of the rates or additional services, or in some other way?—So to speak, the country at large gets the benefit.

21134. Do you think that in West Australia they would have built all these miles of railway if the necessary capital had had to be found by private enterprise?—I do not think so for one moment.

21135. Then of course it goes without saying that a State is always in a position to borrow money on better terms than private individuals?—Quite so; they have the country behind them.

21136. And that without the Government being behind these railways the districts might have been neglected and might not have been in the prosperous condition they are in to-day?—Yes; and not only that, but locally they have not the men or the means, because they suffer from want of population, and consequently it is necessary to get the investor into the country to do anything privately.

21137. Then you agree that the prosperity of these colonies absolutely depends on the railways?—I do not think there is the slightest doubt about it.

21138. Do you agree with the Premier of New Zealand that the construction of these railways in sparsely populated districts, which could not have been done by private enterprise, but which has been done by the State, has been the primary cause of the prosperity of these Colonies?—It has; and I might explain it in this way. We divide the railways up into five sections in West Australia; there is one section of 161 miles which earns a profit, over working expenses, of £77,827.

21139. That particular section you mean?—Yes, the Eastern Railway.

21139A. Do you keep the receipts separate on the different sections?—Yes, in this instance that is so. I think they have abolished that system since I left. Now, the Southern Railway is a country line of 234 miles long, and the loss in 1902 amounted to £57,437.

21140. The loss?—Yes, the loss. Then, we have the Eastern Goldfields Railway, 415 miles long; that earned a profit of £56,775. The next is the Great Southern, which also runs through a country district; it is 243 miles long; and the loss amounted to £46,638. Another northern country line, 306 miles long, involved a loss of £18,359. But the profits earned on the other two were sufficient to meet the interest on capital, and provide £12,168 to the good as net profit. So that there are five instances with two highly remunerative railways, and three running through country districts involving a heavy loss; but the whole 1,365 miles paid nearly 4 per cent.

21141. That is the principle upon which the State railways have been constructed?—That is the principle throughout Australasia.

21142. With regard to their construction, are they constructed in first-class style?—They vary according to the requirements of the districts. In country districts they are built at as low a figure as possible.

21143. You mean to begin with?—Yes; and betterment takes place when the traffic improves.

21144. Yes, we heard that from Mr. Palmer. For example, he gave us an instance in which very small cost had been incurred. That is done, too, generally in America, is it not?—More so in America, I believe, than in Australia. We go in for safety equipment wherever the traffic is thickest. Of course we are our own Board of Trade, practically; and we do just as we think proper in the interests of the public.

21145. You have no requirements laid down by the Government even; it is all left to the general manager?—Absolutely. For instance, half the mileage in Western Australia would be properly signalled and equipped, as in this country, and the other half, running through lean districts, would not be equipped to anything like the same extent.

21146. I am right in assuming, am I not, that there is great immunity from accident in Australia?—Yes.

21147. There have been no great accidents there at all?—Very few indeed.

21148. Do you know anything about the number of passengers killed—have you got any statistics?—No, I have not got any statistics; but I may say that the number is very small. I think that during the ten and a half years I was out in Australia we killed only two passengers.

21149. During your ten and a half years?—Yes, and we conveyed as many as 12,816,000 passengers in a year.

21150. And there were no serious accidents?—No.

Chairman.—I think that is all I want to ask you.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

21151. Just let us deal first with regard to the block signalling or block working. Where you have a line with, say, three trains each way daily, would you have any blocking at all?—We would have the telephone working between a pair of stations, and the train staff and ticket system.

21152. Oh, you would have the train-staff?—Yes.

21153. But no signals?—We should in most of the places, but not interlocked.

21154. Of course you go very much further than the United States, but you do not go as far as England?—That is so; we go further, very much further, than they do in the United States—I have passed through them—but we do not come up to the English standard.

21155. You having had experience in both countries, do you think there is room for economy on the poor lean lines by making less exacting requirements?—Judging from my experience of Western Australia, we could do with less equipment, undoubtedly.

21156. You could not have less than no accidents, I take it, whatever the appliances?—No.

21157. Your evidence is that in Australia, with less elaborate appliances, there are practically no accidents?—I say that we have steered through without accident; I am not here to advocate the non-equipment of lines.

21158. But you think you can carry it too far?—It is quite possible to carry it too far; but where you have little or no traffic, you do not require interlocking arrangements.

21159. And in Australia you say it has not been carried as far as on the main lines in England?—Not nearly; but where the traffic is thick, it is equal to the English standard.

21160. You cannot reduce the equipment there—nobody is suggesting that, I think. Then, another part of your evidence has been directed to the question of construction by the State?—Yes.

21161. The question in Ireland is mainly, of course, not a question of construction; it is a question of taking over existing lines for which the capital has already been found. It may have been found on a better system or on a worse, but it has been found. How far do you think the construction experience applies to the other question?—I should say it applies very largely, because I consider it would be just as easy to run the 3,312 miles in Ireland as it would be in New South Wales.

21162. Certainly; but one main point you made was that the State had advantages in getting capital?—That is so.

21163. In Australia, railways, I have no doubt you would say quite accurately, would not have got their money by means of private companies?—I do not think they would.

21164. But Ireland has got her railways—they are there?—Yes.

21165. So that there is not the same need for State ownership in order to get the money, is there?—If that is the object of this Commission, simply the working of the railways in Ireland, I say no. But if there is a further requirement, namely, the development of the country, it is just possible that if they were converted into State railways the development would be larger, because the facilities would be greater.

21166. You must, of course, know a good deal—I do not know how far from the railway point of view—but you must, of course, know Ireland in a way. In your opinion is what Ireland wants more mileage or, to put it broadly, better service?—What Ireland requires I am not prepared to say. I am here to state that State railways serve a country admirably.

21167. Oh, yes?—And I believe that if they existed in Ireland they would serve Ireland admirably. I do not question that the efforts of the companies existing to-day are excellent; I do not criticise them for a moment. But I am here to state that it is possible to run a country like Ireland with railways on the same system as that I have worked in Western Australia for 10½ years and as Mr. Eddy had worked in New South Wales for a similar period.

21168. I do not suppose anybody questions that the thing is possible; but the point I was anxious to get at was, that one of the main advantages which I understood you to suggest was the getting of the capital?—That is an advantage; and, if you want to extend railway communication in Ireland, the stronger the financial institution the easier it is to obtain the money at low rates.

21169. Clearly so; it is, obviously, easier for a Government to get money than it is for, say, the

June 10, 1907.

Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

Australian Railway experience shows there is no necessity for interlocking signals on lines with infrequent train service.

The advantage of State ownership of Railways as applied to the existing state of affairs in Ireland.

June 10, 1907.

Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

Great Northern of Ireland, which is the strongest railway, financially, in Ireland. We are quite agreed about that; but you do not feel inclined to give an opinion as to what is the line of development in Irish railways that would be most advantageous, do you?—I cannot say that I am dealing with that question at all.

21170. Very well—You mentioned that the lines were always very well kept up?—Yes.

21171. I have no doubt that applies to West Australia, because they have never been in financial low-water. But would you suggest that it applies to all the lines. There is, for instance, a little item in the Victorian reports at this moment—I think it has disappeared within the last year or two, and I think it began at £700,000, if my memory is right, for "overdue repairs," or something of that kind; do you remember it?—I do. In Australia, as in other places, they have periods of success, you know, and periods of, I may say, depression.

Curtailment of expenses follows diminution of receipts on State Railways in common with privately owned Lines.

21172. And then they let the lines down, just like an ordinary private company does?—Possibly the pressure brought to bear by the Government of the day may cause a smaller amount to be spent in lean years on maintenance than in good fat years. I think that is the policy of cutting down that is pursued by most private companies under such circumstances, if they cannot afford the outlay. If you have good fat years, like they have on the Great Northern of Ireland, and you are earning a big percentage, you are able to keep things up properly.

21173. Just as shareholders protest when they receive a dividend which comes down lower than can be helped, so the Government protest against being called upon to pay more than can be helped towards meeting the interest on this railway capital?—They try to keep the expenditure down as much as they can in the poor years and they make it up in the fat years.

21174. Of course in all comparisons we have to appreciate the fact that a shilling is a very different thing in Ireland from what it is in West Australia?—I do not know that.

21175. Wages are immensely higher in Australia, are they not?—If you give the Irishman a chance it is just possible he would prefer the West Australian shilling because he would get a great many more there than he does in Ireland.

21176. A shilling will not go as far in Perth, will it, as in Dublin?—Well, 1*s*. 3*d*. in Perth would go as far as would 1*s*. in Dublin. I should think there is about 25 per cent difference.

Rate of pay for unskilled labour on the Australian Railways.

21177. What are the wages for unskilled labour in Western Australia, roughly?—One shilling an hour and eight hours a day.

21178. Is that railway wages or outside wages?—Outside wages for an unskilled man—a labourer.

21179. And is that the railway standard?—No, that is higher?—These are the figures for engine drivers.

21180. But let us take unskilled against unskilled. You say that an unskilled labourer in the open market gets 8*s*. a day for an eight hours day?—That is the average.

21181. What does a plate-layer on the railway get?—Eight shillings a day.

21182. For eight hours?—Yes; and a ganger 9*s*. to 11*s*. a day of eight hours.

21183. But I thought I understood you to say that railways paid a higher rate than the market rate?—Eight hours a day at 1*s*. per hour is the market rate, but the railways pay a higher rate.

21184. They pay above the market rate, do they?—They do, and it is often criticised.

The tendency of State Railways to pay higher wages than the ordinary market rate discussed.

21185. Do you think that is the natural tendency of State railways?—To pay good wages?

21186. To pay higher than the market rate?—It is the natural tendency, I think.

21187. You think it is the natural tendency?—Yes.

21188 Then if that tendency extended to Ireland, would it not be the case that any calculation made upon the existing net revenue would have to be debited with the extra cost for the extra wages?—It would depend entirely upon how the railways were managed. While paying this high rate of wages in West Australia and in the other Australian States, each State pays a higher interest per cent. than any of the railways in this country. So that you get it both ways: the net receipts are higher and the remuneration of the staff is higher.

21189. I want to get at this fact: Is there a tendency on the part of State railways in Australia to pay higher wages than would naturally be paid if you only paid the market rate?—I have already admitted that the rate paid is higher.

21190. That would imply, of course, translating that into Ireland, an additional working cost in Ireland from the fact of their being State railways?—If similar practices were followed in Ireland it might follow that similar results would follow as regards earnings.

21191. Let us keep the things separate. As I understand it you had a pretty free hand. You were not called a Commissioner, but you had a free hand to manage the railways?—I was held absolutely responsible for the management of the railways. I was wholly responsible to my Minister.

21192. Yes, but yet the fact that they were State railways caused you to add to your working expenses by paying high wages?—That is so.

21193. And that, you think, happens in the other Colonies?—Yes.

21194. Whether there is a commissioner or whether there is a manager; whether the arrangement is like that of New Zealand, where the management is under a Minister, or whether there is a commissioner put in between, there is always a pressure for higher wages, and it succeeds?—It does.

21195. Now, will you just tell me this one other point. Changes of rate must receive the approval of the Executive Council, you said?—Yes, the approval of the Governor.

21196. That is to say, of the Cabinet?—The Governor is like the King here, of course.

21197. The Council speaks in the name of the Governor?—That is so.

21198. How do changes of rates get initiated?—Sometimes on the volume of traffic passing reductions are recommended by the manager; in other cases deputations from different districts wait upon the Government and ask for concessions. They give what appear to them good reasons.

21199. Wait upon the Government?—Upon the Government.

21200. Not upon the manager of the railways?—Upon both. If they cannot get a change from the manager they may go to the Government.

21201. Then it is discussed in Parliament and they get it?—It does not follow that they get all they ask for.

21202. I suppose not?—Nothing like it. But if the Government of the State consider it a reasonable request, and they are in a position to make the concession, then they get it.

21203. And Members of Parliament are influential members of the deputations?—Members of Parliament often introduce the deputations.

21204. And represent their districts?—Yes; but the officials are expected to give very reliable information, of course, to the authorities for their guidance.

21205. Oh, yes. I am only wanting to get at the practice?—Just so.

Chairman.—The same thing is done here.

21206. *Mr. Acworth.*—You said something which rather surprised me. You said, I think, that the goods rates in Australia generally were decidedly higher than those in Ireland?—Except those in New Zealand.

21207. Well, New Zealand is of course in a similar position to that of Ireland—they do not get long leads, because everything comes in and goes out by sea at the nearest port. Now, as to passengers; what do you make out to be the effect of your comparison of passenger fares; what impression has that left on your mind?—Passenger fares in Australia are higher than those in this country.

21208. When you say that, are you speaking of the ordinary fares?—Yes, the ordinary fares.

21209. And then, of course, in addition to that, I suppose there is nothing like the concessions in the way of excursion fares and so on that there are in this country?—No, not so many excursions; but the concessions in other directions for students and school children, and for the yeomanry and the volunteers, are practically on the same lines as in this country.

21210. If I correctly understand your position, it is this: that, comparing Australia with Ireland, the goods rates are higher in Australia, passengers' normal fares are higher, and there are fewer concessions of special fares; is that right?—That is right.

21211. Now, taking another point, there is an interesting figure in one of your tables. It seems to me that Ireland and Western Australia are good comparisons, because they are a good deal alike in many

respects: the earnings per mile are not far apart; the Australian railways earn about £940 per mile per annum and the Irish about £1,200?—Taking New South Wales and Victoria, they are between £1,100 and £1,200, and I think they are the same as in Ireland.

21212. Well, of course, if you take the bigger over they are higher, but the others bring it down lower. But they are a good deal alike in many respects. This is the figure I wanted to call your attention to. I do not think the pages of your proof are numbered, but this is the table which gives the receipts "per mile" and "per train mile," and the working expenses "per mile" and "per train mile." Comparing your Colony with Ireland, I see that the working expenses "per mile" of line in Ireland were £758 and in Western Australia £748—almost exactly the same?—Yes.

21213. When we come to the receipts "per train mile" Ireland gets only 53*d.*, while Western Australia gets practically 90*d.*?—Yes.

21214. In other words, the Irish railways give the public nearly double the train service, so that they have to work very much harder for their money?—They do not get as much per train mile, and that is where the advantage comes in of a State-owned railway.

21215. It does in one way?—There is no question of competition and, consequently, of running four trains when one would do—a practice which very frequently obtains in this country.

21216. But to hardly any extent in Ireland. The competitive mileage in Ireland is very small practically, and I suppose Derry to Dublin is the only case worth talking about?—No doubt the managers are just as keen as those in this country.

21217. You have said that the Irish railways give lower fares than the Australian railways, and now you agree with me that they also, as is shown by the train mile earnings, give a much bigger service?—Quite so.

Chairman.—That does not follow, does it?

Mr. Acworth.—I think so, because the expenses are the same.

Chairman.—But the receipts in West Australia are considerably more per train mile, because their rates and fares are much higher than those in Ireland.

Mr. Acworth.—That should be allowed for, of course, but it could not make such a big difference as that.

Chairman.—I think it could, looking at the figures.

Mr. Acworth.—That would imply that the rates were double.

Chairman.—Yes, they are, many of them that I have looked at.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Some of them are more than double.

21218. *Mr. Acworth.*—Some of them may be; but 150-mile rates are not very common in Ireland. Now, another point: the Australian revenue is very much larger in every case from goods than from passengers?—Yes.

21219. It looks to me as if it was something like in the proportion of nearly two to one against passengers as compared with goods?—I think nearly that.

21220. Whereas in Ireland the passenger receipts are higher than the goods receipts?—That is so.

21221. Then, as I gather, it comes to this, does it not, that you would not expect greater economy in working if you handed over the railways to the State. Assuming the amount of work done to remain constant, you would not expect to save money?—Well, if the present day conditions were allowed to exist, perhaps not.

21222. On the other hand, at present Ireland is getting more service and lower rates than is Australia?—It may be so.

21223. And the percentage on the capital invested is much of a muchness in the two countries, is it not?—The percentage on the capital invested in Australia is slightly higher than that in Ireland.

21224. Slightly higher, yes. I forget what figure you gave us.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The capital of the three States which you have taken as examples is practically the same.

21225. *Mr. Acworth.*—The figures are not very far off, I think, in each case. The income from the capital is what I am trying to get at?—It is £38,000,000 in Ireland.

21226. Not the gross capital, but the average income—that is what I want. Is not the average income something like 4 per cent. in both cases?—Yes, it is 3·96 in Australia.

21227. And in Ireland?—3·78. For 1905, according to the Board of Trade returns, it was 3·61 in Ireland, and in Australia for 1906 on all the railways it was 3·96.

21228. 1905 was not as good a year as 1906, was it?—It would be about the same result I should say.

21229. I mean to say there is very little in it. Now, I want to ask you one other question about that high long-distance rate. As I understand you, you say that the justification for that is that the traffic is sparse, and, therefore, it costs more to work; when you get into the interior it is less profitable to work?—Yes.

21230. And, therefore, you are going to charge the man more?—I do not know that we charge him more. The tendency is for the charge to grow less per mile as the distance lengthens.

21231. That is the tendency in every country in the world, I think; but I never saw a country where it tended so little in that direction as it apparently does in Australia. You would not doubt, I take it, that a rate of £10 for 300 miles is a much higher rate than a rate of £1 for thirty miles?—It depends altogether upon what a man is paying for his farm.

21232. But, from the railway point of view?—You have to take the two things; you cannot take the railway by itself. I have been trying to point out that the country and the railways run together; and a man, perhaps 300 miles out, has practically got his land for nothing; so that a low rate per ton per mile on his goods is a very small tax compared with the cost to the railway department of maintaining a train service to his district.

21233. I was not regarding the matter from that point of view. What I was meaning was this: supposing it pays a railway moderately well to carry thirty miles for a sovereign, and supposing that is a fairly profitable rate, it would be, naturally, more profitable to carry 300 miles for ten sovereigns, would it not?—It would; but I do not think that is a good view to take. The experience of the Australian railway manager is this: that when he has to send goods long distances, it being so small in quantity, he is practically working over the railway at a loss. The shorter distance traffic, the voluminous traffic, is only conveyed for short distances, and the profit made from it helps to make good the loss on the others.

21234. I follow your way of putting it?—Suppose you are the only man in a district, and a train is run for your benefit twice a week——

21235. I quite see what you mean—it is quite clear?—Yes; it is quite clear that we are supporting that man in the country at a loss to the nation; but it is done to encourage that man and others.

21236. *Chairman.*—And to encourage the district?—Yes.

21237. *Mr. Acworth.*—In other words, under the existing circumstances of Australia, you could not afford to give effect to the ordinary principle, that the rate diminishes as the distance increases?—It does diminish, but not so quickly perhaps as one would like it to.

21238. Not as quickly as it would in any other country; that is the way I put it?—The conditions are altogether different.

21239. I quite see your point. Please do not suppose that I am grumbling; I am only trying to ascertain the facts?—If one traffic worked from London to Newcastle and found in Newcastle only one man, that one man would expect to pay a little more than the four millions catered for in London.

21240. And even in Australia, on a 400 mile run, if you had ships in competition, you would have to come down in the rate?—In the interior, of course, there are no ships.

Mr. Acworth.—That is your protection, of course.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

21241. Are you very familiar with the Irish railways?—I cannot say that I am very familiar; but I have been to Ireland several times.

21242. Knowing what you do of the Irish railways, do you think that a Government management of them would be suitable in that country?—Undoubtedly, the system of State management is a good one; and I take it that the Irish people would be as reasonable as the Australians. And, that being so, the effect would be as good there as it has been in Australia.

Explanation of the cause of high long distance rates on Australian Railways.

State management of the Irish Railways recommended.

June 19. 1907.

Mr John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Government Railways.

21243. With regard to the question of administration in Australia, I want to know how far the Chief Commissioner, whether in the case of the West Australian railways or in the case of the other Australian railways, if you can tell me about these in New South Wales, and so on, how far the Chief Commissioner is allowed power as to betterment? Supposing you had thought it desirable when you were out there to put in, we will say, a long line running alongside your main line, because you wanted a new passing place, we will say half a mile of line, could you put that down, and charge it against revenue?—Certainly.

21244. Without asking anybody?—I would have formal authority from the Minister in Australia to spend a fixed sum on new works and improvements for that year.

21245. And would that be charged to capital?—Sometimes.

Explanation of the powers of the General Managers of Australian Railways as to expenditure on urgent new works.

21246. I am on the point as to how far you would be able to spend money out of revenue for betterment?—At the commencement of the financial year the Minister representing the Railway Department, in conjunction with the general manager, would go into the requirements of the railways, as far as possible. The manager would estimate approximately the money that would be required for improvements and new works. The Minister would provide for that in his loans scheme, or in his revenue scheme, and get it authorised by Parliament. When it had been authorised by Parliament, the general manager would then see what he had to spend on revenue improvements and on capital works; and all that he would have to do afterwards would be to make a recommendation to his Minister, and get his approval.

21247. That is not quite my point. That assumes an amount of foresight as to what is going to happen during the coming year. Suppose that during the year you have a great increase in your traffic and, for any reason, you have to do such a work as I have indicated, could you do that upon your own authority as Commissioner?—Not unless I had the money at my disposal.

21248. How long would it take you to get that improvement carried out?—Perhaps a week.

21249. So that you could get the work done quickly, if necessary?—Oh, dear, yes; we could draw on the suspense account.

21250. Then the Government ownership does not make the work drag on slowly?—Not by any means. I could, perhaps, within twenty-four hours obtain Ministerial authority to carry out new works.

The system as regards provision for renewals of Stations, &c.

21251. Now, to deal with another matter, namely, the renewals of your stations—is there any sum put aside each year, or each half-year, if you work in half-years, as a renewal fund for your stations, for instance?—Yes. If I estimated that I required £1,500,000 for renewals my Minister would submit that figure to Parliament for approval. Having obtained approval, the general manager would be authorised to draw on the Treasury for £1,500,000 for one year.

21252. What you mean by that is, that each year has to stand by itself, and that you are not putting by year by year a certain amount for the purpose of renewals?—We cannot.

21253. So that, to take the same question through the other Departments, you have no arrangement for charging an annual amount for renewal of permanent way, or an annual amount for the renewal of locomotives?—Oh, yes; that is estimated for in the figures I have just mentioned.

21254. You make an estimate each year?—Certainly; we have to repeat the estimate process.

Annual Estimates prepared.

21255. So that, supposing you had a weak man at the head of the railways, and there was no recognised system of charging on a renewal fund for each of the great items of expenditure, that man, as a weak man, might not be able to convince the Government of the day that it was necessary to spend that money upon the betterment of the railways?—Quite so; just the same as a general manager in this country has to make representations to his directors. He has to convince them that certain things are necessary; and if he requires £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 they provide it. The general manager in Australia, or the Commissioner (call him what you will), makes a similar representation. He tells his Minister, "I want so much for railways, I want so much for reconstruction of engines, I want so much for reconstruction of carriages, I want so much for new carriages and engines and soforth. The money amounts to, say, £10,000,000. Provide that for me."

21256. But all that depends upon the persuasive power of the individual?—Yes.

Chairman.—Has not a general manager to persuade his directors, in the same way, to make a certain outlay.

Mr. Aspinall.—Any well-regulated company has its renewal fund systematically set aside for such expenditure.

Chairman.—It is a percentage set aside upon a systematic basis.

21257. *Mr. Acworth.*—And if there is a surplus at the end of the year, it comes back into the Treasury, just as it would here in the case of the Post Office?—Quite so.

21258. If the Post Office has not exhausted its vote, the surplus goes back into the Treasury—it disappears from the Post Office?—Yes; and they draw again. I may be permitted, perhaps, to tell Mr. Aspinall that it is possibly easier to get money from one man than from a dozen men.

21259. Would you be able to carry over from year to year? Supposing you open a new line, it does not want a penny spent on its rails, for the five years practically does it?—Quite so.

21260. Would you be able to carry over a credit to the time when that railway began to be expensive?—Nothing is carried over by the Railway Department. It goes into the Treasury, and it is re-voted year by year by the Treasury.

21261. Then you may have this position: that the time when your requirements for renewals are heavier may coincide with the time when the State's finances are most inconvenient for you to get the money?—That may or may not be. But the history of Australia is that there has been progress for a period of fifty years. There have been only few lean years here and there; and it is like any business institution; they conduct their business on the same lines.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POE.

21262. Assuming that you make a profit (as you told us you had in some years) amounting to 11 or 12 per cent., and that you made an average profit for the last five years of say, 5 or 6 per cent., if you went to the Minister and said, "I have made this year a surplus of 7 per cent., and you are satisfied with a return of probably 3 per cent. on the capital, and I want £3,000,000 next year," I suppose that when he found there was a surplus like that he would be willing, instead of paying the whole of the surplus into the Treasury, to give whatever the Railway Commissioner applies for?—Yes.

21263. So that in that way, although the surplus above what is a fair return on the capital goes into the Treasury, as a matter of fact, I suppose a good deal is spent on whatever may be considered necessary in the interests of the railway?—On railway improvements for the following year.

21264. Because of course upon a capital of something like £150,000,000, which you gave as the capital of the railways of Australia, the difference between 3 per cent., which you gave as a fair return, and 4 or 5, or more per cent., would be a very large sum?—Yes.

21265. Another point in connection with the questions Mr. Acworth asked you with regard to the train mileage. Could you give us the train mileage for the three Colonies or States, which you mentioned as being fairly comparable with Ireland. If you gave us the figures for Victoria and New South Wales perhaps that would be sufficient—Queensland, of course, is much smaller. What is the train mileage of Victoria, roughly speaking?—I should have to refer to some of these returns.

21266. I see that whilst the working expenses of those three States are practically 52 per cent. in the case of Victoria, 54 per cent. in the case of New South Wales, and 55 per cent. in the case of Queensland, as against 62 per cent. in the case of Ireland, your working expenses per train mile are, in the case of Victoria, 4*s.* 3*d.*, in the case of New South Wales 3*s.* 10*d.*, and in the case of Queensland 3*s.* 3*d.*, as against 2*s.* 9*d.* in the case of Ireland. Well, of

course, at first sight you appear to be working at a very low proportion in comparison with Ireland, but I should think it would be a fair argument, —judging from the high working expenses per train mile—as I understand Mr. Acworth to say, that it must be largely owing to the very greatly diminished facilities which you give both to the travelling public and to the goods traffic, and the only way to institute a comparison would be if you could give us the actual train mileage in Australia, and compare that with our train mileage in Ireland?—I can give you the train mileage. The train mileage in New South Wales is 16,309,907.

21267. In Ireland our train mileage in 1905 was 17¾ millions?—Yes.

Chairman.—That is about the same.

21268. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is what I wanted to get. Now with regard to Victoria, what is the train mileage there?—In Victoria it is 10,286,272.

21269. That is both passengers and goods?—Yes.

21270. That, you see, is practically only two-thirds?—Quite so.

21271. That is a very low train mileage?——

Mr. Acworth.—That has been cut enormously since Mr. Tait came from Canada.

21272. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do you give exceptional rates for large volumes of traffic?—No.

21273. The big trader has no advantage over the smaller trader?—No advantage beyond passes.

21274. Sir Joseph Ward told us that in New Zealand if a trader consigned 1,000 tons—or he went so far as to say 10,000 tons—of stuff, he would have to pay the same rate as a man who sent only one ton?—He would, or, rather, the same as a man who sent only four tons.

21275. *Chairman.*—That is to say, a truck load?—Yes.

21276. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is the same, generally speaking, throughout Australia?—It is—yes.

21277. Then with regard to your passenger fares, I think you have no second-class in Australia?—The classes are called first and second, but our second is equal to the third in this country.

21278. *Chairman.*—They have no third-class?—No.

21279. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At any rate your second-class, which corresponds with our third-class, is really practically the same fare as our second-class fare for the single journey?—In Ireland?

21280. Yes. Your second-class fare is the same as our second-class fare?—In some of the States.

21281. Our second-class fare is 1·60*d.* to 1·70*d.*?—Yes.

Chairman.—You ought to compare your Irish third-class with their second-class. They have only two classes.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I understand the witness says their second is equal to our second.

Chairman.—No, practically their second is equal to your third, although they call the classes first and second.

21282. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They are very much higher?—New Zealand is really cheaper than any other country.

21283. Then with regard to your return fares, you only charge 50 per cent. of the single fare additional, whereas in Ireland our first-class return fares are 65 per cent., the second-class 50 per cent., and the third-class 70 per cent.—so that there is some difference in regard to the Australian lines as regards the passenger fares?—Yes.

21284. As regards these goods rates, although there is not much in it, as the Chairman pointed out, still if one works it out upon the mileage rate, bacon is practically the same for fifty miles both in Ireland and in Western Australia; you begin at 18*s.* 4*d.*, which is a rate of, roughly speaking, 4½*d.* a mile in both cases. For 100 miles the Irishman pays 3¼*d.* and the Australian still pays 4*d.* For 150 miles the Irishman pays 2½*d.*, while the Australian pays 3¾*d.*?—Yes.

21285. It has often been said that in Ireland rates are very high as compared with Continental rates, and especially so as compared with Australian rates, but that speaks for itself. With regard to hosiery and drapery the Irishman pays 6*d.* as against the Australian's 7¾*d.* That is for fifty miles, and at the end of 150 miles the Irishman pays 3½*d.* as against the Australian's 6*d.*

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think that is not quite right, sir.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I think you will find it is.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I find that for sixty miles the rate for class III. is 16*s.* 6*d.*

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I am only taking it from Mr. Davies's return.

Chairman.—I really think, Colonel Poë, I would leave those rates, because I am quite sure they are the wrong returns.

Goods rates in Australia and in Ireland discussed.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I am only going by this gentleman's figures. For 100 miles he says it is 37*s.* 6*d.*—that is easily worked out, and it comes to 4½*d.*

21286. *Chairman.*—I thought we had agreed to drop those figures—I do not think they are accurate?—The rates in this country vary so much (in Australia they are a fixture) and the only guide that one has really is the Normanton scale. I cannot tell what they have on the Irish railways, and I cannot tell what they have on the English railways, and I do not suppose anybody in the room can tell me.

21287. All your rates in Australia are station to station, I suppose?—No; not station to station; the numeral classes are the same as in this country.

Facility for obtaining particulars of rates and fares in Australia.

21288. Collected and delivered?—In some places, yes, and in other places simply from station to station. But with regard to the Australasian classification, a trader possessing one of these books can tell exactly what it will cost him to convey anything in the coaching department or the goods department without going out of his office—a thing that does not obtain in this country to-day.

21289. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The great complaint here is the difficulty in ascertaining what a man has to pay?—Yes.

21290. *Mr. Acworth.*—There are practically no special rates?—In this book you will find all the information—the distances between station and station, the fares—everything to meet the requirements of the trader.

21291. But if you were to put all the special rates in existence in England into a book it would be a library instead of a single volume?—It would be impossible because they vary so.

21292. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You gave us an instance (in Western Australia, if I understood you rightly) of five different sections of railway, three of which were worked at a loss and two at a profit. Was that in Western Australia?—In Western Australia.

Australian Railway policy of setting off the surplus receipts of paying sections to meet deficits on non-paying sections.

21293. Then I understood you to say that the profit on the two sections of railway was sufficient, not only to cover the loss on the other three sections, but also to pay the interest on the whole of the capital of the railways in that section?—The interest on over £9,000,000, and there was a net profit of £12,000 odd.

21294. That was a point which was a little difficult to understand. As far as my figures went there was a profit of £77,000 on one, and of £56,000 on another?—Yes.

21295. That was £133,000 in round figures?—Quite so.

21296. And there was a loss on another section of £120,000?—Yes.

21297. That left a profit on the whole of very nearly £14,000?—Very nearly.

21298. I rather had the impression that the profit on those transactions practically covered the interest on the capital?—The net receipts amounted to £264,219.

21299. Oh, I see—on the whole of the railways. That makes the point clear?—To pay interest on the capital £253,850 is required.

June 10, 1907.

Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the Midland and South Western Junction Railway, and Ex-General Manager of the West Australian Railways.

21300. I take it that the great advantages which have accrued to Australia from the State ownership of the railways has been very largely due to the fact that in the first instance the State assumed control of the railways?—Yes.

21301. In Ireland we have to face things as they are, but seeing things as they are, do you still think that at this time of day it would be a desirable financial transaction for the State to assume control, on fair terms, of the Irish railways and undertake the management and working of them?—So far as my opinion goes, for what it is worth, I think decidedly that if the State acquired them to-day they could make them a financial success.

State purchase and control of the Irish Railways recommended.

21302. And of course it goes without saying that the State would be in a position to make experiments in the direction of the development of the country in a way in which it is manifest the existing companies cannot do?—Quite so. I may mention to the Commission that I have two statements here—one basing the value of the different stocks of the Irish railways at a figure of my own, and another statement of the market value of all the stocks connected with the Irish railways.

Chairman.—I saw that, but I did not think it advisable to ask any questions upon it.

Greater cost of construction of Victorian and New South Wales lines over the rest of the States explained.

21303. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The only other question I would ask you is how do you account for the greatly increased cost of construction in Victoria and New South Wales over the rest of the States?—They were constructed at an earlier period, when wages and materials were higher. Construction in Western Australia from the nineties downwards was very much cheaper, and consequently the capital cost was perhaps 50 per cent. less.

21304. In Victoria and New South Wales the price is double that in the other States?—Quite so.

21305. In no case does the State pay for land, I believe?—The land in some parts, of course, is Government land. If you carried out extensions in cities like Sydney, or Melbourne, or Brisbane, then it would be necessary to pay very highly for land there. It depends, of course, whether the land is settled or not.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

Australian Railways promoted without legal or Parliamentary expenses.

21306. In addition to getting land for extensions very cheaply or for nothing, I conclude there are no legal or Parliamentary expenses?—None.

21307. Nothing corresponding to the enormous cost of promoting railways in this country?—Nothing. The railways are promoted by the Government in Parliament at no cost to the country.

21308. So that when a line is decided upon the land is furnished by the Government if it is Government land?—Yes.

21309. And the construction can commence forthwith?—Quite so.

21310. *Chairman.*—With regard to capital and revenue, you are acquainted with the system in operation in Australia, and you are acquainted with the system in operation in England. Is there any difference whatever between the two systems. Do you not charge in Australia to capital account any additions to the railway—additional lines and all new works—are not new and additional works charged to capital, and all improvements or renewal works to revenue?—All renewals, of course, are charged to revenue, and we also, in addition, pay out of revenue in many instances for works which could rightly be charged to capital account.

21311. But surely you must be aware that that is done in England?—I am.

21312. Then there is really no difference between the two systems?—The practice is the same in both countries because imported into Australia are Britishers who have been trained in this country, and they are practically running the railways there on English lines.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

21313. May I ask one or two questions. Of course you have a very intimate knowledge of Australia, but have you made a study really of Irish railways?—I have not made a study of them.

21314. Have you been in Ireland?—I have.

21315. Much?—Not very much.

21316. Where did you go in Ireland to study the Irish railways?—As I say, I did not go to make a special study of Irish railways, but I have been in Ireland several times, including Dublin and Waterford.

21317. But not to make a minute study of the Irish railway system?—Oh, dear, no.

Chairman.—We are much obliged to you, Mr. Davies, for the trouble you have taken.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—You will remember, sir, that on the last occasion Mr. Carvill made certain statements with regard to rates from Newry and Stewartstown to Belfast, and so on, and that I promised to have them looked up. I have had this done, and I now hand in a table, for which Mr. Plews is responsible, which gives instances in each case of the actual rates charged. It then takes off the terminals in order to get at what must be divided, and we also take off the 3*d.*, which is the extra charge allowed by the Commissioners for the gradients on the Newry lines. We then compare the rates from Belfast to Stewartstown, Newry to Stewartstown, and all the way down, and you will find they are practically identical rates all through.

Chairman.—Would you like that printed?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think so, sir. You will find that when you have taken off the terminals they are practically identical.

Chairman.—If we print it as it is, as a paper handed in by you, I suppose that will be sufficient.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—May it please you, sir—that will do very well.

The document was handed in, but subsequently withdrawn. (*See p.* 313).

Mr. A. C. Larminie examined by the Chairman.

Mr. A. C. Larminie, Representative of the Castlebar Urban District Council.

21318. You appear on behalf of the Castlebar Urban District Council?—Yes.

21319. You are instructed by that Council to appear before us?—Yes.

21320. You wish to give us some information with reference to the cattle traffic from Castlebar to Dublin?—Yes.

21321. What have you to say about the charge for a wagon of cattle from Castlebar to Dublin?—The charge for a wagon of cattle from Castlebar to Dublin is £3 5*s.*; it is more than it was years ago, to some small extent.

21322. Do you mean to say the rate is higher than it was many years ago?—It was £3, but it was raised about fifteen or twenty years ago—I forget exactly which.

21323. What is the rate from Westport?—I have made a mistake there; I think it is the same. It is eleven miles further from Dublin.

21324. To what particular place in England does this cattle traffic go to which you refer?—It is sent all over England.

21325. Is there any particular centre where more is sent to than to others?—It depends on the class of cattle. Some finished cattle are sent to the large cities, and lighter cattle, that have to be finished in England, are sent very much to Yorkshire, I think. I have sent thousands of cattle myself to be finished in Middlesex.

21326. Store cattle?—Store cattle.

21327. Have you a through rate to York?—I am told not. I do not send, myself, to York. I used only to send as agent to the Earl of Lucan, who finished in Middlesex from his large farms in Mayo.

21328. What have you to say with reference to rates, generally; do you complain, first of all, of the full-wagon rates?—Yes, they are, I think, on the large side.

21329. What have you to say with reference to the half-wagon rates?—I think for the half-wagon they charge two-thirds or three-fourths—I forget which—of the full-wagon rate, which is very hard on the small men. The big man who sends full wagons—and any number of them—has all the advantage.

21330. Are you quite sure about the proportion? Is the half-wagon charged at two-thirds or three-quarters of the full-wagon rate?—I am afraid I am not quite certain. I think it is two-thirds on the Midland.

21331. That is what I thought?—So that the half-wagon rate is two-thirds higher proportionately?—Yes.

21332. How many cattle are allowed for half-wagons?—It depends a good deal on their size. Eight large cattle will fill a wagon, whereas you can put fourteen or fifteen of a lighter class

21333. Then four cattle would be charged at half-wagon rate?—Yes, in some places, I am told, that is so, whereas locally they are allowed five in the same class.

21334. Do you say that greater facilities are given to the large dealers than to the smaller dealers?—So I am told; for instance, by allowing them to unload and transhipment up the line as it were. A great deal of the traffic in cattle from the west is only to the Midland Counties or the Eastern Counties more than to England. We grow store cattle to be finished.

21335. Let us clearly understand what it is you wish to say. Do you allege that a large dealer is charged less per wagon than a small dealer?—No, I do not allege that.

21336. What are the undue facilities that you refer to that are given to large dealers, as compared with small dealers?—What I say with regard to that is that large dealers may buy at a fair, take their cattle to a certain distance on the line, unload them, and reload them again with others later on without any extra charge.

21337. And those facilities are not given to the small dealers?—No; the small dealers could not want them.

21338. Have you any complaint to make with regard to the transit of the animals?—I think it is much too slow. The animals suffer dreadfully, particularly in summer weather, by being kept so long. In the West, where so very few fairs are large enough to enable the company to give special trains, they may be kept twelve hours in addition at the sending-off station.

21339. And that, you consider, is a detriment to the trade itself?—I think so.

21340. And causes loss to the small dealers?—Large and small. Anything that deteriorates the cattle must cause loss to all parties, except the railway company.

21341. You have no particulars, I suppose, with reference to the general rates for goods traffic, have you?—No, I have not.

21342. You have no details of those?—You have those, I think, very fully.

21343. We have got that fully, but have you any particular remark to make upon it—say, for instance, on the carriage of coal or timber, or feeding stuffs for cattle?—I think the rates for feeding stuffs are particularly high, and there again the large consumer has so much the advantage of the small consumer. If you take a wagon load you get it at very little more than half what you pay for the smaller quantity.

High rates for cattle feeding stuffs.

21344. Have you anything particular to say with reference to passenger fares?—We all complain of them being so high in Ireland, particularly considering the accommodation.

21345. I suppose you are referring more especially to branch lines, are you not?—Oh, no; I am not.

High passenger fares and inferior carriage accommodation on Irish Railways.

21346. Do you say the main line carriage stock of a large Irish railway company is not equal to the main line carriage stock of an English company?—That is so, except in very exceptional cases. I do not think the second class accommodation in Ireland is as good as the third class accommodation in England. The third class accommodation, particularly on the Midland line, which I am more familiar with, is not really much better than that for cattle.

21347. *Mr. Acworth.*—When you say the second class is not better than the English third class, are you speaking of the Midland Great Western in particular, or do you mean to apply it to all Ireland?—The Midland particularly; I am more conversant with that line.

21348. Let us understand which particular line you are referring to?—I am entirely speaking of the Midland.

21349. *Chairman.*—That is to say, you contend that the second class accommodation of the Midland is not equal to the third class accommodation on the main lines of English railways?—I do not think it is.

21350. That is what you say?—That is what I say.

21351. And you are more familiar with that particular company than the other companies?—I have been travelling on it for half a century.

21352. Have you anything to suggest with regard to the market tickets?—I think the market tickets are very badly managed on the Midland system. They are really only in name market tickets. If you ask them for market tickets from one place to another they say it is not the market town of such and such a place.

21353. You mean on market day?—On market day, of course. They will say that Westport is not the market town for Ballinrobe. They will give you a market ticket from Castlebar, but not from any other town.

Policy of the Midland Great Western Railway with respect to the issue of market tickets condemned.

21354. But I suppose the market fares are all published in their Time Tables, are they not?—Yes, but I am not talking of the charges. Take, for instance, from Castlebar to Westport; they give you a return market ticket for a few pence over a single ticket rate.

21355. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the distance?—Eleven miles. I think for their own sakes they ought to issue market tickets to every town in the county from every other town.

21356. *Chairman.*—But not every day?—No, on market days—only on those days.

21357. Do you make a distinction between market days and fair days?—The company does, because if the market day happens to be a fair day they will not give you market tickets for it between Castlebar and Westport. Supposing Thursday is the market day for Westport, if a fair happens to fall on the same day they will not give you a market ticket from Castlebar, which, I think is, most inadvisable, from their own point of view.

21358. Will you make that perfectly clear, because I do not quite follow it? Between Castlebar and Westport you say that when there is a market day at Westport and, ordinarily, the market ticket would be issued, if it should happen that a fair falls on that day the market ticket is not issued?—That is so.

21359. That is the complaint?—That is the complaint.

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21360. The people have to pay the full ordinary fare?—They have to pay the full ordinary fare.

21361. Your idea is that market tickets should be issued between all such towns as you mention, whenever market days are held?—I think so.

21362. And also on fair days?—Certainly on fair days.

Alleged loss of traffic arising from high fares on the Midland Great Western Railway.

21363. If such tickets were issued it would encourage travelling between those places, and enable people to get more readily from one place to another?—Yes, certainly, and enormously increase it. Take, for instance, Westport. Owing to the raising of the fares and the doing away with the market tickets four men will take a car instead of going by the train, because the car will be cheaper for four men than if they took tickets at the full amount.

21364. Then, the railway companies suffer?—The railway companies suffer. I am speaking just as much in the interests of the railway company. I have nothing whatever to say against the company except to wish them well.

21365. Have you through carriages from your place to Broadstone?—No. We change always at Athlone. We used formerly to change at Manulla as well.

Complaint as to want of through carriage accommodation between Castlebar and Dublin.

21366. Is there a regular traffic?—Oh, yes. Castlebar is practically the main line.

21366A. *Mr. Acworth.*—There are through carriages from Mallaranny, are there not?—No.

21367. Not to Broadstone?—No.

21367A. Where do you change?—At Athlone. Sometimes, in the summer, they give them.

21368. On the limited mail there are through carriages?—Never, unless by special arrangement. Sometimes, from Mallaranny, in the summer, when there are a large number of tourists, they may give a through carriage, but, broadly speaking, you always change at Manulla and at Athlone, except as regards passengers from Castlebar, who now only have to change at Athlone.

21369. *Chairman.*—Two changes?—Yes.

21369A. Have you made any representations, or has any application been made by your Council to the Midland and Great Western Railway Company on the subject?—I think there has been, but not recently.

21370. Have you, yourself, brought it under the notice of the railway company?—I have often spoken about it; I cannot say officially.

21371. Not in writing?—No.

Delays arising at Junctions from want of co-operation in the running of passenger trains.

21372. What is your complaint with reference to the facilities for what you call local travelling?—That the trains do not hit it off, if I may use the expression.

21373. You mean do not fit in at the junction with other trains?—Yes.

21374. I suppose they fit in one direction, but not in both?—Sometimes they do, and sometimes they do not fit in. We have two companies crossing at Claremorris, and, generally speaking, we have a long delay at Claremorris. Going out from Castlebar in the morning we have a couple of hours at Claremorris before we can get up or down.

21375. In both directions?—I mean that is on the other company's line. The Great Southern come in there from Sligo.

21376. Surely there must be a connection with the Midland system?—Oh, yes; there is a connection.

21377. But with the other system you have to wait, you say?—Sometimes we have to wait for the other system. Of course the Great Southern are entirely poaching on the Midland there.

21378. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—They are poaching, by Act of Parliament?—Quite so; but that is where I blame the Midland for letting in the Great Southern.

21379. *Mr. Acworth.*—They did all they could to stop it?—Everything, excepting buying it themselves. They tried to block it, but not to acquire it. That was where their policy was so defective.

21380. *Chairman.*—Do you think that many of these complaints that you have suggested with reference to the rates, charges, and facilities, would be remedied by the State purchase of railways?—I cannot say that I am in favour of State purchase.

Amalgamation of the Railways into three systems advocated.

21381. Do you think it would be any benefit to the public at large, of which you are one, if the railways were amalgamated?—I think decidedly it would.

21382. I gather that you would favour a system of amalgamation of the companies, but not of State purchase?—I think, on broad principles, that State purchase is not advisable. I think that the prosperity of any country depends more on the individual exertions of the people in the country than on the action of the State.

21383. Are you familiar with any particular country where the State owns the railways?—No, not personally; I am acquainted with it on paper.

21384. But you are strongly in favour of the amalgamation of railways?—Yes.

21385. What do you mean by the amalgamation of railways in Ireland?—I think there certainly ought not to be more than three systems in the whole of Ireland.

21386. Would you compel a railway company to be swallowed up in a larger railway company, whether they liked it or not?—I think so, for their own benefit. A small railway cannot possibly exist in this country on its own merits.

21387. The Lough Swilly is one of the best paying lines in Ireland, and that is a small railway?—Of course there may be some trivial exceptions, if they have any special traffic.

21388. Do you know anything about the Lough Swilly Railway?—No.

21389. At any rate, without going into details, what you suggest is that instead of having thirty or forty railway companies it would be better for the country if there were only three or four?—Better for the country, and better for the railway companies.

21390. But you are not in favour of either nationalisation of railways, which is one thing, or the State purchase of railways, which is another?—I am not, on the broad principle.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

21391. Has any representation been made to the railway companies with regard to these market tickets on fair days?—I have spoken about it several times at the local station.

21392. But not to the railway company?—No; but I know we have applied from the Board of Guardians, of which I happen to be a member, for a very long time, for market tickets for various towns for Castlebar.

21393. Castlebar is the capital of Mayo?—Yes.

21393A. And it is the principal fair of that county?—No.

21394. Which is the principal fair of that county?—The principal fair of the county is at a small place called Balla.

21395. Taking Balla, I suppose traders and cattle dealers come to that fair from a considerable distance?—Yes.

21396. How far?—From England, Scotland, and all the upper counties. All Ireland is very much interested with Balla Fair.

21397. You would hardly expect the railway companies to give anything to the cattle dealers coming from England or Scotland? My point rather was to direct attention to their giving what may be considered reasonable facilities and low rates to cattle dealers coming from distances of thirty or forty miles—local dealers?—Do you mean for the transit of cattle?

21398. For these special tickets?—I was not suggesting that.

21399. I know we had some evidence from the North that on fair days, when cattle dealers had to come into town to buy cattle, the railway company, knowing that they must, whether they like it or not, go because they want to buy cattle, absolutely put off the low exceptional ticket which they give on a market day?—Yes, and I think that is very hard lines.

21400. It does seem to be rather so. Then with regard to the question of amalgamation, did the District Council, which you represent, consider the question of amalgamation or of State purchase?—The opinions differed very much.

21401. Did they, as a body, discuss it?—Only in an informal way.

21402. They did not pass any resolution or anything to that effect, one way or the other?—No.

21403. I think you said you are opposed to State purchase because you thought individual effort would do more towards the development of the country than any other system which would be under the control of the State?—I think so, generally speaking, because Ireland is rather exceptional, and unless you can work it with a very considerable amount of through rates at

a low rate I think we shall suffer more than otherwise, because the traffic is so very little. I quite sympathise with the railway companies.

21404. The difficulty that has occurred to me is that the traffic is so small that every railway company in Ireland is always fighting for its existence, and is obliged to cut their rates as low as they can to get any share of the traffic. If you put the present thirty or forty railway systems into the hands of two or three companies it will be simply giving the traffic to those three or four companies instead of to forty; and there will be a struggle for existence amongst those three or four companies, which would disappear if the railways were in the hands of one central body?—No, that is not so, because these companies would be fed by different districts. They would not come into competition, because they would be in different districts.

21405. What districts would you propose to assign to the different systems?—Practically north, south, and west.

21406. But what relation would you establish between the Midland and Great Northern Railways, the former of which has invested a large amount of capital?—That, I see, is a great difficulty, the purchase by the Midland of England of a certain portion of the system in the North.

21407. They have, I suppose, almost as large an interest in the North of Ireland as the Great Northern have at present?—I daresay they have. The only way to remedy that would be to take the London and North Western and the Great Western and purchase the other lines.

21408. At any rate you would have the Great Northern for the North and the Midland Great Western for the centre?—The Midland would take the centre of Ireland.

21409. And the South?—The Great Southern and Western would take all the South-Eastern and the South.

21410. Of course you are aware that the Midland Great Western is not in a very strong financial position?—I think it is most unfortunate it has gone down in that way.

21411. And, as you pointed out, the Great Southern and Western are legalised poachers, to a certain extent, abbetted by Parliament?—Yes.

21412. In any such system of amalgamation, would you propose that that extension of the Great Southern and Western into the Midland system should be taken away and handed over to the Midland?—I think it certainly ought to be under one management.

21413. So that in other words your amalgamation would involve some redistribution of part of the systems as at present owned?—Certainly. I think vested interests ought to be considered. I do not want to do anything that is unfair to anyone, but to benefit the country.

21414. Assuming your recommendations were carried out, and that the railway systems of Ireland were placed in the hands of these three great companies, do you think they would be in as good a position to give such reductions of rates and fares as would undoubtedly lead to the development of the country as a strong central authority in the hands of the State? I daresay you were present when Mr. Davies gave us evidence with regard to Australia, and said that the Government were prepared to suffer a certain loss on certain railways so long as they could make a return on the whole capital by means of the others?—I think in a place like Australia, which is being developed, that you can put up with a temporary loss, and a very large temporary loss, for a future gain. Unfortunately in Ireland we have nothing to develop.

21415. That was the point I was coming to. Is there any hope for the railways, either under an amalgamated system or under a central system, unless it leads to development? Do you think if the rates were materially reduced, and facilities given one way or the other, that that would lead to the creation of industrial activity and to an increase of the agricultural industry, or do you think it is hopeless to expect any great development?—I regret to say I rather do think it is hopeless, under existing circumstances, to expect any great development, because what are you going to develop? I think the fishery industry may be enormously developed, and it is being developed, I am thankful to say.

21416. With the system of land purchase, which is in operation people anticipate, do they not, that the effect of it will be, when the land is transferred to the peasant proprietors, that it will produce 20, 30, or 40 per cent. more than it does at present—do you share that opinion?—I am afraid I do not.

21417. I do not know whether you have had any experience of properties that have been sold under the Ashbourne Act?—I have within the last three years assisted in the sale of land having a rental of £7,000 a year.

Present favourable condition of the farmer as compared with twenty years ago.

21418. Do you not think that the position which the farmer occupies is a very great deal more favourable than it was twenty years ago; that he is in a stronger financial position, and his land is better cultivated and yields more than it did formerly?—I cannot go very far into that. When you reduce a man's rent you make him more comfortable—that goes without saying, and I am altogether in favour of the land purchase system.

21419. Apart from that, do you not think the effect of the land purchase system would be to give a much greater amount of production?—In connection with that you must go into the question of the farming capacity of the people themselves.

21420. But a man will cultivate his lands to greater advantage when he knows that the whole of the output will go into his pocket, than when he knows that a great portion of it goes into the landlord's pocket—that stands to reason, does it not?—Yes, that stands to reason, but of course they have to pay their instalments still.

21421. You apparently seem to entertain very little hope of any great activity or development in agriculture or industry; and that, I should have thought, would rather be an argument in favour of the State taking over the lines rather than putting them into the hands of the railway companies who, unless they do get a large development of traffic, cannot make any appreciable reductions, while the State can do so. It can incur a loss, to be borne by the general taxpayer if it is in the interest of the taxpayer generally that it should be borne, but the railway companies cannot do that?—That is so.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

21422. When you spoke of the bad second-class accommodation, you would not include in that, I suppose, the limited mail between Galway and Dublin—that is as good as you can expect?—Yes.

21423. If you could get more trains like that there would be nothing to grumble about?—No, I do not think so, but I do think the third-class is too utterly bad.

Improvement in travelling facilities, rolling stock, speed, &c., in recent years on Midland Great Western Railway as compared with twenty years ago.

21424. You spoke of having travelled on the Midland for half a century—would you agree that it has improved very much in its accommodation to the public of recent years?—In some cases.

21425. I am speaking of passengers?—In facilities for travelling?

21426. Facilities for travelling, rolling stock, speed of trains, connection of trains, and everything?—Yes, there has been a considerable improvement.

21427. Within the last twenty years or so?—Yes.

21428. I want to understand the market and fair tickets that you have been telling us about. A fair is a place where they sell more cattle than is usual on a market day?—A market is really more for local produce.

21429. And a fair is a special congregation of people?—Yes.

21430. But at a fair are there not a great number of people who go there, not to buy beasts, but to amuse themselves?—Oh, dear no; it is not like an English fair in that respect at all.

21431. It is purely a cattle fair, and nothing else?—Yes.

21432. And you do not understand the reason of the admitted rule that they do not give cheap market tickets for fairs?—I have no idea of the reason.

21433. With regard to the question of the Great Southern Railway, I gather that you would like to see the Great Southern turned out again of the line from Sligo to Claremorris?—I do not say so at all.

21434. You do not say so?—Not at all.

21435. You said they were poachers?—Yes, I said that.

The effect of the division of the Irish Railways into three systems discussed.

21436. Have you any sympathy with poachers?—Certainly, although I have taken out a game licence for the last forty years.

21437. Supposing you did divide the Irish rail-

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The effect the division of the Railways into the three systems discussed

ways into three systems, as you have suggested, would you propose to leave the Great Southern in the heart of the Midland district, or to buy them out?—I think not.

21438. What I thought I understood you to mean was that you did not want competition; you wanted to give each company its own district, and let it do the best it could with it?—Yes, that in a way, but I think the charges should be governed by some supreme authority.

21439. Quite so; but you would like to give a company a district to itself and say, "Now do the best you can with it under State supervision"?—Yes, or you might have only one system for the whole of Ireland.

21440. In other words you would get rid of such competition as there is at present?—Yes, if they were obliged to give certain accommodation, and not to charge over a certain figure.

21441. At present the theory in England, and to some extent the theory in Ireland, is that competition will lead them to serve the public well. If you propose to make three systems, each in charge of its own district, you get rid of all competition?—You have in that way, but then, on the other hand, which is a very much more important thing, you will have uniformity of accommodation.

21442. I quite agree. Do not suppose I am disagreeing with you. I am only trying to follow the point. Now, I want to ask you this. You remember, I daresay, the proceedings in the Amalgamation Bill, of half a dozen years ago, when the Great Southern got possession of the line?—Yes, I recollect them.

21443. Do you remember that the reason Parliament gave it, rightly or wrongly, was that the local authorities and the people in the locality all said, "Come and give us somebody to compete with the Midland"?—I think it is very likely.

21444. What do you think they would say if the competition was now taken away; do you think they would be content?—I do not know that they derive any benefit from the competition. Some of the farmers have derived benefit by having rates with the South of Ireland more readily than they had before.

21445. You have not thought how far your neighbours would resent the taking away of the line from the Great Southern, which was given to them a few years ago?—I do not know that they would resent it really. As one of the public I should not resent it, because I think they work against each other now.

21446. Have you changed your mind? Did you take that line in 1899, or thereabouts, I think it was?—I do not think I took any line.

21447. You did not take any active part then?—No; we were away from it.

21447A. You are at Castlebar, I think?—Yes.

Colonel G. O'Callaghan Westropp, J.P., examined by the Chairman.

Colonel G O'Callaghan Westropp, J.P., Coolreagh, Bodyke, County Clare.

21448. Colonel Westropp, you are a Justice of the Peace, and you come from Coolreagh, Bodyke, County Clare?—Yes.

21449. What are the particular railways serving your district?—At present entirely the Great Southern and Western, formerly the Great Southern and Western and the Waterford and Limerick, with the West Clare terminus at Ennis, twenty miles distant.

21450. Have you anything to complain of with reference to the rates for goods traffic in operation in your district?—As far as my own particular district goes, it is served mainly by the Grand Canal. They are canal rates, and not railway rates. They go into the village of Scariff by canal boat, which is four miles from me. Killaloe Railway Station is fourteen miles, and Limerick and Ennis are both twenty miles.

21451. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are you, roughly, on a line between Ennis and Killaloe?—No, between Ennis and Scariff.

Improved facilities for passenger traffic at Ennis Station since the amalgamation of Waterford and Limerick with Great Southern and Western Railway.

21452. *Chairman.*—We will take your evidence very shortly. First of all, have you any complaint to make with reference to the passenger train service?—As far as Ennis is concerned, there has been a very great improvement since the amalgamation. We have better trains, better rolling stock, more punctuality, and we have through carriages to Dublin, which we had not before. All of these are very great conveniences. In addition, there have been some minor improvements in Ennis Station, which make for the comfort of passengers. That is, as far as the passengers go.

Alleged penalising of Ennis by the late Waterford and Limerick Company.

21453. With reference to the goods, have you anything to say with reference to rates for goods traffic generally. Are the rates fair and reasonable?—No, I do not think so, but I do not blame the Great Southern Company primarily for that. One has to go back into the history of the Waterford and Limerick Company, whose system they acquired. The Waterford and Limerick Company was strongly established at Limerick many years before it came on to Clare. Finally it pushed its system as far as Clare Castle, which is two miles outside Ennis, on the Limerick side of Ennis, some years before it came on to Ennis itself—I cannot say exactly how many years ago. The administration of the company gave us residents in Clare the distinct idea that Ennis traders were penalised, and that an attempt was being made to crush them out of existence in order to divert the traffic, both the custom of the farmers and the custom of the village traders who distributed their goods to the surrounding districts, to Limerick instead of to Ennis. There was a statement which was very common property in the district, which was attributed to a late Chairman of the Waterford and Limerick Company, to the effect that he would make the grass grow in the streets of Ennis. The Chairman referred to contradicted that, and said all that he said was that he would treat Ennis as a wayside station. Ennis is the capital of the County of Clare. It is centrally situated; it is ideally centred, and that did not improve our tempers.

21454. I understand you told us that that has all been improved since?—No; only the passenger service.

21455. I meant the passenger service?—I have some particulars of the goods service here, and you will see that they are rather remarkable.

21456. Just mention them, if you please?—Taking porter from Dublin to Limerick the rate is 13*s.* 6*d.* per ton; to Ennis, which is twenty-four miles further, the rate is 18*s.* 3*d.* per ton. For wines and spirits from Dublin it is 20*s.* a ton; from Ennis to Dublin it is 30*s* per ton—50 per cent. difference for twenty-four miles.

21457. Twenty-four miles extra?—Yes, and the same gauge; no break of bulk, or anything of that kind.

21458. Have you represented that to the railway companies?—It was, I believe, very strongly represented at the time of the amalgamation. I gave evidence as one of the neutral witnesses for the Treasury, before the Hybrid Committee in 1899 in London. The Preamble was not passed then, but it was passed the following year. That was the Great Southern Bill. I was a neutral witness; if anything, I was slightly in favour of the Great Southern, but I say a neutral witness for reasons which I will give you presently. I have eight rates here for staple goods.

21459. If you have two, three, or four rates which you consider are out of proportion to what you think they ought to be you are quite entitled to let us have them, so that we can put them on the notes?—Hardware from Birmingham to Limerick is 48*s.* 6*d.* a ton, and from Birmingham to Ennis, 56*s.* 8*d.* Hardware from Sheffield to Limerick is 55*s.* a ton; to Ennis it is 79*s.* 2*d.* a ton. Drapery from Manchester to Limerick is 43*s.* 4*d.* a ton; to Ennis, 62*s.* 6*d.* a ton.

21460. I suppose they can go direct from Liverpool to Limerick by water, cannot they?—I believe they can, but I understood that these were railway rates.

21461. Yes, but the railway rates are based on the rates that would be in operation by water. I can understand the Limerick rate, where there is direct water competition, being considerably less than for a place where there is no water competition?—Quite so.

21462. Your point is that Ennis is twenty-four miles further than Limerick, and that the percentage of charge to Ennis is, roughly, from 20 to 50 per cent. more?—Exactly.

21463. I think we will take that statement as it is; I do not think you need give us any more particulars. I can quite see what the figures are likely to be?—I

should like to say that groceries from London to Limerick are 47*s.* 6*d.*, and from London to Ennis, 78*s.* 4*d.*

21464. That seems to be the largest difference of all?—Yes, that is a very large difference. I have to thank the Railway Companies for these figures. I applied to them, when I was coming over here, for these rates to Limerick and Ennis, and I have to thank them for their courtesy for giving them to me. Tea, an important item, from London to Limerick, is 35*s.* a ton, and from London to Ennis, 45*s.* per ton. The ordinary goods distributed in a county market town run about the same. The only two that are pretty much the same rate as the Limerick rate, allowing for the extra mileage, are artificial manures and cotton and linseed cake.

21465. *Mr. Acworth.*—They are from Dublin?—They are both from Dublin, and there there is only a very small difference.

21466. *Chairman.*—What have you to say with reference to the East Clare Railway?—The East Clare Railway was first spoken of about the year 1886 or 1887, at the time when the county was being asked to construct the West Clare Railway.

21467. When was it before the Grand Jury?—It would be before the Grand Jury about the year 1885 or 1886. I was in the Army then, and I only came back in 1889 to live in the county.

21468. Did not the Grand Jury pass a resolution about 1892?—Yes, they did. About 1892 they passed a resolution in favour of the construction of that line by free grant. They did not pledge themselves to any guarantee at that time. It is well to make that clear.

21469. As a free grant as a relief work?—As a free grant they considered it would be a proper line to build at that time. The Grand Jurors of East Clare voted for both the West and South Clare lines, on the understanding that if the Government found the money to assist in the construction of an East Clare line, which was the one link required to complete the county system, the gentlemen who had benefited in Western Clare would return the compliment by voting for the East Clare line. That was the understanding. There were three arms to the county system.

21470. What became of the railway that was suggested by this resolution in 1892; what was done subsequently?—A Committee was formed at Scariff, which was the centre of East Clare, and I was appointed chairman of it. We took the matter up, with the assistance of various engineers. There was a larger scheme before us first, which I need not go into now—I can if you like.

21471. No. I want to have this as briefly as possible on the notes. You were Chairman of the Committee appointed in 1895?—Yes.

21472. And that Committee was formed at Scariff?—Yes.

21473. In the course of your negotiations with reference to that railway did you ascertain what the Government were prepared to do?—Yes; there were prolonged negotiations extending over nearly 1½ years with the Government.

21474. Tell us briefly in your own words the result of those negotiations with the Government?—The question was very thoroughly gone into. The Light Railways Act was passed the year after we formed that Scariff Railway Committee—Mr. Gerald Balfour's Act of 1896, and we approached him on the subject. We had prolonged communications with both Mr. Gerald Balfour, and with Mr. Thomas Robertson, the then Chairman of the Board of Works.

21475. Did Mr. Gerald Balfour visit the district?—He did; eventually, accompanied by Mr. Robertson, he visited the district.

21476. What was the result of that; what did the Chief Secretary agree to do with reference to this particular railway?—They asked a good many questions, and negotiations continued for some time after their visit, and eventually Mr. Gerald Balfour undertook to recommend a grant to us of £62,500. That was half the estimated cost of the construction and equipment—£125,000.

21477. What was the length of that line?—The length of the line would be about 22 miles. It was to include, I should say, the workshops at Ennis, proper sheds for sheltering the rolling stock, and also an ample supply of rolling stock.

21478. It was the line and its equipment?—Rather more than its equipment.

21479. The workshop, the repair shops, the carriages, wagons, and so on?—Yes, but under the Railways Act of 1896 we had to get a guarantee from an existing company that they would work it. We were thrown back on the West Clare Company. They were prepared to work it, but they were short of rolling stock, short of wagon shelters, and short of workshops; and therefore part of the consideration was—(we represented it to Mr. Gerald Balfour)—that as we were thrown on a weak company we should be started in a strong position to enable the company to give us fair play.

21480. Tell us now, in a few words, what was the outcome of all these negotiations and these promises on the part of the Chief Secretary?—The preliminary survey of the line was made by Mr. Barrington, the engineer of the West Clare Railway Company, and he took the preliminary steps for bringing the matter before the Grand Jury. It was calculated that in order to meet the Government Grant of £62,500, and to produce the total of £125,000 cash, we would have to guarantee, on the part of the county, £55,000; that is to say, with a four per cent. County Stock we would be able to get £62,500 cash for £55,000 worth of Stock, and that was the proposition which was put before the Grand Jury.

The negotiations with the Government in reference to the proposed East Clare Railway.

21481. Did the Grand Jury approve or reject it?—I do not want to go into greater detail than is necessary for the people I represent, but there was a feeling that the Grand Jury was strongly prejudiced against the line, and I cannot say it got a fair hearing.

21482. What was the result of it?—The result was that it was rejected by the Grand Jury by sixteen votes to six.

Rejection of the scheme by the Grand Jury of Clare, and diversion of the Grant to Donegal.

21483. That was the result; and therefore it was never made?—It was never made, and the £62,500 was allotted to a line in Donegal.

21484. We have had that in evidence before from some other witness. I think I understood from previous evidence that these Grand Jurors were the same as the County Council afterwards?—They discharge the same functions, except that a Grand Jury simply met twice a year at Assizes, instead of having quarterly meetings, as the County Councils do.

21485. The district never got the benefit of it at all?—The district never got the benefit of it at all. I should like to mention, before you leave that question, that had that railway been constructed it would have put Ennis and the County of Clare in a very much stronger position, because it would have been linked with the port of Clare Castle on the west, and its terminus on the east would have been actually on the Grand Canal Company's system; so that we would have had water competition at each end, and from that competition West Clare and South Clare would have derived the benefit. We reckon that in freights on porter alone the gross receipts would have been £1,400 a year, and there were a great many other items of heavy and valuable traffic also.

21486. *Mr. Acworth.*—Was that portion coming from Dublin by the Shannon, by the Grand Canal?—Yes.

21487. Clare Castle is on the arm of the Shannon?—It is just above the junction of the River Fergus with the Shannon. It is really on a tidal estuary.

21488. That is what I wanted to get at; it is not artificial; it is natural navigation?—It is slightly improved; it is a natural estuary.

21489. *Chairman.*—I think you have very clearly given us the history of that?—I felt bound to ask to be heard on that point, because two gentlemen have given evidence from County Clare before you who, I think, were not perfectly acquainted with the length of the negotiations and of the trouble that Mr. Robertson, who was one of our greatest Irish experts, took on the matter. They supposed it was rushed through rather as a relief of distress work or something like that. It was first brought forward in the early nineties as a relief of distress work; but it was as a commercial concern and to put the existing West and South Clare lines on their legs that it was brought forward in 1895-1896.

21490. Now, I will ask you one or two general questions. First of all with regard to passenger traffic, I think you hold the opinion that in Ireland there should only be two classes—first and third?—Yes, I do.

Two classes only for passenger traffic recommended.

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21491. The same as on the Midland Railway in England?—Quite so.

21492. Your opinion also is that if two classes were established the first class fare should be substantially reduced?—It is. I think the companies could do it with safety and advantage to themselves.

21493. And you think that if the first class fare were substantially reduced, a great many people who now travel third would travel first class?—I do, undoubtedly.

21494. And that the railway companies instead of losing money would be benefited: that is your view?—That is so. At present, travelling a good deal as I do, one sees the first-class carriages practically empty.

Improved sleeping car and lavatory accommodation on passenger trains suggested.

21495. You are also of opinion that sleeping-cars should be provided on night mail trains?—I think that is most important. May I say, to make that clear, that when I say sleeping-cars I do not mean anything like the magnificent sleeping-cars that one sees at Holyhead, for example; but several times, for instance, I have been on military duty at the town of Plymouth, and I have seen some carriages on the Great Western Railway, ordinary first-class carriages, which can be used for a night journey, each compartment making a double sleeping berth. I do not know how they do it, but they are distinctly comfortable; and that would meet our needs in Ireland. For instance, in this way. At Kingsbridge terminus (the terminus we in the South are mainly concerned with) passengers arrive, I will say, for West Clare, which is the great tourist resort, by the afternoon boat from Holyhead, and are, in fact, in Kingsbridge somewhere about six o'clock. At present they cannot get on to Ennis the same night, nor to West Clare; but if those passengers were able to get their dinner comfortably in Dublin, go to bed in a sleeping-car, and find themselves at a siding at Ennis the next morning (just as you find yourself at Euston), get their breakfast, and turn into the West Clare train on the opposite side of the platform, and go on, I believe it would be a great help to the tourist traffic, and the tourist traffic is the one payable traffic I can see ahead of us.

21496. Do you think there would be sufficient passengers to warrant the expenditure on these sleeping cars?—I am myself against the special sleeping cars. I think they should be first-class carriages, with adaptable seats that could be turned into bunks. You do not get people used to these conveniences all at once; it would be two or three years before people realised the comfort of them.

21497. You also suggest that more lavatory carriages should be provided?—That is very necessary on long distance runs.

21498. Is not that being done gradually by all railway companies now?—The Great Southern have gone a long way in that direction, but I hope to see it extended.

21499. In the rolling stock that is being built by all railway companies, is not lavatory accommodation provided?—In the corridor carriages it is.

21500. But independent of the corridor carriages?—Independent of the corridor carriages, only in the first and second class, and not for all of them.

21501. Not for the third?—In the corridors it is all right.

Alleged deterioration of cattle owing to slow transit.

21502. That is with regard to passengers. Now, with regard to cattle, which is a very important item in the business of Ireland. Why do you say that the transit of cattle in Ireland is too slow: have you any particular reason for making that remark?—Perhaps you will allow me to get the question of the rates out of the way first. I know that the Ennis people complain very much about the cattle rates, but you have already got that on the notes. My own rate from Killaloe, which is about £2 16*s.* for a wagon holding nine cattle, to Dublin I am not dissatisfied with; I do not quarrel with it at all. The half wagon rate is rather high, but I do not quarrel with the wagon rate. I find, however, that the cattle reduce tremendously on the journey more than they have any right to do. I weigh my cattle at home, and they are sold by live weight at the big Dublin sales; and I find that an ordinary good-sized beast in forward condition, say a beast that would scale 10 cwt. live weight, will reduce four stones (fifty-six pounds) between leaving my paddocks at home and being put on the weigh-bridge in Dublin, and I have to give them two days' rest in Dublin in addition.

21503. To recover that weight?—To recover from the journey, and that is a very serious thing.

21504. How often do you weigh your cattle—when they start and when they arrive?—Invariably both ways, because I sell by live weight, and I must do it for my own protection. Of course I assume that my salemaster is honest, but I like to tell him what sort of price I expect.

21505. These figures are not assumed; they are actual figures?—Actual figures, arrived at by weighing. Supposing, for instance, I am sending up nine head of cattle, I weigh two to four average beasts.

21506. You say an ordinary beast would lose ½ cwt. What have you allowed for the journey in that case?—I am counting it all on the journey.

21507. Is it twelve hours or twenty hours or what?—On the whole journey, road and rail.

21508. From Ennis to Dublin?—Killaloe. I send from Killaloe to Dublin.

21509. Do they join the railway at Killaloe?—Yes.

21510. You put them into trucks at Killaloe?—Yes.

21511. Supposing I put them into trucks at Killaloe at nine o'clock this morning, at what time do they arrive at Dublin?—In practice they would be loaded at about two o'clock in the afternoon, but I cannot tell you definitely the hour of arrival, because it is the salemaster's men, not mine, who meet them at the other end; but I take it they would get there about four or five a.m. the following morning. Probably the railway people could tell you that.

21512. What is the railway mileage?—About 118 miles.

21513. *Mr. Aspinall.*—They have nothing to eat?—I water and feed them at Killaloe before loading them; I always send my own food. At two p.m. they are loaded at Killaloe, and I should say at about four or five a.m. the following morning they would have arrived.

21514. *Chairman.*—At what time do they leave Killaloe?—They would leave Killaloe at, I think, four o'clock.

21515. Why do you load them at two o'clock?—Because the company, for their convenience, like to have the cattle loaded some time in advance.

21516. Not two hours?—They always ask me. The company are very good in finding me wagons at short notice to suit the markets, and that sort of thing, and therefore I convenience them in every way I can.

21517. But not to that extent, if the train leaves at four o'clock?—I think I may take it this way—that the very latest that I could load them without inconvenience to the company (because there are other trains coming and going, and the company's servants have other things to do) would be three o'clock.

21518. That I can understand; three o'clock, with the train leaving at four o'clock, would not seem unreasonable?—I do not complain of that in any way, but what I mean is that if they arrived in Dublin at ten o'clock that night, so that they could be turned straight into the paddocks and have a drink and stretch themselves, and have a good feed of hay, next morning these cattle would be very much better beasts than they are under the existing system.

21519. Is the journey unreasonably long; that is the point?—I think it is. I think it ought to be possible, loading cattle at Killaloe at three o'clock and despatching them at four o'clock, to unload them at the latest at eleven o'clock the same night in Dublin.

21520. I suppose you have represented all this to the railway company?—As a private individual, I do not see much good in doing so. Under the old system, which prevailed up to 1899, the Grand Jury system, those of us who were members of the Grand Jury (and the Grand Juries were recognised fiscal bodies) were in a position to make representations, but at present, unfortunately, a good many of us are rather out in the cold, with the door locked behind us.

21521. Have you thought of any remedy for the state of things you have brought under our notice?—I have.

21522. First of all, are you in favour of what has been represented to us as being advantageous to the

country—an amalgamation of the railways into three or four systems?—I think, for the present, that is the best that could be done, assuming that the districts were guaranteed against higher rates; that is to say, that they did not lose such benefits as they have gained at present in competitive areas, and guaranteed against an inferior railway service. For instance, take the case I gave in evidence here in London before, of the amalgamation of the Great Southern and Western and the Waterford and Limerick system. If by any chance you lopped off the extreme northern part of the present Great Southern line, that is to say, the line from Tuam to Collooney and Sligo, and gave that geographically to the Midland, you would deprive all that part of Connaught of competition, and therefore they would need to be safeguarded. That was one of the great rocks on which that railway scheme split, first of all, because there was an attempt to divide the line at Ennis, which would have been a most delightful thing for us, but it would have deprived Connaught of competition on the one side, and Limerick and Kerry on the other. I think it was those considerations which eventually lead to the Bill being passed, and in anything like a grouping of railway companies it would be necessary to see that districts did not lose; in fact, I believe so much in competition myself, that the one reason why I would go for these amalgamations would be that there would probably be very considerable savings in staff charges; and I should hope to see the public accommodated perhaps at a great many points where at present, owing to the friction between companies and things of that kind, there may be inconveniences, and connections made that are at present missed, and so on.

21523. I understand from what you say that, subject to some proper understanding, that rates should not be advanced and other safeguards, you are in favour of three systems of railways?—And possibly a fourth.

21524. Three or four?—I do not pretend to be an expert, but it is quite possible there might be a fourth system running down the East coast.

21525. Have you anything to say with reference to the Railway Commissioners' Court; is not that a proper tribunal in which differences between traders and Irish railway companies can be settled?—I have no experience of it, and anything I say on that point I would say, therefore, with great respect; but I believe we will have to come eventually—(not at present; it would not be safe to do it at present)—to something approaching nationalisation of the railways in Ireland, the shareholders, of course, being properly safeguarded—I have no right to begin by plundering them. But, in the meantime, what I should like to see would be, say, two gentlemen of approved experience and position, and one gentleman, a barrister, of considerable experience in railway matters, appointed upon a sort of roving commission, with powers to go round and hold inquiries from place to place. I should like to see those gentlemen appointed at a salary, not in the way in which we commonly do things in Ireland, just paying them enough to secure a second-rate man, but I should like to see them appointed as permanent civil servants on a proper scale of salary and pension, and let them go round holding roving commissions to see how these various groups of systems worked. Then when the time came, as I hope it will come, when we have our wretched land system out of the way, which is obstructing everything at present, then I should hope to see those gentlemen, the experts with all this experience, come in and be of the greatest assistance, from the experience which they would have gathered from their five or ten years' work, to the Government who were running the railways as the State concern. That is the best way I can see. I know that is looked on as a very radical suggestion; but I have occasionally come across cases in which the public, on the one hand, and the railway companies, on the other, were brought into strained relations just by a bit of unreasonableness on the part of the directors. In such a case as that, I think from my own experience of public life, there is no beating the power of surcharge. If a member of the public has to fight a rich corporation like a railway company, he does it under great disadvantages; but if, in the course of inquiry before a thoroughly competent tribunal, it came out that this was a thing that ought not to have been brought into Court at all, or that the company's or the shareholders' money ought not to have been expended in defending a thing that no prudent director would have ever dreamed of defending, I should like to see the Court or tribunal able to order a proportion of the costs to be paid personally by the director or directors who were at fault, and I believe that would have the greatest effect in stopping unreasonable litigation. It is the best thing I can think of.

21526. Do you really think so?—I do.

21527. I don't?—I am very sorry you differ from me; your opinion is worth a great many of mine.

21528. It is valuable to get other people's opinions?—I am very glad to get yours on it. I shall be more careful how I put it forward next time.

21529. Of course, you will agree that, whatever tribunal has to settle these differences between the public and the railway companies, it should be an easy and cheap and quick way of settling it, without any great expense?—Yes. The people who come before it are poor people, and they want to get on with their work and not be kept idling about. There is just a point that I think has not been brought before you, but it is an important point on our own county railway system. There has been a great deal of talk about the Great Southern taking over those lines—I am not going to take you into that—and about converting them into broad gauge.

Question of the proposed conversion of the West and South Clare railways into broad gauge lines discussed.

21530. You mean the West Clare line?—The West and South Clare. I happened to be on a Grand Jury when a good deal of that was going through, and the other gentlemen who have been here were not in a position to tell you about it. The West Clare will have to be completely re-made, because it was only constructed to carry a narrow gauge line; but when we were making the South Clare line we stipulated that the South Clare line should be ballasted and the culverts made of a strength to admit of its conversion to the broad gauge. Therefore the expense of converting the South Clare will be very much less than the expense of converting the West Clare. The only other point on those two lines to which I should like to draw attention, which also came within my own knowledge when I was on the Grand Jury, was that we drove a very hard bargain for the South Clare line with the contractor. I believe he barely made the very minimum percentage of profit that a contractor should make; but the opinion of the Grand Jury was that he made a very good thing out of the West Clare line. The Grand Jury, not knowing much about railway matters, drove a soft bargain over the West Clare, and consequently they did not get the amount or quality of rolling stock, or such a substantial permanent way as they ought to have done, and that is, to a great extent, the cause of the expense which has made these lines unpopular since. If they had been given a better start, they would have been very much cheaper.

21531. *Mr. Acworth.*—Where do the two lines divide?—It is only a theoretical division. The metals are continuous.

21532. Where does the West Clare end?—At Miltown-Malbay.

21532A. It is a continuous run?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

21533. With regard to these railways, I think the county pays a considerable amount in the way of county contribution on both of these?—Yes, on an average about £7,000 a year.

21534. Over and above the two per cent. for which the county is liable, I think, as a matter of fact, that to meet the deficit on the working expenses in respect of the West Clare there is an annual contribution of something like £900, and of £1,100 in respect of the South Clare?—I know it is a considerable amount; I do not know the actual figures, because they do not come before me now.

The annual liability of the Co. Clare in respect of the West and South Clare railways.

21535. Those are taken from the Board of Works Returns. Over and above two per cent. which they have to pay on the guaranteed capital, they have also to pay £2,000 a year for the deficit in working expenses?—Yes.

21536. You mentioned that the East Clare people considered that they were rather aggrieved because

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at the time they joined in the contribution it was on the understanding that if there was any money forthcoming in future it would go towards making an extension in their direction?—Yes.

21537. And, as a matter of fact, I believe the whole County of Clare, which was what you were referring to, pays 2½*d.* in the £ in support of that guarantee?—As a county at large charge.

East Clare's contribution to the South and West Clare railways guarantee.

21538. For which they derive no benefit at all?—In East Clare we derive no appreciable benefit.

21539. In the remainder of the county the poundage is from 3*d.* to 1*s.* 1*d.*?—Once I think it has gone as high as 1*s.* 2*d.*; that is in the extreme western barony of Moyarta.

21540. With regard to the receipts from the West Clare Railway, I think the Board of Trade Returns show that the receipts per mile on the West Clare portion are really higher than those of any other of the light railways in Ireland, with one exception. On the West Clare section the receipts per mile come to £8 14*s.* per week?—I have heard it stated; I have not it in my mind at the moment, but I think that is right.

The heavy expenditure on the West Clare railway discussed.

21541. The only other line that approaches that at all is the Cork and Muskerry. Having regard to that high receipt per mile, and to the fact that the expenses work out at such a high figure—the expenditure is £9 2*s.* per mile per week—can you account for that at all?—No, I cannot. I think it is a thing that a man would want to be a director of the company or a trained expert to go into thoroughly before he could express an opinion. A mere casual traveller or a mere resident in the district could not put his finger on it properly.

21542. You spoke of the West Clare being in a very bad state as regards permanent way and equipment generally?—Yes, but it has been improved, and that is the reason of these increases. We have no borrowing powers on those lines, and all repairs and renewals of rolling stock have to be paid for out of revenue.

21542A. *Chairman.*—That is the explanation, then?—It is part of the explanation.

21543. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It seems strange, in looking at the Board of Trade Returns, that on the united system, for 1905, the permanent way expenditure works out at over £5,000, the locomotives at £7,000, and the repairs to rolling stock £2,400. That is a heavy expenditure in one year?—It is long ago that we did that. If we had started fair, if we had known our business better at the commencement of it, and bought a better permanent way and rolling stock to begin with, the charges would have been very much lighter.

21544. In addition to that guaranteed capital there is a small sum on both lines of ordinary stock, is there not, which pays nothing?—There may be, but it must be so small that I have never heard of it.

21545. £20,000 in the one case, and £16,500 in the other?—I never heard of it.

The Board of Works inquiry into the working of the Clare Railways in 1898

21546. It is in the Board of Trade Returns: there is no interest paid on it, naturally. I think there was an inquiry by the Board of Works under the 7th section of the Act of 1896, at the instance of the ratepayers of West Clare, as to the working of that line, was there not in 1898? They have power under the Act of 1896?—I did not know they had power with regard to railways constructed before 1896.

21547. The Act is retrospective?—I did not know about that, but I know it has been continually talked of, and the matter was before the Lord Lieutenant recently, within the last month or two.

21548. The Board of Works Report for 1902 points out that they held this inquiry at the instance of the ratepayers in 1898, and that the result of that inquiry was that after referring the matter to the West Clare Company they did not consider any further action was necessary, and there the matter ended. It seems curious if there were such grave complaints that apparently the Board of Works were satisfied they were not of such a nature as would necessitate any Report to the Lord Lieutenant. You spoke of the water competition of the Grand Canal as being in the interests of the county, the district, and the whole country. As a matter of fact I suppose you have seen the evidence which was given before the Railway and Canal Commission recently, and also on previous occasions in 1902, as to the agreement between the Great Southern and Western Company and the Grand Canal Company?—When was the agreement made?

The effect of the agreement between the Great Southern and Western Railway Company and the Grand Canal Company on competition discussed.

21549. I do not know when it was made, but it was in existence in 1902, at any rate, and it was referred to again before the Royal Commission on Canals and Waterways last October?—Our railway came forward in 1897.

21550. It is in existence at the present moment: I do not know whether you have seen it?—No, I did not see it.

21551. In return for a payment of £4,000 or £5,000 a year by the Great Southern and Western Company to the Grand Canal Company, the Grand Canal Company forewent a certain traffic; in other words, although ostensibly there was competition between the Canal Company and the Railway Company in respect of certain classes of traffic, that competition was entirely nullified by this agreement?—I should say it is a very unfortunate thing for the districts if that is so.

21552. Where you have agreements of that kind entered into between a water-carrying company and a railway competition disappears?—Obviously.

21553. So that the competition which you refer to as being of such great advantage to your county is rather more of a figure of speech under such circumstances. Further than that, is it not a fact that the canal service on the Shannon and on Lough Derg is considered a very unsatisfactory service?—We think in the Scariff district it might be considered improved, but at the same time we would be in such a miserable condition without it that we make the best of what we have, and are thankful.

21554. Are not the boats often held up for days at a time by high floods?—Not as often as formerly. They used, twenty years ago, to be continually troubled with that.

21555. I saw some evidence about it before the Congested Districts Commission the other day, when Mr. O'Connor, from Scariff, and a gentleman from the Grand Canal Company gave evidence, and I think the evidence of these gentlemen was to the effect that the boats were often held up?—I get a good deal of my own goods for my house and farm over the canal system, and I can only remember once in the last eighteen years that goods of mine were delayed by that cause.

21556. Is it not a fact that inter-communication between the outlet of the canal at Lough Derg and Limerick, is very inefficient, and that practically goods have to be transhipped, and that there is no communication owing to tides and bridges?—I think they break bulk at Killaloe I cannot tell you for certain, but my impression is that there is a main line of goods from Dublin to Limerick, that a certain amount of bulk is broken and sent on to Scariff or Killaloe.

21557. I daresay you are aware that there have been negotiations from time to time between the Board of Works and the Canal Company as to the rates and tolls which they charge?—Yes, the Board of Works have the tolls on Lough Derg.

21558. But there has been some difference of opinion between the two. The Board of Works were appealed to, and they tried to come to some arrangement with the Canal Company as to the tolls which were in force on the Shannon; was that not so?—I have only heard it hearsay; it was not a thing I was much concerned in; I have not a clear recollection of it.

21559. My only object in asking the question was to show that from what I have read of these different reports, and from the evidence that has been given before the Railway and Canal Commissioners, and also on different occasions here, I should have thought that the canal service and the Shannon navigation was not of as much value as it should be to the district?—I think it is quite conceivable that it may be worked up. There is one point of importance on that. You may remember, perhaps, that a few years ago a service of passenger steamers was put on, called the Shannon Development Service. These boats were not allowed to carry small articles, like a pair of tennis shoes, that you might pay threepence on, or something like that; they were only allowed to carry passengers and passengers' luggage.

21560. *Mr. Acworth.*—Who prevented them?—The Canal Company.

21561. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The Board of Works knew nothing about it. There was an agreement entered into between the Canal Company and

the Shannon Development Company, when the subsidy for the service was given in 1897, that in return for certain facilities which they gave to the Shannon Development Company the latter agreed not to carry goods traffic.

Mr. Acworth.—The Board of Works stipulated a guarantee.

21561. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It was a subsidy. My whole contention is that where in Ireland you have these agreements, not secretly done, but in the light of open day, the effect of them must be very much to destroy the competition which at first sight appears to exist?—I know in that particular case it was most irritating, for the Development boats were fast traffic and the others were deadly slow. There were lots of small things like parcels which they might, with great advantage, have taken, and helped to earn money which would have kept them going.

21562. You referred to the two services which were established under the second clause of the Act of 1896. One was the service on Lough Derg. That was established for twelve years with a subsidy for seven years?—We gave a five years' guarantee.

21563. The counties gave a subsidy in addition?—Our Grand Jury did—I was one of them.

21564. A subsidy of £1,700 a year?—We gave £250 from Clare.

21565. Seven counties contributed to it?—Yes.

21566. That subsidy has expired now?—It has from Clare, certainly.

21567. They got a guarantee of £1,700 a year, and they further got a subsidy of £10,000 from the Treasury to run over a period of seven years?—Yes.

21568. In return for that, can you tell us what service they performed?—They began with a distinctly defined service.

21569. How often?—They had a daily service.

21570. Where from?—From Athlone to Killaloe, and then they had a cross-lake service, what they called a local service.

21571. I think you will find they went a good deal further than Athlone?—They did; but I do not think it was with the same boat; they had a lighter boat that went on to Carrick-on-Shannon.

21572. They went right up to Carrick-on-Shannon, to Rooskey, Athlone, and so on to Killaloe, with a cross-service on the Lake?—Yes.

21573. That was a daily service in each direction?—Yes.

21574. As a matter of fact, do you know that has not been a great financial success?—Yes.

21575. And that the only portion of that service that is now running is the Killaloe and Athlone portion?—Yes.

21576. The Carrick-on-Shannon and other sections have been discontinued?—To the best of my recollection, they certainly wasted a good deal of money by running bi-weekly services in the winter months when none wanted them at all.

21577. That has been discontinued for some years?—But they began in that way, which was a waste of money. A better summer service would have been much better.

21578. At the present time, the position is that the steamship company is getting no subsidy either from the Treasury or the county?—I think, in effect, it is. I cannot tell you exactly how it happened; anyone from the Board of Works would be able to tell you The Board of Works held up some money, and I remember that the Shannon Development Company were very angry that the Board of Works did not pay it over to them. But the steamers would not have been running now if the Board of Works had not held up that money to help to keep the thing going.

21579. You may rest assured that they are getting nothing. We had evidence from Mr. Stevenson that owing to the expiry of the subsidy, he did not see how it was possible, although they were legally bound to continue the service, that they could do so under the present circumstances. Would it be a very great drawback to your district if the service were discontinued?—Not to my immediate district; but if you take the group of counties that border on it, it would be most unfortunate.

21580. You are referring to East Clare and Killaloe would it seriously affect the interests of East Clare and Galway, the district which you represent, if that Shannon steamship service were discontinued?—It would make no appreciable difference to East Clare, but to Galway, I think it would be most unfortunate distinctly if it were discontinued.

21581. We will now leave the steamship question. You referred to the coach service from Ennistymon to Lisdoonvarna and Ballyvaughan. That was also established under the same Act?—Yes, that was entirely done by the Government; there was no guarantee from the county.

21582. And they gave a subsidy of £2,600 a year to run for seven years; can you say what the result of that service was?—I have been over it myself when it was running. I should call it a distinctly convenient service; but in opening up any new route in backward places like this, it is impossible to judge the thing by the first few years of running, because it takes the tourist public and the public generally some time to get into the way of using new tracks.

The value of the coach services from Ennistymon to Ballyvaughan, and from Listowel to Tarbert, to the districts, and the financial results discussed.

21583. Could you give me any idea of the income that particular coach earned during the seven years or during any year?—No, I have no figures of that kind.

21584. Would you be surprised to learn that the receipts for the whole of the seven years amounted to £420, in other words, an annual sum of £60, and that the coach received a subsidy of £320 annually from the Treasury?—No, I should not.

21585. It may have been a great convenience, but it was not a financial success?—I do not think it was ever intended to be a financial success; it was a development scheme.

21586. I think they had a coach service on the other side, from Listowel to Tarbert, in connection with the steamships there to Kilrush?—I have never been over it.

21587. And the result of all those schemes established under that Act was of such a disappointing nature that when the subsidy expired the service was discontinued; you are aware of that?—Yes.

Discontinuance of the services on the expiration of the subsidy.

21588. I believe one object the Government had in starting those different schemes was to ascertain if there was any necessity for railway extension in that part of the country. Was that not the idea with which the scheme was started?—I never heard that. I thought they were rather started to fill up blanks in places where there was not the slightest prospect of having railways, and as a support to the existing railways. For instance, our West and South Clare lines would have derived distinct assistance from those lines. It would have brought them a certain amount of traffic that would probably not have come to them otherwise—commercial traffic.

21589. At any rate, the service was only a summer service?—That was all.

21590. The coach service did not carry goods at all—small parcels only?—Not as far as I remember. I never saw any goods.

The coach services not considered a proper test as to the desirability of railway extension.

21591. Would you be of opinion that, under such circumstances, no very reliable or just conclusion could be formed from a service running in the summer months only—particularly for tourist traffic—as to whether that negatived the desirability of establishing a light train service?—Oh, no. The two things are not comparable. One is a tourist thing; it is a philanthropic effort, and you cannot draw commercial deductions from that. I do not see how you can.

21592. It did not lend itself to commercial undertakings; it did not give facilities, and so on?—No.

21593. When you say the Grand Jury threw out the proposal for the East Clare Railway, I believe that was at the time when you proposed to make it from Ballinasloe?—That was before the East Clare Railway.

Explanation of the County Clare Grand Jury's action in refusing to entertain the proposal for the East Clare railway.

21594. The time when you were considering it?—When the people of East Clare and East Galway united, and the Ballinasloe people, too, and King's County, we had one common Committee at Scariff; then there were sub-committees, and we took this matter up. I have not the slightest doubt that for opening up that district, and possibly making it a commercial success, a line from Ennis through Scariff to Ballinasloe, crossed by a line from Loughrea to Portumna and Birr at a place called Cloonmoylan, would, beyond all question, be the best thing for that side of the country.

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Colonel G. O'Callaghan Westropp, J.P. Coolreagh, Bodyke, County Clare.

21595. It was given in evidence by Mr. Trench that if that Portumna railway should be resuscitated, his opinion and those whom he represented would be to continue that line across the Shannon to Portumna, down the east side of Lough Derg to Scariff; and that would probably meet your views as well as this other line you speak of?—It would indeed really help the matter on one side, and that is the traffic in store cattle, which keeps the North East from us entirely.

21596. At any rate, the Grand Jury, in their wisdom, threw it out?—Yes.

21597. We have had an instance of where the Leitrim County Council have just foregone a grant of £24,000 because they feared they might have to supply some small guarantee. At any rate, the Co. Council of Leitrim in their generation were no wiser than the Grand Jury in their generation, so that human nature is very much the same whether it is exemplified by a Grand Jury or a County Council?—A number of residents in the county, including some County and District Councillors, have been coming to me for the last three months asking if it was possible to revive the Committee and the efforts we made for getting this line built; and that was partly my reason for offering to give evidence when I saw that certain West Clare gentlemen who had no statistics connected with the line and the possibility of its paying had given evidence which was hostile to us.

The necessity for some extension of light railways in the East Clare district strongly urged.

21598. Taking into consideration these experiments on different schemes of coach and steamer services, is it still your opinion that some extension of light railways in this large district of East Clare and Galway would be desirable?—I go further than that. I think it is necessary.

21599. Do you think it is likely to prove remunerative?—I think so to this extent, I think it should certainly pay its working expenses, and it should pay, probably, I should say, 75 per cent. of the dividend on the guaranteed capital. I know estimates were made by very competent people when that line was on before, that in three or four years, when it had established its connection and got its customers, it would be a paying concern. I cannot say that I was positive about that myself, but I know it would have gone so near to paying that with a very small tax on the rates it would have paid.

Willingness of the ratepayers to contribute towards the cost of railway extension

21600. Under these circumstances, do you think the ratepayers would be prepared to guarantee anything towards the capital?—If it had been fully discussed I think they would. It would be most improper to rush them into it now. They would have to have plenty of time to consider.

21601. Apart from any prospect of such a line being remunerative, do you think the conditions of that particular district, its financial state, the poverty of the people, and their dependence largely upon agricultural pursuits, would warrant the expenditure of public funds, even though they might not directly be likely to produce any profitable result?—I can only tell you that Mr. Robertson gave me——

21602. Never mind Mr. Robertson; what is your opinion?—I can only say that Mr. Robertson scolded me for asking for Government help for such a rich district; he said we ought to be able to build a line out of our own pockets. But if it is a rich district here, it is a poor district there (*showing on the map*).

21603. It was represented to us that the whole of that was a poor district?—When you get up *there* it is; but between Ennis and Scariff there is land valued at £1 an acre and upwards.

21604. Have you considered the question of the State acquiring the control of the Irish railways?—I have.

21605. Would you be opposed to that?—I think it will come, and that it ought to come in time.

21606. I am talking now of the State controlling the railways, not of nationalisation of the railways—of the State taking over the whole of the Irish railway systems and putting them under such a Board as they might think fit; in other words, adding one more Department to the number of Departments which we already have in Dublin?—I rather think we cannot do it until we have more sense than we have at present, and until we get the land question out of the way.

21607. I am afraid we shall have to wait till the end of time?—When we get the land question out of the way we will have more sense. There are two very short local grievances I want to mention, which I was asked to state, so that they will appear on the notes. One is that at present a commercial man or a business man cannot go from Ennis to Dublin and return the same day, and that is very hard on a number of men. There are a great many solicitors, land agents, and business people who would like to have that convenience, but now they have to stay out a night. There is no train leaving Dublin later than 3 p.m. by which you can get back to Ennis the same night, and that is rather bad. The other point is with regard to return tickets; it is an absurd anomaly that has only to be mentioned to obtain your sympathy. At present you can get a two months return ticket from Ennis to London, and no more; but if you take a ticket from Euston to Ennis it is available for six months.

21608. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Has this been represented to the railway companies?—It is in course of representation, but I gave it as one of the absurd anomalies we indulge in there.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning, at 11 *o'clock.*

THIRTY-EIGHTH PUBLIC SITTING.—TUESDAY, JUNE 11TH, 1907.

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; and Mr. W. M. ACWORTH;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. Acworth.—Mr. Balfour Browne, that return that you put in yesterday was practically in answer to some questions of mine.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It was in answer to what you put to Mr. Carvill, sir.

Mr. Acworth.—What I wanted to suggest before it is formally put in was this—that while it corrects various rates, it really does not deal with the point I was anxious to get explained. Rightly or wrongly, there was a difference of, we will say, 20 per cent.—or there appears to be a difference—in the rate book on the class rates for Class A or Class B, or whatever it be. But when it comes to special rates that distinction has pretty much disappeared, and the difference in percentage is very much smaller. Now, it is quite clear that whether it be a class rate or whether it be a special rate, terminals have got to come off, so that I do not see that the taking off of terminals affects the question of percentage. That return does not answer my question, which is, why is there such a large difference in the percentage in class rates, which are, presumably, not charged, and a small difference in percentage when you come to the special rate, which, in fact, is the rate at which the traffic goes.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Of course there shall be an answer to that. This does not answer it.

Mr. Acworth.—You agree with me that it does not?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—This was intended to answer it, but it does not, and even here there is an error of 7*d.* in the first case—it is clearly a mistake. But this was intended to answer the allegation that on the actual charges Newry was unfairly treated as compared with Belfast. What we did was this—we have taken off the terminals at each end, which are practically the same. That was the idea. Then that left a certain rate to be divided by mileage. But that would not have been fair, because, by the Railway Commissioners' decision, which I had, they said—"In consequence of the incline in the case of Newry, the rate you may charge shall be from 2*d.* to 4*d.*" where it is minerals, we have taken off 2½*d.*; where it is Class C we have taken off 3*d.*; and, doing that, then we have compared the rates with the view of showing that practically they are the same. That was what this was intended to do, but why there should be a greater difference between the two rates when they are merely class rates than in the case of the actual rates, I do not know, except that the actual rates are carrying out the Railway Commissioners' decision. You will remember they complained on the second occasion that we had not differentiated sufficiently. The first allegation was: "You are putting us—Newry—at an undue disadvantage as compared with Belfast." The Commissioners said, "You are," and therefore we had to amend, and we did make a difference of from 2*d.* to 4*d.* Then we went back to the Commissioners, and the Commissioners held that from 2*d.* to 4*d.* was the right difference, and these actual rates are framed upon the Commissioners' decision. *June* 11, 1907.

Mr. Acworth.—Of course you say that you have put that in, as it were, in answer to the witness. I have nothing more to say, as you admit it leaves my question unanswered.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—We have not answered your question.

Mr. Acworth —Very well; but I think it is right that you should understand that I would like Colonel Plews to deal with that point.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I will reserve this, and will not put it in at this instant, not only because it does not answer your point, but also because there is the clerical error which I have already mentioned in the first example. We have taken off 7*d.* in the case of Belfast, which is 2½*d.*, 2½*d.*, and 2*d.*; and we have taken it off the same in both. That is a mistake; I will have that corrected, and at the same time answer your question.

Mr. Acworth.—May I ask you what terminals you have in fact taken off? You, obviously, have not taken off the statutory maximum terminals.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—We have taken off the statutory, sir, for that class—that is for coal.

Mr. Acworth.—I think you will find you have in some cases taken off 9*d.*, where you were entitled to 1*s.*

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—But, as a fact, sir, we have taken off the same in both cases.

Mr. Acworth.—But I mean it is an imaginary terminal, as all terminals are, no doubt.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I think that is right. However, I will get this and have it corrected, and I will have your questions answered as well.

Mr. Acworth.—Thank you.

(The statement was subsequently withdrawn by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C. The matter will be dealt with in the evidence from the G. N. Ry. (I.) Company).

Mr. EDWARD WATSON, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. Edward Watson, J.P., Managing Director, City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.

21609. You are the Managing Director of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company?—I am one of them; there are two.

21610. How long have you been Manager?—For twenty-four years.

21611. Are you also a Director of any other steamship company trading between Ireland and England?—I am a Director of the British and Irish Steam Packet Company, trading between London and Dublin.

21612. I believe you are also a member of the Dublin Local Marine Board, a magistrate for the County of Wicklow, and a member of the City of Dublin Junction Railways Committee?—Yes.

21613. Therefore, you are generally acquainted, at any rate, with railway matters in Ireland, and with the steam packet service between Ireland and England?—I have some knowledge of them.

21614. Just to get it on the Notes, will you state when was the first date that the English mails were carried from Dublin to Holyhead?—1574.

Date of the starting of the Mail service between Dublin and Holyhead.

21615. And they have practically been carried to Holyhead from that period up to the present time?—Except for a short time, when the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened to London and the mails went *via* Liverpool until the line was opened to Holyhead.

21616. At any rate, for a great number of years the mails have been carried in the way you suggest, and

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they have been carried by your company?—My company has carried them for fifty-seven years.

21617. I do not propose to take you through the very interesting account which you have written as to the various changes that have taken place, not only by your company, but also by the Irish railway companies, but I will come now to the present time. At the present time how are the mails from Ireland to England carried?—They are all carried by the regular mail through Holyhead. They are brought to Kingstown and handed over to the London and North-Western Railway at Holyhead.

The Mails contract between the Post Office and the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, of 1892.

21618. But has there not been some arrangement during the last few years with reference to the rail transit into Kingstown?—Yes; since 1892 the mails to the interior of Ireland are, for the North and for the South, carried through from Kingstown. The mails to the West are carried to Westland-row, and then carted across the town.

Existing arrangements for conveying the Mails across Dublin

21619. Is there any physical connection with the Midland?—Yes.

21620. Then why are they carted?—That is a question that I think should be answered by the Post Office and the Midland Great Western Railway Company. Really there is no reason why it should be so. Passengers are carried through to the West in the same way as they are to the North and to the South; but the mails are not.

The connection made by the construction of the City of Dublin Junction Railways for the transit of the Mails.

21621. There was some new line made recently, which gave you through rail communication to the various parts of Ireland from Kingstown; what was that line?—The City of Dublin Junction Railway, which is a line from Westland-row to Amiens-street, opened in 1892.

21622. Was it an independent company?—Not exactly an independent company, but a separate undertaking. It was a separate undertaking of the Wicklow Company, the company which is now called the Dublin and South-Eastern—they are the working company, and the interest is guaranteed by the South Eastern, the Great Northern, and the City of Dublin Company.

The "Loop" Line worked by the Dublin and South Eastern Company, and guaranteed by the latter and the Great Northern and City of Dublin Company.

21623. By your company?—Yes. It would have been impossible to finance it otherwise without a guarantee.

21624. You could not have raised the money without a guarantee?—It would have been impossible.

21625. I understand that all the mails are carried over that railway direct to various parts of Ireland, except in the districts served by the Midland Great Western?—That is so.

21626. We shall hear, I suppose, why that was excepted. In connection with the British and Irish Steam Packet Company, I presume, you are one of the managing directors?—I am only an ordinary director of that company.

21627. Well, as a director of that company you can probably tell us this—that company, I suppose, is a party to the Traffic Conference?—Yes.

21628. And in that Conference through rates are made between Ireland and England and *vice versa*?—Yes.

21629. And you were a party to that Conference?—Yes.

21630. Have you read the evidence that has been given before this Commission?—Yes, I have read it as it came out.

The existence of preferential cross-Channel through rates in favour of imports to Ireland.

21631. Have you noticed the complaint that has been made that the rates from England to Ireland are considerably less than the rates from Ireland to England?—That the through rates from the English stations to the interior stations in Ireland are less than the sum of the local rates—yes, I have noticed that.

21632. One of the complaints was that the rates from England to Ireland for the same articles were less than the rates from Ireland to England?—I believe that is so, too, in certain cases. That is a thing we as a cross-Channel company have nothing to do with—the fixing of the through rates. We have to agree to what the other companies have agreed to. The North-Western practically have control of the Irish companies.

City of Dublin Company have no voice in the fixing of through rates.

21633. Have you through goods rates by Kingstown to Holyhead?—Well, merchandise cannot be carried by the mail steamers in the same way as passenger traffic.

21634. The through rates in which you are interested are from Liverpool?—Yes.

21635. From Dublin to Liverpool?—Yes, from Dublin to Liverpool.

21636. Can you tell us what was the cost of that railway—that Dublin Junction Railway?—£425,000.

21637. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is the same line that is called the Drumcondra Link, is it not?—No, that is a different line altogether.

21638. *Mr. Belfaur Browne*, K.C.—It joins that at Amiens street?—I sent in a map which shows it. The Drumcondra Link line is coloured vermilion.

21639. *Mr. Acworth.*—I have got it now?—The junction railway is the line that is coloured a sort of orange brown.

21639A. I see; I follow now.

21640. *Chairman.*—Well, now, with regard to the time occupied in the carrying of the mails, I suppose the making of this railway has considerably reduced that?—Very greatly; it has made a difference of at least half an hour in the ordinary connections.

21640A. That, of course, is a commercial advantage?—A very great advantage, because it enables this to be done; the Northern mail now leaves Dublin at five minutes past six, and the London mail is delivered in Belfast in ample time for business purposes on the same day.

21641. What time does the return train leave?—The return train leaves Belfast at five o'clock.

21642. So that there is plenty of time to answer correspondence the same day?—The same day. As far as Belfast is concerned, I think the best has been done with the railway. There is nothing to complain of. As far as the North is concerned, the best has been done with the new facilities.

21643. What about the South?—Well, I think the best has not been done with the South. When the new service was commenced, on the 1st April, 1897, an acceleration was made of forty minutes. That is to say, the train left forty minutes earlier than it did before. That forty minutes was gained by an earlier arrival by ten minutes of the train at Holyhead, and an acceleration of half an hour across the Channel.

21644. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are you talking of the night mail from London?—Yes; that is a typical case I have put here. The night mail was made to leave so as to arrive ten minutes earlier at Holyhead, and with half an hour gained in going across the Channel, that gave forty minutes' acceleration. Now, the night train to Cork—the train leaves Kingsbridge at 6.40 a.m.—that is thirty-five minutes later than the Northern, which leaves for Belfast at 6.5.

21645. *Chairman.*—You think that as far as the Great Southern and Western is concerned, a considerable further saving might be effected?—I do think so, but I do not put that as my own opinion. What I put forward is that the Great Southern and Western have always objected to the junction with Amiens-street, which was used by their carriages. If you look at the map you will find seventeen chains marked "Loop Junction Station" and "Newcomen Bridge Junction." The Great Southern and Western did not consider that good enough, and the result was that the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford engined the train the whole way to a point on the other side of the Liffey, where the green joins the vermilion line.

21646. Then it backs into the station?—Yes. The Great Southern engine takes it there and takes it into the station.

21647. The Dublin South-Eastern work it up to the junction?—They did until the 1st of last December; they used to work it up to that junction.

21648. It seems a long way round—I do not know what the distance is?—The run can be done in about fifteen minutes.

21649. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Does it go by the Drumcondra Link?—Since the 1st December it has gone by the Drumcondra Link, and the Great Southern "engine" the train from Amiens street station.

21649A. *Chairman.*—In your judgment, what time should the train leave Kingsbridge?—The train should start for the South, certainly half-an-hour earlier than at present. My reason for making that statement is that that was what was promised when the line was projected—the Drumcondra line that is. The Drumcondra line, the vermilion line, which is practically parallel to the Midland Great Western. When that was projected, a promise was made by the Chairman of the Great Southern and Western

to the shareholders that they would save half-an-hour. When the Act was passed, the same thing was said. There were a great many delays, which I do not think the Great Southern and Western could be blamed for, in opening that line, and instead of being opened in 1900, as it might have been, it was not opened for traffic till the 1st of last December. In the course of the summer, when we found it was going to be opened, we naturally assumed that the Great Southern and Western would give that acceleration. I was in communication with the North Western on the subject, and we all anticipated it, but as a matter of fact the Great Southern and Western now run the train in exactly the same time as before.

21650. When you say the Great Southern and Western promised it, I suppose you mean in evidence before the Committee?—Not exactly to that extent. It never went before an opposed Committee, that particular Bill. It was an unopposed Bill; I shall hand in copies of the two speeches in which the promises I allude to were made (*handing in same*).* I consider that these are promises.

21651. I see this is a speech by the Chairman of the Great Southern and Western, Mr. James Colvill?—Yes; his son is Vice-Chairman at present.

21652. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—May I have a copy of that?—Yes (*handing a copy to Mr. Balfour Browne*).

21653. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What was the date of that speech.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It is dated the 15th February, 1896, and it is a statement apparently made by the Chairman to the shareholders.

21654. *Chairman.*—Have you got the date Mr. Browne?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Yes; one is the 15th February, 1896, and the other is the 8th August, 1896.

Witness.—One was before the Act was passed; the other after it was passed.

21655. *Chairman.*—Could you just read the particular words in which the promise was made that half an hour would be saved, because I do not see it there?—"It is right that we should inform you what our policy is in going in for the purchase of this Act." Then later, he says this: "Some time ago the plan was proposed for making this line that is now called the Drumcondra and North Dublin Loop Line. That line was made with very favourable gradients, and on a high level. It runs over the roads, and it will enable us, if the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway allow us, to work the mails, and I have no doubt they will—it will enable us to run the distance from Kingstown to Inchicore on the way South in little more than half the time that it now occupies." They took more than an hour, at that time, and therefore the contemplated saving was half an hour.

21656. That is the deduction you draw?—That is the deduction I draw; and the same thing practically is mentioned in the second one.

21657. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You had better read the other?—In the other speech he says: "We will be running on a high level, and hope to use our own carriages and dining cars, and breakfast cars, on this line, so that I certainly feel very sanguine that we will be able to save the better part of half an hour, at any rate." And in replying to a question, Mr. Colvill said: "The delays between Kingstown and Kingsbridge—the backing of the trains, and all the delay that took place there should be, and must be removed."

21658. *Mr. Acworth.*—They still have to back. Is it physically possible to run forward into Kingsbridge? It does not look as if it was on this diagram?—That is a question of working—that is a railway question. Of course, they could not run into Kingsbridge in the same direction, because the train would have to reverse.

21659. Unless they had a curve?—A curve was never projected.

21660. Then, they must back all the same?—It was not necessary to go to Kingsbridge at all. I am not giving any railway information, but I simply say if the Chairman of the Company says it could be done, I am justified in saying it can be done, and if I am allowed, I will hand in a table which shows the way the trains were worked (the time occupied) before the line was made, and the way they are working now. Mr. Balfour Browne would probably like to have one also.

21661. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Have you got the time of working at that date?—Yes; this table shows that.

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21662. There has been sixteen minutes saved since this line was made?—No; nothing of the kind. You are in error in that. It has been stated, and I am surprised that it should be stated again, because the Great Southern and Western had a letter from us stating that such was not the case, and I understood they accepted it. There are the times, and anybody is at liberty to try to make it sixteen minutes saved if he can, but they will not find it easy to do so.

21663. *Chairman.*—If you have given a copy to Mr. Balfour Browne, we will put that on the notes.

The Table was handed in, and is as follows:—

COMPARISON between the Running of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's morning Mail Train from Kingstown before the 1st April, 1897, and after that date.

Comparison of the running of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's morning Mail between Kingstown and Kingsbridge before 1st April, 1897, and after that date.

—	Before 1st April, 1897.	After 1st April, 1897.
Mail Train due at Holyhead:—		
(Greenwich Time), . .	2 35 a.m.	2 25 a.m.
(Dublin Time), . . .	2 10 a.m.	2 0 a.m.
Cross-Channel Contract Time, .	4 h. 7 m.	3 h. 37 m.
i.e. From arrival of Mail Train at Holyhead until last bag is in train at Kingstown, when train is due to start.		
Departure of train from Kingstown Pier, ...	6 17 a.m.	5 37 a.m.
Departure of train from Kingsbridge, ...	7 20 a.m.	6 40 a.m.
Interval, ...	63 minutes.	63 minutes.

21664. Am I right in assuming that so far as the carriage of mails is concerned, upon the Great Northern Railway Company, you have no improvement whatever to suggest?—Everything of course, can conceivably be improved upon, but I have no fault to find whatever.

21665. No fault to find?—None.

21666. I think we will leave it there. So far as Ireland is concerned, on the whole, the mails both to and from, with this little difference, which you have mentioned, are generally carried in a very satisfactory manner?—The mails to the South and North I do not think anyone has any fault to find with; they are very well done.

The Mail Train services in Ireland generally considered quite satisfactory.

21667. We know the steamboat service is well done?—I do not say anything about that.

21668. I will not ask you about that; we know that?—But I think I should make an observation as regards this side, that I have no doubt the train to Holyhead could be considerably improved.

21669. From London?—From London; certainly. For instance, the North-Western rolling stock and rails, and everything else are quite as good as that of the Great Western, and therefore I have no doubt the North-Western could run a quicker service if they ran at the same speed as the Great Western run on their main lines; it would make a considerable saving between Euston and Holyhead, and that there is no doubt about. Take the speed of the Great Western, and the speed of the North Western, and you will see that the latter could run quicker.

Proposed acceleration of the Irish Mail Train between Euston and Holyhead.

21670. The speed of the Great Western from and to where?—Any of their main line traffic; the Great Western run fifty-eight miles an hour.

21671. That is quite exceptional, is it not?—I have often travelled by their trains at that speed.

21672. *Mr. Acworth.*—The North Western speed to Holyhead is fifty-three miles per hour, is it not—they do the journey in five hours?—Five hours and about twenty-five minutes.

21673. *Lord Pirrie.*—They go to Crewe at full speed, and then have to shorten?—The North-Western road is first-rate; doubtless there is no road better.

21673A. *Chairman.*—We know that, and we know the rolling stock is very good. Personally, I think they run fast enough.

* See Appendix No. 29.

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Lord Pirrie.—So do I.

21674. *Chairman.*—Now, I will just ask you a few general questions, because as we have got you here, with your great experience in business and your knowledge of the trade and commerce of the country, your views will be valuable. I think you said just now that you had made yourself acquainted with the evidence that has been given before this Commission?—Yes, I have read it as it came out; I will not say I have read every word of it, but I have read it generally.

21675. You probably remember that we have had practically three different suggestions made by various witnesses with reference to the Irish railways. First of all, the question of the nationalisation of the railways has been advocated; secondly, the question of State purchase has been advocated, and, thirdly, the question of amalgamation has been suggested?—Yes.

21676. I think that fairly represents the three views that have been placed before this Commission?—I think so.

21677. First of all, let me take the first suggestion about the nationalisation of the railways in Ireland. Do you agree with the evidence that has been given on that point?—No, I do not. It seemed to me, as I understood the question, that as far as I read the evidence, by "nationalisation" the witnesses appeared to mean that the Treasury should purchase the railways, and then hand them over to some popularly-elected body in Ireland to manage; and I should think that would simply mean chaos.

Nationalisation of the Irish Railways disapproved

21678. Therefore, we may take it that you are strongly opposed to the nationalisation of railways, with the Treasury finding the money for the purchase of the railways, to be managed by a local body in Ireland?—I do not feel very strongly about it, because I do not think it is one of those things which there is the remotest probability of ever happening.

21679. At any rate, you would not advocate it?—Certainly, I should not advocate it, and I do not think there is any probability of the Treasury doing it.

21680. If it were advocated, you would oppose it?—I do not suppose my views would be considered, but I certainly should not be in favour of it.

21681. Now upon the next question—the question of the State purchase of the railways—have you formed any opinion about that?—That is a perfectly feasible plan.

21682. *Mr. Acworth.*—May I ask what do you mean by State purchase—after purchase what method of working do you contemplate?—What I understand by State purchase is that the Treasury should be responsible for the Irish railway stock. As far as the shareholders are concerned, I think they would be just as pleased to sell their shares, as the landlords their land, if they could get a decent price, and then practically the Treasury would be responsible for the interest, and the interest would be payable out of the receipts, and there is no doubt that if a scheme of that kind were proposed, something like what the late Mr. Robertson proposed for India, it would be quite feasible; I do not see that there would be any difficulty in carrying it out.

State purchase of the Irish railways, and control by a State Department advocated

21683. The State would work it?—The State would work it as a State Department.

21684. Under the English Treasury, or would it be purely under Irish control?—The State would. I assume, appoint Commissioners who really knew their business, and those Commissioners would carry on the business as a Government Department. I do not see why that could not be carried on in Ireland if desired, as it has been carried on in India.

Appointment of Railway Commissioners same as in Australia and India recommended.

21685. *Chairman.*—The same principle as is adopted in Australia?—Just the same principle as I understand is adopted there.

21686. Your opinion is very clear on these two points; now let us take the third, the amalgamation of railways. Have you anything to say about that—you have read the evidence, and have considered the various suggestions that have been made?—I think that the witnesses who gave evidence about that are not aware of the extent to which railways have been amalgamated of late years.

The alternative proposal to amalgamate the Irish railways discussed.

21687. In Ireland?—Yes. The Great Northern, of course, is an instance of that; that is, several small lines and the Great Northern line were amalgamated, and I do not suppose there is a more satisfactory railway anywhere.

The extent of previous amalgamations of Irish railways.

21688. That is an amalgamation?—That is an amalgamation of several lines. The total mileage (I only give it in round figures—you have the exact figures) of the Irish railways amounts to about 3,120 miles, and there are four railways that have termini in Dublin which have a mileage of 2,383 miles.

21689. Of the four railways having termini in Dublin, what do you say the mileage is?—They own 2,383 miles, and then the Midland of England has about 355 miles.

21690. The Midland of England has 355 miles in Ireland?—Yes; that leaves a balance of 382 miles owned by eight small companies. So for the moment I should like to put aside the four railways with termini in Dublin, and the Midland, and simply come to the 382 miles. Dealing with the 382 miles, I believe before very long the Belfast and County Down will be absorbed by the Great Northern; and the Great Western have acquired a scheme for a junction railway in Cork, so I think it is only a matter of time when the three lines south of the Lee will be absorbed by the Great Southern and Western Railway. That leaves them a number of small lines of railways to be dealt with, and I do not think the welfare of the country depends upon these, whether they are absorbed or not. Then, if I may revert to the four companies with termini in Dublin, and the Midland—I do not suppose the latter company could be amalgamated; the Midland will probably keep it. I simply come now to the four in Dublin—the Great Southern and Western, the Midland Great Western, the Great Northern, and the Dublin South-Eastern. I think with all respect, that it would be a very great disadvantage to the public to amalgamate the Great Southern with the Midland, because there is a certain competition now for traffic, and I think it is a great benefit to have the two companies independent. Parliament thought so when the amalgamation scheme was brought in in 1899, because they gave the Midland Great Western running powers. Then with regard to the Great Northern and the Midland Great Western, for the same reason it would be a mistake to amalgamate them. Now I will take, for example, what I am quite sure you are familiar with, the case of the Chatham and Dover and the South-Eastern of England. I do not think the public have gained very much by that amalgamation, although it has been very good for the shareholders. I have been in the habit of travelling on that line for many years, and I do not think the train service is as good as it used to be.

21691. I do not think it is very good for the shareholders?—At any rate, I do not think the public would gain by the amalgamation of these railways. Now I come to Dublin South-Eastern; the position of that line is entirely different, and I think that great benefit would result if it were amalgamated with the Great Northern Railway.

21692. As Mr. Acworth points out to me, that would take the Great Northern down to Waterford?—Yes, with running powers to Cork. I think the public would gain immensely by this amalgamation. The Dublin South-Eastern is a line which has suffered from serious mistakes in policy ever since it was formed, for many years the plan adopted by the Board has been to go to Parliament to get capital for one purpose, and then when it was obtained, use it for "general purposes." The year before last a Bill was introduced to raise capital on similar lines. The debenture holders, however, took alarm and would not assent to its passing until the capital was ear-marked; so the present position is, if the Dublin and Wicklow want to use the capital for the specific purposes named in the Bill, they can, but not for other things, and the capital has not been raised, nor has there been any attempt to raise it. I am quite satisfied that if the Dublin South-Eastern were handed over to a strong company such as the Great Northern, it would be worked with much more efficiency and greater economy in the working. Now, I take, for example, the Locomotive Department. They have a factory (the Dublin South-Eastern) which the company themselves consider most unsatisfactory. They happen to have a very able locomotive superintendent, who was with the Great Southern and Western Company, and who got a good training there. I do not think anybody could carry on that factory better than he does, but if you take the account for last year, and leave out running expenses and charges for new stock, the cost of working that factory came to

£24,000 in the year. The company themselves, according to their evidence recently, wanted to spend £50,000 on a new factory. In other words, they wanted to charge themselves with £2,000 a year to effect economies in their present working. I think it is quite obvious that if the Dublin and Wicklow factory were got rid of, and the Great Northern had charge of everything, the saving would be immense.

21693. I think we are drifting rather into the advantage which would be to one company to take another; what are the public going to gain by all this?—I was going on to deal with the question of electrification; the public would get a service which would be superior to the present service.

21694. The interests of the public would be better served if this railway were taken over by a larger company?—Yes,, that is the point. I should not wish to take up too much time, but may I refer to the tram competition in answer to the question you put just now?

21695. It is patent to anybody who travels on the railway and sees the tramway running alongside it that it is sure to divert some traffic from the railway whatever they may do?—My point is, if that line were electrified, the service would be infinitely better done, and the public would get a better service. But the thing is to find the capital. Of course to carry out such an idea as I have suggested, the money has got to be found. I might, perhaps, make a suggestion as to how the money could be found without costing anybody anything.

21696. I take it from what you have said that in your judgment if that line were in the hands of a powerful company the whole district would be better served, the public would be benefited, and the shareholders?—My belief is this, that the shareholders—the poor, unfortunate ordinary shareholders—would get a dividend.

21697. With the exception of that particular railway to which you refer, you think the question of amalgamation had better be left alone?—I think it is better. If I might be allowed I should like, before I pass on from that, to make the suggestion in reference to the financing of it, because I should not like it to be supposed that I want the Great Northern shareholders to be charged with the expenses of working the Dublin and Wicklow Railway.

21698. Of course the terms would have to be arranged?—I do not think they could be arranged in any way except in the way I suggest here, because the Great Northern is a line that pays well, and I do not think it would be a just thing to put a line like the Dublin South-Eastern on the Great Northern shareholders; but my suggestion is that if the Great Northern agreed to take it, the Government should advance the Great Northern the capital which would be required to rehabilitate the line, and electrify it, and let the capital be given to the Great Northern at four per cent.—that is, interest at 2½ per cent. the rate Government could raise money at, and 1½ per cent. sinking fund—and my impression is that in a very few years' time the line would be transformed.

21699. That, of course, involves State aid?—Yes, State aid, unquestionably.

21700. I do not think I will ask you any questions with reference to the management of the Irish railways—I think we will leave that?—Very well.

21701. And also as to the constitution of the Irish Railway Boards; I do not think that is necessary. I think the Irish Railway Boards are constituted pretty much the same as the English Railway Boards?—Not altogether the same; there is one difference.

21702. What is it?—On the English Railway Boards the professional element is more represented. It is very usual in England for a general manager to be put on the Board after a time. There is always the professional element, to some extent, on English lines.

21703. Perhaps the Irish general manager refuses to go on the Board?—There are no general managers in Ireland in the same position as in England.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

21704. Have not the Great Southern got a general manager now?—Not in the same position as an English general manager.

21705. Has he not the title of "general manager"?—Oh, yes.

21706. The title is new, I think?—The title is new.

21707. In speaking of the speed of the North-Western trains, the London mail leaves, does it not, at 8.45 at night?—8.45.

21708. And it gets to Holyhead at 2.25?—Yes.

21709. That is five hours and forty minutes?—Yes.

21710. Am I right in thinking that there are trains running to Holyhead faster for the North Wall service?—The express trains are a little faster, but I think that is because they stop a shorter time; I think the run is about the same, but they do not stop as long.

21711. Of course the mails are obliged to stop if the Post Office want them?—They stop for postal purposes.

21712. In what time does the 10.30 at night get to Holyhead?—In five hours and fifteen minutes. That is, to the station—to be quite fair, you should take off eight minutes off the time of the mail train.

21713. Allowing for the pier, and allowing for the Post Office, I suppose the speed is much the same?—Yes. Then, of course, the mail trains are much heavier—the sorting vans, and so on, are much heavier. The speed is about the same, I should say.

21714. Your point is, judging by the average of the Great Western, they might accelerate the whole lot, if they liked?—I think so.

Proposed acceleration of the London and North-Western Railway trains between London and Holyhead discussed.

21715. Tell me another thing; you have been laying great stress on getting the mail away from Kingsbridge as early as possible in the morning?—Yes.

21716. I think the train from Broadstone does not leave till seven?—Yes, that is open to the same objection.

The question of the hour of departure of the mail train from Kingsbridge discussed.

21717. What I want to ask you is this. The earlier you go in the morning from Dublin, the worse you make it for Dublin people. Very few people want to start at 6.5, or 6.40, or even at 7?—Of course Dublin people would, no doubt, like to stay longer in bed, but if they want to get to their destination earlier, they must go by the earlier train.

21718. If I might ask you to regard the thing from the point of view of the Irish resident in Dublin rather than from the point of view of being interested in the quickness of the mail service, which is the more important—is not the bulk of the traffic in the train going to Cork or going to Belfast, Dublin traffic?—I do not quite follow you; but I take it that if a man in Dublin wants to do business, he ought to be as anxious to get as early to Cork as another going to Belfast is. The people of Belfast who leave at 6.5 in the morning do not make any complaint; if they do not like to go so early as the 6.5 they can go at 9.

21719. Take, for instance, Belfast—do you think any Dublin people (merchants, we will say) really do start at 6.5?—I think they do, if they want to do a day's business.

21720. Then they are more energetic than they are in this country. You do not think that is a serious point—that the earlier you put it, the more you turn Dublin people out of the train?—I do not think it is any more difficult for one town than for another.

21721. You would not consider the comparative convenience to Dublin of a later start?—I do not think so; I think the mail is for the benefit of everybody.

21722. You spoke of the Drumcondra Link. Except for this tale about a somewhat bad curve between Junction Station and Newcomen Bridge Junction, the Drumcondra Link does nothing for the through traffic that could not be done equally well along the line of the Midland Great Western?—I do not think so.

The policy of the expenditure in the construction of the Drumcondra link line.

21723. How much did it cost?—I cannot give the exact figure—not far from £400,000.

21724. It has cost £400,000 to take traffic off the line of the Midland in order to put it on the Great Southern's own line?—Yes.

21725. We may assume that the Midland line was not over-crowded?—It was not.

21726. Does that seem a wise expenditure of money?—It seems strange that such a course should have been adopted.

21727. I wanted to ask you that because you spoke of the advantages of competition. That is a natural result of competition, is it not—that kind of thing?—I do not think that is a result of the competition question at all.

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21728. Taking money out of one person's pocket in order to put it into the pocket of another person?—I do not think that question came into it as far as I know.

21729. Why was it done?—The reason it was done was because the Great Southern and Western said they did not like the Junction—that it was not safe, and they would make the other one. That was the reason given, and any further questions ought to be asked of them.

The policy of the expenditure in the construction of the Drumcondra link line.

21730. Would it not have been cheaper to improve the Junction?—As a member of the Committee, I may say that if the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western had wanted a double junction made, they could have had it at the time the line was being constructed.

21731. I gather you do think it is a pity that that capital was spent?—I like myself the high level line—I think it is rather a nice thing to have, and I think it is an advantage to have it.

21732. A luxury?—A luxury.

21733. Do you think Irish railways can afford to spend £400,000 on luxuries?—That is a question for the Great Southern and Western to answer; they are very rich.

21734. In the long run does it not come out of the pockets of the public—the public have to pay interest on the capital, have they not?—I suppose so.

21735. I gather you want to get competition?—Not in this case; competition does not arise at all.

21736. But your view is that you desire to have competition?—I think there should be some competition.

21737. You desire to have the competition of a strong company down in the South of Ireland against the Great Southern and Western?—Yes.

The desirability of maintaining competition between the different railway systems in Ireland.

21738. I take it, you think the competition from Dublin to Waterford and Wicklow, or even to Cork, would be more effective in the hands of a strong company like the Great Northern than in the hands of a weak company?—Possibly; but I have not looked at it from that point of view; I have only looked at it generally. The Dublin South-Eastern is not worked as it might be, and I think the Great Northern would work it much better.

21739. I want to ask you about the through rates. At any rate, as far as your Liverpool steamers are concerned, you have a great deal of traffic that never touches the railways—that originates in Liverpool and goes to Dublin. Probably there is not so much that originates in Dublin and goes to Liverpool, but there is, of course, some; there is porter, for instance?—Yes, Messrs. Guinness's porter is a very large traffic, and the whiskey trade is large.

21740. We have been told by witnesses who have given evidence before this Commission that there is a tendency to give an advantage to traffic imported from England into Ireland, and not so great an advantage to traffic exported from Ireland to England—what do you say as to that?—It certainly is the case that the through traffic rates from some stations are under the local rates; in other cases it is not so.

The fixing of Cross-channel port to port rates.

21741. Ignoring the question of local rates altogether, have you any idea that you put, for example, your rates from Liverpool to Dublin on a lower scale than the corresponding rates from Dublin to Liverpool?—Oh, no.

21742. Have you any inducement to do that?—No. The local rates across Channel, I may say, are regulated entirely by competition. It is the interest of the companies to get the best rates they can to command the traffic. If the local rates from Liverpool to Dublin were put up, we should be immediately in a position of disadvantage.

21743. And if the local rates from Dublin to Liverpool were put up the same thing would happen?—Exactly the same.

21744. Would you say, speaking of your own Dublin Steam Packet Company, that you put the rates in both directions on the same basis?—On the same basis.

21745. And that you have no interest to do otherwise?—None whatever; our interest is to charge the rate which the traffic can afford to pay, and to develop it.

21746. As far as you know does that apply to all the other cross-Channel traffic?—I think so. The sea is open.

21747. I will not ask you about nationalisation and State purchase—I think I understand what your point of view would be—but I do not gather that you are at all keen for any drastic alteration?—Well, I think people would be greatly disappointed by the result if there were a State Department, because in Ireland they are always finding fault with the State Departments.

21748. As I understand you do not advocate—you distinctly oppose—the idea of handing the railways over to an Irish body to work?—Yes.

21749. You do not advocate the Treasury working them?—No.

21750. Practically you very much want to leave the *status quo*?—I think that is probably the best thing to do.

21751-2. When you speak of amalgamation, I suppose you would sympathise with the desire to amalgamate the little lines?—I think so.

21753. But you would like to leave the main great systems of the country as they are?—I should like the three lines coming into Dublin left alone.

21754. And you have no objection—though we have heard a great deal against it—to the English railways having an interest, as the Midland has in Donegal and the Northern Counties?—I do not think that has been considered generally.

21755. It has been made a grievance on several occasions here?—I could not give any opinion about that; I am not familiar with those Northern lines at all.

21756. But you would desire to see an amalgamation of the little lines?—I think so—yes.

21757. Leaving the main systems as they are?—Yes.

21758. Do you think much money requires to be spent upon the Irish railway system?—Well, the Great Southern and Western and the Great Northern are exceedingly up-to-date lines.

21759. They have the money they need?—As far as my humble judgment goes, I think the Irish railways compare very favourably with the Scotch railways. Of course, the population is about the same as that of Scotland, and as far as dividend-paying is concerned, they compare very well. Take the Great Northern—I do not know any better line.

21760. That compares well from the dividend point of view with the North British for instance?—Yes.

21761. What about the point of view of the public service?—I think the public service is fairly well done.

21762. Do you think there is a claim that either in capital or in income, or in both, Ireland wants substantial help?—How do you mean—a claim?

21763. In your view, is it a reasonable demand that the State should find new capital?—I do not know why there should be a claim in Ireland more than in Scotland or England.

21764. Then you would answer that in the negative both as to capital and as to subsidising income?—I think so.

21765. For example, we have been told that rates are very high, and that they ought to be very largely reduced?—Yes. I know that statements have been made of that kind. I do not mean to say that there are not anomalies.

21766. The claim is not made as to particular rates, but that as a whole the rates are very high and ought to be reduced?—Well, I do not think that is so.

21767. Just one more question; your evidence is a great deal on the same lines in its main points as that of Mr. Goodbody, who came from the Chamber of Commerce?—I can't say this.

21768. Do you think that your view represents the view of the big business men of the country?—As I said, I give my views with great hesitation. I do not consider that I am a person of much influence.

21769. You have had some experience, at any rate?—Yes, some experience.

21770. And you must be, of course, in touch with the big traders of the country; you cannot help being so?—Of course, I have something to do with them.

21771. Do not answer unless you wish to, but do you think those views of yours are substantially the views held by the large traders?—I could not answer for other people at all.

21772. I take it that this subject has been discussed a great deal. However, if you do not wish to answer, I do not want to press you?—I think that a great many traders have ideas of what might be done; but I think they would be disappointed if their ideas were put into practice.

21773. Do I correctly gather that your evidence comes to this; that Ireland does not really require any exceptional treatment?—I think the people in Ireland are quite able to look after themselves. The railways in the last twenty years have been enormously improved, and I think that improvement is still going on. I date that very much from the time that the late Mr. Robertson, a very great friend of mine, came to Ireland; and I think there is very great improvement going on, although it is going on slowly.

21774. Subject to what you have said about comparatively small matters, you would allow the thing to go in its natural course as at present?—I think so.

21775. You would not apply any heroic remedy of any sort or kind?—Certainly, I would not apply any heroic remedy.

21776. *Chairman.*—You have suggested that the English Treasury should find the money for the improvement of the Dublin and South Eastern Railway?—Yes; but I think that would cost them nothing.

21777. You mean that there would not be any loss to the Treasury?—Exactly.

21778. *Mr. Acworth.*—Did I rightly understand you as meaning that the Treasury should only find such additional capital as was necessary for the electrifying and so on?—Exactly.

21779. Not to buy out the line?—Merely that the Great Northern should take it as a separate undertaking, and that they should say to the Government, "We want so much money in order to do these works to the line and bring it up to date"; and, if you find that money by degrees, the line will be security for the money, and I believe that after paying the fixed charges there will be ample security.

21780. You do not propose that the Great Northern or the Government should buy clean out the existing holders of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Stock?—No; simply take it over as a separate undertaking with its existing liabilities.

21781. Keeping the existing shareholders and putting in new capital guaranteed by the Government?—Yes, with a sinking fund.

Mr. Acworth.—It is not a proposal that the Government should buy the whole concern?——

Chairman.—Oh, no. I said "State aid," and Mr. Watson said so, too.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

21782. With regard to the question of rates, there has been a great deal of evidence here from many witnesses that the local rates in Ireland from station to station are high, relatively speaking, compared with through inland rates across the Channel?—I believe that is so.

21783. Would not the effect of low through rates into Ireland as against, relatively, high local rates be to discourage, and cripple, and in some instances even to destroy, local enterprise and local industry?—That I do not myself understand. I know it is a fact that there are very anomalous rates from England to the interior of Ireland, as compared with local rates, but I do not know the reason; and I do not myself see why there should be such a difference as there is in some instances.

21784. There has been no evidence before us, so far as I understand it, to show that the rates in any case at all exceed what the railway companies have a right to charge?—No.

21785. But the evidence, generally speaking, has been to show that, owing to the conditions of the trade of Ireland, the few industries and so on, rates which are in themselves not unreasonable do press in some cases very heavily?—I believe it is the case that local rates from Dublin are higher than corresponding proportions of through rates from England into Ireland; but I do not know why that is so; it is a question for the railway companies.

21786. At any rate, I suppose, you would agree with this view: that if the local rates were reduced to such a level as to meet the views of the people who complain, that would, for some time at any rate, entail some loss upon the railway companies?—I suppose it would.

21787. And you would probably agree that the railways do not pay extravagant dividends at present?—Yes. I should agree with that.

21788. And that if they were to lose any portion of the revenue they now derive from the local rates it might very seriously affect the dividends they do pay?—I could not answer that, because so much of the traffic comes from the other side. Take, for instance, the iron trade: rates from Dublin are considerably higher, proportionately, compared with the local rates. I do not know why it is so; it is a question for the railway companies to answer.

21789. At any rate, you sympathise with the view which has been put before us, that if there could be some reduction in the local rates it would assist the industries of the country?—Yes, I think so.

21790. As regards through rates, have you any voice in fixing the through rates?—No.

21791. You say "No"?—There is a conference, but the Commission will see that a company like ours, when we compete with the London and North-Western Railway Company across the Channel, is practically powerless. Whatever rates the London and North-Western Railway Company agree to we have to agree to the same.

21792. It is entirely optional with them as to the proportion they assign to you?—The point laid down is this: the London and North-Western would not consent to the rate being less *via* Liverpool than *via* Holyhead; and we get the same proportion as they get. They get their proportion of the mileage, and we get ours.

21793. Is that a satisfactory arrangement with regard to your particular business as a shipping company?—We cannot do better than that; we are not sufficiently strong to say what the railways should do. Taking it all round, I suppose some things might be improved.

21794. At any rate, I think you said, in answer to Mr. Acworth, that the outward through rates were practically the same as the inward through rates?—Yes, across the Channel.

21795. *Chairman.*—That only applies from port to port?—Yes.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It also applies from station to station.

Mr. Acworth.—We have had some exceptions.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Very few.

Chairman.—What I understand Mr. Watson to say is, that the local rates by his steamers are the same from Dublin to Liverpool as they are from Dublin to Holyhead.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That is all he has said.

21796. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You cannot give any evidence as to the railways?—No.

21797. Now, as regards the amalgamation of the Dublin and South-Eastern with the Great Northern; why do you advocate amalgamation with the Great Northern rather than with the Great Southern and Western?—Because in the one case the line is parallel and there is a certain competition, and in the other case it is continuous. All amalgamations of continuous railways have been a success; and my point is that nothing could be better than an amalgamation with the Great Northern. The Great Northern is a very progressive line, as can be seen if you compare it now with what it was twenty years ago.

21798. Do you not think it possible that the Great Southern and Western would rather jib at the Government coming forward and practically finding the money to take over the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway, putting it into proper condition, and handing it over to the Great Northern. Would it not naturally have the effect of competing more or less, whether to a great degree or a small degree, with the Great Southern and Western. Do you not think the Great Southern and Western would be justified in complaining and saying, "Why did not we get an opportunity of taking over this line and making a success of it"?—No, I do not think so.

21799. Do you not think that the Great Southern and Western would be capable of turning that line into a success just as well as the Great Northern could?—I do not think they would take the same interest in it, because it is parallel to their own line.

21800. Surely, they have the Rosslare route, and so on?—As regards that, I do not myself see what the advantage to the Great Southern would be in diverting the traffic to Rosslare; I do not see what they are to gain by it.

21801. That is, of course, a matter of opinion. Is it more in the interest of the competition that you speak about?—My opinion is that when two parallel lines amalgamate it is not advantageous, but that when two continuous lines amalgamate it is.

21802. Is competition a thing in the interest of the railway company or in the interest of the public generally?—I think it is.

21803. As a matter of fact, where there is so little traffic, and where each company tries to get the

Reduction in local rates as an assistance to Irish industries approved.

The influence of the London and North-Western Company in the fixing of cross-Channel rates with Dublin.

Similar local steamer rates, Liverpool to Dublin and Dublin to Liverpool.

Continuity of line a reason for the suggested amalgamation of the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway with the Great Northern Railway in preference to the Great Southern and Western Railway.

Amalgamation with the Great Southern and Western Railway objected to.

Railway competition considered a desirable thing in the interest of the public.

June 11, 1907.

Mr. Edward Watson, J P, Managing Director, City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.

biggest share of that little traffic, does it not resolve itself more or less into agreements being come to between the different railway companies as to their charges; and in that way competition ceases to exist?—When I say "competition," I assure you it does exist at present.

21804. Rather at the expense of the railway companies; and probably if that competition did not exist, they might be in a position to do more for the carrying of the public, both in the way of passengers and goods?—I do not think the public would be advantaged if they lost the competition there is at present.

21805. I think the Dublin and South-Eastern has something like £2,500,000 of capital, £1,000,000 of which obviously receives nothing?—At the present time there has been a re-shuffling of the capital; but they have only paid on the Debentures and the Guaranteed Stock for some time.

Anticipated advantages to Dublin and South-Eastern Rai way shareholders from an amalgamation with a strong company.

21806. Do you think that any strong company taking that line over would be, after a few years' time, in a position to return some dividend to its unfortunate shareholders who now receive nothing?—I think so, if they got assistance.

21807. As regards the three points you spoke of, I think you said that by nationalisation you understood that the British Treasury should find the money and then hand the railways over to some properly elected body?—Yes.

21808. I think that is only partially the view that was put before us, and I think that we have had evidence to show that many people think that some local authority, assuming of course that nothing is done to disturb the relations now existing between the State and Ireland; apart from that altogether, some local department might be created which would find the money on the security of the railways themselves, and the buildings in Ireland—the local rates of Ireland, and finance the operation themselves. That is the view which was put before us by many people—that a sort of Railway Board should be formed, in any way you like, either from the existing companies or otherwise, and the money floated and financed on the security of the railways themselves?—I do not think that would be practicable. The difficulty is a financial one; and what to anyone in England seems such a very small matter assumes a very different aspect in Ireland. What do people in England think of the £400,000 I referred to? They would not think twice about it.

The financial difficulties in connection with a scheme of nationalisation or State purchase discussed.

21809. You do not think that a local authority would be in a position to finance the operation?—I do not think it is possible.

21810. Did I correctly understand you to say that you were resolutely opposed to the State taking over the railways, and managing them through another Department?—No, I think that is perfectly feasible.

21811. But I understood you to say in reply to Mr. Acworth that you did not approve of another Department being set up?—I did not say that I had any objection to it; but I think the people in Dublin would have. For instance, take the Board of Agriculture; everybody must admit that the Board of Agriculture is doing good work; and that Sir Horace Plunkett has done his best, and has given away every penny of his salary; but there is great dissatisfaction, notwithstanding.

21812. "Gratitude" is a word perhaps not quite known or appreciated in the Irish language; but, if it could be shown that by the acquisition of the railways of Ireland by the State some appreciable benefits in the shape of reduction of rates and charges could be given, and of course no injustice inflicted on the shareholders whose shares would be taken over at their fair valuation, would you see any objection?—I see no objection if the Government choose to make a State Railway Department—no objection and no difficulty.

No difficulty apprehended to State purchase and control by a State Department of the Irish railways.

21813. Would you prefer that to amalgamation or otherwise?—Personally, I should rather object to a general amalgamation; I should prefer to leave the three railways as they are.

21814. Would you be opposed to amalgamation into one system?—I do not think there would be any advantage in that; I do not think there is any halfway house between State purchase and leaving them as they are.

21815. Then, with regard to the obligations of the Great Southern and Western in relation to this mail service, you said those obligations had not been fulfilled, and that acceleration would be desirable; and then Mr. Acworth asked you a question as to whether the convenience of the Dublin people would not be seriously affected by having to start at six o'clock in the morning?—I do not think so.

21816. As a matter of fact, is it not your experience that the great bulk of the passenger traffic by that particular train is through passenger traffic, and that there is very little local passenger traffic?—You probably travel by that line more than I do, and would know better than I. In that case, if very few go at present, the inconvenience which Mr. Acworth pointed out would not exist.

21817. That is the point I wanted to bring out—I only wanted to know whether you had followed that point?—Yes, I followed that.

21818. With regard to the Midland, has there been any acceleration of the mail service?—None since the new service began.

21819. Then the only portion of Ireland benefited by this new service is the North?—Yes, by railway. The people to the West and the South have got the forty minutes, but the Great Northern have got the half-hour by the new line.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

21820. There is one question I should like to ask you about the mail train in the morning. You were advocating very strongly that the Broadstone and Kingsbridge people should make their trains earlier?—Yes.

21821. Have you any record of the number of times per week or per month that the mails for the North miss the 6.5 train?—Very seldom.

21822. It is very seldom they catch the train?—They very seldom miss it.

21823. Have you got the record?—I have not the record here, but the service is worked very accurately, I must say. There is a margin.

21824. Would you be amazed if I told you, living in Belfast as I do, that the mails very often miss the connection on three or four days in the week, and that therefore Belfast is in a worse position than Cork?—I think your lordship has overlooked the fact that if the connection is missed a special train is run immediately afterwards.

21825. If it does it stops somewhere?—If they cannot start it at 6.20 they send a special, and the special very often arrives at Belfast immediately after the ordinary mail.

21826. Is not that a new arrangement?—It has been in existence for years.

21287. We frequently do not get our mails in Belfast until eleven or twelve o'clock, and I often think it would be a very great benefit to the merchants of Belfast if there was a greater time allowed from the arrival at Kingstown until they leave the Amiens-street Station. I feel that the certainty of your mails would be very much better for us than the present uncertainty?—I am afraid, my lord, you are not quite right as to your facts. If the mails are late in Belfast, there may be some postal question involved, but as far as the Great Northern Railway is concerned, the service is worked with the greatest accuracy.

21828. I am not speaking of the Great Northern; I think the postal authorities should insist that the mails arrive in Holyhead at the hour they do, or probably earlier, but in case of accident or fog, the mails may miss the connection, and I only wanted to point out that we in Belfast do suffer?—I think your lordship has overlooked one fact—that Belfast has an advantage which other parts of Ireland have not got, and that is this—that if from any cause the connection is missed there is a special train run. In the case of the Midland Great Western, remember, the mails must cross the town, and if they miss there they must go by another train.

21829. If the people going from Dublin to Belfast have to go because the train leaves at 6.5, would it not be well to give them the advantage of the margin, by starting the mail train a little later from Dublin, without, however, slowing the mails from the other side to Kingstown?—I think there are grave mistakes in Belfast, and that the mail is missed a great deal more frequently than you seem to imagine?—I think you will find the Great Northern work the service very regularly.

21830. I am not blaming the Great Northern, but the Great Northern cannot carry the mails if they are not there to be carried—that is all I am pointing out. Whether it is the London and North-Western Railway Company who get delayed in running their train from London to Holyhead, or whether it is the Dublin Steam Packet Company who get delayed owing to fogs I do not know, but I think that extra twenty-five or thirty minutes would be an advantage, that is all.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

21831. May I ask a few questions. On the last point Lord Pirrie was asking you about, I think he has shown the importance of a little margin. But on this plan of yours, how do you anticipate that we are to save something like half an hour by going a longer distance?—I do not quite follow you.

21832. Just look at your map. We used to go over the brown line, which is 17 chains?—Pardon me; you did not go over it at all—it was the Dublin and Wicklow. You never went over it.

21833. The mails went over it?—The mails went over it, yes.

21834. Did not the Wicklow engine, with the mails, go over that brown line?—Yes.

21835. It then ran over the yellow line until it came to the green line?—Yes.

21836. It then went over the green to Island Bridge Junction?—Yes.

21837. It then went (back-shunted) into Kingsbridge?—Yes.

21838. Now, as a fact to-day it has to go over the brown line to the Junction, change engines at Amiens-street, go over on the pink and white dotted line?—It is all pink. Yours is an old map.

21839. Very well, it is all pink—until it joins the green, which is a little longer distance, obviously, than the yellow line?—One is on the level, and the other is a steep gradient, which makes up the difference at once.

21840. That is, I think, about a quarter of a mile?—That was one of the complaints—that that caused the delay.

21841. Then it has to go over the green line, and there is the same back-shunt?—Yes.

21842. There does not seem much chance of saving in that?—I put it this way—that if the Great Southern and Western Chairman, with the advice of his officers, came to the conclusion that they could save half an hour, I think that is probably right.

21843. We will deal with that. Do you know that besides the change of engines at Amiens-street there is still the same change of engines at Island Bridge Junction?—The same engine that takes the train from Amiens-street could take it to Cork. That is a railway question, and I am quite sure the railway officials would do anything they were told, and that they thoroughly understand their business.

21844. All that the Chairman said was, "We will be running on a high level, and hope to use our own carriages and dining-cars and breakfast-cars"—(at which there was applause)—"on this line, so that I certainly feel very sanguine that we will be able to save the better part of half an hour, at any rate"?—Yes.

21845. Now, have you got the times before that speech was delivered?—I have handed them in.

21846. Forgive me—those were the times on the 1st April, 1897?—Those were the same times.

21847. Why take the 1st April, 1897?—Because that was the time when the contract began.

21848. I want to see the times before that speech was made?—I will show them to you.

21849 Now I will pass from that. As I understand, you desire that the three railway companies having termini in Dublin should still compete?—I think it better for them to be as they are.

21850. That is incompatible with your view that the State might be the owner of all the railways, because then there would be no competition?—That is not what I said—I said there would be no difficulty in carrying out such a transaction.

21851. But you would lose the benefits of competition if they were all owned by the State?—All I said was that there would be no difficulty in carrying out such a transaction.

21852. You are in favour of competition?—I am in favour of three of the four railways coming to Dublin being left as they are.

21853. First of all, in regard to what you have suggested, that the Great Northern should take over the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford, as it used to be called—or the Dublin and South-Eastern—do you know that under the amalgamation which took place between the Great Southern and the Waterford and Limerick, the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford, because it was a weak company, got very extensive running powers over the Great Southern line?—I know they got them.

21854. All the way to Limerick. Do you know that?—I know that.

Anticipated advantages from an amalgamation of the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway with the Great Northern (Ireland) Railway.

21855. Do you think it would be a fair thing to hand over all those running powers—given because the company was weak—into the hands of a strong company?—That is an assumption. I do not know that the powers were given for that reason; Parliament gave them—I do not know why. You may remember.

21856. I remember why it was?—Quite so.

21857. Colonel Poë was suggesting that the Great Southern might jib. Supposing the Great Southern got amalgamated with the South-Eastern, it would be their tendency, would it not, to develop the Rosslare route more or less?—I do not myself think that it is the interest of the Great Southern and Western to develop that traffic in that way. They know their own business best of course.

21858. There is a beautiful tourist country to be developed between Dublin and Wicklow. Would they not be likely to develop that very much and would that be likely to be of any benefit to Dublin and Holyhead?—I have never heard it suggested before that they have ever contemplated such a thing.

21859. One of the members of the Commission asked you about the shareholders being benefited. How would the shareholders of the Dublin and South-Eastern Company be benefited by having a Government loan put before them?—They are getting nothing now; they could not be worse off than they are at present.

21860. Would they get anything by having another loan put in front of them?—I think they would. I am firmly convinced that that line, in the hands of the Great Northern, could be made to pay all right.

21861. Do you know if there is any instance where the through rate from an Irish internal station to an English internal station is different in either direction? That is to say, I suggest that the rates are the same in each direction—both going and coming?—Knowing that the railways were coming here, I did not go into any question of that kind.

The recent Order as to through rates on the Great Southern and Western Railway of the Railway and Canals Commission.

21862. Then we will leave it. You spoke of the local rates being lower than the through?—I think in some cases some of the locals are less. In some cases they are more, and in some cases less, but I think from England to Ireland the sums of certain locals are less than the corresponding through rates.

21863. Do you know that under the last decision of the Railway Commission, which was only given a month ago, we are compelled to carry from Clonmel to London at a lower rate than from Dublin to London?—The Order is not made out yet.

21864. But the judgment is given—it is in the hands of the Commissioners?—I am waiting with great interest for that Order.

21865. If that is so, what becomes of the local rate between Clonmel and Dublin?—I have not given attention to matters of that kind.

Mr. Acworth.—Is that from Clonmel to London through Dublin?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Yes, we are to carry at less than from Dublin to London; that is the Railway Commission's Order.

Lord Pirrie.—Upon what grounds is that decision based, do you know?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Well, I am not going to canvass their grounds.

June 11, 1907.

Mr. William T. Watson examined by the Chairman.

Mr. William T. Watson, Representative of the Dublin Mercantile Association.

21866. You are a member of the firm of Paul and Vincent, of Dublin?—I am joint manager.

21867. I think you appear before us on behalf of the Dublin Mercantile Association, of which you are a member?—Yes.

21868. You have been requested to do so?—Yes.

21869. What particular industry do you represent?—The cattle-feeding cake trade and the fertiliser industry; but I am not here as the official representative of the fertiliser industry, which is associated.

Alleged unfair treatment of Irish producers in the matter of local rates for cattle-feeding stuffs.

(See Appendix No. 30.)

21870. What particular district do you refer to in connection with this cattle-feeding cake?—The complaints I wish to bring before you refer mostly to the Midland Great Western Railway; there are a few cases on the Great Southern Railway.

21871. What is the nature of the complaints that you wish to bring before us?—I have sent in, and I have here, copies of thirty-four cases of through rates; in twenty-five of the cases the minimum rate applies to any quantity; that is, anything over 3 cwts.; in seven of the cases the minimum rate is for 3 tons; only one for 5 tons, and one for 6 tons. If a manufacturer in Dublin is to get the minimum rate from Dublin to an inland station he must send a minimum quantity of six tons.

21872. *Mr. Acworth.*—Do you mean that your thirty-four cases of through rates are from England?—From Liverpool; Liverpool is the dominating market for this trade.

21873. And all the Irish minimum rates from Dublin are for six-ton lots?—Yes.

21874. *Chairman.*—Just go on with your statement; what is your complaint?—Well, we think it is unfair that a railway company should take a single ton, or even 4 cwts., from a Liverpool merchant, when they will not take less than six tons from us at the minimum rate.

21875. That is the complaint?—That is the principal complaint.

21876. Can you give us any instances of how that operates—one instance will do, if you can give us one?—There is one instance here, Killucan Station, on the Midland Great Western Railway; the through rate from Liverpool is 10*s.* 5*d.* per ton for any quantity.

21877. When you say "any quantity," do you mean any quantity above 3 cwts.?—Yes. The Dublin producer must send six tons in one lot in order to procure the minimum rate of 5*s.* 8*d.* The cross-Channel rate if we were importing from Liverpool to Dublin is 6*s.* 5*d.*, and from Dublin to Killucan the rate is 6*s.* 11*d.*, transfer to rails in Dublin 1*s.* 6*d.*; that makes a total of 14*s.* 10*d.*, or 4*s.* 5*d.* against the Dublin seller.

Instances of through rates for this traffic disproportionate to the local rates.

21878. *Mr. Acworth.*—Where is Killucan?—On the Midland Great Western, in County Westmeath; 41¾ miles is the distance from Dublin.

21879. *Chairman.*—That is one instance, but your complaint generally is, that whereas traffic, such as feeding-cakes and other things, from Liverpool to inland stations in Ireland can be conveyed at a low rate for any quantity above 3 cwt., if you bring the stuff into Dublin and send it from a depôt there, you are bound, in order to get the low rate, to have a minimum of six tons?—That is right.

21880. And that applies, does it, to all traffic going from Dublin?—It does.

21881. Does it apply in the same manner from other ports in Ireland?—Yes; six tons is the unit in Ireland.

21882. For instance, from Belfast?—Yes, all over Ireland.

21883. Cork, or any other port?—Yes; except on some of the light railways. In England and Scotland the minimum rate applies to two tons in some cases, and in many cases to four tons.

21884. Just give us the rate for feeding-cakes by rail from Dublin to Cork?——

21885. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—What is the distance from Dublin to Cork?—165 miles, I think. Of course we have steamer competition there.

21886. *Chairman.*—Never mind your book; you have your proof?—It is 10*s.* for six tons; and for under six tons it is 13*s.* 4*d.*

21887. That is a low rate; you are not complaining of that rate, I suppose?—No, we are not. Of course we would send by steamer there; the rate by steamer is 8*s.* per ton for six-ton lots.

21888. What have you got to say about the chemical fertiliser; I think that is used for manure?—It is.

21889. Basic slag; is there much of that sent into Ireland?—About 14,000 tons of basic slag comes into Ireland.

21890. For agricultural purposes?—Yes.

21891. What have you to say about the rates for this particular article?—It is in class B, whereas other fertilisers are in class C; consequently the rates are different.

21892. The rate for basic slag is low, is it not?—It is about twenty-two per cent. lower in a number of the cases I have given here.

21893. Is not that right?—Oh, yes; according to classification it is right; but the stuffs are of much the same value.

21894. Are they?—Yes; basic slag is practically of the same value as chemical fertilisers.

21895. Is that so?—Yes.

21896. "Chemical fertilisers" seems to be a very wide term, and might include some things of great value?—Some are, no doubt, but only a small proportion. There are 120,000 or 125,000 tons of chemical fertilisers used in Ireland per annum, and I should say that two-thirds or three-fourths of that is superphosphate. The price of superphosphate is about from £2 10*s.* to £3 6*s.* 3*d.* per ton to the ports; and the price of basic slag is from £2 10*s.* to £3 3*s.* 6*d.*

21897. Both are about the same, weight for weight, in bulk I take it?—No; basic slag is slightly smaller in bulk.

21898. It is heavier?—Yes.

21899. You do not complain of the rates for this being high, do you?—Well, we think it is unfair to superphosphate manufacturers that basic slag, which is used for the same purposes, should be carried at a lower rate.

21900. Have you brought that to the notice of the railway companies?—Yes, it has been brought to their notice.

21901. And have they attempted to make any alteration?—The answer we get is, that it is in class B.

21902. Have you given reasons to the railway companies, the same as you have mentioned here, as to why the fertilisers should be put into the same class with basic slag?—Yes, we have.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Might I mention that the rate for basic slag was fixed when it had not any value as a bye product? That is the way the difference arises.

Mr. Acworth.—You cannot afford to put the things in class C into class B, and make them all the same rate.

21903. *Chairman.*—That is a matter that could be met in all cases by smaller rates being given by the railway companies, is it not?—Oh, yes, it could.

21904. May I ask if this traffic is sent in large quantities to one particular place, or is it a dribbling quantity throughout the whole of Ireland?—There is very seldom less than a wagon load of six tons sent.

21905. To one place?—Yes.

21906. So that it is an important traffic?—It is.

21907. And, I suppose, it is one of the necessities for the land?—It is, and it is a growing necessity.

21908. Can you tell us the quantity that is used?—About 14,000 tons of basic slag and about from 120,000 to 125,000 tons of other fertilisers.

21909. Which are distributed to various parts of Ireland from various ports?—Yes.

21910. Where from, principally?—Dublin is the principal seat of the industry; but there are factories in Belfast, Cork, and Derry.

21911. Going back for a moment to the low through rates for feeding-cakes, those are for linseed cakes, I suppose?—Linseed and cotton cakes, principally.

21912. Then you think Dublin is prejudiced a great deal in connection with these rates?—Dublin is now a manufacturing port in that business.

21913. You are making the cakes?—Yes.

21914. And therefore you think you ought to be put in the same position with regard to the rates as Liverpool?—Quite so.

21915. Have you represented that to the railway companies?—I have.

21916. And what is the result?—Well, I have had nothing in writing, but I have had an interview with one of the officials, who stated that it was evidently unfair that the Liverpool people should be

able to send two bags at the minimum rate while we must send six tons, and even then pay the railway company more than they get under the through rate.

21917. At any rate, I think that is a matter which you will have to take up with the railway company?—I thought this Commission might have, perhaps, some influence; we do not seem to have much.

21918. Just for information, do you make either cotton cake or linseed cake?—Cotton cake and compound cake.

21919. The raw material comes into Dublin direct, I suppose?—Yes; we import it chiefly from the United States.

21920. Is it really becoming an important industry?—Oh, yes, it is quite a large trade.

21921. How long has it been established?—Within the past twenty or thirty years.

21922. But recently, I suppose, there has been some extra development?—Oh, yes, it has developed considerably within the last ten or fifteen years.

21923. You do not crush your own cotton seed, surely, do you?—No, we import it from America.

21924. You import it with the oil out, and you work it up?—Yes, with the oil partially extracted, same as is done by Liverpool and other manufacturers.

21925. *Chairman.*—At any rate, the complaint is that the Liverpool maker is placed in a better position than you are in?—That is the point.

21926. And, of course, the traffic is sent from Dublin over the various railway companies' lines?—Yes; there is one through rate that I would like to draw attention to, and that is the rate to Tipperary from Liverpool—it is not on the record, but it is 17*s.* 3*d.* for any quantity. I find that the Liverpool people can send "feeding-meal" (whatever that is meant to convey) at 14*s.* 2*d.*; and our competitors are sending a nutted cake under that denomination and at that rate, thus getting an advantage of 3*s.* 1*d.*

21927. They are sending a cake under the rate applicable to what is called "feeding meal"?—Yes, and describing it as "feeding meal." What I particularly wish to draw attention to, however, is, that there is apparently a lower basis for other feeding stuffs, although they are of the same class as feeding-cakes.

21928. That is by the Great Southern?—Yes.

21929. Were you going to make any comparison with Dublin?—No; the point I wished to bring out was the fact that the railway companies seem to have the power to give lower rates.

21930. Of course they have got the power to give any lower rates?—Yes; but these lower rates benefit only the Liverpool man and not the Dublin man.

21931. Have you represented that case to the railway companies?—I have this particular case.

21932. What was the result of it?—They said that they would see that the nutted cake was not carried under the "feeding meal" rate; but I know it is done at present.

21933. Do you think that these apparent anomalies that you have pointed out would be remedied if the railways were the property of the State?—I do not know; that is such a remote contingency, that I have not considered it very much.

21934. Do you think it would be any better if there were a smaller number of railway companies in the country than at present?—I think it would be to the public benefit if some of the smaller railways which are still independent were absorbed by the larger lines.

21935. Beyond that, you are not prepared to give any opinion, I suppose?—No.

21936. You are aware of the various Regulations made by the Board of Agriculture, I suppose, with reference to cattle and other things?—I am not interested in it, but I know that they have taken up that matter.

21937. This particular industry of cattle cakes and feeding stuffs, and all that sort of thing, has nothing whatever to do with them, I suppose?—Well, of course, we are dependent on the cattle trade, but we do not look after their rates.

21938. You have made these suggestions as to what you call unfair treatment of Dublin as compared with Liverpool; what remedy do you suggest, if you cannot get any satisfaction from the railway companies?—I think that the railway companies and the steamship companies should show in their rates what proportion they each get out of the through rates, the same as when the steamers belong to the railway companies. For instance, the London and North Western Railway Company for their own line of steamers must show the proportion; and I do not see why railways running from Dublin should take less from a Liverpool man than from a Dublin man. It is not as if Dublin were merely importing from Liverpool to re-distribute. Dublin, as I have said, is a manufacturing port.

21939. Supposing you have a difference with, say, the Great Southern Railway Company, you know that you can make your complaint to the Board of Trade, if you cannot get satisfaction from the railway company. Do you not know that?—Yes, that is so. I know that.

The resource of an appeal to the Board of Trade in settling disputes with the railway companies.

21940. You can write to the Board of Trade?—Yes.

21941. Have you written to the Board of Trade?—I did, on one occasion. There was a matter of a dispute which we had with the Midland Great Western.

21942. Was that satisfactorily arranged?—The point that was then raised has been since settled. The question was this:—If we sent eight tons in one consignment, they would charge the wagon-load rate on seven tons, because one wagon would hold seven tons; but they would penalise us on the eighth ton and charge us the full ton rate.

21943. And that has been put right, has it?—It has.

21944. *Lord Pirrie.*—The Board of Trade put it right, did they?—They did.

21945. *Chairman.*—Failing the Board of Trade, you know there is an appeal to the Railway Commissioners?—But that is a very expensive procedure.

The resource of appeal to the Railway and Canal Commissioners an expensive and unsatisfactory proceeding.

21946. But you know of it, of course?—Yes.

21947. And you do not think it is a satisfactory Court to go to in order to settle small differences, do you?—No; I think there should be a Court in Dublin to deal with these matters.

21948. Inexpensive, and easy of access, I suppose?—Yes.

21949. So that either you or other traders could, without any great expense, get these matters settled; is that your idea?—That is my idea. But I should not advocate that any complainant should not have to pay his own costs. I think, to prevent frivolous cases being brought up, they should be obliged to pay their own costs.

21950. Of course there must be some protection afforded the railway companies?—Yes, the railway companies are entitled to ordinary protection, I think.

A Dublin tribunal cheaper and more accessible recommended.

21951. I take your evidence to be really to this effect: that you have no particular grievance against the railways in Ireland?—No; they have to earn a dividend, the same as we all have.

21952. The only thing you wish to bring under our notice is the fact that you think that as far as feeding stuffs and chemical fertilisers, which are necessities in Ireland, are concerned, you are not treated quite so fairly as the Liverpool people?—In the case of feeding cakes, the Liverpool people have the advantage in places where these through rates operate.

The Irish feeding stuffs and chemical fertilisers industries handicapped by preferential treatment afforded to Liverpool.

21953. You mean that they have an advantage over you?—They have.

21954. And you think that you ought to be placed in a similar position with regard to rates in order to compete with them?—Yes. We have to pay higher ocean-freight on our raw material coming in than they pay.

21955. It would be more to Dublin than to Liverpool, you mean?—Yes, from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* extra, and sometimes more.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

21956. Do you get your feeding foods direct from America to Dublin, or do you get them *via* Liverpool?—We import them by the "Lord" and "Head" Lines of steamers from America direct.

21957. You import them direct, not through Liverpool and not through Glasgow?—Yes.

21958. You said that goods were sent by the railway under, we will say, a misleading description, such as "feeding meal," so as to get a low rate; is that only in the case of feeding meal, or does it apply in the case of other general goods?—I have no knowledge with regard to general goods; that is the only case of complaint I know of.

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Mr. William T. Watson, Representative of the Dublin Mercantile Association.

21959. Do you ever make any special terms with the railway companies for large quantities. We were told by some witnesses from Belfast that they were able to make special arrangements for fifty or sixty or seventy-ton-lots. With such a large quantity as 120,000 tons, do not you ever make any special terms—cheaper than the 6*s.* rate, I mean?—Yes, we have done with the Great Northern Railway; they have met us where there was some steamer competition in regard to the rates to Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry, and Derry.

Temporary low rates for fertilisers granted by the railways where steamer competition exists.

21960. Is that the only company out of Dublin that has met you with special rates?—The Wicklow Railway Company has given us a concession for 2-ton lots to two ports.

21961. If they give you special rates, are those rates entered in their book, or have you to make a special arrangement with them each time?—We have to make a special arrangement each time.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

21962. Are you familiar with the powers conferred upon the Board of Trade by Section 31 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, the clause which is commonly called the "Conciliation Clause"?—Yes.

Suggested transfer of the powers of the Board of Trade under the Conciliation Clause of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, to the Irish Board of Agriculture.

21963. Do you think it would be an advantage if the powers conferred by that clause were transferred from the Board of Trade to the Board of Agriculture in respect to complaints arising in Ireland?—I think it would be, undoubtedly; because the Board of Agriculture in Dublin is more intimately acquainted with the circumstances.

21964. So that you would favour a transfer of that kind if it could be effected?—I would.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

21965. Do I correctly understand you to say that you do not complain of the minimum rates, for instance, this Killucan rate of 5*s.* 8*d.*?—I do not.

Reduction of the minimum quantity restriction on the low special rates sought.

21966. You would be satisfied if you had the advantage of this minimum rate for a smaller consignment?—I would.

21967. That is your point?—Yes.

21968. And do I correctly understand you to say that the local rate from Dublin to Killucan is 6*s.* 11*d.*?—The rate from Dublin to Killucan for under 2 tons is 6*s.* 11*d.*

21969. But if you were able to get it carried at a rate of 5*s.* 8*d.*, that would meet your point, would it?—It would.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

The powers of the Irish Board of Agriculture to cite railway companies before the Railway and Canal Commissioners.

21970. Just arising out of the question Sir Herbert Jekyll has put to you, you know that the Board of Agriculture has power, and has exercised it, to act as prosecutors?—Yes.

21971. I dare say you know of the case where they brought an action against the Great Southern before the Railway Commissioners?—Yes.

21972. When you said that you would be quite ready that they should act as arbitrators, had you in your mind that they have also power to act as prosecutors?—No, I had not.

21973. You would not yourself like to go before an arbitrator who was also a prosecutor, would you?—No, I should not.

21974. You give a number of instances here, where you say you cannot send by railway the cake to the various ports unless you send it in 6-ton lots. As I understand, you say 6-ton lots are too big, and that the farmers will not take them?—That is so.

The equity of the rates for feeding-cake in Ireland generally.

21975. And, on the other hand, unless you send in 6-ton lots, the rates are so high that you cannot afford to pay them?—Exactly.

21976. And therefore you send by steamer?—Yes, where possible.

21977. You would not say that 10*s.* for 164 miles was high, would you?—No, I should not.

21978. Feeding-cake is pretty valuable stuff, is it not?—Ten shillings would be more than 5 per cent. on the value.

21979. Yes, I daresay it might be?—About 6¼ per cent.

21980. What is cake worth now?—About £8.

21981. But you would not call that a high rate, would you?—I would not, provided I could not get a lower one by any other route.

21982. But the point is, of course, that steamers are cheaper. I suppose that if you were sending to an inland point, for instance, to Mallow, the rate would not be as low as 10*s.*, would it?—I will tell you that rate in a moment.

21983. Or tell me with regard to any point, it does not matter about Mallow in particular?—From Dublin to Mallow for six-ton lots the rate is 11*s.* 9*d.*

21984. And it is cheaper to Cork, is it not, though Cork is twenty-five miles further?—Yes.

21985. You would not say that even the Mallow rate was an unreasonable rate, would you?—No.

21986. So that your complaint really is that the railways, although they do quote lower rates to seaports, are still not able to get under the steamer rates?—Well, I do not see why the railways in Ireland should not take two-tons at the minimum rate, the same as in England.

21987. I quite follow that point; that is a very good point, and I have no doubt the railway companies will consider it, and that, if they cannot see their way to do it, they will at least explain why they cannot?—I believe it would lead to a large expansion of trade.

21988. Your point is, that it clearly does not seem to be fair that a man in Liverpool can get a two-ton rate and you can only get a six-ton rate. That is quite plain, and I see that point; but the other point was a different one. Now about the classification question; basic slag is in class B, is it not?—Yes.

21989. That is in by Act of Parliament, and the railway companies cannot put it out?—But they can charge the maximum in class B and the minimum in class C.

21990. You have said that basic slag represents only about 14,000 tons as against 120,000 tons?—Yes.

21991. Would you agree that it would not be quite fair to the railway company, supposing they could not put up the 14,000 tons, to expect them to bring the whole 120,000 tons down; that would be a tremendous loss to the railway company, would it not?—I am not suggesting that. I think, if the minimum in class C were charged for fertilisers, that is all we could ask; and I think that would lead to larger business.

21992. Would you think it fair to treat nitrate in that way—nitrate is worth more than basic slag, is it not?—It is.

21993. What you want is, to get superphosphate treated something like basic slag?—Yes.

21994. Though you do know that it is only of recent years that the prices have got to be about the same?—Yes.

21995. As to the "feeding-meal" rate, do you know anything about whether the traffic also goes by Waterford?—Yes, I daresay that is by Waterford.

21996. I expect that is the explanation, is it not—that it is based on the old Limerick and Waterford rate?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—Yes, that is it.

21997. *Mr. Acworth.*—It probably came in originally as a rebate. Now, just one other thing. You said that you did not think it was fair that the railways from Dublin to, say, Limerick or Galway should carry stuff from Liverpool through Dublin for less than they charge from Dublin to Galway. That is what I understood you to say?—That they should charge the Liverpool man the same rate as the Dublin man.

21998. What you said was this: that it was not fair that the railways should take a less amount out of the through rate than they took from the local rate?—Exactly.

21999. That is from the one point of view. Now look at it from the other point of view; that there is a through steamer from, for instance, Liverpool to Galway, a steamer that goes round?—There is.

22000. Supposing the railway company insisted upon their full rate from Dublin, would they ever get a pennyworth of traffic; would it not all go by steamer?—That is possible; but it would shut out the Dublin producer.

22001. You agree probably that it would in that event be all sent by steamer?—Yes.

22002. What harm does it do you that they get some traffic over the route by charging a lower rate?—Why not give us the same opportunity?

Mr. William T. Watson, Representative of the Dublin Mercantile Association.

22003. That is another matter. The point is, would you be benefited if the railway company gave up that particular traffic?—No, we would not be benefited.

22004. Is it not a benefit to the railway company to be able to get some profit out of the Liverpool man?—Yes.

22005. Does not the fact of their getting that profit enable them to afford to get a little less out of you?—Your argument comes to this; that under existing circumstances the stuff would be most likely shipped from Liverpool by sea; and the consequence would be that a man at, say, Athenry would have his stuff brought from Galway; and the railway company would get only a short mileage; whereas, by getting it through Dublin the railway company would get a long mileage.

22006. I was trying to get at whether you thought it would do you any good if they insisted on getting the full local rate from Dublin to Galway?—They would be sure of getting the traffic if they made their rate from Dublin suitable.

22007. Do you think they could afford to put down all the rates from Dublin?—They can afford to take a lower rate apparently on the through traffic.

22008. But can they afford to take a low rate on all through traffic?—Our point is, that by giving a low rate to Liverpool producers the producer in Dublin is prejudiced.

22009. But does it hurt you if they take the traffic at the lower rate when your rival can get a lower sea rate any way, whether the railways take it at that lower rate or not?—It hurts us in this way: that it prevents us competing.

22010. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think your point is, that it does not affect you in the case of the port being near, as is the case with Galway in this particular instance; but if you are half-way between Dublin and Galway, it makes a great difference, because you have no sea competition. If you are close to a sea port, it naturally does not affect you, but with regard to the intermediate places, it affects you very much?—It does, but the through rates I complain of are to inland points and not affected by sea rates to our ports.

22011. *Chairman.*—The traffic carried from Galway by steamer is not from Galway alone; it has to go inland, and thus it competes with you?—It is an advantage to give Dublin producers a low rate, because the railway company gets a longer mileage.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—If Ireland was not an island it would solve most of these questions.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—And a great many others, too, Mr. Barrington.

Mr. J. Clarke examined by the Chairman.

Mr. J. Clarke, Secretary, and Representative of the Mayo County Council.

22012. Mr. Clarke, you are a member of the Mayo County Council, are you not?—I am Secretary of the County Council.

22013. And you have been authorised on behalf of the County Council to appear before us?—Yes.

22014. Have the Council at any time given their consideration to the question of the purchase of the Irish railways?—Yes; various resolutions have come from other County Councils to the Mayo County Council, and they have adopted them.

22015. Have they passed any resolutions on the subject?—They have. They have agreed that the railways should be purchased, not by the State but by the General Council of County Councils, pledged on the rates of Ireland.

22016. They passed a resolution in favour of the railways being handed over to some Irish body?—Exactly.

22017. I suppose that is in accordance with the resolution of the General Council of County Councils?—Yes.

22018. And has your Council agreed with the resolution that was passed by the General Council?—They have.

22019. Is there much difference of opinion upon your Council upon the subject?—None whatever.

22020. Then I may take it that so far as the County of Mayo is concerned the County Council are unanimous in favour of the railways being handed over to an Irish body?—Exactly.

22021. What special reasons have you in Mayo that induce the Council to adopt that course?—They think that by having it handed over to a popular body fares would be much cheaper, and things would go a lot better than they do at present.

22022. Have the County Council of Mayo any obligations in connection with guaranteed railways?—Yes; we have a great deal. If you go on with the evidence, you will find that we have considerable obligations.

22023. What is the total amount the County Council have had to pay on guaranteed railways?—They have paid up to the present over £30,000.

22024. Do you know how that amount has been made up?—I do. I have the statistics here, if you would care to go into them.

22025. I think you had better tell us how that amount has been made up?—It is in my proof of evidence.

22026. I suppose that is under the Light Railways Act; to what particular railways do you refer?—I refer to three—the Ballinrobe and Claremorris Railway is one, the Claremorris and Swinford Railway is another, and the third is the Athenry and Tuam extension to Claremorris, but with that we do not deal at present.

22027. Taking the other two you have mentioned, what is the amount that has had to be contributed by the Council?—Some £1,200 a year has to be paid by the County Council on the Ballinrobe and Claremorris Railway.

22028. What is the length of that line?—About twelve miles.

22029. That amount is spread over the whole union?—Over the barony of Kilmaine and the parish of Ballyovey, which is practically the whole union of Ballinrobe.

Amount of baronial guarantees paid in respect of the Ballinrobe and Claremorris, and the Claremorris and Swinford railways.

22030. How long has that payment been going on?—Since the 10th of March, 1892.

22031. Could you tell us what rate in £ that is for the parish?—Something like 6*d.* in £ it would work out at.

22032. I am taking it for the last eight years, and you say that the ratepayers have had to pay about 6*d.* in the £ as their guarantee for this particular railway?—Yes.

22033. And that is going on now?—No; it is less.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is really 5*d.* in the £.

Chairman.—I am taking the average.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—For the last five years it is 5*d.*

22034. *Chairman.*—It is now 5*d.*, but the average for the eight years is about 6*d.*?—Yes. It has come down.

22035. The other railway was the Claremorris and Swinford line?—Yes.

22036. What is the length of that line?—I could not say.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is 17½ miles.

22037. *Chairman.*—What has been the payment for that railway?—That would be about 1½*d.* in the £ on the guaranteeing area. But what is the total amount paid?——.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—They paid, as a matter of fact, £350 for the last five years.

22038. *Chairman.*—Let us take the total amount paid on the Claremorris and Swinford line for eight years. What is the total amount that the barony has had to pay: is it £3,052?—Yes, that would be the amount.

22039. What is the amount on the Athenry and Tuam Extension?—We are not dealing with that case. That passed out of our hands in 1902.

22040. Who work this light railway?—The Athenry and Tuam Extension is now worked by the Great Southern.

The working companies concerned.

22041. Who works the Ballinrobe and Claremorris line?—That is worked by the Midland.

22042. What is the guarantee that the barony has to pay upon that?—About £1,200 a year, roughly speaking.

I have in your proof £1,700 half-yearly?——

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That is a mistake. They only pay £1,140 or about £1,200 a year.

22043. *Chairman.*—The Midland Company work that line, do they not?—Yes.

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22044. What is the agreement for working it—do they work it on a percentage of the receipts?—They retain fifty per cent. of the receipts and credit is given for the other fifty per cent. to go to the reduction of the interest, and this usually leaves a deficit of about £1,200 half-yearly.

22045. About £2,400 a year?—Something like that.

22046. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is wrong for the last five years?—It is a little lower.

Ballinrobe and Claremorris line worked under agreement at 50 per cent. of receipts.

22047. For the last five years it is just one-half. The barony has only been called upon to pay £1,141.

22048. *Chairman.*—Because one-half of it has been refunded by the Board of Works?—Yes.

22049. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—But there has been a large profit on that section of the line?—You will see in this return that there has been a large profit on that portion of the line.

The Secretary.—The annual baronial contribution was £1,141 for the five years ending 1905.

The annual baronial and Treasury contributions for five years ending 1905.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—And the Treasury contribution is the same?

Secretary.—Yes, £1,141.

22050. *Chairman.*—Up to the year 1892 the Athenry and Tuam Railway was guaranteed by the county, was it not?—Yes.

22051. And what alteration has been made?—In the year 1902 the Great Southern line applied for, and was granted, running powers over the Athenry and Tuam Extension to Claremorris line, and since that year the area of charge has been relieved of the guarantee, the Board of Works paying half the cost as in the other lines, and the Great Southern paying the other half.

Baronial guarantee for the Athenry and Tuam railway taken over by the G. S. & W. Company in 1902.

22052. Since the first guarantee was paid, up to October, 1906, how much has been paid by that district in respect of the three railways?—There were £30,005 in respect of the three.

22053. When was this agreement made by the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company to take over the extension from Claremorris to Swinford?—You mean the Athenry and Tuam Extension?

22054. The extension from Claremorris to Swinford; that is in 1891, is it not?—Yes. That is the original presentment.

22055. The Waterford and Limerick Railway Company took that over for a term of years, did they not?—Yes.

22056. For how many years?—It does not state how many.

The agreement under which the late W. & L. Railway Company undertook to work the Claremorris and Swinford line.

22057. They took the line over to work and maintain the line for a period. Was the period fixed?—No. It is an agreed term to maintain the line for a period of fifty years, retaining the gross receipts up to £4 per mile per week as working expenses, and if the gross receipts exceed £4 per mile per week, then one-half of the excess should go to the guaranteeing area, and one-half to the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company, provided, however, that under no circumstances should the guaranteeing area receive less than £400 per half-year.

22058. What has been the result of that arrangement? Can you tell us the gross receipts?—The gross receipts shown amount to £2,965 18*s.*

22059. For what period is that? You say the gross receipts shown amount to £2,965; for what period?—This is the report from the auditor of the railways; that would be for a year.

22060. And the working expenses were fixed at £4 per mile per week?—And they amounted to £1,840.

22061. What was the balance left?—£1,125 18*s.* as excess, one-half of which, £562 19*s.*, together with £1,840 working expenses, make the expenditure £2,402 19*s.*, leaving the other half of excess, £562 19*s.*, to credit of net revenue account, which, deducted from the £800 guaranteed dividend for the half-year, leaves the deficiency £237 1*s.*, which is payable by the guaranteeing area.

Amount paid by the guaranteeing area in respect of Claremorris and Swinford line.

22062. Then £237 is paid by the guaranteeing area?—Yes.

22063. What does the guaranteeing area of the County of Mayo consist of?—It consists of the entire barony of Gallen, that portion of the barony of Costello, consisting of the parishes of Kilmovee, Kilbeagh, Knock, and Aghamore, and also that part of the barony of Clanmorris, consisting of the parish of Kilcolman, all of which have guaranteed payment of four per cent. per annum on £40,000, namely, £1,600 a year. The half-year's interest amounts to £800, and, taking credit from the sum available for net revenue, leaves a deficit which is met by 1½*d.* in the £ to be contributed by the guaranteeing area.

Baronies, &c., comprised in the guaranteeing area.

22064. That is what you explained at the beginning of your evidence?—Yes.

22065. Does your Council consider that if the railways were purchased and put under the control of an elected body this amount would be saved?—They do. I think I allude to that later on in my proof. It has been estimated that it would require about £40,000,000 to purchase all the Irish railways, and this, at 3½ per cent., would amount to £1,400,000 a year.

22066. Your Council is of opinion, speaking generally, that by what I may call the unification of the railways, under one management and one system, a considerable amount would be saved in working expenses?—Yes.

22067. Have you any direct knowledge of the railway rates in operation for goods traffic?—No, I have not.

22068. Then I do not think it would be fair to ask you about them?—I think you are alluding to the carriage of a ladder, are you not?

22069. I do not think it is worth while going into that, because that is a special article that probably required two or three trucks?—Yes, but it appears so extraordinary that for a £3 article you should have to pay £4 3*s.* 6*d.* carriage. But probably there may be reasons.

22070. There are reasons, no doubt?—Of course, I know nothing about that.

22071. I do not think I need refer to that?—I do not suppose you will compare the rates in Canada.

22072. Do you know anything about the rates in Canada?—I happened to be in Canada.

22073. What is the point you wish to raise upon that?—From Peterborough to Montreal, a distance of 263 miles, the carriage of a canoe only cost 13*s.*, while from Sligo to Kiltimagh, a distance of forty-three miles, it cost 13*s.* 6*d.*

22074. You merely mention that as an instance where a little canoe was carried a long distance?—As showing that it actually cost less from Peterborough to Montreal, a distance of 263 miles, than from Sligo to Kiltimagh, a distance of forty-three miles. The difference in rates is what I am referring to.

22075. In Canada, for a long distance, the carriage was less than for a short distance in Ireland?—Yes.

22076. Surely that is not a staple industry of the country?—No, it is simply to show that if we had only one line managed by popular control and a fixed price, we would have to pay much less than we are paying at present.

22077. Of course, that is quite an exceptional thing. Now, let us deal more generally with the rates. You frankly state that you have no personal knowledge of the rates for goods traffic, or mineral traffic, or agricultural traffic in Ireland?—That is so.

22078. You do not know whether the rates are fair or reasonable?—I have stated some cases.

22079. The two extreme cases you give are those of a long ladder which would require three or four trucks, and a small canoe coming from Canada. Surely neither of those articles can be considered a staple industry of the country, can it?—I know that if we got the ladder made in Scotland we could get it sent to Westport by water and get it taken over for 10*s.*

22080. You do not suggest that the railway company should carry at a loss?—No, I do not in the least.

22081. If a ladder occupies two or three trucks, the railway company were justified in charging for it accordingly; there was nothing unreasonable in that, was there?—Except that they said it was £4 3*s.* 6*d.* in the first instance, and we eventually got it for £1 7*s.* 10*d.*

22082. With regard to passenger fares, you know more about passenger traffic and passenger rates than goods rates?—Yes.

22083. What do you say on behalf of your Council in reference to third-class traffic in Ireland?—That it should be very much improved.

22084. You mean the accommodation?—Yes.

22085. Are you alluding to the main line or to branch lines?—Taking the main line as far as Athlone from Castlebar, the accommodation is very bad; after that it is very much improved.

22086. What do you mean by very bad?—I allude to it in my evidence. The seats and the floor are solid hard wood.

22087. What would you have for the floor?—I would have a little matting.

22088. For third-class passengers?—Yes. You have it in the English third-class carriages.

22089. Not any of them, I think, or in very few. I confess I do not often go in one, but I do not remember ever seeing a mat in a third-class carriage on an English railway anywhere?—I think, with all due respect, that there is.

22090. I admit that they have cushioned seats now. At any rate, from what I have seen of Irish railways I may say that the main line accommodation seems to me to be almost equal to the best accommodation in England?—For third-class passengers—I do not know whether you have been down west.

22091. I have not been west lately, I admit. At any rate, I suppose, for the main line traffic of Ireland the rolling stock is practically the same as is used in England?—Yes, practically the same.

22092. Then, really what you refer to more are the branch lines?—It would not be a branch line from Athlone to Castlebar.

22093. No. Is the rolling stock different there from what it is on the main lines? Is it very much different from Castlebar to Athlone than it is from Athlone to Dublin?—Yes, very much different.

22094. Let us see what you have to say with reference to these little railways—the Ballinrobe and Claremorris Railway. Can you tell us the number of passengers that travel first, second, and third-class on that railway?—Yes; first-class passengers, 10,610; second-class, 4,902; third-class, 172,435

22095. For what period is that?—I am taking that for a period of seven years.

22096. That is the total number in seven years?—Yes. For seven years, ending October 31st, 1906.

22097. If you divide that total by seven, it brings the passenger traffic down to a miserably small figure?—It is very small.

22098. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The third-class passengers were about 25,000 in the year, first-class passengers about 1,500, and second-class passengers about 700.

22099. *Chairman.*—Yes; that is practically nothing. Do you mean to say that if you got your soft seats and matted floors on this particular branch railway more passengers would travel?—I do not think more passengers would travel, but that more would travel at a cheaper rate.

22100. More would travel at a cheaper rate?—Yes.

22101. You would attach more importance to the cheaper fare than to the cushioned seats and so on?—Yes, but I would have both.

22102. Do you know what the fare is per mile?—I think about 1½*d.* a mile.

22103. Third-class?—Yes.

22104. I think not?—1¼*d.*, I think.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—No; a penny.

22105. *Chairman.*—I see you admit here that on the Great Southern line the carriages are in every way comfortable and convenient—corridor carriages and almost every facility given as given on the English railways?—Yes.

22106. That is what I meant when I said that the main line rolling stock is equal to the rolling stock in England?—I was talking about the Midland.

22107. You mean that the Midland is not up to the standard of the Great Southern?—No; I do not think so.

22108. What do you say with reference to facilities at Clara Junction?—What I meant by that, is that when one railway company embarrasses the other, it is carrying out my argument that there should be only one company all over Ireland at a fixed rate.

22109. Clara Junction Station, I suppose, is used by two railway companies?—It is.

22110. Which are the two?—The Great Southern and the Midland.

22111. Do they both use the same platform?—No, there is a different platform for each.

22112. Do you complain that when passengers get out of the Midland train and want to go to the Great Southern train the porters will not carry their luggage?—Exactly.

22113 Do you know that from your own knowledge?—Yes. But it is about five years ago since I travelled on that line.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It is five years since you travelled on the line.

Mr. Neale (*Manager, G. S. & W. Ry.*)—There is an exchange platform.

Lord Pirrie.—You have to go from another platform, have you not? You have not to go over a bridge, I think, but along the same platform.

Chairman.—Have you to go over a bridge?

Mr. Neale.—You have only to carry the luggage up a little bit from one train to another at the same platform.

22114. *Chairman.*—The train comes up to one side of the platform, and the passengers walk to the other side for the other train, but all on the same platform. (*To Witness*).—Your Council appear to make some grievance of this; what is the grievance?—The grievance was that the two companies did not appear to work in harmony.

22115. How do you know that?—Because you could not get a porter to carry your luggage down to the other train.

22116. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do you mean that the porter of one company would not take your luggage down to another train?—Exactly.

22117. *Chairman.*—But it is on the same platform?—There is a distance of about the length of the train for the luggage to be carried.

22118. Then the Athenry and Tuam Extension to Claremorris Railway, I suppose that must be managed well, because I see they have nine directors of that railway; what do you say about that?—We are not dealing with that now, because that has passed away from us. I only brought it in to show how much the County of Mayo had to pay for guarantee. *Personnel* and functions of the Directorate of the Athenry and Tuam line.

22119. That is done with now?—Yes.

22120. You have had under consideration in your Council the question of directors not living in the neighbourhood and not being thoroughly identified with the districts served by the railway?—Yes.

22121. And you think that all that would be remedied if the railways were handed over to one body in Ireland?—Yes.

22122. Surely some of these directors must be members of your Council?—None of them are.

22123. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Four of them are Baronial Directors—Lord Oranmore and Browne, Col. Morris Blake, Mr. Denis, and Lieut.-Col. Saunders?—There are none of them members of the County Council.

22124. *Chairman.*—But they are Baronial Directors?—Yes.

22125. And they are ratepayers in the district?—Yes.

22126. And they have to pay this rate?—Yes, their portion.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The only function of these directors under the Amalgamation Act is to pay the dividends?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That is so. On the amalgamation we wanted to get rid of them altogether and to purchase, but we could not, so we arranged a perpetual rent, and these directors only pay over the rent.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

22127. Do I understand that you rather complain of the high rates which you have to pay on account of the railway extensions in County Mayo?—Yes.

22128. Do you know that the County Mayo pays less in respect of light railways under different Acts than any other county in Ireland with the exceptions of Sligo and Cavan, in the North. Every other county that has had the benefit of the Light Railways Act pays considerably more. The poundage in the whole County of Mayo in respect of one of these extensions is 5*d.*, and in respect of another 1¼*d.*, and your liabilities in respect of these two railways are something like £3,000 a year, I think?—Yes, something like that. Comparatively favourable position of Mayo with other counties as regards liability for railway guarantees.

22129. But owing to the profit at which they are worked you are only called upon to pay one-half?—Yes.

22130. And in addition to that you have had the benefit of getting grants of money to the amount of £250,000 in respect of the Ballina and Killala line, the Westport-Malranny line, and the Achill extension?—We have.

22131. Those are all in County Mayo?—Yes.

22132 I should have thought that from the point of view of the County of Mayo ratepayer he is greatly

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Mr. J. Clarke, Secretary, and Representative of the Mayo County Council.

benefited from grants of £250,000, especially when he has only to pay Baronial contributions to the extent of about 5*d.* in some baronies and in others of only 1½*d.*?—Yes.

22123. So that compared with the rest of Ireland he is very favourably situated. Is not that so?—As regards the figures of the passenger traffic, the bulk of the traffic is third-class—25,000 passengers a year?—Yes.

Reduction of second-class fares as a means of increasing passenger traffic recommended.

22134. Would your opinion be that if the second-class fares were lowered—there are only a fraction over 1,000 a year at present—any considerable number of passengers who now go third, and have to put up with the inconvenience of which you have spoken, would go in the higher class?—Certainly.

22135. You think they would?—Yes.

22136. It would be to the benefit of the travelling public and also indirectly to the benefit of the railway company if they lowered their second-class fares and gave the people an opportunity of getting better accommodation?—Yes; I believe it would.

22137. And I understand you to say that the want of harmony and co-operation which, in your opinion, is shown by the different railway companies in the matter of through connection, would probably cease to operate if the railways were unified and put under State control?—Yes.

22138. Have the County Council of Mayo, which you represent, considered the question of the acquisition of the railways by any other body apart from a national body, so to speak?—No.

22139. So that you cannot speak upon that point?—No.

22140. Of course, as you are aware, there is not much probability of our getting even the extended powers which we thought we were going to get?—No.

22141. So that there is not much probability of a national authority?—No, I fear.

22142. From your point of view, do you think it would be an improvement on the present system if the State acquired the railways?—I could not give an authoritative opinion.

State-ownership and control of Irish railways preferred to the continuance of present system.

22143. But I only want your own opinion?—No, I think it would be more popular if the General Council of County Councils had the control.

22144. I mean failing that; we cannot always get what we want in this world?—If we do not get that, I would prefer that the State acquired the railways.

22145. You would prefer that the State acquired the railways to the continuance of the present system?—Yes.

22146. In regard to the want of connection between Tuam and Castlebar, how long have you to wait at Claremorris? Supposing one of your County Councillors is coming up from Tuam and wants to get to your county town, Castlebar, to attend a meeting of the County Council; how long has he to wait at Claremorris?—That state of things is bettered.

22147. Then we need not follow that out?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

22148. With regard to this want of harmony, I see that our train arrives from Kingsbridge at Clara at 11.8 and stops at the Midland Railway platform at Clara. The train of the Midland, I find from their time table, goes on at 11.35. There is no want of harmony there, is there; that is pretty good, is it not?—I do not mean as regards the time.

22149. Then what do you mean?—I mean as regards the porters and officials.

22150. Are you sure you ever put your hand in the mouth of your pocket? Then, with regard to this little Ballinrobe and Claremorris line, do you know that its earning receipts are less than £5 per mile per week?—No; I'm sure I put my hand further down.

22151. Do you know that the Midland Great Western are working it for 50 per cent. of the receipts?—I know that.

22152. And that it will cost at least £6 a week?—I could not tell you that.

22153. You cannot expect much under those circumstances?—No; if such is the case.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—There is a very good profit on that section of the line.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Which?

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The Ballinrobe and Claremorris there is a large profit on that line.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It is a profit because the Midland work it at 50 per cent. of the receipts.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That is it, is it?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Yes, it is paid out of the pocket of the Midland Company. It is a profit out of loss, so to speak. It does not nearly pay.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11.15 *o'clock.*

THIRTY-NINTH PUBLIC SITTING.—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12TH, 1907.

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, Chairman; Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; and Mr. W. M. ACWORTH;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Sir Herbert Jekyll.—I ask your permission, Mr. Chairman, to put in a Memorandum which has been prepared by the Board of Trade on the inspection of the Tralee and Dingle Railway. Some remarks were made during the examination of Mr. O'Donnell the other day, and he quoted Mr. Justice O'Brien, who made certain observations on the subject to the Grand Jury. I feel there was some misapprehension in the mind of the judge, and it perhaps is best that the matter should be settled and explained. This Memorandum explains the whole subject.

Chairman.—I do not see the slightest objection to that explanation being printed as part of the proceedings, and I think, as a matter of courtesy, if you do not mind, we will send a copy of it to Mr. O'Donnell.

Sir Herbert Jekyll.—Certainly.

The Memorandum was handed in, and is as follows:—

June 12, 1907. Memorandum handed in on behalf of the Board of Trade as to the opening of the Tralee and Dingle Railway.

TRALEE AND DINGLE LIGHT RAILWAY.

This line was authorised by Orders in Council of the Lord Lieutenant of 1888 and 1889 under the Tramways (Ireland) Acts.

It is on a three-feet gauge and its total length is about thirty-seven miles. For a considerable portion of the route it is laid along the side of the public road.

The construction of the line as described in the Orders was, as stated in the preamble thereto, approved in 1884 and 1889 by the Grand Jury of County Kerry and the Tralee Town Commissioners, who had before them the deposited plans and sections, as well as reports by the County Surveyor and the Irish Commissioners of Public Works.

A history of the railway is given on page 1 and the above-mentioned reports on pages 10-12 of the Report on the Accident at Camp in 1893 (*copy herewith*). The Commissioners' report stated, *inter alia*, as follows:—

"Now, we, in pursuance of the Acts hereinbefore "mentioned, do report that, as regards the merits of "the undertaking in an engineering point of view, "the proposed Tralee and Dingle Light Railway "and Tramway can be efficiently constructed and "worked in accordance with the plans and sections "deposited with us."

No approval of the plans, etc., was given or required by the Board of Trade, and it was not until October, 1888, that a plan and map were lodged with the Department in compliance with Section 52 of the Order of that year.

For the curves, gradients, and other features of the undertaking, therefore, the Board of Trade are in no way responsible, and the inspection of the line on the Board's behalf upon the completion of the works was made in pursuance of the Regulations of Railways Act, 1842, which is applicable to Light Railways constructed under the Tramways (Ireland) Acts.

The material sections of the Act of 1842 are given on page 12 of the Camp Accident Report. Their general effect is to enable the Board of Trade to postpone the opening of a line for passenger traffic when they or their inspecting officer are of opinion that such opening would be attended with danger to the public using the railway either by reason of the *incompleteness* of the works or the insufficiency of the establishment for working the line (see Section 6). No power is given to the Department to postpone the opening because authorised curves may be sharp or gradients severe.

In the case of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway the line was notified as ready for inspection in December, 1890, and was accordingly inspected by Major-General Hutchinson, who made a report enumerating various requirements and expressing the opinion that the line could not be opened without danger to the public owing to the incompleteness of the works.

The opening was therefore formally postponed by the Board from time to time in accordance with the Act of 1842, until, after a re-inspection of the line in March, 1891, it was allowed to be opened, subject to compliance with certain requirements and specified restrictions of speed.

The requirements were afterwards complied with, and the restrictions of speed were embodied in a code of working regulations issued by the Board of Trade on the 13th May, 1891. These restrictions are given on page 4 of the Camp Accident Report.

Both the late Sir Francis Marindin in his report on the Camp Accident (p. 9) and Major Pringle in his report on the recent accident near Lispole Viaduct (see p. 7 of print attached) urge the desirability of improvement of the curves and gradients on the line, but the Board of Trade have no powers in the matter, and the question of giving further financial assistance for such a purpose is entirely one for the Treasury and the Irish Commissioners of Public Works.

It is understood, however, that the Irish Government have decided to give such assistance (see concluding paragraph of the attached report on the Lispole accident).

Alderman HENRY DALE, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

22154. You are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

22155. And I think you appear before us on behalf of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping?—Yes.

22156. Your Chamber has had the question of railway rates and facilities under consideration?—Yes.

22157. And you are generally acquainted with the views of the Chamber?—Yes.

22158. Do you consider that with regard to the rates generally in Ireland—I will speak of goods rates first—there are inequalities which are prejudicial to the interests of the country?—We consider there are.

22159. And do you think that if those inequalities were done away with there would be some expansion of traffic on the Irish railways?—That is our opinion.

22160. We had the evidence of Mr. Green—I

Alderman Henry Dale, J.P., Representative of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping.

Alleged inequalities in goods rates prejudicial to the interests of the country.

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Alderman Henry Dale, J.P., Representative of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping.

think he is President of your Chamber?—He is the President—yes.

22161. And I think he gave us some evidence with reference to the disproportion between through and local rates in favour of through rates?—Yes.

22162. Do you remember the evidence he gave on that subject?—Yes, I do, generally.

22163. And you agree with him?—I do.

Alleged disproportion between through and local rates.

22164. Then I do not think it necessary to go through that portion of the evidence again. Now, as far as Cork is concerned, have you any reason to believe that Cork is treated by the railway companies, as compared with other places, in an unfair manner?—Yes; I may say I have some instances here which we were specially requested by the members of our Chamber to bring forward.

Complaint on behalf of Cork brewers of unfair treatment as to rates compared with Dublin brewers.

22165. Take some particular industry—what industry would you like to refer to?—The first one I have in my notes is brewing, which is a very important industry in Cork. The brewers have given us some instances here in which they consider that they were unfairly treated as compared with the Dublin brewers. I have here some rates to certain towns in the South of Ireland from Dublin and from Cork. Sometime ago, before the amalgamation took place of the Waterford and Limerick with the Great Southern and Western, and before the Rosslare Company's Bill became law, certain concessions or reductions were made in favour of places in Kerry, which were not made to the same extent (or, in many instances, to any extent) with respect to Cork.

22166. That is to say, reductions were made in the rates from Dublin?—From Dublin to towns in Kerry, and no proportionate reductions, and in many cases no reductions, were made in similar rates from Cork to these towns. Shall I mention one or two?

22167. If you please?—The first one I have here is Tralee. The rates for ale and porter in casks from Dublin to Tralee were formerly as follows: For six-ton lots, 15*s.* per ton; smaller quantities, 17*s.* 6*d.* per ton. These rates were reduced at the time I mention——

22168. *Mr. Acworth.*—Would you mention when the amalgamation you referred to just now came into operation?—In 1901.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.—It came into operation on the 1st January, 1901.

The rates for porter—Dublin and Tralee and Cork and Tralee.

22169. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is what I thought?—Before this amalgamation these rates were reduced to:—For six-ton lots, from 15*s.* per ton to 9*s.*; for smaller quantities from Dublin to Tralee, from 17*s.* 6*d.* per ton to 12*s.* 6*d.*

22170. *Chairman.*—Just for information, while you are on those rates, have you got the distance from Dublin to Tralee?—Yes, I have.

22171. Will you just give it, to get it on the notes?—The distance from Dublin to Tralee is 205 miles; from Cork to Tralee, 82 miles.

22172. You have not given us the Cork to Tralee rates; would you kindly give us those?—From Cork to Tralee the former rate was 10*s.* 10*d.* per ton for any quantity. For three-ton lots this was reduced to 7*s.* 6*d.*, but for smaller quantities the 10*s.* 10*d.* remained as it had been before.

22173. And that is the rate to-day?—That is the rate to-day.

22174. Then, it is 10*s.* 10*d.* for small quantities for eighty-two miles, and 12*s.* 6*d.* for small quantities for 205 miles?—Yes.

22175. What deduction do you draw from those figures?—Dublin got an advantage over Cork in getting greater concessions.

22176. Yes; I see there was a very large reduction in the Dublin to Tralee rates, and not a proportionate reduction in the other rates?—That is so in regard to the larger quantities, and there was no reduction whatever in the smaller quantities. Then Killarney is the next instance I have on my notes. From Dublin to Killarney is 184 miles; from Cork to Killarney is sixty-one miles. The previous rate for six-ton lots from Dublin to Killarney was 17*s.* 6*d.* a ton; the present rate from Dublin to Killarney for six-ton lots is 9*s.* per ton.

The rates for porter—Dublin and Killarney and Cork and Killarney.

22177. Give us the rates for smaller quantities?—The rates for smaller quantities were, previously—for three-ton lots, 18*s.* per ton, from Dublin; for smaller quantities, 20*s.* per ton, from Dublin.

22178. 18*s.*, did you say, for three-ton lots?—Yes.

22179. Three-ton lots, 18*s.*, and smaller quantities 20*s.*?—Yes; the small quantities now have been all reduced to 12*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

22180. Just give us the Cork rates in comparison?—The Cork rate formerly was 10*s.* per ton for any quantity. The present rates from Cork to Killarney are, for three-ton lots and upwards, 7*s.* 6*d.*; smaller quantities remain as before—10*s.* The wagon-load rate from Dublin has therefore been reduced by 3*s.*

22181. Then, for the smaller quantities the rate is 10*s.* per ton from Cork to Tralee—the same as from Dublin?—Killarney we are on now.

22182. I beg your pardon; I am speaking of Killarney. Is not that so—what is the present rate from Dublin?—12*s.* 6*d.* from Dublin.

22183. There is 2*s.* 6*d.* difference?—2*s.* 6*d.* difference.

22184. What about the wagon-load rate from Dublin?—The wagon-load rate from Dublin has been reduced by 9*s.* per ton.

22185. 8*s.*, is it not?—8*s.*—I beg your pardon—it has been reduced to 9*s.* per ton from 17*s.*, and the smaller quantities have been reduced by 7*s.* 6*d.*

22186. What has been the reduction in the Cork rate?—None on the smaller quantities.

22187. How much on the larger—2*s.* 6*d.*, is it not?—2*s.* 6*d.*

22188. Your contention is, I suppose, that the brewers in Cork are seriously prejudiced in consequence of this?—Well, they say it has seriously prejudiced their trade. Then, I have similar statistics with regard to Castleisland, which is somewhat the same, and Listowel. Listowel is perhaps the more striking instance.

22189. You had better give us the rates to Listowel?—Listowel is 173 miles from Dublin, and ninety-seven miles from Cork. The former rate from Dublin for any quantity to Listowel was 20*s.* 7*d.* per ton. That was reduced to 9*s.* per ton for six-ton lots, while Cork remains as before—15*s.* 1*d.* per ton.

22190. *Mr. Acworth.*—Cork has got no rate except 15*s.* 1*d.*?—None; there was no change made for Cork.

22191. *Chairman.*—And I suppose the traffic is sent from Dublin in such quantities that the senders can avail themselves of the 9*s.* rate?—Mainly, so I am told.

22192. That is to say it would be sent in six-ton lots?—Yes; principally so.

22193. Then, the Dublin rate has been reduced to 9*s.* per ton, but if you send to Listowel from Cork, your rate would be 15*s.* 1*d.*?—That is so.

22194. I do not know that it is necessary to go into all the other instances; I suppose you could name several others if we asked you?—I have several others in my notes.

22195. I do not think it is necessary to go into them?—There is one fact I was asked to mention, and that is, that in 1901 the Great Southern and Western Railway Company proposed, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act to increase their rates to these places:—Tralee, Croom, Killarney, and Castleisland. They proposed to increase the rates again in the case of Tralee from 12*s.* 6*d.* to 17*s.* 6*d*; Listowel and Killarney they proposed to raise from 9*s.* to 15*s.*; Castleisland, from 12*s.* 6*d* to 17*s.* 6*d.* But their application was refused, I am informed. This is an extract from the *Irish Times* of the 21st December, 1901, containing a notice of their intended application to increase these rates again.

22196. But the application was declined?—Yes.

22197. *Mr. Acworth.*—It was an application to the Railway and Canal Commission?—Yes.

22198. *Chairman.*—You have dealt with ale and porter in casks?—Yes.

22199. Have you got any similar instances with reference to the trade in heavy drapery?—Yes; I have a number of instances here.

22200. Would you just pick out, so as to get them on the notes, two or three instances—you may make your own selection?—Yes; I have before me particulars of the inequality of rates with regard to distances For instance, from Cork to Kilkenny is 143 miles, and the charge per ton is 32*s.* 1*d.* From Cork to Bagnalstown, *via* Kilkenny, which is 157¾ miles, 14¾ miles further, the charge is but 25*s.* per ton.

22201. For the same quantity and under the same conditions?—For the same quantity, the rate for the greater distance is 7*s.* 1*d.* per ton less.

22202. You may give us two or three other illustrations, if you please?—I have just marked a couple that seemed to me to be the most striking. There is,

for example, Cork to Portarlington, which is 123½ miles—29*s.* 8*d.* per ton; Cork to Tullamore, *via* Portarlington, being sixteen miles further off, is but 25*s.* per ton. So that for a journey sixteen miles longer 4*s.* 8*d.* less per ton is charged. The Great Southern and Western, I am advised, have refused to give Cork the benefit of the special rates in existence from Cork to Dublin, or Athlone, to stations beyond these points. For instance, the rate from Cork to Dublin is 25*s.* per ton.

22203. For what?—Drapery goods—25*s.* per ton to Dublin. From Dublin to Drogheda, including cartage across Dublin, the rate, as quoted by the Great Northern Railway, is 11*s.* 8*d.* per ton. The total of these two local rates from Cork to Dublin and Dublin to Drogheda makes 36*s.* 8*d.* per ton; but the through rate from Cork to Drogheda is 44*s.* 1*d.* That is 7*s.* 5*d.* per ton more than the sum of the two local rates. Similarly Cork to Athlone is 25*s.* per ton.

22204. What is the distance?—I have not got the distance of that.

22205. I have it—it is 162½ miles?—From Athlone to Ballinasloe, the rate is 8*s.* 1*d.*—making 33*s.* 1*d.* as the sum of the two local rates (you have not got that on my notes); and the through rate charged from Cork to Ballinasloe is 34*s.* 5*d.*—that is 1*s.* 4*d.* more than the sum of the two local rates. There is the same thing with regard to Athlone and Roscommon. Cork to Athlone is 25*s.*; Athlone to Roscommon is 9*s.* 4*d.*; that makes 34*s.* 4*d.* as the sum of the two local rates, but the through rate from Cork to Roscommon is 39*s.* 8*d.* That is 5*s.* 4*d.* more charged on the through route from Cork to Roscommon than the sum of the two local rates. There are several other points here that I do not think I need trouble you with—similar instances which we have been given, and asked to bring under your notice.

22206. I think those will be sufficient?—I do not wish to trespass on your time unnecessarily.

22207. Have these inequalities been represented to the railway company?—They have, I understand.

22208. And there has been no remedy that you are aware of?—Not that I am aware of.

22209. The railway companies' turn will come by-and-by, and then no doubt we will hear some explanation?—I was going to say that these inequalities cause a great deal of local dissatisfaction wherever they press on the local people, and cause grumbling, which is very natural. The resolution of our Chamber, I think, was asked for when Mr. Greene was here, and he had not a copy of it with him. I have brought a copy of the resolution; the Council of the Chamber appointed a special committee which recommended this resolution, and it was unanimously adopted.

22210. Have you the date of it?—Yes. On the 29th November, 1906, this resolution passed the Council:—"That the committee recommend that the basis of the evidence to be given before the Viceregal Commission on behalf of this Chamber be in favour of State purchase of Irish railways." That was passed unanimously on the 29th November, 1906.

22211. Have you personally considered this question of State purchase?—I have. For a great many years I have taken considerable interest in it.

22212. You told us in the beginning that you concurred in that resolution?—Yes, entirely.

22213. Have you considered it sufficiently to give us your own reasons why you consider that it would be to the advantage of Ireland for the State to purchase the railways?—Well, I consider that the fact that there is room for improvement in the management of Irish railways has been, as far as I can judge, proved up to the hilt. We have the fact that there is dissatisfaction in various quarters, whether rightly or wrongly, with the existing state of affairs. There has also been public evidence afforded of the fact that in many other countries on the Continent and elsewhere, the rates for the transit of both individuals and goods are much lower than they are in Ireland, and, then, we have the fact that Ireland is for some reason in a very unsatisfactory condition economically. There is a large amount of emigration; the country is to a great extent going out of cultivation, and many parts of the country where railway facilities are very much needed are without them.

22214. You think, I suppose, that private enterprise cannot be expected to construct railways?—Quite so; I think it would be not natural to suppose that companies which exist primarily for the purpose of making dividends for their shareholders can be expected to make extensions into districts which, for a long time at any rate, would not pay, nor can they be expected to reduce rates to a point that would enable the Irish producers or manufacturers to compete with their rivals from other countries who have much lower rates to the seaboard, and in many instances much lower through rates than we have in Ireland. The consequence is that at the present day a great part of the agricultural produce consumed in England (especially in London, perhaps) comes from the ends of the earth. We have eggs and other produce coming from places as far off as Siberia, and butter coming from the farthest places of the earth, and a great many other articles of produce that I need not mention particularly, which Ireland could produce if the conditions of the country in various ways, including the means of transit, gave an opening to the Irish producer to compete with other countries. I believe therefore that if in some way (and State purchase appears to me to be the most feasible) the railway facilities in Ireland could be greatly extended, and the rates reduced, it would have the tendency of bringing the land more into tillage again, and I believe that the want of tillage and the extension of grass lands has been one of the great causes of the emigration from the country. It is manifest that if we have no employment for the people at home they must go abroad, and this I believe to be one factor that would at least tend to produce a better state of things in that respect, and to develop to some extent at any rate many of the possible industries of the country.

Chairman.—Your answer has been so explicit and so full that I do not think I need ask you another question.

June 12, 1907.

Alderman Henry Dale, J.P., Representative of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping.

The suitability of a system of State-owned, rather than of privately-owned, railways to the wants of Ireland.

The improved railway facilities to be induced by State purchase would improve tillage and discourage emigration.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

22215. On the last point you said that if the rates were sufficiently reduced it would lead to a large development of both agricultural pursuits and industrial activity?—Certainly; that would be the tendency.

The probability of a large development of agriculture and of industrial enterprises if assisted by low railway rates.

22216. You do not agree with the opinion expressed by a gentleman from Clare who gave evidence a couple of days back—Colonel Westropp—who said he was of opinion that there were no prospects of any great development of either agricultural production or industrial enterprise. I take it you do not agree with him?—I do not.

22217. You know of course that the cost of operation must largely determine the incidence of the rate?—Yes, certainly.

22218. And you referred to the fact that a great portion of the produce—the great bulk of the produce—which we might raise in Ireland is now imported into England from Continental and other countries?—Yes.

22219. You are, of course, aware that where we send our consignments in hundredweights, or perhaps in a few cases in ton lots, they send in ten-ton lots, and often in train loads?—Yes.

22220. And that until we can somewhat approach those conditions, we cannot possibly expect the railway companies to give us anything like corresponding rates?—Certainly not.

22221. Do you not think a good deal might be done by the farmers themselves in assisting the railway companies to give these lower rates—which I fancy they are always prepared to do if they are approached—by means of co-operation and combination?—Of course something might be done in that direction, but the difficulties of getting the people to co-operate and combine in that way are very great.

The advantage of combination in securing low rates for large consignments.

22222. Is not that one of our chief difficulties in Ireland, that the people are so averse to co-operation, and so suspicious of one another, and so averse to letting each other know what traffic they are putting out, either in the shape of manufactures or agricultural production, that they really throw every possible obstacle in the way of co-operation—is not that your experience?—Yes, that may be so, but I think that state of things might be improved if we perfected our arrangements more; I think the more perfect our arrangements the more that suspicion will probably die away gradually.

22223. Can you suggest any means by which the difficulties caused by this attitude on the part of the people themselves who are most interested could be overcome? Assuming that the railway company did

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give a low railway rate, that would not of itself overcome that difficulty if the people were still averse. We have had in evidence that the railway company, if people would only try to bring in their consignments half-a-dozen at a time so as to make a full load, would be very anxious to give a much lower rate than at present, but the people will not do so?—Yes, but that does not deal with the proposition I mentioned at first, that railway companies have to earn dividends for their shareholders. If the State owned the railways they would simply require to earn as much as would pay working expenses and some reasonable sum for interest on the capital, which would be much less than it is necessary for the railways to earn now in order to pay a reasonable dividend.

A State authority in Ireland the only manner of securing a general reduction of rates involving loss of revenues.

22224. I think everyone is agreed that the only manner of getting a reduction of rates is by some State authority which would be prepared to incur a loss, and could afford to incur it; but even in such an event, if the people did not themselves help the State authority, it would not improve the situation to any great extent. Naturally, the State would give to each individual producer the benefit of the reduced rate and to that extent he would benefit, but the central authority, the central system would not eventually derive very much benefit unless there were co-operation on the part of the individual producer; do you not agree?—I do agree.

22225. I think you said that your Cork Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution in favour of State purchase; did you consider the conditions generally on which that purchase should be carried out? I do not mean the financial conditions?—No, we did not; really we dealt more with the broad principle. We assumed that if the Government decided to purchase the Irish railways, they would do so with knowledge as to how such State management had been conducted elsewhere, and they would adopt what seemed to them the best mode of carrying it into operation. But we really had not information enough to consider that point.

Reasons for preferring State purchase to amalgamation of the railways under present ownership.

22226. Did you discuss the further question: supposing State purchase was not advocated, or supposing, even if advocated, the State were not prepared to entertain it, did you consider the question of amalgamation?—Not definitely—we had some conversation about it, but I think the feeling was that even with amalgamation there would still remain the initial difficulty—that the railways would be still worked for the profit of individual shareholders instead of for the public interest.

22227. But you are aware that when amalgamation was recommended by the Allport Commission one of the conditions upon which it was to be carried out was that it would be subject to Government control, not only with regard to the terms of the amalgamation, but the Government was to have a voice in the rates and charges which were to be levied on that amalgamated system. I suppose amalgamation under these circumstances would not be objectionable in your opinion?—It would be an improvement on the present state of affairs, I think, but would scarcely provide, I imagine, for the extension of railway facilities to districts not likely to be immediately profitable.

22228. That leads one to another question. Do you think there is any great need for a further extension of light railways in the South and West of Ireland, the part with which you are probably most familiar?—I think there are a great many districts cut off from railway communication very much.

The necessity for further extensions of light railways in the South and West of Ireland.

22229. You are aware that the experience of the different railways constructed under various Acts, so far as the return on the capital is concerned, has not been very satisfactory or encouraging?—Not very satisfactory, as a rule.

22230. To what do you attribute that lack of return?—It must naturally be very much to the benefit of the district and of the people who live in the district, in the shape of enabling them to get better prices for their produce and also in putting supplies at their doors at a cheaper rate. It must incidentally be a great benefit in that direction?—Yes.

22231. But apparently it has not led to any great development; there are a few small industries, but it has not led to any development of agriculture to any extent?—Of course there are a number of factors at work in Ireland, and it is very hard to say to what particular circumstances any particular conditions are due; but I do think that, generally speaking, there is a tendency in Ireland now to take more advantage of what is being offered in the way of improved knowledge and so on, and also, I think, that recent changes in the land conditions have produced a desire on the part of a great many people in the country to stay at home and develop the country if they can rather than leave it.

22232. Even assuming that the people have the best inclination to launch out on a new career of industrial activity, still, handicapped as they must be with existing industries in England and the United Kingdom generally, unless there is some very appreciable diminution of the carrying charges in Ireland, you think there is very little hope of that inclination producing its full effect?—That is my opinion.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

22233. You have given instances of inequalities in rates which are rather startling, and which on the face of them appear to require some explanation. Have you, or have the industries concerned, ever made representations to the Board of Trade under the Conciliation Clause of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888?—Well, I am not able to say definitely, but from the conversation I had with the gentleman who compiled these statistics, I am inclined to think they must have done so.

22234. You cannot say definitely whether they have or not?—No.

22235. These are cases of a kind which could easily be dealt with in that way?—Yes.

22236. And without expense to the complainants?—As I say, I did not ask the question, and I was not informed whether they had done so.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

22237. Have you any personal recollection of the case before the Railway Commissioners that you mentioned—the application to increase the rates to Croom and so on?—No, I have not.

22238. So you personally were not in a position to carry the thing further?—No, I was not.

22239. I suggest to you that the railway company tried to put up the low rates because it was obvious that they could not defend the difference between the two?—I suppose that is possible.

22240. If you had carried it a stage further I do not myself think you would have needed to come here. As far as you know, there is nothing special in the Acts affecting the amalgamations of the Waterford and Limerick and of the Central Ireland that affects these rates?—I am not aware of it.

22241. I will not ask you any further questions about that. The railway companies will know if there is anything, and they will be able to give it. Now, you spoke about the difficulty in getting away your produce. The butter traffic has grown immensely of late years from Cork and Tipperary, has it not?—Tipperary, certainly, but not from Cork. It has decreased from Cork, but from other parts it has grown a good deal.

22242. Eggs, too?—Yes.

22243. But the railway companies have managed to take all you have been able to give them?—I think so.

22244. Do you doubt that if you produced more they would be ready and willing to carry it to the market?—No doubt there is sufficient capacity wherever the railways go.

22245. Your point is that you think you would probably get lower rates, and that is what you want?—And extension of railway facilities.

22246. Now, tell me—suppose, for example—I do not say it is so, I only suggest—suppose it was desirable to put a railway down into the Kenmare Peninsula in order to develop it. There is no railway down there, but suppose it was thought desirable to put a railway down there, would Cork be prepared to be taxed to pay for it?—I have really not considered that question, but if it were done by Government, Cork would be obliged to pay a share of the taxation, I suppose.

22247. Quite so, but Cork says, and everybody says, it wants railway extension into poor districts. We know that railways into those poor districts could not pay, so somebody has got to pay the interest. Now, the question I ask you is—Do you think Cork

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would be inclined to pay its share of the interest on the capital necessary for developing other districts?—Well, of course, generally speaking, people are never inclined to pay taxes if they can avoid it, but I think it is quite equitable that people should be made to pay their share.

22248. Do you not think they would be inclined to kick when the tax gatherer came round?—They are getting so used to the tax gatherer coming round that I do not think they would be inclined to have that feeling.

22249. They would accept it as inevitable?—The point I have in view is this—that although for a short time it might need some public aid, in a shorter or longer time the development of industries would both directly and indirectly tend to render that public aid unnecessary.

22250. But you know there is a pretty long experience. Some of the railways made under the Act of 1883, which have been opened now for twenty years, are only now paying working expenses, and somebody—the barony, the county, or the Treasury—has got to pay the whole of the interest on the capital, even after twenty years?—Yes. However, that, I suppose, is indispensable of the condition of such extensions.

22251. Who are you contemplating would pay—Ireland?—We have had two theories here—one that Ireland would pay for itself, and the other that the English people ought to pay their share, which would be a large part, of course? Well, of course, I take the view, judging from the disclosures of facts revealed by the Financial Relations Committee Report, that there is a very large sum due to Ireland, some of which might very fairly be applied to railway extensions.

22252. I wondered whether that was the way you put it. Just one other question. You said that there was a great deal of discontent, as shown before this Commission, with the Irish railways under present management?—Yes.

22253. And that that was an argument for State management?—It would be an argument for some change that would remove these causes.

22254. And what you suggested was that the State should take the railways over?—Yes.

22255. Might one ask whether the Irish people were altogether satisfied with the State management of Ireland at the present moment?—Well, I believe there are some people who are not quite satisfied.

22256. So I gather from the newspapers. Are you sure they would all be quite satisfied with the Government management of railways?—I fear that even if the management were transferred to a higher court even than England, they would not all be satisfied.

22257. Do you think that they would even be more than at present satisfied?—It is impossible to say; I can only speak for myself.

22258. You would like to chance it?—I would chance it, certainly.

22259. Mr. Balfour Browne, I do not know whether your attention has been called to these rates?—Yes, sir, and I was going to ask some questions.

Cross-examined by Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.

(*To Witness*).—You have been complaining, I understand, that there are rates to various places in the South of Ireland which in fact give an undue preference to Dublin as compared with Cork?—Yes.

22260. I am only going to take one just as an illustration. I think, perhaps, you have mentioned it. Porter is carried from Dublin at 9*s*.?—To Tralee?

22261. Yes, to Tralee. That is a low rate?—Nine shillings, yes.

22262. Do you take it from me that is the rate in the meantime?—Yes.

22263. Do you know that the Great Southern and Western were bound under Act of Parliament not to increase any actual charge which was in existence on the 30th day of June, 1900, on any railway heretofore owned by the Waterford and Limerick—did you know that?—I cannot say I did; I may have heard it, possibly.

22264. Do you know that the only way they could increase directly or indirectly was with the consent of the Railway and Canal Commissioners?—Yes, so I gathered.

22265. Do you know that they went to the Railway and Canal Commissioners and sought to raise various rates—among others that one—which we thought did give an undue preference to Dublin—the 9*s*. rate to Tralee?—Yes.

Inability of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to alter the Dublin and southern stations porter rates discussed.

22266. Do you know that so strong were we that we were even backed by Messrs. Guinness and Company, who appeared by my friend, Mr. Ronan, to support the raising of that rate, they being the only people interested in it—were you aware of that?—No, I was not aware of that.

22267. Do you know that, notwithstanding that, we were opposed by the Board of Agriculture and a great number of local authorities, and the Law Officers appeared against us, and it was refused?—Yes; I mentioned that fact before you came into the room.

Mr. Acworth.—Mr. Browne, the evidence given was that these rates went into force on the amalgamation; I presume you can correct that?

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—It is not so; they were existing before, and were all stereotyped by Clause 29.

Mr. Acworth.—Your explanation is that in all those cases the existing railway arrangements were stereotyped by the Amalgamation Bill.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Yes, under Clause 29. We did think them unfair to various districts, and we went to the Commissioners to try and rectify that state of things.

The position of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company as regards rates to certain stations under the Amalgamation Act of 1900.

Mr. Acworth.—I remember the case well. There is another case given here—the rate to Kilkenny, which is higher than the rate forward to Bagnalstown, which is on the Central Ireland.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I do not know what the explanation of that is, sir.

Mr. Acworth.—It is probably the same explanation.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I am told that one is a class rate and the other an exceptional rate given for large quantities of traffic to that place. We will look into it, and if there is any other explanation we will give it, but I am told that is the case.

Witness.—May I explain to Mr. Balfour Browne that it was before the amalgamation I stated that these reductions had been made.

22268. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Quite so?—What Cork objected to was that proportionate reductions were not made in the case of Cork.

22269. I entirely agree with you in all your statements of fact; I only wanted to get out the fact that we had tried to alter it. I daresay you know this—and that is the last question I want to ask you—that that 9*s*. rate of which you complain was originally put in force in order to meet sea competition?—I gathered that it was.

22270. And then down comes this Act upon us and stereotypes this rate?—But then I referred afterwards to Killarney.

22271. The same principle applies there?—Yes.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—Mr. Dale has just mentioned the rate to Killarney. Again there is a clause in the Act which says the rates to Killarney are not to be higher than the rates to Tralee; so we are bound hand and foot.

Mr. Acworth.—There is nothing in that Act to prevent you from giving a like rate to Cork.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I know that, but 9*s*. will not do.

Chairman.—Mr. Dale, we are much obliged to you.

The Witness withdrew.

Mr. E. J. Long, J.P., City High Sheriff, Limerick, examined by the Chairman.

Mr. E. J. Long, J.P., City High Sheriff, Limerick. Representative of the Limerick Corporation.

22272. Mr. Long, you are High Sheriff of Limerick, and you appear here on behalf of the Limerick Corporation, do you not?—Yes.

22273. Are you a member of the Limerick Corporation?—Yes.

22274. Do you hold any other official position in Limerick?—I am a member of the Harbour Board and of the Chamber of Commerce.

22275. And you are engaged in business there, I think?—Yes, in the leather trade.

22276. Have you been long in business in Limerick?—About thirty years in Limerick, and about fifteen

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years in Dublin. We manufacture leather and send it all over the country.

22277. I suppose your position in Limerick for manufacturing leather is rather favourable than otherwise?—Yes, we find it rather favourable; there are favourable rates, particularly by water, and the position geographically is favourable for distribution purposes to most parts of Ireland, but not to the North of Ireland.

22278. I think you do not wish to complain against any particular railway company, do you, with regard to the way in which they treat you?—No, we have no reason ourselves to complain of the way in which they handle our goods, or of the relations between ourselves and the Great Southern and Western, with which, of course, we are in touch in Limerick; those relations are satisfactory, and we always find them very anxious to meet us with regard to local traffic; we have no serious cause of complaint at all against the company.

Facilities afforded by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company at Limerick to traders considered satisfactory.

22279. What I was going to ask you was this. You do complain, so far as rates are concerned, that manufactured leather outside Ireland is treated in what you consider to be a more favourable way than is the leather that you manufacture in Ireland?—Yes; that is our greatest cause of complaint against the Great Southern and Western Railway Company; and I should think it would also affect, perhaps the Great Northern Railway Company.

Alleged disproportionate through rates for leather as compared with local rates.

22280. Just give us one or two examples of the rates which you consider are unfair so far as your own manufactured article is concerned. Select two or three instances, just to get them on the notes?—The rate from Limerick to Belfast is 40*s.* 2*d.* per ton, with proportionate rates to other towns in the North of Ireland; Lisburn is 38*s.* 2*d.*; Carrickmacross is 33*s.* 8*d.*, and so on; those are the rates from Limerick.

22281. Will you now compare those rates with the rates from Liverpool?—We find that the same class of goods can be brought from the sister country from Liverpool to Belfast for 5*s.* per ton (these are sea rates), Lisburn 22*s.* 6*d.*, Dundalk 15*s.* 5*d.*, and Newry 15*s.* 5*d.* per ton. From Glasgow to Dublin the rate is 17*s.* 6*d.*, to Belfast 16*s.* 8*d.*, to Londonderry 17*s.* 6*d.*, to Coleraine 17*s.* 6*d.*, and to Sligo 18*s.* 4*d.* per ton.

22282. Of course those are nearly all water rates that you have mentioned?—Yes.

22283. And of course you do not expect railway companies to carry goods as cheaply as steamers?—No, we do not.

Necessity for lower rates for leather from Limerick to Irish stations to compete with the foreign trade.

22284. You merely give those figures to show the disadvantage at which you are placed in competing in those particular places in leather as compared with leather manufacturers in England?—Outside of Ireland.

22285. Outside of Ireland I mean?—Yes, that is so. The same complaint exists with regard to the Continental and American leathers; they are imported into Belfast, Glasgow, and elsewhere, and sent into Ireland at very low rates.

22286. You think that cheap transit facilities would be very advantageous to you and others similarly situated in Ireland?—Certainly.

22287. And you think that the absence of those facilities and cheap rates retards the development of traffic?—I do.

American manufacturers the keenest competitors.

22288. Who are your keenest competitors?—The American leather manufacturers are very keen competitors with the leather manufacturers of the United Kingdom; they are our keenest competitors. The English leather manufacturers and ourselves compete very keenly for trade in all the Irish ports and the towns near the ports.

22289. Of course, as far as your business in concerned, you are wholly dependent upon railway transit?—Wholly as far as our manufactured leather is concerned; not as far as our raw material is concerned, which we get in by water mostly.

The system of giving cheap cross-channel through rates into Ireland objected to.

22290. Do you suggest that specially low rates for, say, leather, should be put into operation from Limerick on a somewhat similar basis to the proportion of the through rate charged on the Irish railways for imported traffic?—I do, most certainly; and I should also say that the same should be done with regard to all classes of Irish goods.

22291. Of course, with regard to leather manufactured in America or in England, and sent to Ireland, the railway companies get only the transit of the manufactured article?—Yes.

22292. Whereas you, in Limerick, must import from some place or other your hides and other things for manufacturing leather?—We do.

22293. Therefore, your contention is, that so far as your business is concerned, the Irish railway companies get double carriage, as it were?—Yes, in some cases they get double carriage; we pay them double carriage on a portion of our manufacture.

22294. And do you consider that that should be a factor for the railway company to consider in fixing your rates for the manufactured article?—I certainly do.

22295. That is your idea?—Yes.

22296. I am dealing now exclusively with the leather that you manufacture. You say that low rates are given to those who manufacture and produce leather outside of Ireland; whereas you are charged high rates; that is your statement?—Yes.

22297. Can you give us any examples to prove that statement?—Yes; the through rate from Liverpool to Tralee *via* Cork is 25*s.* a ton; we cart the goods in Cork.

22298. You cart the goods from the steamer to the station in Cork?—Yes; and again, from the station to the stores. The cartage I have put down at 1*s.* per ton—that is the lowest, but in some cases it would be more. The rate from Tralee to Cork is 16*s.* 10*d.* The combined rates are 37*s.* 10*d.* per ton; and the through rate is 25*s.*, making a difference in favour of Liverpool merchants to the extent of 12*s.* 10*d.* per ton. The same refers to the rate from Liverpool to Limerick.

22299. I do not want to get too many instances; we just want to have two or three instances on the notes. Your contention is that there is a difference in favour of Liverpool of 12*s.* 10*d.* per ton in this particular traffic from Liverpool to Tralee?—Yes.

22300. What do you say the Great Southern and Western Railway Company ought to do with reference to your traffic from Cork to Tralee under these circumstances?—Do you suggest that they should charge you the same mileage rate as they charge the Liverpool merchant?—Certainly.

22301. That is your contention?—That is my contention.

22302. Have you formed any idea as to what that proportion would be?—5*s.* 7*d.* per ton I make it—about 5*s.* 7*d.* per ton.

22303. That is what the railway company gets as its proportion of the through rate?—Yes, 5*s.* 7*d.* per ton they charge on our traffic more than they charge on the direct through traffic.

22304. *Mr. Acworth.*—They get 5*s.* 7*d.* more?—Yes.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—They got 11*s.* 3*d.* out of the 16*s.* 10*d.*

22305. *Chairman.*—What you say is that, according to what you believe—you do not know it, but you believe—the railway company get 11*s.* 3*d.* per ton as their proportion of the through rate from Liverpool to Tralee; whereas they charge you locally 16*s.* 10*d.*?—That is it.

22306. Those are the figures?—Roughly. To be sure, it is a calculation of my own and I cannot say that it is correct by any means.

22307. We must take it for what it is worth. You may give us one other instance, if you please. Take Liverpool to Limerick *via* Cork?—From Liverpool to Limerick *via* Cork the through rate is 22*s.* 11*d.* per ton; from Liverpool to Cork, the local rate is 20*s.* per ton.

22308 You know that as a fact, I suppose, because you pay it, do you not?—Yes, we pay it. Liverpool to Cork is 20*s.* per ton; the cartage I put down again at 1*s.* per ton. And the rate from Cork to Limerick is 13*s.* 7*d.* The local rates combined amount to 34*s.* 7*d.* per ton, as against 22*s.* 11*d.*; making a difference in favour of Liverpool of 11*s.* 8*d.* per ton

22309. In that case the Great Southern and Western Railway Company charge you about 4*s.* 4*d.* per ton more than they get out of the through rate?—Yes.

22310. You have a great number of instances in your proof, but if you would pick out one more that would be enough. Look through your proof, please, and take out one more—whichever one you like?—Perhaps the next one would suit our purpose as well as any.

22311. Which is that?—Liverpool to Listowel *via* Waterford; the through rate is 38*s.* 4*d.* The local rate is, Liverpool to Waterford, 25*s.*; cartage, I put down again at 1*s.*; and then, from Waterford to Listowel, 22*s.* 3*d.* per ton. That gives a total of 48*s.* 3*d.*, making a difference in favour of Liverpool of 9*s.* 11*d.* per ton.

22312. There again I see, according to your figures, you are placed at a disadvantage to the extent of about 4*s.* 2*d.* per ton?—About that.

22313. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Might I just ask the witness to call attention to an instance on page 6 of his proof, which seems to me to be rather curious. At the bottom of page 6 there is an instance given of Bristol to Limerick *via* Waterford; and the through rate per ton is 32*s.* 6*d.* Then, you allocate the local rates as follows:—Bristol to Waterford, 25*s.* 10*d.*; cartage, 1*s.*; Waterford to Limerick, 16*s.* 1*d*, total 42*s.* 11*d.* Now, if you allocate that on the same basis as you have done in the cases of the other rates which you have just given us, as to the proportion which the railway company gets out of it, I think you will find yourself in some difficulty. Because, unless the sea-carriage gets nothing at all, the Waterford to Limerick rate, the railway company's rate, must still remain the same figure as at present. On the same basis as you have allocated your proportion of the sea-carriage, the proportion which the railway company gets out of the through rate, Bristol to Waterford, would be 20*s.* 1*d.*; and Waterford to Limerick, in order to make up the through rate of 32*s.* 6*d.*, would have to be 17*s.* 3*d.*?—I do not quite follow.

22314. Let us go back to the second figure you gave us; Liverpool to Cork is 20*s.* on the local rate; cartage, 1*s.*; and the proportion of the railway rate, 13*s.* 7*d.*?—Yes.

22315. To make up the through rate of 22*s.* 11*d.*, you assume that the sea-carriage is 14*s.* 4*d.*; the cartage 1*s.*; and the railway rate 7*s.* 3*d.*; that makes up the 22*s.* 11*d.*; is that not so?—Yes.

22316. Very well. To work on the same basis with regard to the Bristol to Limerick rate, I presume you reduce your sea-carriage proportionately, as you have done in the other cases?—Yes.

22317. And, on the same basis, putting it down at anything you like to put it at—say, 14*s.* 3*d.*—your cartage remains 1*s.*, and your railway rate in that case would have to be 17*s.* 3*d.* But, leaving it at 16*s.* 1*d.*, that would leave your sea-carriage at 15*s.* 6*d.* Are you sure that the Waterford to Limerick rate is 16*s.* 1*d.*?—I do not quite follow your point, because the through rate is lower by 10*s.* 5*d.* There is a proportionate reduction applied to both.

22318. It is all assumption, is it not—You cannot determine what the proportion is for the sea-carriage, or what the railway company gets out of the total rate. But, following it out, in this particular instance, your proportions do not seem to apply. You see my point, Mr. Acworth, do you not?

Mr. Acworth.—I do not see how we are to know in any one case how much comes off the 25*s.* 10*d.*, and how much comes off the 16*s.* 11*d.*

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The witness has said that he has assumed that on the railway carriage from Cork to Limerick, the second instance he gave us, instead of charging 13*s.* 7*d.*, they only get 9*s.* 3*d.* out of the through rate.

Mr. Acworth.—Perhaps you would ask the witness whether he has gone on the basis of assuming an equal percentage of reduction both on the sea rate and on the land rate, or how.

22319. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Will you answer that?—I have taken an equal percentage on both.

22320. *Mr. Acworth.*—And you have assumed that in every case?—Yes, in every case.

22321. Have you any evidence that it is so in either case?—No.

22322. It is an assumption of yours?—It is an assumption of mine which I consider reasonable.

Mr. Acworth.—I am not questioning it in the least.

22323. *Chairman.*—You say, excepting from Liverpool to Cork, that you have paid these charges?—Yes.

22324. And you say that you have a house in Cork and that you pay these rates?—Yes.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—If you look at that particular instance you will find that that principle does not apply. He gets no reduction on the railway rate.

22324A. *Chairman.*—We will not take any more instances?—I have them here if you wish to get the figures.

22325. *Mr. Acworth.*—Have you got figures showing the percentages deducted?—Yes, I have them all in a table here.

22326. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You have got the local rate; the sea rate is 25*s.* 10*d.*—whatever you get, that is your assumed local sea rate from Bristol to Waterford?—From Bristol to Waterford?

22327. Yes. What proportion do you assume the steamer gets out of that on the through rate?—Well, I take them in this way: I put the two combined rates together, and I find they come to 42*s.* 11*d.* per ton; the reduction of the through rate comes to 10*s.* 5*d.* per ton from Bristol to Limerick; that is equal to a deduction of 22½ per cent. on the combined rates; I have worked it out on the mileage. From Waterford to Limerick is 77¼ miles, and the ordinary rate is 16*s.* 1*d.* per ton, or 2½*d.* per ton per mile. Taking 22½ per cent. off that brings it to 3*s.* 8*d.* on the 16*s.* 1*d.*, which would leave 12*s.* 5*d.* per ton, or 2*d.* per ton per mile, which the Great Southern and Western Railway gets, instead of 2½*d.*

22328. That will make your sea rate come to about 20*s.* instead of 25*s.*?—I should have to calculate that.

22329. It would be 19*s.* and something. So that in that particular instance you have not reduced the sea rate. In the instance above that, Bristol to Waterford, you assume that the sea proportion is 15*s.* 2*d.*?—I beg your pardon, I have applied the same deduction to the two rates, inasmuch as the combined rate is 10*s.* 5*d.* lower than the local rate. I applied the same deduction to both.

22330. If you will allow me just one moment. You say at the foot of the note with regard to Bristol to Tralee: "The Great Southern and Western Railway concedes about 8*s.* 6*d.* per ton of their rate Waterford to Tralee to imported goods." Therefore, if you deduct 8*s.* 6*d.* from 23*s.* 3*d.* it leaves you 14*s.* 9*d.* as your assumed proportion of the rate which the railway company derive out of that through rate?—Yes.

22331. 14*s.* 9*d.* and 1*s.* for cartage makes 15*s.* 9*d.* and adding on 14*s.* 3*d.* for sea carriage that makes up your through rate to 30*s.* So that on that sea rate you have reduced your sea rate from 25*s.* 10*d.* to 14*s.* 3*d.* Both the sea rates are the same in these particular cases; but you are assuming that the railway company get 14*s.* 9*d.*, and therefore the steamship company can get only 14*s.* 3*d.*?—I did not apply it in that way.

22332. In the next instance you practically say that the sea carriage is 19*s.* as against 14*s.* in the Bristol to Tralee case, the sea carriage—Bristol to Waterford—being exactly the same in both instances. Both the figures cannot be right?—I will stand by my figures until you prove them to be wrong.

22333. *Chairman.*—I began by saying that we would take the figures for what they are worth. I also began by stating that you could not tell, and could not know, what proportion the railway company got out of these through rates; and therefore that is more or less an assumption on your part?—Yes.

22334. But there is no question about the local rate which you pay?—No.

22335. And no question about the through rate?—No.

22336. But as to the division it is all surmise?—All surmise.

22337. Now, we will leave all the other instances. At any rate, assuming that the railway companies only get what you suggest as their proportion for carrying on their railway out of these through rates, your contention is, that your local rate should be the same?—Yes.

22338. That is what you contend?—Certainly; that is our contention.

22339. But if you found that the railway companies by arrangement with the steam packet companies got the full local rate, then you would have nothing to say about it?—No, we should not have the same complaint.

22340. You are of course in constant communication with the railway company which serves your town, or city, I suppose I ought to call it—the Great Southern and Western Railway?—Yes.

22341. Have you communicated to them with reference to the through rates to stations in the North of Ireland?—Yes, very often.

22342. And what has been the result of your applications to that company with reference to through

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The method of calculating the Irish rail proportion out of the through rates discussed.

The divisions of the rates a matter of assumption.

The right of the Irish local goods traffic to the same mileage charge as the local proportion of the freight on through booked goods.

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rates—have they given you rates which you consider satisfactory?—No; unfortunately they have not been able to meet us, for some reason or another. We have not been able to get to the bottom of it.

22343. Of course they have had to communicate with other companies?—Yes.

22344. You do not, I presume, wish to say whose fault it is?—No.

22345. At any rate, you know that the result to you is that you have not got what you consider favourable through rates from Limerick to the North of Ireland?—We have not; and our trade to those places is injured consequently.

Complaint as to the failure to obtain favourable rates from Limerick to the North.

22346. Your competitors from other countries get into markets which you think you ought to get into?—That is so.

22347. Just in order to see whether your application has been reasonable or not, what rate have you asked for?—A rate of about 25*s.* per ton.

22348. To where?—From Limerick to Belfast, Newry, and similar places in the North of Ireland.

22349. That is your application?—That is our application.

22350. What rate do you pay now?—To Belfast, 40*s.* 2*d.*

22351. With a rate of 40*s.* 2*d.* from Limerick to Belfast I suppose you are really out of the market altogether?—We are practically out of the market.

22352. So that the rate is merely a book rate as far as your business is concerned—little or no traffic is sent?—Very little.

22353. But if a rate of 25*s.* per ton was put into operation, in your opinion, you could then do business there?—Certainly.

Allegation that the existing rates shut out the Belfast and Northern markets generally from the Limerick manufacturers.

22354. You say that you have applied to the railway company?—Yes.

22355. And you have suggested a 25*s.* rate?—Yes, or about that.

22356. But for some reason which you do not know the reduced rate has not yet come into operation?—No. But I think we had a rate of 25*s.* some years ago, and it was raised for some reason or other. Before the amalgamation time, I think, we had a rate of about 25*s.*

22357. Which amalgamation do you refer to?—I mention that, but I do not imply that there is any connection between the raising of the rate and the amalgamation of the Great Southern and Western Railway and the Waterford and Limerick Railway. But, before that time, we had a local rate to the North of Ireland which we found satisfactory.

A lower rate in operation in pre-amalgamation days.

22358. What period are you referring to—are you referring to the amalgamation of the various lines with the Great Northern?—No, to the amalgamation of the Great Southern and Western Railway with the Waterford and Limerick Railway.

22359. Oh, you mean the recent amalgamation?—Yes, the recent amalgamation.

22360. Before that you had a lower rate?—Before that we had a rate which was satisfactory.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—He is only referring to the amalgamation for the purpose of fixing the date; he says that he does not connect the two things.

22361. *Chairman.*—Oh, yes, I understand that. Now, just take this application which you have made against the 40*s.* 2*d.* rate to Belfast; do you, as a mercantile man suggest that there ought to be some tribunal to which you could go and ask for that rate to be put into operation?—I am strongly of that opinion; some cheap tribunal.

The alleged prohibitive cost of appeal to the Railway Commissioners' Court.

22362. You do not, I suppose, suggest that the 40*s.* 2*d.* is in any way beyond their statutory powers?—No, I do not suggest that.

22363. But you object altogether, do you not, to appealing to the Railway Commissioners' Court?—Yes, it is very much too expensive. Our knowledge, based on the experience of other people who have gone before the Railway Commissioners, is that it is prohibitive on account of the cost.

22364. You want some tribunal set up which would hear evidence from you as a trader, and from the railway companies, and you want to leave the tribunal to settle what the rates shall be; is that your idea?—That is my idea; and I do not know why the County Court should not be used for that purpose.

The County Court suggested as a substitute for the Railway and Canal Commissioners' Court.

22365. The County Court Judges?—I imagine so. Without having given the question very much thought, I do not see why expert witnesses should not appear before a County Court Judge, nor why a County Court Judge should not be able to deal with and settle these questions.

22366. Do you think that the railway management in Ireland generally has seriously attempted to develop agricultural and manufacturing industries?—No, I do not think the railway management in Ireland has ever seriously attempted to develop the country either agriculturally or commercially, from the manufacturing point of view.

22367. I suppose you send small parcels from your works?—Yes; it is not a big traffic with us, but we do have to send small parcels from time to time.

22368. With regard to the rates for parcels from Limerick to stations in Ireland, do they differ in any respect from the rates charged in England?—I believe they are supposed to be the same rates; but in practice they do not work out the same. There are a good many stations in Ireland where, I understand, there is no through traffic for parcels between the companies, and the result is that very high charges are enforced on parcel traffic between some stations in Ireland.

22369. You are aware of the small parcels scale, are you not?—Yes.

22370. And you know that it is uniform in both countries?—It is supposed to be.

22371. Have you any reason for making that remark?—Yes; because I find that parcels sent from Limerick to Cork or Dublin—or some stations in Dublin—are charged two rates.

22372. Do you mean to say that they are charged differently from the scale?—Supposing a parcel goes over two lines of railway, the charges for each company are separate in the bill, and they are much more than the parcel rate—what you call the uniform parcel rate.

22373. Do you mean parcels weighing under four or five or six pounds?—Yes.

22374. Why not send them by parcels post?—I cannot tell you with regard to particular items why not; but there may be some reason sometimes why they are not so sent.

22375. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is a perfectly distinct statement, that you have frequent experience, as I gather, that a parcel going somewhere on the Great Northern or the Midland pays one rate to, we will say, Athenry, or wherever it changes lines, and then another rate beyond?—I would not bind myself to Athenry.

22376. No, I do not want you to. Say Dublin or wherever it is?—That is so.

22377. It pays a certain rate up to the point where it meets the other railway company, and then it begins to pay again. So that there are really two scales in operation with regard to that one parcel?—Yes.

22378. Have you any invoices to show us?—I have sent in some copies.

22379. *Chairman.*—There must be something wrong about this, I think. But give us, if you can, one or two instances of a parcel being charged higher than the published scale?—I sent a parcel from Limerick to Belfast on the 26th November last, weighing 4 lbs.; for that the charge was 2*s.*, which was paid by our customer, and that included a delivery charge of 2*d.* The railway docket, I think, is marked "A" in that case.

22380. *Mr. Acworth.*—There is nothing there showing two charges?—Not on that—I did not say there was.

22381. I am only trying to understand your evidence. This is from Limerick to Belfast; there is a through railway charge of 1*s.* 10*d.*, and delivery 2*d.*?—Yes.

22382. *Chairman.*—That was a 4 lb. parcel?—Yes.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—He ought to have been charged sixpence, including delivery.

22383. *Chairman.*—That is what I say. There must be some mistake. If that had come from, say, Leicester in England to Limerick in Ireland the charge would have been sixpence?—Yes. In my experience there is never a mistake with regard to English traffic to Ireland, but there are frequent mistakes with regard to traffic in Ireland between different points in the country.

22384. You have given the date as the 26th November, 1906?—Yes.

22385. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Have you got the invoice?—I sent it to the Chairman.

Mr. Acworth.—That must be "goods."

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—The parcels rate certainly is sixpence.

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Mr. Acworth.—It is called "Invoice No. 91," which, I take it, is under "Merchandise" traffic.

22386. *Chairman.*—It must be a mistake, at any rate. I am sure you want to be perfectly fair, and I think you will admit that this may be a mistake?—I quite agree with that; but I am afraid these mistakes occur very often.

22387. Your point is, that they occur a great deal more often than they ought to do?—Certainly.

22388. Can you give us another instance?—A parcel sent from Limerick on 15th November last weighing 3 lbs. to Schull (a station on the Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway) cost eightpence.

22389. From any part of England that would be, how much?—Fivepence.

22390. Is fivepence the parcel post rate?—I think it is the railway rate, too.

22391. Just give us one other instance?—A parcel sent from Limerick to Macroom on 15th November, weighing 3 lbs., cost ninepence, and it should have been only fivepence.

22392. Now, if you will just give us the last one you have got?—A parcel weighing 13 lbs. from Dublin to Limerick on 2nd November last was charged 1*s.* 1*d.* That contrasts unfavourably with a parcel of 7 lbs. weight from London on the same date, for which the charge was only sixpence, and with a parcel of 20 lbs. weight from Dundee to Dublin, which was carried 91¾ miles by railway, and 223 miles by steamer, costing but 11*d.*

22393. *Mr. Balfour Browne,* K.C.—What was the weight of that parcel on 2nd November?—Thirteen pounds from Dublin to Limerick.

22394. *Chairman.*—We will not go into any of the other instances—I see there are several others that you have got in your proof, and there is proof of the charges given also?—In these cases I very much object to delivery charges, amounting sometimes to 30 and 33 per cent. of the whole freight, being charged on parcels.

22395. I thought the rates included delivery?—Not in all cases.

22395A. They do according to the scale.

22396. *Mr. Balfour Browne,* K.C.—All the rates for parcels include delivery?—Parcels are charged separate cartage delivery.

22397. *Chairman.*—I see they are, according to your statement, charged 2*d.* for delivery?—Fourpence, and sometimes more, when the whole railway rate is only 1*s.*, the delivery, which means perhaps cartage for only 100 yards, is charged 4*d.*, which I think is very excessive.

22398. What you say is this: that even these little additional charges operate against the development of the retail trade from Limerick to places in Ireland?—I think they operate very much against the Irish shopkeepers who have a small parcel or retail trade.

22399. And you advocate that the small parcels rates ought to be the same throughout Ireland, and uniform, as they are in England?—As they seem to be in England.

22400. The scale is so; and I do not understand why you are charged differently?—Nor do I; but it is so.

22401. *Mr. Balfour Browne,* K.C.—The scale applies to every railway in Ireland, except the Waterford and Tramore, and the Cork and Macroom?—I am sure that it does not apply to the Listowel and Ballybunion.

22402. That is a mono-rail?—These things affect the traders, and prevent trade from being done, or attempted to be done.

22403. *Chairman.*—Do you think that if those rates were uniform, as suggested, and low, as in England, small parcels of agricultural produce would be distributed over the country?—Yes, I believe that.

22404. And do you believe that these additional charges for delivery operate against the development of the small parcel industry?—I think so very strongly. I know a great many instances where it acts against the Irish farmers and the Irish shopkeepers.

22405. Do you believe that a trade could be developed in small parcels of agricultural produce if the rates were low and uniform?—Yes, I believe it would be developed.

22406. Have you had any experience of the carriage of a parcel of vegetables brought under your notice recently?—Yes; a short time ago I got a parcel of vegetables from Cork, weighing 13 lbs., the railway charge was 1*s.* 2*d.*, and that was almost the entire value of the goods. I have had several experiences such as that.

22407. According to the scale in England, do you know what the rate in that case would have been?—I have calculated it, and I think it is about 1*s.* 1*d.*; it is one penny per lb., I think, up to a certain maximum.

22408. I suppose the parcel you refer to was sent by passenger train?—That, I could not say.

22409. Have you tested it in any other way; have you had other vegetables from Cork delivered?—Yes, I have had several similar parcels of vegetables sent from Cork to me.

22410. What was the weight?—The weight was 56 lbs.

22411. And the charge?—The charge was but 8*d.*

22412. *Mr. Acworth.*—That would be "goods," I suppose?—That I do not know.

22413. The first must have been by passenger train rate, and the other goods' train rate?—That may be the reason, I am not sure.

The distribution of small parcels of agricultural produce restricted owing to excessive rates.

22414. *Chairman.*—At any rate, you are strongly of opinion that vegetables and other produce could and would be distributed in small parcels in Ireland if the rates were low and uniform?—That is my opinion.

22415. Now, with regard to the passenger fares; I suppose you do not consider they are in any way excessive, do you?—No; with the exception of the second-class fares.

Reduction in the 2nd class fares recommended.

22416. And with regard to the second-class fares your views are, I suppose, the same as we have had over and over again expressed here, that the second-class fares should be a small proportion over the third-class, instead of being as now 50 per cent. increase over the third-class fares?—Yes; and perhaps there is a greater reason why it should be so in Ireland than in other countries.

22417. If such a change were made, in your judgment, would it tend to a large development of second-class traffic?—Well, I think it would tend to the development of the second-class traffic.

Comparison of selected 2nd class fares in England and in Ireland.

22418. I do not know that we need go into all these instances of fares which you have prepared, but you might just pick out two. Just take the first two?—From Limerick to Dublin, travelling second-class, a distance of 129 miles, the single ticket costs 17*s.* 8*d.* From Euston to Stafford on the London and North-Western Railway (133½ miles) the cost is but 12*s.* 3*d.*, that is 5*s.* 5*d.* less than the Great Southern and Western Railway charge for a less distance.

22419. I see that you have several other instances?—Yes.

Irish 1st and 3rd class fares considered reasonable.

22420. I think you can put it in two or three words; whereas in England the second-class fare is a small fraction over the third, in Ireland it is 50 per cent. over the third?—Yes.

22421. And your suggestion is that you think that in Ireland, being a poor country, it would be a great advantage to the travelling public, and that more people would travel second-class if the same principle was adopted as in England?—Yes, I believe that would be so.

22422. You have nothing to say about the third-class fares?—Nothing; I think they are reasonable.

22423. Or the first?—Or the first.

22424. With regard to the excursion traffic, I see that you have also nothing to suggest?—No; I think it is pretty well done, except as to the one-day passenger traffic.

Suggested extension of the "market ticket" principle to the large centres.

22425. What is that—the market traffic?—In England it seems to be quite a common experience to be able to get a one-day ticket between large centres, going and returning the same day at any time in the year; whereas in Ireland you can only get such a ticket on Sundays between large centres—generally on Sundays, or whenever there is something particular going on.

22426. You mean a cheap fare?—Yes.

22427. I do not think you are correct with regard to the English custom?—I see these day-trips very often advertised.

22428. The same thing is, I think, done in Ireland—I see bills in Ireland, too?—Yes. Why should not the principle of market tickets be applied between large centres of population in Ireland, say, Limerick and Cork, or Limerick and Dublin.

22429. At any rate, I do not think the practice differs in Ireland very much from that in England

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with regard to those sorts of things. I see that you have, with great pains, taken out the running of various trains; but, on the whole, I do not think I need ask you any questions upon that. With regard to train connections at junctions, your experience is, I suppose, the same as that of everybody else who has had to do with junctions, that some trains fit, and some do not; is not that it?—Yes.

Improvement in the passenger train service between Cork and Limerick necessary.

22430. It is difficult to arrange for all trains?—Yes, I quite agree with that; but I do think that some improvement might reasonably be asked to be made in the train connection between Cork and Limerick.

22431. There is no doubt that improvement might be made between any two places. Now, let us get to something more general, if you please. Your Borough Council, on 11th March, 1907, had this question of railways before them?—Yes.

22432. And they passed certain resolutions?—Yes.

22433. Were you present?—Yes, I was there.

22434. Were the resolutions unanimous; or, was there any difference of opinion with regard to them?—They were unanimous.

22435. Practically unanimous?—They were unanimous.

Resolutions unanimously passed by the Limerick Corporation on Irish railway policy.

22436. In order to get them on the notes, would you be good enough to read those resolutions?—"Resolved: That in the opinion of this Council the policy of Irish railways should be directed more towards developing the agricultural and manufacturing industries of Ireland than has hitherto been their aim. That to us it seems a grave injustice to Irish industry that Irish railways should carry imported goods at lower rates than they carry similar Irish produce, which special treatment amounts to protection in favour of foreign manufacturers. That the Irish railway companies be requested to discontinue this policy, and to give to home produce, as low mileage rates as those at which they now carry imported goods. That we believe the lowering of internal rates between stations in Ireland on all classes of agricultural produce would soon sensibly diminish the amount of such goods imported. That there should be through rates to all stations in Ireland for Irish traffic of all descriptions. That, this being a comparatively poor country, it is most desirable, with a view to the more economical working of several Irish railways, that the unification of all the existing lines under one Board of Management should be brought about, and with effective State or public control."

Unification and State or public control (see appendix, No.).

22437. These are the resolutions passed by the Limerick Council?—Yes.

22438. Is it within your knowledge, that other public bodies have passed similar resolutions?—Yes; I have seen reports of other public bodies passing somewhat similar resolutions.

22439. And do you personally agree with every word of that resolution?—I do.

22440. I think the words of that resolution are so comprehensive that I may pass over three or four sheets of your proof. Are you acquainted with any Continental railways?—No, not personally.

22441. I suppose you know that several countries in Europe have State railways?—Yes.

22442. Do you know anything about these?—I have had no personal experience beyond travelling on some of them.

State purchase of Irish railways advocated.

22443. I will not ask you, then, about them. You consider it would be an advantage to Ireland generally, and would promote industries in Ireland that are now dormant, if the railways in this country were taken over by the State?—Yes, and run with a view to developing the country; I think it would be a great factor in helping the promotion of industry in Ireland.

22444. Not with a view to making any large percentage on the working, but with a view to developing the country, regardless altogether of whether they paid or not?—Yes, I think that should be the case for some years.

The country should pay any deficiency in revenue available for interest in the event of State purchase.

22445. Have you considered who should pay the deficiency—I mean, if the railways did not earn sufficient to pay the interest on the capital outlay—have you considered who should pay that?—The country, I should think.

22446. It should fall on the country?—I think so.

22447. The State should work the railways for the benefit of the people?—Of the whole country.

22448. And you think if the State owned the railways, many districts in the country that be now without railway communication might be provided with railway accommodation, and thus tend to develop the resources of the land, and so on?—That is my view.

22449. And that is the view of the Limerick Borough Council?—That is so.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

22450. You have been speaking of rates on leather per ton?—Yes.

22451. Leather, as a matter of fact, is bought and sold by the pound, is it not?—By the ton, too.

22452. I mean the quotations one sees in the newspapers—I do not pretend to be a leather merchant myself, but the quotations given in the papers are per pound, are they not?—Yes.

22453. And the quotation per pound seems to be roughly something like 2*s.* a pound for many qualities?—Yes, from that down to 4*d.*

22454. But the normal quality of leather is from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* per lb, or something like that, is it not?—About that.

22455. That is what I fancied. Do you not, practically, in buying and selling deal in farthings or something like that?—Yes, and one-eighth of a penny and one-sixteenth of a penny.

22456. Oh, it runs as fine as that, does it?—Yes.

22457. With regard to the rate you spoke of to Belfast the difference is one-twelfth of a penny—the reduction you want per lb.—and that would make a very serious difference?—Yes.

22458. That I can fully believe. But, putting it another way round, £2 per ton on stuff worth 2*s.* per lb. is one per cent. of the value. Now, we had a gentleman here yesterday who represented artificial manures, and he pointed out that the rate was six per cent. and more on the value of his goods. It was a much lower rate than yours, but it was six per cent. on the value instead of one per cent. What I want to ask you is, supposing the State were working the railways, would not the natural thing be to make the reductions on the goods which were heavily taxed already rather than on the high-class goods which were not so heavily taxed?—I could not say that.

22459. Would it not be reasonable to let off the man who was paying six per cent. rather than the man who was paying one per cent.?—If I were the State I should consider the taxable capacity of the goods.

22460. That is what we should all do, I think?—But I do not quite agree that because certain goods would have a high rate the taxable capacity of these goods should not be equal to it.

22461. But surely the goods that are paying one per cent. only can better afford to go on paying one per cent. than the goods paying six per cent. can afford to go on paying six per cent.?—It would depend upon circumstances.

22462. You think so?—I do, most decidedly.

22463. Do you not think it is reasonable to suppose that Glasgow is in effect very much nearer Belfast—I do not say it is in miles, but in economic cost of getting there Glasgow is much nearer to Belfast than you are?—I admit that.

22464. Is it not natural that you should have difficulty in getting into the Belfast market?—Perhaps so.

22465. That is what it seems to me, I confess?—From the Glasgow man's point of view, certainly I agree with you.

22466. Of course the Glasgow man wants to come into yours if he can—I am not taking it that way. Take a number of the rates you gave—you gave us instances where you had very high rates—Dundalk, Listowel, and so on. Supposing you take the rate from Limerick to Glasgow, what is it?—By sea?

22467. Yes?—I think 25*s.*

22468. You can get to Glasgow?—Yes.

22469. Because you say 25*s.* will take you to Glasgow, therefore I suppose you can get to Glasgow?—And we get there.

22470. So that you get the advantage also of the low rates?—I grant you that.

22471. Glasgow has a great advantage over you in Dublin or Belfast?—Yes.

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22472. But supposing you take it from the Glasgow man's point of view, he has to submit to cheap rates from Boston, I suppose?—I do not know what the rates from Boston to Glasgow are.

22473. You may be sure they are pretty low—or from New York to Glasgow?—Probably.

22474. And if the Glasgow man wants to get across the country to a place where he does not get sea competition—say he wants to send from Glasgow to Hull, there, again, he will have to pay a high rate?—Very likely.

22475. So there is nothing exceptional in your condition?—There is the exceptional difficulty in regard to transit facilities from Limerick to get to other ports in Ireland. Give me the same transit facilities for Irish ports that I now have for Glasgow, and then I shall say we are equal. We have not those facilities.

22476. Does it matter to you whether your outlet is to Glasgow or whether it is to Belfast? Have you any special desire to sell to Irishmen rather than to Scotchmen?—Most decidedly.

22477. You have?—Yes, I have, for commercial reasons.

22478. Do let me understand that—I do not quite follow that?—It is easier for us to get to places in Ireland than it is to get to Glasgow. I mean it is easier for us to get there ourselves, if we want to go there. It is much easier for us to control the trade, and it is much easier for us to sell in Ireland than to sell outside of Ireland.

22479. Because of Ireland being more or less an entity by itself—is that the way you put it?—That is a factor—it is an entity in itself.

22480. An Irishman deals more naturally with an Irishman than in a more or less strange country?—No, I do not say that.

22481. I thought that was your point?—I do not agree with that entirely.

22482. How would you put it, then?—As I said before, it is easier for us to get our travellers to places in Ireland; sometimes our travellers are on the border line, and the same thing does not apply to Scotland, nor does it apply to any place which you have difficulty in getting to.

22483. Yes, I follow that?—Communication is easier, and therefore if one is commencing business it is easier to do business in the home market—the places nearest. Business usually commences in that way.

22484. In other words, your own people being able to get communication—personal communication being easier—you would like goods communication to follow?—Supposing you were going into business in Limerick you would naturally look for a market for your goods locally—business expands in that way—but if you have no local market you do not go into business at all; therefore how can you develop?

22485. And you are not prepared to accept Glasgow as your local market?—No, not under the circumstances I have mentioned.

22486. Though, as far as rates are concerned, you can get there?—Yes.

22487. I see. I should like to ask just one question on the proportions of local as compared with through rates. Take the one that Colonel Poë asked you about at some length—Bristol to Waterford. The Bristol steamer does not come to Limerick, does it?—No.

22488. The Bristol steamer would clearly like to get traffic for Limerick, would it not?—Yes, I am sure it would.

22489. But it cannot get it direct, so it must get it by Waterford?—Yes.

22490. Do you not think that it is quite arguable that sooner than lose the traffic to Limerick altogether it would take the whole 10*s.* 5*d.* off its own local rate?—I do not know that.

22491. It is possible, is it not? It might be better worth its while to carry it for 15*s.* 5*d.* than not to carry it at all?—I should think so.

22492. And unless it gets it through Waterford it cannot get it at all?—No.

22493. On the other hand, the Great Southern and Western would equally get the rate on it if it came in by sea to Cork, or to Dublin, or to Rosslare, or to anywhere else, would it not?—Yes.

22494. So that the steamer has more interest in reducing its share of the rates than the Great Southern and Western has in reducing its share?—I do not see that.

22495. Does it not seem to follow?—It would altogether depend on where the goods would be going to. There again I think you must take each case individually.

22496. We will not carry it too far. In some cases, at any rate, it is easy to see that the steamer has more interest in reducing its share of the rate than the railway company has in reducing its share?—I do not quite see that.

22497. But you did see it in the case of Waterford. You agreed with me that the steamer would only get it if it got it through Waterford?—Yes.

22498. Then you agreed that it had a great interest in getting it somehow; but supposing that traffic was going to Limerick, and went by steamer from Bristol to Dublin, the Great Southern would still get it to Limerick?—Yes, if it were going to Dublin.

22499. If it were going to Limerick?—If it were going to Limerick?

22500. Whichever port it went to from Bristol, the Great Southern would still get the carriage?—Yes.

22501. So that it does not matter very much to the Great Southern which port it goes to. It may matter somewhat, but not very much?—Quite so.

22502. Whereas in the case of the Bristol to Waterford steamer it is Waterford or nowhere. Do you see?—Yes.

22503. Just one other thing. You mentioned the Cork and Macroom. I do not in the least wish to suggest that you did it without good grounds, but you did tell us that there were frequent cases of parcels where there was a "paid on" up to the frontier of a second railway, and then a second charge?—As I mentioned before, parcels form a very small proportion of our trade.

The question of rates for small parcels.

22504. I shall only call your attention to this. In the instances you have set out under the letters A, B, and C, and so on, there is only one that shows a "paid on" charge?—I can give you more.

22505. That one is on the Cork and Macroom?—Yes.

22506. Mr. Balfour Browne has just told us that the Waterford and Tramore and the Cork and Macroom are the only railways in Ireland not subject to the small parcel scale?—I think there is a similar one to Kilrush.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—I am only reading from the book, which shows that this small parcels scale is applicable to every other railway in Ireland.

Mr. Acworth.—No doubt the railway companies will see whether it is more than an accident in particular cases. They are clearly bound to adhere to their terms.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—This gentleman has our scale in his office, and if we have charged him too much he can, of course, get it back.

22507. *Mr. Acworth.*—I have no doubt the railway companies will treat it in that way. If you think it worth while you will put it to the railway companies. Just one other point. You spoke of the country subsidising railway earnings, so to speak?—Yes.

22508. What do you mean by "the country"? What country?—Ireland.

22509. Are you prepared to say that the Irish people ought to bear extra taxation to reduce the railway rates?—Yes, if it is proved that all our taxation is now spent on the country.

22510. Leave that out, please, if you do not mind. We cannot concern ourselves with that. We have all heard of the Financial Relations Report, but we must leave it out. But supposing you take it the other way round—supposing it were proved that Ireland and England were bearing their fair proportions at present, and supposing that under those conditions you wanted another half million to subsidise railways and reduce rates, would you be prepared to put it on Ireland?—Most certainly.

Reduction of rates, if necessary, even at the expense of the Irish taxpayers recommended.

22511. You believe it would pay to do so?—Most certainly.

22512. I am very much interested in that, because a great many witnesses have answered, "We want to get it out of England." Your view is that it would pay Ireland to do it?—Most decidedly. It would take perhaps ten, twelve, or fifteen years, but I most decidedly think it would be a good investment.

22513. Are you empowered to say that that is the view of the Limerick people?—I believe it is the view of a great number of people in Limerick.

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22514. Do you think it is a view which would commend itself to a sufficient number of Irish people to make it possible to do it?—I think so.

22515. You believe that if they were face to face with the question, "Pay half a million more a year, and put it into railway development—extensions of line, better facilities, and so on"—they would be prepared to face it?—I believe the country could be got to do it.

22516. And you believe that it would pay?—I do believe that it would pay.

22517. You spoke of a tribunal to settle what the rates should be?—Yes.

22518. Of course that would not apply if they were State railways?—I presume not.

22519. I mean, the State would settle what your rates were to be, as it settles what your income tax is to be, and you could not litigate about it?—I daresay public opinion would control the State.

22520. In case it was in private hands, you think there should be a tribunal?—Yes.

22521. The way you put it is this—that there should be a tribunal to settle what the rate was to be?—Yes.

22522. And to say whether a railway company which was charging 10*s.* should only charge 8*s.*, we will suppose?—Yes.

The position of the Irish shareholders and the necessary protection from loss required by them if rates were compulsorily reduced.

22523. Would that be reasonable?—I think so.

22524. That would come out of the pockets of the present shareholders?—Yes.

22525. You are saying that on the assumption that it would ultimately come back?—I am saying that on the assumption that the present shareholders have got a monopoly by Acts of Parliament—special enactments—and I consider the public have a perfect right, and in fact are entitled, to every protection under these monopolies, which I think they have not got at present.

22526. But work that out in another shape. The Great Southern and Western are getting, we will say, $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. dividend. Would you consider it reasonable that a tribunal—a cheap, expeditious tribunal—should be able to say, "We will reduce your earnings to $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.?—I do not see that a reduction of rate would mean a reduction of dividend at all.

22527. You have agreed that if the State found the money it would take ten years or more before it came back?—When I say that, it is natural, in my mind, that the railway companies would work their business so as not to give such reductions that they would not be able to pay any dividends—that would mean great reductions.

22528. I would not suggest that, but supposing that all over the country these cheap and expeditious tribunals led to the people applying to the judges everywhere to cut down the rates from 16*s.* to 12*s.* 6*d.*, or from 13*s.* down to 11*s.*, and so on?—That is assuming that the rates will allow these reductions.

22529. I will assume that it would be better for Ireland if the rates were lower. We can always assume that?—But there is always a reasonable rate—what the traffic will bear.

22530. I wish you would tell me what it is. I have been hunting it a great many years, and I have never met it yet. However, just answer this question. Supposing the net result of these reasonable reductions was a loss of income to the extent of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 1 per cent. to the Great Southern, would you think it fair to take that out of the shareholders' pockets?—No, I think not.

22531. I feel sure you would not. But do you not think it does come to that—that if you are going in for any systematic reduction of rates, and are going to leave the railways in private hands, the Government has got to guarantee the shareholders somehow?—Yes, but they must also see that the railways are well worked and properly administered. I think the State should then come in to the relief of the railways.

22532. I only wanted to know whether you carried it so far as to say, "Ireland wants reductions, and must have them out of the pockets of the shareholders"?—No.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

22533. You are very strongly in favour of State purchase of the railways?—Not very strongly. I am rather doubtful about it, but I am very strongly in favour of changing the present system.

22534. You mean that in case the State did not do it there should be amalgamation?—With some sort of public control.

22535. So that good management would reduce the rates without taking anything out of the shareholders' pockets?—Yes, better administration and cheaper administration.

22536. The only other question I need ask you is this. Have you no steamer communication between Limerick and Belfast?—Not for some few years; we tried it a couple of times.

22537. And it has been given up?—It has been given up.

22538. Is that because there is no great traffic between Limerick and Belfast?—That is the reason.

22539. Therefore when you are urging for cheaper rates by train to Belfast, that is not very material to the prosperity of Limerick?—But all these things are factors in development.

Cross-examined by Mr. BALFOUR BROWNE, K.C.

22540. What you said in answer to Mr. Acworth was rather consolatory, from my point of view. You said that extra taxation to reduce rates on railways was in your view legitimate?—If necessary.

22541. If necessary, of course. That is to some extent a bounty to trade out of the pockets of the ratepayers, is it not?—But I must also say that that opinion is only given with a view to developing it.

22542. If you thought it was not going to benefit them in future you would not suggest it?—Certainly not.

22543. At the same time, you see it is in the nature of a bounty given to trade out of the pockets of the taxpayers?—Certainly.

22544. Do you think you could persuade the country to protect trade in the way you are speaking of?—I do.

22545. You have complained that by reason of the low sea rates you have difficulty in competing with Belfast and other places?—Yes.

22546. You think the manufacturers of Ireland are therefore put at a disadvantage?—As far as Belfast is concerned.

22547. Quite. The same thing would be done, of course, by a protective tariff as by raising railway rates—the two things are of a similar nature?—I presume so.

22548. Now, you first took the rate from Liverpool to Tralee—25*s.* You know that from Liverpool to Tralee there is a direct steamboat?—Yes, she calls there occasionally.

22549. And railway rates must have some regard to competition?—I suppose they must in the view of the railway companies.

22550. And it is an advantage, of course, to the public to have two means of sending goods. Suppose the railway company did not charge a low rate to Tralee the traffic would all go by steamboat?—Yes.

22551. It would be no benefit to the public to shut up the railway route—it is better for them to have the two routes open?—Yes.

22552. The same with regard to the rate from Liverpool to Limerick—there is a direct boat?—Yes.

22553. With regard to Listowel that does not apply—does it?—At the rate the railway company carry both to Tralee, Limerick, and Listowel I assume they do so at a profit. If they do not do so at a profit, they should not carry at such low rates.

22554. But you do not mean to say that a railway company is bound to get the same profit on every ton of goods delivered?—They should not charge me more than they charge you.

Mr. Acworth.—Under similar circumstances.

22555. *Mr. Balfour Browne*, K.C.—Under similar circumstances—I quite agree?—We are speaking of the circumstances now obtaining in Tralee, Listowel, and Limerick.

22556. But supposing it is necessary to reduce a rate in order to get the traffic at all, surely you would say that a railway company, as a trader, was justified in doing that—to get it out of the hands of the steamboat company?—The policy of the railway companies seems to me to be a policy governed not so much by what is the interest of Ireland in the way of developing the traffic of Ireland as a policy dictated by some other influences.

22557. You tempt me to ask a question. Surely it would be to the benefit of the railway companies to develop the trade of Ireland?—But they do not do so, in my opinion.

22558. But they ought to try. They are carriers, and they depend very largely on the prosperity of the State for their own prosperity?—Decidedly.

22559. Do you know that besides the rate you gave of 40*s.* 2*d.* from Limerick to Belfast there is a rate *via* Waterford of 32*s.* 2*d.*?—To Belfast?

22560. You can send by train to Waterford, and then it goes by the Clyde Steamship Company?—I know there is a lower rate, but we can't avail ourselves of that.

22561. You have been rather puzzled by some of these rates yourself?—I have not seen them for months.

22562. But it is a puzzling question—the question of railway rates?—Very puzzling.

22563. Mr. Acworth and myself have been at it a long time, and have been puzzled very often. Do you think that any ordinary tribunal would be capable of dealing with these very nice questions of railway rates?—I do; I think the railway company would be very well looked after.

22564. *Mr. Acworth.*—Do you think the trader would have a fair chance?—Well, I think he would have the sympathy of the tribunal with him.

22564A. I pity him if that is all he is to get?——

22565. *Mr. Balfour Browne,* K.C.—One or two more questions. With regard to passenger fares, you compared the second class fares in Ireland with the second class fares in England—to Stafford and Crewe and so on on the North-Western?—Yes.

22566. Would you like the third class fares of England put in force in Ireland? Do you know that instead of 18*s.* 1*d.* the charge upon that basis would come to 26*s.* 6*d.*?—I did not deal with that.

22567. No, I know you did not. One more question. Do you know with regard to perishables that there are lower rates in Ireland than in England? I think you gave an illustration of a 56 lbs. lot?—Yes.

22568. Do you know that in England that would be charged 1*s.* 9*d.* as against 1*s.* 2*d.* in Ireland?—I do not know that.

Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.—That is all I ask.

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Mr. E. J. Long, J.P. City High Sheriff, Limerick, Representative of the Limerick Corporation.

Rates for "perishables" in England and in Ireland.

Mr. Henry J. Forde, J.P., examined by Lord Pirrie (in the Chair).

22569. Mr. Forde, you are attending on behalf of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce?—Yes, and also on the Waterford Harbour Board.

22570. You are a Director of the firm of R. and H. Hall, Limited, Corn Merchants?—Yes.

22571. You have been a member of the Waterford Harbour Board for some years?—For fifteen or sixteen years.

22572 Are you also Vice-President of it?—I am Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce this year, and I am a past President.

22573. Have you been requested by them to give evidence, or are you giving evidence simply on your own behalf?—I have been requested to attend by both bodies.

22574. What position do you look upon Waterford as occupying; is it a large manufacturing town?—Waterford is not a manufacturing town generally speaking; it is more a distributing centre for a considerable portion of the South of Ireland.

22575. For distributing goods coming in from sea?—Yes.

22576. Not from Dublin?—No, from sea.

22577. Do they come to Waterford direct from the Continent or from America, or is it merely a distributing centre for Great Britain?—There is a large cross-Channel traffic from England, and of course there is a trade from foreign parts as well.

22578. Is there a large foreign traffic with Waterford?—There is a large foreign grain trade and timber trade.

22579. Really, Waterford is a shipping centre for the South?—For the South-east of Ireland.

22580. What regular cross-Channel steamers have you trading with Waterford?—We have cross-Channel steamers trading with Liverpool, Bristol, Fishguard, Glasgow, Plymouth, Southampton, Newhaven, Dover, and London.

22581. Are they weekly?—Some bi-weekly, some daily, and others weekly.

22582. The Great Western, of course, is the daily service?—That is the only daily service—to Fishguard.

22583. That is the one you rely on as being the daily service?—The only daily; it used to run to New Milford.

22584. Has Waterford been benefited by the amalgamation of the Great Southern and Western and Waterford and Limerick Railway Companies?—We opposed the amalgamation very keenly in Waterford.

22585. You did?—Yes.

22586. Although you opposed it, has it benefited you; have you changed your minds since, on the subject?—I would not like to say that it has not benefited us since. There was this point in Waterford. At the time of the amalgamation we got a clause inserted in the amalgamation Act which was designed or intended to preserve to Waterford the benefits of its geographical position in regard to through rates to England. That question came before the recent Railway and Canal Commission. The Dublin and South-Eastern Railway preferred a charge against the Great Southern and Western, that they were unduly benefiting Waterford as against Dublin, and the Railway Commission has decided that the same facilities should be given to Dublin as exist at Waterford, Cork, and Rosslare, and it has deprived us in Waterford of what we believed was a valuable clause for our protection, preserving our geographical position which was given to us in the first instance by the Committee of the House of Lords that dealt with the measure. We believe in Waterford that the effect of their decision has been practically to sweep away competitive routes hitherto existing *via* Waterford and Cork.

22587. Therefore facilitating Dublin and Cork?—In favour, of course, of Dublin and Rosslare.

22588. Cork does not compete?—There was an old arrangement. Cork and Waterford have what are known as differentials. These differentials were given by reason of the infrequency of the service between Cork and Waterford to places in England, and those differentials have been upheld by the Commission. But they only exist from three places on the Waterford and Limerick Line, and I think one place on the Waterford and Dungarvan Railway. At these points competition existed before the amalgamation, but, of course, since the amalgamation the competition has been done away with, and we think that the differentials not only should have been maintained, but that they should have been given from other places on the old Waterford and Limerick system.

22589. That does not do away with your great advantage of getting close connection with Wales; you have a monopoly, have you not, through Rosslare?—Anything going through Rosslare does not benefit the port of Waterford. Anything going through Rosslare naturally passes by the port of Waterford.

22590. You gain nothing by the Rosslare route?—No, if the port of Waterford is affected, the interests of the city are affected.

22591. Does it not bring a great deal of passenger and tourist traffic to Waterford?—It may bring tourists, but whether it will bring other traffic remains to be seen. At present Rosslare is not being run much as a goods port; it is being run more for passenger traffic.

22592. As far as the port itself is concerned, it is not affected by the Rosslare route?—We are afraid it will be affected.

22593. You are?—Yes.

22594. What do you object to?—I do not find fault with the Irish railways; we have had grievances, and I have had grievances, but they are incidental to the management of any large concern such as a railway company. But I do not think it was the purpose of this Commission to have brought before it small measures of complaint. But, generally speaking, I think the Irish railways, considering their position and the means at their disposal, and the opportunities that they have had, have been very fairly managed.

Mr. Henry J. Forde, J.P., Representative of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Waterford Harbour Board.

Protective clause for Waterford inserted in the Amalgamation Act of 1900 alleged to be nullified by a recent decision of the Railway and Canal Commissioners.

The increased flow of traffic through Rosslare not of any benefit to Waterford.

Irish railway management as a whole considered fairly satisfactory

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Mr. Henry J. Forde, J.P., Representative of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Waterford Harbour Board.

22595. But, as a member of the Chamber of Commerce and as a Waterford Harbour Commissioner, what particular view do you want to put before us?—The view I have to put forward is, that we regard with apprehension the extension in Ireland of the English railway companies—not only their purchasing of lines, but also the controlling influence which they appear to be getting over Irish railways. We hold that the Great Western Railway Company of England are practically the dominant power in the South of Ireland at present owing to amalgamation—I should not use the word amalgamation, but owing to the agreement between the Great Southern and Western Railway and the Great Western, by means of the Fishguard and Rosslare Company. The Great Western have a majority on the directorate of the Fishguard route, and in that way they can exercise a controlling influence.

The controlling influence of English railways over the Irish lines considered to be to the disadvantage of Ireland and a hindrance to the development of Irish industries.

22596. You have not found that the investments of English companies in Irish railways have reduced the rates for you?—No, certainly not. We would like to see this development of railway influences in Ireland on the part of the English companies stopped. We believe the Irish companies would manage things more sympathetically and from an Irish point of view. Naturally, English companies look at the matter from their point of view, and that would be the encouragement of traffic on their lines to Ireland, and not from Ireland.

22597. How do you view the interests of Ireland as regards the general tendency of these English companies to give you cheap commodities; or, to put it in other words, do you look upon Ireland as a dumping field. Is it not an advantage to the people of Ireland to get their goods in that cheap way?—I am looking at it from the point of view of the necessity in Ireland of encouraging industries. If the population of Ireland is to be maintained or increased, there must be something done for the encouragement of local industries in the interior and elsewhere.

22598. Does not getting your goods very cheaply into Ireland assist the manufacturing industries of Ireland?—I would take the view that the inward through rates should be based in such a way as to assist the Irish manufacturers, if necessary against the English manufacturers—a system of protection.

The system of low cross-Channel through rates into Ireland, and disproportionate local rates condemned

22599. Take the ordinary instance of boots or furniture; they must come into Ireland to the benefit of the manufacturers?—I do not quite understand.

22600. Your objection is that Ireland is turned into a dumping field by getting cheap commodities. But surely, whether it is coal or timber, or whatever it may be, the cheaper you get it into the country, the better it should develop your manufactures, should it not. And the more your town of Waterford would be improved?—What I would say against that is that if you take the case of a through rate from England to some place in the interior of Ireland where there is a boot factory, and we will say the through rate is a £1 a ton, and the proportion from Waterford to that inland town is, say, 5*s.*, whereas the local rate from Waterford might be 7*s.* 6*d.*—we think that the through rates should be based on a different plan; in other words, that if there must be through rates, the local rates should be the same.

22601. In other words, you want to reduce the local rates to the same as the through rates. You do not object to the through rates being as cheap as possible?—I cannot object to that, though I would like to object to it.

22602. You would?—Yes.

22603. I do not think I need argue that because I do not see how you could increase the prosperity of the manufacturers of Ireland by increasing the rates on their goods. Have you anything you would like to say as regards local matters in connection with Waterford as against the Great Southern and Western Railway Company?—I have nothing very special to say in regard to that.

22604. What about the toll?—That has been done away with since I submitted my proof of evidence.

22605. You have nothing to complain of about the toll?—That was a toll put on for admission into their new station, but it was taken off in deference to public opinion.

Improvement in the train service to Waterford called for.

22606. Therefore that disappeared?—Yes. I gave that statement some months ago.

22607. I only wanted to correct it, because I thought it had been put right. Do you complain at all of the train service in connection with Waterford?—We think it might be a little expedited.

22608. Do you mean as regards punctuality or as regards speed?—As regards both punctuality and speed, and more rolling stock would be desirable; but again I say that I think that, on the whole, there is not a great deal to complain of.

22609. Do you, as a Harbour Commissioner, suffer by goods lying on the quay waiting for trucks?—Since the opening of the Rosslare route there has been a considerable disturbance of traffic, but I think that is being gradually got over.

22610. It has been?—It is being gradually got over.

22611. Have any cases come before either the Chamber of Commerce or the Harbour Board in which preference has been given to any traders?—We have no specific cases where it has been done, but it came out in evidence before the Canal Commission that there were such cases.

22612. And you believe there were?—It came out in evidence.

22613. *Mr. Acworth.*—What do you mean by the Canal Commission?—The Railway and Canal Commission.

22614. You do not mean the Royal Commission on Canals?—No.

22615. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is the belief at Waterford that there were such cases, but you have no actual knowledge yourself?—I have heard it stated that goods have been taken at customers own weights.

22616. That is very satisfactory to the customers. Do you believe in the present system of appeal?—I think the present system of appeal to the Railway and Canal Commission is a most cumbrous and costly system, and one which is practically out of the reach of anybody except very large traders, and that it shoud be amended.

22617. Have you any view in your own mind as to the form that amendment should take?—I think there should be a Commission of, say, three experts, one, say, representing the railway companies, one a lawyer, and the other representing the business community; they should be well paid, and they should go round the country hearing appeals and dealing with the instances in the districts in which they arose; they should be there for no other purpose than that.

22618. They should just travel about?—Going round periodically: that could easily be arranged.

22619. You say a Commission of three?—I suggest three.

22620. Should they be really experts?—I would suggest one railway expert, one lawyer, and one business man. Let them be very well paid, and do nothing else.

22621. You have faith in the lawyer; other witnesses have said that that is the one profession which should be excluded from all these measures. But that is your suggestion?—I would not object to having two business men.

22622. I agree we would not get on very well without them, but that is your idea of a Court of Appeal, as it were?—Yes. If they were able to go round the country it would reduce the expense of appearing before them and make it very simple. Let it be a sort of common sense decision on many of the points.

22623. With regard to rates and through traffic?—Everything.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

22624. With regard to that Commission, do you intend it to have the powers that the present Railway and Canal Commission have, of making peremptory orders?—I would give that power.

22625. That power, of course, may affect vitally the revenue of a railway company?—Naturally, it might.

22626. It might reduce their rates, and that kind of thing. You will agree that this Commission would have to decide according to strict legal proof?—I suppose they should, but I think that in a good many measures in business and otherwise, we get on just as well if we eliminate to a certain extent the legal aspect and deal with them more from a common sense view.

22627. But if they were going to give a legal binding judgment, the Court would have to act strictly on legal evidence, and according to the ordinary rules of evidence. You would have to prove everything strictly and so on?—Certainly.

22628. Then I gather that you would not have lawyers on either side before that tribunal?—You might have solicitors.

22629. Local solicitors?—Yes.

22630. Now, just consider that. I suppose I may safely assume that the average local solicitor in Waterford does not spend much of his time on railway cases?—No.

22631. He cannot be an expert?—No.

22632. Would you yourself like to go to law with the Great Southern resting on the advice and with the help of a local solicitor in Waterford who would have no special knowledge of railways, while the railway company would have their expert managers and a railway solicitor who spends his life in dealing with railway law: do you think you would have a fair chance?—I see your point, and it is an extremely difficult one to answer, and I cannot.

22633. Honestly, I do not think you can. I am afraid that all these proposals for making a cheap expert tribunal are going to break down. That is my belief?—But you will admit the necessity for something of the sort?

22634. I admit I want to see my way, but so far I have not been helped by any evidence. You see the difficulty yourself?—I do.

22635. Then take another thing. There is the same difficulty here. One wants to do something, but what is one to do. You say that there are people who get unfair advantages, or you believe that there are?—Yes, I do. I believe it has been done, but whether it continues I cannot say.

22636. We have had a great many people who believe that there are things of that kind done, but the people who get those advantages are not going to tell?—No.

22637. And the people giving them are not going to tell?—No.

22638. And if you do not know them, and nobody else can tell the controlling authority whatever it is about them, how are they going to be stopped. You see the difficulty is one of evidence?—Yes.

22639. It is illegal now, and it could be stopped tomorrow, if you could prove it?—There again, if it was possible to have some sort of tribunal to deal with the measure easily and cheaply, you would have cases brought before it, and possibly the evidence elicited would result in proving it, whereas when you have to deal with the Railway and Canal Commission you hesitate about taking action.

22640. But if you could prove it; if you had conclusive evidence, no railway company would ever dare to let you take them into Court; they would never venture to go into Court; you would not have to spend any money beyond the filing of an application, which costs, I think, a sovereign. You would not need any counsel or anybody else. If the company knew that you could prove your case they would back down instantly. Do you consider that the Dublin judgment has injured you seriously?—I think it will have that effect.

22641. I have not pretended to follow it; I have it here, but I have not read it except in the newspapers. What is your view—that some of the protection that was given to Waterford by the long and famous clause is gone?—Yes.

22642. I do not know whether you would agree with me that there were sixteen clauses practically to sixteen different people, and that they really were inconsistent one with another, one saying that Dublin should be treated a little better than Waterford, and another saying that Waterford should be treated a little better than Dublin; you really could not reconcile them?—My recollection is that the clause that was given was a clause designed by Sir Henry Oakley for us; we employed him at the time; that clause was given to us. I think the hybrid Committee said "Waterford looks like being hardly treated, and we will see that Waterford is protected," and they gave us the clause. Then in the hurry and skurry of winding up everybody came in and said, "We want this clause," and they got it, and now we will suffer.

22643. And then when each put forward their different view the thing would not work out. But you do think that you are going to suffer. Now tell me what is your scheme precisely. What do you think, under a system administered by people who were perfect, Waterford is entitled to? You clearly would not claim that it was entitled to better treatment than other people?—I think we should have the full benefit of our geographical position.

22644. That is a common phrase?—I think it is unfair—it is hardly within the province of this Commission perhaps—but I think it is unfair, with all respect to the Railway and Canal Commission, to say that if the distance between a place in England *via* Dublin is 100 miles further than *via* Waterford, they are to get the same rate; I do not see how they can reconcile it.

22645. Take it the other way round, Rosslare has got a better geographical position than you?—Yes, they have.

22646. Are you prepared to let Rosslare get better treatment than you?—It is now a case of the lesser of two evils in that way; but we really had no option as the grouping of Rosslare with Waterford was done by a Parliamentary Committee at the instance of the Great Western Railway.

22647. It is really a very difficult position, is it not?—It is.

22648. Do you not think, supposing we had a witness who knew the case from the Rosslare point of view, or from the Dublin point of view, as well as you know it from the Waterford point of view, that he would tell us that Waterford was claiming more than the benefit of its geographical position?—He might.

22649. Are you not really anxious to preserve an old advantage that you got before Rosslare existed?—Naturally we are.

22650. Naturally you are, and that is what it seems to me is a very difficult question. Now tell me this, what do you mean exactly by objecting to the extension of English control. Am I wrong in thinking that in the old days, when the Great Western used to subsidise the Waterford and Limerick line, you welcomed the Great Western of England?—They gave us something then.

22651. Is it not really the fact that your objection to the extension of English control means that it does not suit Waterford; at present one big company is helping Dublin and another is helping Rosslare?—Of course, by helping these places, they are doing it to the detriment of other ports.

22652. Understand that I am not taking sides against you in the least; I only want to see where we are?—It was hardly so pronounced at that time. Before the amalgamation the Great Western gave the Waterford and Limerick and the Dungarvan line certain subsidies.

22653. It is the case that twenty years ago the Cambrian Company used to run steamers to Waterford?—Yes.

22654. If they ran them again, and it brought traffic through Waterford, would you object to the extension of Welsh control?—I suppose we would not.

22655. I do not think you would be wise to do so?—No. But I think you hardly grasp what I was trying to explain. Perhaps I am a little dense about it.

22656. Oh, no?—What we complain of is that the Great Western have really a dominating influence over the Great Southern system by reason of this agreement, by which they are bound to send all the traffic they can control by Rosslare, and if that was pushed to its logical conclusion—I may be wrong, I am only giving you my views and the views of Waterford—if that was pushed to its logical conclusion, it would mean that the Great Western would practically administer the whole South of Ireland through the Great Southern, and that they could do so from their point of view, which, naturally, would be an English point of view as distinct from an Irish. We say that something must be done to promote and encourage the growth of industries in Ireland, and one way we think of doing it is by reduced railway rates, however it may be brought about, but we think that that is not likely to result from the great English companies getting the control of the railways in Ireland. They would say "We are more interested in the traffic we can pour into Ireland than in the traffic we can get out of it."

22657. I am glad you have said that, because that is a point I was coming to. You say that it is to the interest of the English railway companies to encourage traffic to Ireland rather than traffic from Ireland. You were speaking, I suppose, of goods?—Yes.

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22658. You do not object to English tourists?—No; we are most delighted to see them, and I hope we receive them in every way that they should be. We have improved our hotels in Ireland for their benefit.

22659. I hope you get the benefit, too. But you had goods traffic in your mind?—Yes

22660. What interest has an English railway in encouraging traffic to Ireland rather than from Ireland?—Ireland is more an importing than an exporting country, and the imports will be greater than the exports. Therefore the volume of traffic from that point of view would be worth more to the English company.

22661. That is the present condition?—Yes.

22662. You will agree with me that owning steamers as well as railways it would always be a good thing for them if they could get a full load both ways?—Yes, of course, it would.

The alleged policy of English companies in promoting the flow of traffic to Ireland, rather than from it, discussed.

22663. So that if imports are biggest at present, their interest would be to encourage exports even more than imports?—I do not think they do it.

22664. I quite gather that, but I do not follow why you think it is not to their interest to encourage the traffic from Ireland. The export from Ireland at present is mainly produce, is it not?—Yes.

22665. The imports are mainly manufactures?—Yes.

22666. And manufactures for a given amount of money are a smaller volume than produce?—Yes.

22667. Therefore the produce is the bulkier thing, and there is more railway profit to be made out of carrying bulky stuff than out of carrying valuable stuff in smaller quantities?—I do not think the railway companies carry the produce in the volume that you would infer, for this reason. A large amount of the export from Ireland being produce would be brought down to the ports and shipped direct, and not by the railway steamers.

22668. But by railways?—The Irish railways would get it.

22669. Butter, eggs, poultry, bacon, and so on?—Yes.

22670. I cannot take it further if you are not inclined to tell me your reason for thinking that English railway companies have an interest in doing it. I cannot myself see that they have. It seems to me that their interest is just as much to encourage the traffic one way as the other. But I will leave that and ask you another question. You, like a large number of Irish witnesses, have said that you would like to see Irish manufacturers given an advantage against the Englishman—that the Englishman is so much more powerful that the Irishman ought to be given a benefit. I do not know whether you heard the question which Mr. Balfour Browne put to the last witness when he said that that meant that you would like Protection?—Yes.

The claim of Ireland to special treatment in the matter of railway rates and preferential treatment urged.

22671. I gather that you would like protection as against England: you say it is fair to level up?—The way I look at it is this. Ireland is a country which requires special treatment, and one of the ways of giving special treatment is by a reduction of rates and preferential treatment.

22672. A reduction of rates for Irishmen rather than of the rates for English stuff?—I would not object to the rates for stuff going into England being cheaper.

22673. You would like lower rates for Irish manufactures, but would keep them as high as they are for English manufactures coming into Ireland?—Yes. In other words, it is Protection.

22674. I am not disputing it; but, rightly or wrongly, the policy of the English Government is Free Trade?—Yes, a kind of Free Trade—so-called Free Trade.

22675. I do not want to defend it in the least, but that is what it is commonly called. Would you think it reasonable, when that is the policy of the English Government, that the railways should set themselves up against it and say "we are Protectionists; the Government is Free Trade, but we are going to be Protectionists"?—I think that is being done; at the present moment they are applying the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act in a way which is almost amounting to Protection. For instance, the other day they brought out an order by which the cases of watches——

22676. But that is not the railway?—No; I mean the Government.

22677. I am not objecting to the Government doing it. What I want to ask is would you think it right that the railway companies should set themselves up against the Government and say "you may want Free Trade, but we are going in for Protection?"—Viewed in the abstract, it would perhaps be peculiar, but, as I say, our reply to that is that Ireland is a country that requires special treatment.

22678. But does it not come to this? If you want to have railway rates worked in a Protectionist direction—and I am not objecting—you have got to convert the public and not only the railway companies; does not that seem so?—It does.

22679. I am not objecting to your doing it in the least, but the railway companies cannot go a different way?—I think I ought to say that we favour the view of a certain amalgamation amongst the Irish railways, with a certain amount of State control, or rather State aid, so that in this way manufacturers might be assisted.

22680. But taking it that way; supposing that happened and the railways were handed over to State control?—I am not in favour of State control—State purchase.

22681. But suppose there was a general control of rates developing then in certain directions; at present that would be the control of a Free Trade State?—Yes.

22682. And it would guide the rates in a Free Trade direction?—Naturally it would.

22683. That is what you do not want?—Yes.

22684. So that this question is bound up with the general question of Free Trade policy or of non-Free Trade policy?—I am afraid it is.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

22685. I understood you to say that previous to amalgamation the Great Western Company paid something like £16,000 a year to the three railway companies that served the port of Waterford?—Yes.

22686. And I suppose that while they paid directly to the railway companies, indirectly the traders who were served by those railways in the districts of Limerick, Maryborough, Lismore, and so on got the benefit of those rebates?—I could not answer that beyond saying that I think the subsidy was paid as a rebate from the rates that they got for the carrying of goods. I do not think the individual trader got any benefit of the subsidy that was paid in the way of reduction. I think it was paid more to encourage railway companies to collect traffic to go by the Milford route.

22687. Naturally, in the first instance; but surely the railway companies gave some portion of the advantage of the rebate which they were given by the Great Western Company to the traders in encouraging the traffic?—I could not answer on that point

22688. Perhaps you can answer it in this way. Can you say yes or no whether since the amalgamation the rates which the traders pay in the districts I have mentioned for the carriage of their produce to Rosslare or Dublin compare favourably or unfavourably with the rates they paid previously?—The rates in existence at present are the same as before the amalgamation, except that in any instance on the Waterford and Central and the Waterford and Limerick Railways, where the rate between two points happened to be greater for the same distance on the Great Southern and Western system it was to be reduced to the rate in force on the Great Southern and Western system; no increase was to be made in the rates existing at the time of the amalgamation, so that I could not answer what you ask me.

22689. So that, so far as you know, they are not affected by the amalgamation, and they do not have to pay any more for sending their goods to Rosslare or Dublin—cross-Channel goods—than formerly for sending them to Waterford?—I do not think so.

22690. *Lord Pirrie.*—Did you not say they pay a lower rate—that if there were two rates in existence they pay the lower?—No. The Amalgamation Act provided that if there was a rate, we will say for twenty miles on the Waterford and Central Railway, which ran between Dublin and Maryborough, and that rate was 5*s.*, and if the rate for the same distance on the Great Southern System between Dublin and somewhere else was 4*s.*, the rate should be reduced after amalgamation to 4*s.*

22691. So that you gained that much?—Yes, in the few instances to which it applied.

22692. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—In other words, the traders were in a better position than before?—To that extent, yes.

22693. I do not see how you could expect them to send their goods *via* Waterford, because you admit that they are in a better position by sending them *via* Rosslare. But, as a matter of fact, the judgment delivered by the Railway and Canal Commission the other day did not interfere with the differentials which were given to Waterford and Cork?—No. If I remember aright, the judgment practically said that the differential which had been accorded to Rosslare previous to the enquiry was not justified.

22694. It was to be taken away?—Yes.

22695. Undoubtedly the differential treatment had been accorded to Rosslare, and the Commission thought that as the steamboat service was practically as good as, if not better than, the London and North Western system, there was no justification for the differential treatment. I think that was the effect of the decision. At any rate, Waterford and Cork were not interfered with in regard to differential treatment?—No, except that we only got differentials where they were in existence before. We did not get any new benefit, though we did claim that we ought to have got them.

22696. Because of the protective clauses?—No, but because all the places on the old Waterford and Limerick line, which now belongs to the Great Southern, were not competitive. There were three places where differentials were given before, and they were competitive points at that time.

22697. You said that if the Dublin and South-Eastern had not taken action and won their case, probably these protective clauses would have afforded you all the protection necessary?—Yes.

22698. That would have been because Dublin would have suffered very much, and was suffering?—I do not think they were suffering.

22699. It was proved to the satisfaction of the Commission that they were, because their judgment practically laid down that in future the rates *via* Dublin were to be the same as *via* Rosslare, so that in the opinion of the Commissioners Dublin was very seriously affected to the advantage of Rosslare. Your contention is that Waterford has been seriously affected to the advantage of Rosslare, and I suppose to a certain extent you consider that Dublin has gained at your expense?—Yes, they have

22700. But, to put it shortly, you are of opinion that in a country like Ireland, with a big seaboard and a number of ports, the smaller ports do not get the benefit of their geographical position?—Yes.

22701. And that under a unified system, with State control, probably there would be no reason for diverting traffic across country to two or three principal ports, but that each port would get the benefit of the trade within a certain radius of its own sphere of influence, so to speak?—Yes.

22702. You consider that the dominating influence which the Great Western Company has acquired in the South of Ireland is not in the interests of the country?—I do not think it is.

22703. As a matter of fact, I think they have a certain voice in the management—I do not know to what extent—of the Waterford and Dungarvan line, and I think, in the Waterford and Wexford line?—The Great Western have an influence in this way, that the board of the Fishguard and Rosslare Railway Company consists of four Great Western directors and three Great Southern directors, so that they have a majority on the board.

22704. In that way they practically carry out their own policy.

22704A. Which may be antagonistic or not, as the case may be, to the interests of the Irish trader?—Yes.

22705. And handicapped as the Irish trader is in every direction you consider that it is of great importance that instead of being accorded, I will not say unfair treatment, but hard treatment in the way of rates, he should be encouraged to develop his particular industry by assistance in the way of low rates and facilities?—I do, generally speaking.

22706. You spoke of a new impost, or duty, or toll being placed on passengers and non-passengers at the Central Station at Waterford?—That has been done away with.

22707. You know that there is a small tax on Continental railways for admission to the platforms?—I am aware of that, but I would be sorry to see Continental methods applied here.

22708. But they do derive a very large revenue from it on the Continent. At any rate, this particular toll gave rise to great complaint, and it has been done away with, so there is no need to go into it?—We do not like new imposts or taxes in Ireland.

22709. Have you considered the question of amalgamation apart from State purchase?—I am not in favour of State purchase.

22710. Are you in favour of amalgamation into one system?—Into one system or three systems, as might be considered advisable when the matter was gone into.

22711. You would not approve of amalgamation unless it were accompanied by some form of State control?—Yes; some form of State aid, and that would involve Treasury control.

Amalgamation of the Irish railways under State control approved.

22712. And having some voice in the management?—Yes.

22713. In the framing of the rates and charges which would be levied?—Co-operation with the directors in the management of the amalgamated system.

22714. Would you be prepared to leave the decision as to any reduction which might be considered advisable in the hands of a Railway Board in Ireland without any interference or any control by the State?—Of course, if they were going to advance the funds, the State should have some control as to how the money should be given and the objects to which it should be applied.

22715. I take it for granted that unless amalgamation can be accompanied by a reduction in rates and fares, and unless it were laid down that that should be a condition of the amalgamation, it would not be worth considering?—No.

A reduction in rates and fares considered a necessary condition of amalgamation.

22716. *Lord Pirrie.*—In answer to Mr. Acworth, you said that you believed that certain traders got a preference. Do I understand that if any preference were given you think those special rates should be published or advertised or entered in the rate book?—I think they should be.

22717. That is what you would like to see done?—I think if preferential treatment is given, it should be available for anybody else.

Equal treatment of all traders as regards rates and concessions advocated.

22718. Do you mean that it should be published in the local paper?—I would not say that.

22719. Would you be satisfied if it was merely entered in the rate book?—Quite satisfied. I think I ought to say that what I have in my head about this preferential treatment has arisen entirely through the competition that took place between the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway and the Great Southern and Western in connection with a matter that was subsequently decided by the Railway and Canal Commission.

22720. Are these special rates given to large traders only and not to small?—What I have heard relates to small traders. It was in the nature of rebates. I have not permission to mention names, and I do not wish to do so. I have no personal experience myself of anything of the sort.

22721. *Mr. Acworth.*—You know that it is absolutely illegal?—I am quite aware that it is absolutely illegal.

22722. You reminded me by something you said in reply to Colonel Doë of a question which I should like to put to you. The Fishguard and Rosslare Company is managed by four Great Western directors and three Irish directors?—Yes.

The *personnel* of the Fishguard and Rosslare Company's Directorate.

22723. Is it within your recollection that less than ten years ago that extra Great Western director was appointed after pressure from the Irish side?—Yes; I must plead guilty to that.

22724. Waterford themselves were partly responsible?—At that time we were suffering.

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22725. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solr.*—It was inserted by the committee on pressure from the Irish side, and the committee put it into the Bill of 1898.

22726. *Mr. Acworth.*—You knew how bad the Great Southern was, but you did not know how bad the Great Western was; that is how you would put it?—I am afraid that is the way we must put it.

Growth of the desire of the Irish people to manage their commercial affairs free from outside control.

22727. But, seriously, what I want to ask is this. Is not that feeling which you have given expression to, and which a great many other witnesses have given expression to—the feeling that you want to be allowed to manage your own affairs commercially—of recent growth; there is no doubt that it is a real feeling?—There has been a feeling for a very long time amongst a large section of the community that we should be allowed to manage our own affairs.

22728. But commercially?—In other ways besides, but commercially, I think, it is to a large extent of recent growth.

22729. If I were not trenching on politics, I would be inclined to say that it has rather gone aside from political and taken a commercial form lately; is not that so?—Yes, I wish it were absolutely so.

22730. There is no doubt that the feeling exists now all over Ireland?—I think it does. I think that undoubtedly the people generally are taking more interest in commercial matters than they used to.

22731. And in that way Ireland feels that it ought to be a commercial entity to some extent?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Lord Pirrie.—I have been asked by the Chairman to announce that it was decided this morning that the next meetings of the Commission will be held in London on July 3rd, 4th, and 5th, in these rooms, and on the 8th and 9th in Dublin.

The Commission then adjourned till Wednesday, 3rd July.

FORTIETH PUBLIC SITTING—WEDNESDAY, JULY 3RD, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, BART. (Chairman); Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN, Secretary.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Sir Charles, before you begin the business of the day, will you allow me on behalf of the Associated Companies to express our heartiest congratulations to you upon the honour that has been conferred upon you by the King since the Commission sat last. *July* 3, 1907.

Chairman.—I am exceedingly obliged to you.

Mr. ST. JOHN HENRY DONOVAN, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. St. John Henry Donovan, J.P., Representative of the Kerry County Council, Tralee Harbour Board and Urban District Council, also of the County Councils' General Council.

22732. Mr. Donovan, are you a member of the Kerry County Council?—I am a member of the Kerry County Council, the Tralee Harbour Board, and the Tralee Urban District Council, and a delegate of the County Councils General Council in Dublin.

22733. And you have been asked to give evidence on behalf of the Kerry County Council before this Commission?—Yes.

22734. And the other bodies that you have mentioned?—Yes.

22735. Have they had this particular question under their consideration?—At different times there have been several discussions, both at the County Council, the Harbour Board, and the Urban Council, in connection with it, and they object very strongly to the rates and the way they are worked through Ireland—the local rates.

22736. You mean the way the railways are worked?—Yes; the unevenness of the rates.

22737. Do you think that those inequalities of rates which you have mentioned are detrimental to the prosperity of Ireland?—Certainly; the inequality is most detrimental and affects the trade of the country. It allows outside people to come in and sell their goods where the local man is handicapped by a higher rate to the same point.

22738. Then you think that local industries are damaged by that arrangement?—Yes.

22739. Of course it is easy to say that, but can you illustrate it in any way by giving us some figures?—Well, if you take the case of the through rate, you can get stuff from Liverpool——

22740. First of all, what do you mean by "stuff"?—Flour, or meal, and grain.

22741. Take grain, then; will you illustrate it by giving us the rates for grain?—Yes.

22742. Just give us those?—You get a rate for grain from Liverpool *via* Waterford or Cork for 10*s.*

22743. From Liverpool to where?—To Tralee *via* Cork or Waterford.

22744. How is that traffic carried?—Partly by sea and partly by railway.

22745. What is the distance from Cork to Tralee?—About 80 miles.

22746. Then there is a transit by sea from Liverpool to Waterford, and then a transit of 80 miles by rail?—From Cork to Tralee.

22747. Yes; I should have said Cork—Cork to Tralee. What are the through rates?—10*s.*

22748. What deduction do you draw from that?—Also the same rate is in vogue *via* Waterford, that is, you have sea to Waterford from Liverpool, and from Waterford to Tralee, 138 miles, it is the same rate.

22749. All 10*s.*?—Yes, 10*s.*

22750. Are you sure of that?—Positive; I have paid it.

22751. How does that compare with your local rates?—If you take it over, say, from Tralee to Millstreet, 43 miles (which is on the way from Tralee to Cork), it is 5*s.* 11*d.*, or from Tralee to Rathmore, 36 miles, it is 5*s.* 3*d.* That is, if we import grain direct from the Black Sea, or La Plata, or any portion of America, we have to pay a very large rate in comparison to what the merchants in Liverpool pay, who can, of course, have the liners and a cheaper freight against us. In proportion to the mileage we have to pay a higher amount.

22752. Are you engaged in the grain trade?—Yes.

22753-4. And therefore you know about these figures?—Yes. I am a timber merchant, grain merchant and coal merchant—a general merchant in the district.

22755. Have you got the rate for hardware to Tralee *via* Waterford?—Yes.

Instances of disproportionate local rates between Tralee and certain stations compared with through rates from English stations.

22756. Just give us that figure?—The hardware rate from Tralee to Waterford it should be; it is wrong in that proof before you, because "*via*" was put in; it should be "from Tralee to Waterford, 138 miles, 30*s.*"

22757. That is the railway rate?—Yes, and hardware from Birmingham *via* Dublin or Waterford is 48*s.* 4*d.*, and hardware from Dublin to Tralee, 134 miles, is 38*s.* 5*d.*

22758. Is that by railway?—That is by railway. Since I have sent that proof to you I have got two dockets from another gentleman in Tralee, which I have in my hand here, with regard to the rates.

22759. Tell us what they are and we will see what bearing they have?—For iron bedsteads the rate as quoted here is 38*s.* 5*d.* from Kingsbridge, but from Warrington *via* Kingsbridge and Dublin the rate is only 36*s.* 8*d.*—2*s.* less, although carried over the same line.

22760. Are the quantities the same in each case?—The quantity is 3 cwt. in one, and 5 cwt. in the other. The rate is the same, but of course in the smaller rate they charge scale rate; they charge at the rate of 60*s.* for the smaller lot of 3 cwt.

22761. Is there any difference in the conditions in regard to those; are they in each case company's risk?—The same conditions obtain in each case.

22762. Under the same conditions for the same weight the rate is less from Warrington to Dublin than it is from the port itself?—Than from Dublin to Tralee on the local line alone—only on its own line.

22763. Just give us those figures as clearly as you can, so that we may have them on the notes?—The

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rate from Warrington *via* Dublin, for hardware, to Tralee is 36*s*. 8*d*. per ton, and the rate from Dublin to Tralee——

22764. For the same traffic?—For the same traffic, is 38*s*. 5*d*. per ton.

22765. That is clear. You have notes to show that that is so?—I can produce the two dockets—the through rate (*handing in the same*).

22766. Do you consider that that is giving an advantage to outsiders over the Irish traders?—It is virtually 2*s*. less from Warrington.

22767. That is your complaint?—That is one of the chief complaints.

22768. I suppose you are in a position, if we want it, or are you in a position, if we want it, to give any further rates and particulars?—Yes; I have a good many rates. I have only taken a few items, as I have given you there in connection with these, to prove the facts. Those are with regard to through rates. We object a good deal to the local rates to the district. We say that Kerry is injured, as in comparison with Cork, for instance. The rates are grouped in County Cork; three towns are taken specially in Kerry out, and there is a group rate given of 4*s*. 6*d*. per ton for these three towns.

Injury to local industries in Kerry alleged owing to the low rates for grain charged from Mallow to certain Kerry stations compared with the rates from Tralee and other Kerry towns.

22769. From where?—From County Cork—Mallow.

22770. Give us the rate from Mallow?—Mallow, County Cork to Killarney, Castleisland, and Killorglin are all grouped at one rate—4*s*. 6*d*.

22771. That is rather a low rate?—It is a very low rate.

22772. You do not complain of it being too low?—We object to it, because we say it is injuring County Kerry, who guarantee a very large sum in connection with the railways worked by the Great Southern and Western.

22773. Are both districts served by the same railway company?—Yes.

22774. Have you mentioned that particular inequality of rate to the railway company?—Yes.

22775. Has it been brought under their notice?—Yes, but they say they cannot change it, because it is scheduled to the Act of Amalgamation?

22776. That is the low rates?—Yes.

Extent of the guarantees to railways in Kerry.

22777. They cannot raise those?—No, but our reply to that is, if the 4*s*. 6*d*. rate pays you to come into Kerry, we maintain that you should give us a proportionate rate out of Kerry, so as to give the same facilities to the Kerry towns as you give to the Cork towns. If they made a bad bargain, and put in a rate which they now say is entirely too low we maintain we should get the benefit in County Kerry of a similar rate out. That is one of the chief points upon which the County Council is very strong, because of their guarantee, upon which, I think, you had evidence from Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, M.P., and which, therefore I think I need not go into again. You have had those figures with regard to the guarantees for £20,000 a year virtually. Of course there are refunds out of it, but Kerry has guaranteed very largely, and has been a very go-ahead county, I think, in trying to open up the country for the benefit of the ratepayers, and we feel very strongly that another county should be in a position to come into Kerry and injure the ratepayers of that district by having a lower rate against the industries locally in the county.

Rates with Youghal and Templemore quoted.

22778. I think you have made that very clear, and unless you have any particular rate that you wish to mention in connection with the goods traffic, I think we will pass on to another subject?—Unless it would be necessary to point out that in Cork itself, taking Mallow as a distributing centre to other portions of the county—taking Youghal, which is forty-eight miles—they charge 6*s*. 4*d*., although they come into Kerry, over sixty miles, at 4*s*. 6*d*., thereby still showing that they are virtually attacking the county of Kerry. If you take it the other way, towards Tipperary, I may instance Templemore, which is sixty-five miles from Mallow—in that case they charge 7*s*. 9*d*.

22779. *Mr. Acworth.*—These are all grain rates, I suppose?—These are all grain rates—yes.

22780. *Chairman.*—I think those questions are sufficient for our purpose this morning?—I think so. Really there is no necessity to put the matter very fully.

22781. Your evidence is more of a general character, and you give these few instances of what you consider inequalities?—Yes.

22782. *Mr. Acworth.*—Would you tell me where Templemore is?—Templemore; it is on the map there.

22783. *Chairman.*—Do you consider the passenger service of the railway serving your district satisfactory?—No.

22784. Why?—We consider it is neglected, especially in the winter, and in summer local people get no real advantage. The tourists coming in from the big towns will get trains that will bring them into Killarney and down to Kerry at a very reasonable rate; but if we want to leave Kerry the difficulty is such as to make it almost impossible in the winter. It is only for three months in the year that those facilities are given really.

22785. But Kerry is not at all as attractive as Killarney, for instance?—But, of course, Killarney is Kerry.

22786. You are speaking of the county?—Yes; of all the towns.

22787. You are making some comparison with Killarney; you do not complain that sufficient facilities are not given to Killarney?—In the summer, of course, they give good facilities.

22788. Is there any use in giving special facilities in winter?

Lord Pirrie.—He says *from* Killarney.

Witness.—In the summer they give facilities from Killarney, too; they put on an extra train.

22789. *Chairman.*—What I understand you to say is this—that in the summer the arrangements of the railway company with regard to excursion trains, cheap fares, and other facilities are satisfactory?—Yes; from Dublin to Killarney you can get a cheap ticket.

22790. And from any other place?—From the big towns, but coming from Kerry we cannot get up to Dublin. From Tralee, which is twenty miles from Killarney, we cannot get these facilities. There are only two excursions in the month.

22791. I should have thought that quite sufficient. What is the population?—10,000, approximately.

22792. You have two excursions a month?—There are two cheap excursions a month—yes.

22793. What do you suggest?—I think they ought to give the cheap tickets as they do from Dublin—the three-day ticket from Friday to Monday.

22794. Do you think that people would travel?—Certainly, if they have got the facilities; I am confident of it. In the old days people could not travel at all; but when facilities were given you see how the traffic increased.

22795. Of course, I see your point—your point is that the same facilities that are given into Kerry should be given out of Kerry. That is what you mean?—That is so.

22796. And with regard to the summer arrangements, they are on the whole satisfactory to Killarney?—Oh, yes; they are now.

22797. And you think that if those facilities were increased, and if cheap return tickets were more frequently issued from Kerry, a large number of people would be induced to travel?—I am confident of it. Whenever there are facilities, and whenever there is an excursion train, it is always very well patronised, and every excursion train that runs so far has been a paying one.

22798. That is the two a month that you speak of? Yes.

22799. Those trains when run are well patronised?—Yes.

22800. With regard to the service of trains, say, between Tralee and Killarney, have you anything to say about that?—Well, the trains in the evening are rather inconvenient. If a person wants to go to Killarney on business for an hour or two, he can get away, say, in the afternoon at 3.20, and be in Killarney at 4.15. If he has a couple of hours' business to do there he cannot get back until 10.20—that is, arrive back in Tralee.

22801. When is the first train back to Tralee after you arrive at 4.15?—The first train back is 9.30, I think it is, or 9.25, but there is a new train, I believe, put on for this month.—I have not seen the time-table for this month. I think there is another train put on.

22802. Then that meets your complaint?—It would if they continued it all the year round, but they only put it on for the three months.

22803. What is the population of Killarney itself?—About 3,000.

22804. Then, there is a business connection between the two places?—Oh, yes, a very large connection, and it serves a large district—Killarney serves a very large district.

22805. Of course, if the train is on now, we will not say anything more about that, only we will take it for what it is worth that you think that waiting till 10.20 p.m. before you can get away after doing business in Killarney is rather inconvenient?—If they divided their hours better, it would be an improvement.

22806. With regard to the general question that has been brought under our notice by various persons, has your council considered the question of the purchase of the Irish railways by the State?—They have.

22807. Have they passed any resolution on the subject?—No; they have not.

22808. Have you formed any conclusion in your own mind?—There was a general discussion at the County Council, but no formal resolution. There was a resolution of the Urban Council.

22809. Have you got that?—I have not a copy of it here.

22810. What was the purport of it?—The purport of it was that the railways ought to be under one management—the Irish railways. They would not care exactly to make it entirely a Government Department; they would like to have it under certain local bodies, which would each appoint a number of representatives—say the County Councils.

22811. Of course it would have to be purchased by some body?

Mr. Shanahan.—There was a resolution, sir. (*Copy handed to witness by the Secretary.*)*

22812. *Chairman.*—Have you got it?—I have got the resolution in my hand now.

22813. One minute. You are a member of the body that has passed the resolution?—Yes.

22814. Do you remember it?—No. I was not present at the meeting that day.

22815. Would you read it if it is not long?

22816. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is it the County Council?—Kerry County Council, signed by the Secretary. "Irish Railways Resolution, 7th March, from Limerick Corporation. That the policy of Irish railways should be directed more towards developing the agriculture and manufacturing industries of Ireland. It is unjust to carry imported goods at a lower rate than similar Irish produce. The lowering of internal rates between stations in Ireland for all classes of agricultural produce would sensibly diminish the amount of such goods imported. There should be through rates to all stations in Ireland for Irish traffic, and effective State or public control should be introduced." This resolution was adopted on the proposition of Mr. William M'Mahon, and seconded by Mr. William O'Donnell, two members of the County Council. Mr. William O'Donnell is Chairman of the Rural District Council of Tralee.

22817. Are they both prominent men in that county?—Yes.

22818. I think you said that you represented the Irish County Councils' General Council?—Yes. I am on the General Council from Kerry—the General Council meets in Dublin. I am a member of that body, appointed by the County Council of Kerry.

22819. Are you aware of the resolution which they passed?—I am.

22820. Do you agree with it?—I do.

22821. But I think that went for State Purchase?—It went for State purchase with Irish control.

22822. With Irish control?—Yes.

22823. And you agree with that?—Thoroughly—to have the control by Irishmen—a Committee—that the local bodies should have the control up to a certain point. My view of the case would be that each County Council, say, or each province—the County Councils in each province should meet and appoint, say, two to form a central body, and that body then should have three railway experts paid a large sum of money—£1,000 to £1,500 a year each—and assimilate the different lines, so that the interchanging of goods between each would be facilitated. Whereas you have to write to one manager now, and to another manager at another time, and it takes time to get things carried through, if they were all under one control, the management would be facilitated, and the rates would be, in my opinion, more just.

22824. Is it within your own knowledge what the arrangements are with regard to railways in the Colonies?—No.

22825. Or Belgium?—Except what I have seen in the evidence.

22826. You have not made a study of the question?—No, except what I have read of the evidence here.

22827. I really gather that you, as representing these bodies in Kerry, would favour State purchase with Irish control?—Yes.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

22828. There is just one question I wanted to ask you to clear up, I think, an answer you gave the Chairman, as I want to be certain that I understand you. Did you mean to convey that the rate for goods from Liverpool *via* Waterford over the train line to Tralee was only 10*s.*?—Yes.

22829. And that the actual rate for the same goods from Tralee to Waterford was 11*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

22830. 1*s.* 6*d.* more?—That is so.

22831. That is correct?—That is correct. It is on the rate-book. I copied that out of the rate-book myself.

22832. What is the rate from Waterford to Tralee. You say from Tralee to Waterford it is 11*s.* 6*d.*?—11*s.* 6*d.*

22833. *Chairman.*—Either way?—Either way.

Lord Pirrie.—I only wanted to get that clear.

Chairman.—1*s.* 6*d.* more than the through rate.

22833A. *Lord Pirrie.*—1*s.* 6*d.* more than the through rate from Liverpool.—Yes; that is right.

Chairman.—We have had evidence about the Tralee rate several times before.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

22834. With regard to the facilities which you say are given to tourist traffic to Killarney, very often, I think, those tickets include hotel accommodation, do they not?—Yes.

22835. Would you propose, then, that the facilities which you wish to obtain out of Killarney would also include hotel accommodation in Dublin?—Oh, no.

22836. You simply refer to the actual railway rate?—To the actual railway rate.

22837. You said, I think, that the excursion rate from Dublin to Killarney was 21*s.*—that is, this Friday to Monday ticket?—Yes.

22838. And what is the ordinary return ticket from Killarney to Dublin, which you complain of?—I think it is £2 7*s.* 6*d.*

22839. Against 21*s.*?—Yes.

22840. And in your opinion, if they gave you the same rate from Killarney outwards it would lead to a great development of traffic? In other words, they are carrying only three or four passengers at £2 1*s.*—that is what I believe it is—when they would carry ten or so at least.

22841. Has it ever been represented to the railway company, and have these facilities been asked for?—They have been asked for at different times. We asked to have the rates reduced, and resolutions have been passed in connection with it for the last seven or eight years.

22842. From Killarney and Tralee outwards?—Yes. I speak more for Tralee, because the County Council meet there, and it is with regard to Tralee that we want to get the special rates outwards.

22843. If you did obtain these special rates outwards, it would involve some alteration to the railway service between Tralee and Killarney?—The morning connection is fairly good.

22844. As a matter of fact, it would not involve any great alteration of the through service?—No, not the through service to Dublin.

22845. Which you require?—Yes.

22846. I think you referred to the large liabilities which the County Kerry incurred with respect to those lines in the shape of rates?—That is so.

22847. And, in some cases, as we had from Mr. O'Donnell, they amount to 2*s.* 6*d.* in the £?—Yes; that is correct.

22848. And you consider, therefore, that you are entitled to derive any benefit the railway companies can give you in return for that?—Yes.

22849. Did I understand you to say, in regard to the acquisition by the State of the railways, that you proposed that the controlling authorities should be two members from each County Council, with the assistance of three or four railway experts—or from

The excess of the local grain rate, Waterford and Tralee, over the through rate, Liverpool to Tralee.

Issue of tickets at excursion rates to Dublin from Killarney and Tralee recommended

The taxation in respect of the heavy liabilities of Kerry in the matter of railway guarantees.

Constitution of a Controlling Body under a State Purchase Scheme discussed.

* See Appendix 39, VII.

July 3, 1907.

Mr. St. John Henry Donovan, J.P., Representative of the Kerry County Council, Tralee Harbour Board and Urban District Council, also of the County Councils' General Council,

each province, did you say?—I think that would be rather too large—to have them from each County Council; but to have the County Councils of each province meet, and those County Councils appoint two for the provinces.

22850. That would be eight?—Yes, practically.

22851. *Chairman.*—I am glad you have cleared that up?—Otherwise, it would be a very large body.

22852. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is the point—it would be very unwieldy?—You might add the cities. I suppose Dublin would have two extra, and Belfast and Cork.

22853. You would only be in favour of a small body, not a large body, which would be unworkable?—Quite so; and the expense of having to meet in Dublin would be too great to have a large body.

Constitution of a Controlling Body under a State Purchase Scheme discussed.

22854. Do you think it likely, if the State found the money for the acquisition of the railways, that they would consent to Irish local authorities, no matter how perfect they might be, having the ultimate control of those railways? Do you think the State likely to agree to such a suggestion?—That is rather a difficult question to answer.

22855. I only wish to get at your views?—Personally, I think that we in Ireland are thoroughly able to manage our own affairs. We have proved, since we have got the County Councils, that we have improved our country, and helped to keep our rates down; and we have managed our own affairs as far as we were legally entitled to do. If we got more power, I am confident that we would give a return which would be creditable to the Irish people.

22856. I quite agree with you as to the good work which, as a body, the County Councils have done, but my only point is this—do you think the State would be prepared to find the money, and hand over the control of these railways in this particular instance to the County Councils, or to any general body elected by Irishmen?—We are entitled to a sum of money, as you know, from the Report of a Royal Commission.

22857. We had better not go into that question?—It is only a matter of finance.

State Purchase and Control of of Irish Railways preferred to the existing arrangements.

22858. Assuming that the State were willing to find the money, and not to give control, would you be prepared to have that solution of the difficulty? If they said, "We will find the money, but we must have the control"—failing your own suggestion, would that satisfy you?—I think it would be better than the present arrangement.

Purchase and Control of Irish railways by an Irish authority recommended as the best for the country.

22859. Would you be prepared, again, if the Irish authority, whatever it might be (we need not go into the details of it), were prepared to find the money themselves—supposing it were possible for them to raise the money—to finance the purchase of the railways, and so on, would you prefer that solution—that they should find the money and undertake the control?—Oh, yes.

22860. I mean the man who pays the piper generally calls the tune, but assuming the Irish authority could finance the operation, then there would be no objection to that authority having the control of it. But do you think it would be possible for them to finance the operation?—I am afraid not at the moment, because what have we to go on?

22861. You have the security of the railways. Of course you know what the resolution of the General Council of County Councils is?—I have not gone into the evidence.

22862. I am speaking now of the general principle?—I am in favour of the general principle, certainly, if the financial position could be worked out satisfactorily.

22863. Taking your evidence, I suppose the opinion you have formed is that at present, under existing arrangements, there is a want of enterprise on the part of the railway companies in their own interests in not going as far as they might in lowering passenger rates, and so on, which would eventually lead to a great development of passenger traffic?—Yes.

The adoption of the Australian method of management by three Commissioners with absolute control suggested.

22864. And that that want of enterprise would probably be lessened at any rate, if not altogether removed, if the control of the railways were in the hands of some central body?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

22865. If the railways were put into one organisation, what objection would you have to the Australian method of three Commissioners, who would have absolute control?—Well, virtually, that is what I suggested. I think I said you would have three railway experts working under a body; that body would define the principles and the experts would work them out.

22866. What advantage would there be to those three Commissioners in having to deal with an inexpert body like the County Councils, dealing with a very, very technical matter like the management of a railway?—Well, even although you may not have expert knowledge, there is a certain amount of commonsense which it would be perhaps an advantage to the experts to receive.

22867. Do you not think that if your three Commissioners were readily accessible in Dublin you would be able to make any representations that you wanted in regard to your locality to them?—They would probably be too autocratic if there were not somebody to whom they would be responsible. There is a danger in confining things to too close a body.

22868. But has this particular question of the management of the railways been gone into with any great care in your district?—There have been several meetings, and Committee meetings, and discussions on it at different times. The Chairman of the County Council and two or three others who are interested in the matter have discussed it, and so have the Chairmen of the other Councils in Kerry. They have met and we have had different informal discussions. We had a Committee at the time of the amalgamation, and other Bills have been on in connection with the railway that the Committee have been working on, and they have had discussions without coming to any definite opinion, but the concensus of opinion is that the present management of the railways is conservative and not sufficiently go-ahead.

22869. With regard to some of these rates which you have quoted, you have taken into account the fact, have you not, that they are largely governed by carriage by sea?—Yes.

22870. And that you would always make a difference in railway rates where water carriage has great influence?—Yes. Of course you take the question of Waterford. In that case you have the sea rate from Liverpool to Waterford, and to Tralee. You have also a sea rate from Liverpool direct to Tralee. You have also the sea—it is true there is no service on at present—but you have the sea still from Tralee to Waterford, and yet the rate from Liverpool to Tralee *via* Waterford is 10*s.*, and the rate from Waterford to Tralee is 11*s.* 6*d.*

22871. I suppose that is governed to some extent by one of these Amalgamation Acts that have caused you so much trouble?—I suppose Tralee was responsible for having that rate fixed, because they took a very strong lead in fighting the amalgamation at the time, and got these reduced rates, *e.g.*, this 10*s.* rate.

22872. So that Parliament in its wisdom or unwisdom, has fixed you with rates you do not like?—We say these local rates should be reduced to a certain proportion of what the through rate is. For instance, the through rate is 10*s.*; we say if there is a local rate you should divide the 10*s.*; it is approximately about 4*s.* from Liverpool to Waterford, and it is about 6*s.* that the railway gets out of the through rate.

22873. My point is rather this. Assuming that the railway company were willing to alter that—practically they cannot alter it now on account of their Parliamentary obligations?—They can reduce their rates; they cannot increase them.

22874. *Chairman.*—Is that 10*s.* rate fixed by Act of Parliament?—It is scheduled, I think.

Mr. Acworth.—The Act stereotyped the existing rates; whatever they were they were not to be increased.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—All the existing rates were stereotyped, except with the consent of the Commissioners.

22875. *Mr. Aspinall.*—I suppose the line from Mallow to Killarney is still a single line?—Yes.

22876. And right on from Killarney to Tralee?—Yes.

22877. So that before asking for additional services you have considered the immense difficulty of putting on additional trains with regard to the few passing places there are upon the line?—There are a good many; they occur nearly every ten miles, or less.

22878. But there are comparatively few, unless the place has changed very much since I knew it?—Not few for the distance.

22879. But with the great length of single line

there is a great difficulty in doing that?—The length is about 60 miles.

22880. *Chairman.*—Are there six, or eight, or ten passing places?—There are nine.

22881. Nine in 60 miles?—Yes.

22881A. *Mr. Aspinall.*—With regard to your desire to have more excursion trains, do you really think that in Killarney you would be able to gather up a large number of people—the number of inhabitants there is only about 5,600—and do you think from there you would be able to fill excursion trains to Dublin in the same way that a large collecting centre like Dublin can send them into the country?—No, but if they gave an excursion rate to take them by ordinary morning trains they could do it by putting on an extra carriage or two.

22882. That depletes your revenue?—It increases it another way, for at present they are not getting the traffic.

22883. You think they would get more?—Oh, yes.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

22884. The last time you and I had the pleasure of meeting was at the time of the Amalgamation Act?—Yes.

22885. That was in 1899, was it not?—1900.

22886. Before that you had three companies into Tralee?—Yes; the Tralee and Dingle, the Kerry Railways, and the Waterford and Limerick.

22887. You have got rid of the Kerry railways—they were amalgamated?—No, the Kerry railways were worked by the Great Southern alone.

22888. But they are now made part of the system?—Yes, and they were part of the system at the time.

22889. I see what you mean. At any rate, the Waterford and Limerick was wiped out?—Yes.

22890. On the whole, do you think that amalgamation has been for your benefit, or the reverse?—It has not given us the same competition as before.

22891. That we know?—We used to get special rates and reductions.

22892. And some of them made inconvenient anomalies, as you have pointed out. But, on the whole, if you could go back again to the competitive system and have the Waterford and Limerick would you do so?—I would rather go back to the old competition.

22893. You would rather go back?—Yes.

22894. Then may I carry it further—may I assume that you would not desire to see further amalgamations if the companies remained?—Yes, I would be against amalgamation if the companies remained.

22895. If the railway companies remained, you would like to have all the competition you could?—Yes.

22896. But you think if they were all amalgamated into a State system you would prefer that?—Yes.

22897. And you are not afraid that the State would go to sleep?—No.

22898. I gather you think that the Great Southern, not having competition, has not improved its facilities?—Where it was bound to by the Amalgamation Act, it has improved its facilities, but we tied them down.

22899. But I understand it has lost the stimulus that it formerly had?—Yes.

22900. The question I want to ask you is, are you quite satisfied that the State, which would have no stimulus of competition, would be go-ahead?—Well, I think the interests would be so broad with the different people, and each person looking after his own district, that the stimulus would be there.

22901. Take the case that you mentioned. You objected to Cork coming into Kerry to compete?—Yes.

22902. And you wanted to get into Cork to compete?—We want equal facilities.

22903. Do you not think under a State system there might be local jealousies?—Oh, no, because the State would deal equally with each district, and the mileage and other matters would be taken into consideration.

22904. Yes, but supposing you and I were both treated equally, I should want a little better than equal treatment, and you would want a little better than equal treatment, too; that would be human nature, would it not?—Yes.

22905. Supposing the State was perfectly fair to everybody?—You would have other parties representing other districts to decide between you, and the decision would then be fairly fair.

22906. But would not each side consider it unfair?—Possibly, if we were too selfish.

22907. To come to another matter, can you tell me what is the grain rate by steamer from Liverpool to Tralee?—It varies from 5*s.* to 7*s.*

22908. So that the man sending grain locally from Waterford, if there is such a man, has always to compete with the 7*s.* rate from Liverpool?—Yes.

22909. Liverpool is always able to compete in the Tralee market cheaper than Waterford?—Yes, but the freight from Waterford by sea to Tralee would be about the same.

22910. But you said there is no service?—There is no service—that is, of course, no regular service (I must correct myself there), but if a merchant charters a vessel of 500 or 600 tons and puts her alongside the liner at Liverpool he can bring her in, whereas if he takes the ordinary service it comes out at about 9*s.*

22911. But it is still lower than the through railway rate?—Yes, it is.

22912. So that the point I want to get out is this, the man sending from Waterford pays 11*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

22913. The man sending from Liverpool can send it for 9*s.* by steamer?—By the ordinary steamer—yes.

22914. And even lower if he gets a special steamer; but let us suppose an ordinary regular line, it would be 9*s.* per steamer or 10*s.* by rail?—Yes.

22915. What I want you to tell me is why does the man who sends his stuff from Waterford to Tralee suffer if the railway takes it instead of the steamer; it would go any way at a rate not more than 10*s.*?—The man from Liverpool would lose 1*s.*

22916. I want you to think of the man from Waterford; it would go from Liverpool to Tralee at not more than 10*s.*; what harm would it do the Waterford man if the railway takes it rather than that the steamer takes it?—He could bring a steamer into Waterford.

22917. You are not quite seeing my point—what harm does it do the Waterford man if the Liverpool man sends to Tralee by rail instead of by water all the way?—A higher rate from Waterford to Tralee renders him unable to compete.

22918. Never mind whether he can compete; does it make any difference to him whether it goes by rail instead of going by water? He cannot compete either way—he has got to pay a higher rate either way?—He would get a 5*s.* rate by direct steamer from Waterford to Tralee if he chartered.

22919. If there were one?—He would charter a special boat.

22920. He can do that now?—He can do that now, but of course sometimes it is inconvenient for a merchant to take 200 tons.

22921. I will not ask you any more questions on that. Just tell me this: those exceptional Mallow rates are under the Amalgamation Act, are they not?—Yes.

22922. And they are the result of the competition of the Waterford and Limerick Company, are they not?—No, they have nothing to do with the Waterford and Limerick.

22923. Of course the Waterford and Limerick line did not touch Mallow, but it touched the district?—No, they did not come within twenty miles of any of them; they only came to Tralee. In one case, Castleisland, it came within ten miles.

22924. They were there before the Amalgamation Act?—They were—yes.

22925. And they are fixed by the Amalgamation Act?—Yes.

22926. And on the whole all the people in that part of Ireland thought it better, though they knew they were an anomaly, to fix these low rates than to have them left out?—Oh no, there was competition under that low rate before the amalgamation.

22927. The old rates were stereotyped on the application of the various local authorities?—Yes, or of individuals, more, perhaps, in some cases.

22928. You remember all the clauses in the Act were headed "For the protection of the town of Tralee," "For the protection of the town of Cork," and so on?—Yes.

22929. So they asked for them?—They asked for them, certainly—yes.

22929A. Would you think it reasonable—never mind who owned the railways—supposing the State owned the railways. Here are a number of very low exceptional rates—would you consider it reasonable to bring all the other rates down to that level?—Well, to within a proportion of it, anyway.

22930. To make them on the same scale?—Near the same scale—yes.

July 3, 1907.

Mr. St. John Henry Donovan, J.P., Representative of the Kerry County Council, Tralee Harbour Board and Urban District Council, also of the County Councils' General Council.

The hardship on the local merchants of the high rate for grain between Waterford and Tralee as compared with the Liverpool and Tralee rate.

The reason for the retention of the low Mallow to Kerry stations grain rates.

The justice of enforcing a general reduction of railway rates discussed.

July 8, 1907.

Mr. St. John Henry Donovan, J.P., Representative of the Kerry County Council, Tralee Harbour Board, and Urban District Council, also of the County Councils' General Council.

22931. Where would the money come from?—They might lose a little traffic at one end, but they would gain it at the other.

22932. Do you not think, if they thought it would pay them, they would do it now?—I think it would pay them personally.

22933. But you will admit they have more experience in the matter than you?—Certainly.

22934. They think it would not pay them or they would do it now?—They are afraid of reducing the rates.

22935. Because they do not think it would pay them?—I suppose that is it.

22936. Supposing they are right, and supposing that it would mean a loss of revenue, that would not recover itself for a good long while anyway—where is the money to come from supposing the State take the railways and find that they must level down?—They must level up a wee bit, too.

22937. Would you agree it would be well to allow the companies to level up?—I do not think so.

22938. As long as they are companies you would keep them down, in spite of the fact that they are unremunerative?—It would be too dangerous to give them that power.

22939. You could not give them any such power without control, of course. I wanted to know what your view was. Have you not made a mistake about the cheap fares?—I have got here the Great Southern and Western time-table. Here is a statement which I find in it:—"Saturday or Sunday to Monday cheap bookings. Cheap first, second, and third class tickets are issued by all trains except mails," and so on, to the following stations, and *vice versa*; and here are Tralee and Dublin both——?—Is that this month's?

22940. I suppose it is.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—That is the standard regulation, sir.

Witness.—What was the rate?

22941. *Mr. Acworth.*—Slightly over single fares. "For further particulars apply at the station"?—That is only on two days a month, is it not?

Extension of time of Week-end tickets advocated.

22942. The point is this, that from Dublin to Tralee and from Tralee to Dublin there are cheap week-end tickets in both directions?—Which day is stated there. I said Friday. They gave a ticket on Friday from Dublin available to Monday. If you leave the country on Saturday you cannot do any business on Sunday, whereas if you leave on Friday you can do your business on Saturday and go back on Monday.

22943. I follow. I thought I understood your complaint to be that cheap week-end tickets were not issued from Tralee to Dublin?—That is on the Friday.

22944. The point is this, that from Dublin to Tralee they are issued on Friday?—Yes.

22945. From Tralee to Dublin they are issued only on Saturday?—Yes.

22946. I did not understand that.

22947. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Is that the matter which you say you asked the Great Southern and Western Company to put right?—It was brought under their notice about three years ago. I do not know that it has been brought under their notice lately. I will not say that.

22948. *Mr. Acworth.*—In England those week-end tickets are from Friday to Tuesday?—Yes.

22949. And that, you think, would be a great advantage in Ireland?—Certainly.

The failure of G. S. &W. Co's application to the Railway and Canal Commissioners to increase some through rates in 1901.

22950. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Arising out of that question of the through rates which were in the interests of Tralee and other towns, I think, as a matter of fact, the Great Southern and Western some years ago, since the amalgamation, applied to the Railway and Canal Commissioners to raise those rates, and they were refused?—Yes.

Resolution of the Kerry County Council complaining of the injury to traders ceused by the discontinuance of parcels conveyance by the express service *via* Rosslare.

22951. So that, as a matter of fact, those rates which were against the interest of the railway company, and in the interests of Tralee, are practically fixed by Act of Parliament and were reduced on the special application of the Great Southern and Western Company to the Commissioners?—Yes. There is one more matter. There was a resolution also passed by the County Council, and sent to me—"Resolved, that we instruct our representatives appointed to give evidence before the Railway Commission to strongly urge on the Commission the great injury and injustice to the traders and agriculturists of the South of Ireland caused by the discontinuance of the carrying of parcels by express trains *via* Rosslare."

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—May I say now, that this is a thing under consideration? There is some misunderstanding. I did not know it was going to be mentioned. There is a discussion going on between the Postmaster-General and the Great Southern and Western. As I understand, we have no objection to carrying these parcels if we are properly remunerated for doing so.

22952. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is parcel post parcels, I suppose?

Mr. Croker Barrington.—Yes, parcel post parcels by the mail trains, as to which arrangements have not yet been made.

22952A. *Mr. Acworth.*—You do not refuse to carry your own parcels.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Certainly not, but we do not like carrying them by parcel post for nothing.

Witness.—We had an interview with Mr. Hartness, who is an inspector of the Post Office, on May 3rd about these parcels, and he stated that the Great Southern said they could not carry them, as there was too large a delay at Mallow transferring them. Mr. Hartness had the time taken for the Rosslare express—he was present himself—and the transfer at Mallow only took two minutes, and the train did not start for two and a half minutes after. It was on May 3rd that Mr. Hartness made that statement.

22953. *Chairman.*—May 3rd of this year?—Yes.

22954. What is the date of that resolution you read?—16th May.

22955. Quite recently?—Quite recently.

22956. *Mr. Acworth.*—Surely, from Limerick to Tralee was worked by the Waterford and Limerick Company before the amalgamation?—Yes.

22957. I think you told me the Great Southern?—I said it did not touch those three towns on the 4*s.* 6*d.* rate.

22958. I think it has got wrong on the notes. I understand you to tell me that from Cork to Limerick, previous to the amalgamation, the line was worked by the Great Southern?—Oh, no.

22959. We will get it corrected on the notes. From Tralee to Limerick was worked by the Waterford and Limerick, and is now worked by the Great Southern?—Certainly.

22960. And you think, on the whole, you had competition that way, of course—the Great Southern by the one route and the Waterford and Limerick by the other?—Yes.

22961. And you think, on the whole, you have lost rather than gained by the amalgamation?—Yes.

22962. Do you think that is a common opinion in the town?—Well, a good many complain with regard to delays—goods coming to them do not turn up—not so keen to have the traffic, and they are not so keen to have the traffic come that way. As regards the traffic out of Tralee, we get very great facilities from the staff at Tralee. They are doing their best; but we get a letter from some of our correspondents, "We could not send you the goods because there was not a wagon."

22963. I think I am right in saying that Tralee is increasing in population?—And increasing in imports, too—they have gone up.

22964. I have been told that is in consequence of these exceptional rates—is that true, do you think?—No; I think it is owing to the keenness and the business ability of Tralee.

22965. But not without help from the railway company?—Not without some help from the railway. I must say that the officials at Tralee do their very utmost to facilitate the merchants. Sometimes they are handicapped, but, on the whole, they have done their best, undoubtedly. There was a letter from Mr. Watson in connection with this business. He was a large creamery man—I do not know whether it is worth while to hand it in.

22966. *Chairman.*—Will you let me look at it?—(*Handing the document*) I have the original; that is a copy of it.

22967. This is the same question you have been raising now?—The same question.

22968. It does refer to small packages of butter and other things which we have had before?—I only wished just to mention the fact.

22968A. I really think you have brought up the whole subject by that resolution of the Council. It all turns upon that question. We are much obliged to you.

Mr. RICHARD W. WALSH, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN. *July* 3, 1907.

22969. Mr. Walsh, you are a Justice of the Peace, are you not?—Yes, and late High Sheriff for the County Louth.

22970. And you are a resident in the district served by the Great Northern of Ireland Railway?—Yes.

22971. Will you tell us where you live?—At Williamstown House, Castlebellingham.

22972. In the County of Louth?—Yes. I will hand in a map, if I may.

22973. It is not necessary, thank you, as I know Louth pretty well. I think you appear here in a rather different character from that of the last witness; you represent, or you wish to represent, the views of, what I may call, the small trader?—No, I do not represent the trader at all; I represent the country gentleman.

22974. But you want, do you not, to speak on behalf of the small trader more particularly?—Quite so.

22975. In your district, what is the principal industry?—Growing barley and corn and farm produce generally.

22976. Do you think that the farm produce of your particular district is served in a satisfactory manner by the railway company?—It is not served at all; we cannot use the railway. The only farm produce we can get out of the country is cattle. With regard to the other produce, practically we cannot use the railway.

22977. Do you think that if more facilities were given a trade might be done by those small traders in poultry, butter, and so on?—Certainly.

22978. You would say, I suppose, that there was no encouragement given to those small traders?—No encouragement at all.

22979. And therefore that that particular industry was stifled; is that your view?—That is my view—yes.

22980. Of course that is easy enough to say; but, how do you prove it before this Commission?—For instance, take the small farmers, and take the women who have eggs, butter, and fowl to sell; they are living quite close to the railway, and they get a cheap ticket, a market ticket, into Dundalk, for instance; but they have to go nearly three miles round by the road to get to the railway station, in consequence of the river intervening. I suggested that the railway company might make a footpath along the railway, fencing it off from the line, and in that way enable people to go along the railway, which is not more than a quarter of a mile from the station.

22981. You have not mentioned what place you are talking about?—I am bringing the whole matter down to a local point at Glyde Bridge, opposite Castlebellingham station.

22982. You are talking, first of all, about Castlebellingham station and Dundalk; give us the distance between those two places?—The distance between Castlebellingham and Dundalk is seven miles.

22983. Let us go by steps. You further say, I think, that the people in the Castlebellingham district, in order to get to the railway station, have to walk three miles by road because they cannot get across the river?—Quite so.

22984. And you suggest that that might be got over by the railway company putting up this footpath at a very small cost; and that this would be an enormous convenience to those small people?—Quite so.

22985. How do you suggest it should be done?—By making a footpath along the railway.

22986. But how are the people to get over the river?—A plank on iron brackets would enable them to pass over the river; the railway runs overhead, and an iron or a wooden plank could be put up at a comparatively small cost.

22987. There is a railway bridge over the river?—Yes.

22988. Do you mean that there should be something at the side of the railway bridge to enable people to cross over the river?—Yes.

22989. A cantilever, or something of that sort?—Or a wooden plank underneath the railway bridge.

22990. It is easy to talk about a wooden plank underneath the railway bridge; but, surely, if the railway company made a footpath they would have to make it safe?—It is only required for foot passengers.

22991. But supposing a foot passenger tumbled into the river while crossing over, would the railway company be held responsible—I mean, in case the footpath was defective?—Yes, I suppose so.

22992. Then you must have a proper footpath across this bridge; and your suggestion is, that the railway company ought to provide it?—Yes.

Lord Pirrie.—There would be iron brackets under the bridge.

Chairman.—But the footpath must be protected.

Lord Pirrie.—The railroad would run alongside the planks, and there would be iron brackets underneath the bridge, with a handrail.

22993. *Chairman (to the Witness).*—Your suggestion is, that if this footpath is made, and this plank, which you talk about, is put across the bridge then, instead of these poor people walking three miles they will only have to walk a quarter of a mile?—Yes.

22994. Has your local Council ever approached the railway company with that suggestion?—No.

22995. They have not?—I have asked the railway company to make a footpath or subscribe towards it, but they declined.

22996. How long ago is that?—Two years ago.

22997. And since then, you have done nothing?—Since then, I have done nothing. Allow me one moment, please. The people used to trespass upon the railway until there was a man who wished to commit suicide, and he threw himself on the rails, and a train went over him, naturally; and then the railway company stopped the footpath along the railway.

22998. In other words people trespassed upon the railway?—They did; they always trespassed upon the railway.

22999. Was there never a proper footway?—No, there never was a proper footway.

23000. The line is fenced, and they used to get over the fence and walk along the line of railway?—Quite so.

23001. And they went over the railway bridge, did they?—Yes, over the railway bridge.

23002. What occurs to me about your suggestion is this: Why do not the local authority get permission from the railway company to do this work?—Of course the local authority could not go along the railway.

23003. I mean by arrangement with the railway company. You say that you asked the railway company to contribute towards the cost; but, supposing the local authority agreed to pay the whole of the cost, do not you think the railway company would have allowed it to be done then?—I have no power with the local authority.

23004. What is your local authority?—The Louth County Council.

23005. What you say is this: that if convenient access were made to the railway station those people would be able to get to the market in Dundalk, where they could dispose of their little produce at a profit; whereas now they cannot go there at all; is that your point?—That is my point.

23006. We will leave it there. Have you made any estimate of what it would cost to do this work?—Well, I should think about £50, to do it in an ordinary way; about £50 I think would make a footpath and fence it and put a plank across the river.

23007. *Mr. Acworth.*—What is the length of the bridge?—Only about 30 feet span; the bridge is already there.

23008. *Chairman.*—Just go on a little further, please. I think you complain also that there is a long distance from Drogheda to Dunleer without a railway station at all?—Yes.

23009. What is the distance between those two stations?—Ten miles.

23010. Ten miles without any railway station accommodation?—Yes.

23011. Are there no sidings for goods traffic?—Nothing; and as Drogheda Station is one mile to the south of the town you have to come back one mile to the shops, banks, and shipping, and this has killed the coal trade of the river.

23012. What is the character of the district between Drogheda and Dunleer?—It is an extremely well-wooded district; there is a good deal of agriculture

Mr. Richard W. Walsh, J.P., Castlebellingham, co. Louth.

Gt. Northern Company's refusal to construct a footpath near Castlebellingham station.

Question of action by the local authority.

Estimated cost of the improvement.

Want of a railway station between Drogheda and Dunleer, complained of as an inconvenience to a largely populated district.

July 8, 1907.

Mr. Richard W Walsh, J.P., Castlebellingham, co. Louth.

carried on there, and it is very thickly populated with small farmers.

23013. Have the County Council of Louth ever brought that fact under the notice of the railway company? Is there a town of any kind between the two places you have mentioned?—There are several small villages—Clogher Head, Newtown, Termonfeckin, Cartown. I believe it is the longest distance in Ireland without a railway station.

23014. You mean on an existing railway?—Yes, on an existing railway.

The necessity of a railway station between Drogheda and Dunleer urged to accommodate and develop the villages of Clogher Head, Newtown, Termonfeckin, and Cartown, and the surrounding districts.

23015. But is there population sufficient to justify another station?—Yes. There have been several attempts made to make a light railway to Clogher Head to serve that district.

23016. Although it is at present served by a railway without a station?—As I say, there is a distance of ten miles without a station.

23017. Clogher Head is on the coast, is it not?—Yes; there is a fishing village and a new fishery pier by the Board of Works, and to get their fish to Dublin by train, they have to pass through Drogheda and round the place to the station, which is a mile outside Drogheda town.

23018. Your suggestion is that it would be a great convenience to that district to have a station put down about midway between those two places, which would serve this fishing village as well?—Yes; there are four villages; it is a large district on both sides of the railway.

23019. Are the residents in that district small farmers?—Small farmers and fishermen.

23020. And whatever they have to dispose of has to be carted into Drogheda?—Yes, and through Drogheda to the railway station a mile outside Drogheda; they have to cross over the river.

Inexpensive station without signals suggested.

23021. I see in your proof that you make some suggestion as to how this could be done?—Yes, by sidings, simply sidings on the railway side, and let the milesman's wife look after the goods. My idea would be to have the whole thing simple and cheap, with little expense and no signals.

23022. I am afraid there would have to be signals?—The Board of Trade kill all these wayside stations; they will not allow them to be put up. But I suggest that the thing should be done by sidings, and by allowing the milesman's wife to look after the goods. The Board of Trade have an idea that traffic in Ireland is the same as it is in England, where you have enormously long trains rushing backwards and forwards with goods.

The loss to the barley growers by having to cart their produce to Drogheda and Dundalk for disposal.

23023. How do those people get rid of their produce now?—The only way in which we can get rid of it is by selling it to the local brewers. We have to cart it into Drogheda or Dundalk, cart the barley, and then we are entirely in the hands of the two or three local men who are buying the barley; we cannot get it away out of the district.

23024. Have you any figures just to inform the Commission as to the extent of the growth of barley in that district—I mean, are you telling us merely what might be done, or what is actually done?—What is actually done.

23025. What quantity of barley is produced in that district for brewers?—Last year was rather a good barley year, and there was £15,000 worth of barley grain and potatoes in that particular district.

Year's value of the barley and potatoes produced in the district for which the proposed station is asked.

23026. £15,000 sterling?—Yes, sterling. The year before that the barley all got damaged; the brewers would not buy it at the time, and it was all left on the farmers' hands, and ultimately it was bought as damaged corn. I had a meeting at my house, and they said they had 8,000 barrels of barley on their hands worth over £4,000. I wished to get the Agricultural Board in Dublin to help the farmers to market this corn, but they would not help, as they said it would interfere with local traders.

23027. I do not understand that; but perhaps you will tell us what you mean by a barrel of barley?—A barrel of barley is 16 stones.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Two cwts.

Chairman.—It is a local denomination, I suppose.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It is a sack weighing 2 cwts.

Chairman.—Yes, I understand that it is called a "barrel there"; with that explanation that is all right.

Lord Pirrie.—It is a local term.

Chairman.—A barrel is about 2 cwt., is it?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Yes; it is an Irish term which is used all over the country.

Mr. Acworth.—It is a half-quarter, roughly.

23028. *Chairman.*—Then it is an important industry now in your district?—Barley is the principal agricultural produce.

23029. In consequence of there being no railway station and there being ten miles between those two places which you have named, the grower, or the local farmer—the small farmer—is put to considerable expense in carting his produce to Drogheda?—Quite so.

23030. And your suggestion is, that if there was a siding provided midway between those two places it would be very largely to the advantage of those local growers; is that your point?—Yes.

23031. Does not that express what you have to say without going into further detail?—Yes, quite.

23032. Now, what have you to say about passenger fares?—Before we pass from the produce, there is a curious anomaly I should like to mention. Last year I sent potatoes to the railway station, and I sold them to a dealer in Dundalk. He expected to get those potatoes carried to Dublin from Castlebellingham at the same rate as he got potatoes carried from Dundalk, that is, 4*s.* or 3*s.* 6*d.* But he found that the local rate from Castlebellingham to Dublin was 7*s.* 4*d.* Of course he objected to that—it was rather a surprise to him—but the railway company would not give way; they said that they must have 7*s.* 4*d.*; and he found it would be to his advantage to take the potatoes into the town of Dundalk, leave his wagon in Dundalk station, and from there to send them up to Dublin. By doing that he made 1*s.* on the rate between Castlebellingham and Dundalk and between Dundalk and Dublin. The total of the two rates was less than the rate from Castlebellingham to Dublin.

23033. Let us try and make that clear: Castlebellingham to Dundalk is seven miles?—Yes.

23034. He loaded these potatoes in a wagon at Castlebellingham, and sent them locally from Castlebellingham to Dundalk, and then they were sent from Dundalk to Dublin, and the two rates were less than the through rate from Castlebellingham to Dublin?—Yes, by 1*s.*

23035. That is your statement?—Yes.

23036. That does sound very curious; but are you sure of your facts?—I have it here on the railway invoice. (*Handing invoice to Chairman.*) It is much cheaper for me to do so. I always get my goods now from Dundalk, and I got them back to Castlebellingham for 1*s.* less. Otherwise, in getting feeding stuffs for cattle from Liverpool across to Dundalk, the Dublin rate is prohibitive, 7*s.* 4*d.*

23037. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—From where?—From Dublin to Castlebellingham.

23038. *Chairman.*—Will you just explain how you manage that; take an actual case?—This is an actual case.

23039. What was the quantity of potatoes, one ton, or two tons, or what?—Two tons.

23040. You took two tons of potatoes to Castlebellingham station; where did you consign them to?—To Dublin they were to go.

23041. But where did you consign those two tons?—I put them on the wagons at Castlebellingham to the order of Gray at Dundalk.

23042. You consigned them to the order of some man at Dundalk?—Quite so.

23043. What does this man at Dundalk do?—He takes them down to Dundalk and then sends them to Dublin.

23044. You mean the railway company took them to Dundalk to this man's order?—Yes.

23045. And instead of his unloading them there he then consigns them to Dublin?—Yes.

23046. And by that process you save 1*s.* a ton?—He saves 1*s.* a ton.

23047. You do?—Yes.

23048. *Mr. Acworth.*—You say that you do this frequently?—Yes, with feeding stuffs.

23049. What do you do? Do you consign them to yourself at Dundalk?—I consign them to myself at Dundalk.

23050. And then you get a note from the railway company that they have arrived?—Yes; and I take my time; I want to annoy the railway company, because they give me inconvenience; and then I take them back again to Castlebellingham.

23051. *Lord Pirrie.*—They do that entirely openly with you—Yes; and with coals they charge for the seven miles 2*s.* 4*d.* a ton for coals from Dundalk to

Castlebellingham. They charge for barley from Dunleer to Drogheda 2*s.* 6*d.*—I am constantly sending barley from Dunleer to Drogheda, which is ten miles; I put it on the wagon and take it off the wagon in Drogheda; they have no trouble and no terminal charges or any cartage at all.

23052. *Chairman.*—There is the accommodation at the station?—But there is no handling for them to do.

23053. *Mr. Acworth.*—You say that you are charged 2*s.* 4*d.* a ton for coal for a distance of seven miles?—Yes, seven miles.

23054. Surely there must be some charge for running it from the ship?—No.

23055. Is that coal bought from a local coal merchant?—Yes, bought from a local coal merchant. It is on the rates you have in your hand.

23056. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Did you not also say that they charge 2*s.* 6*d.* for ten miles?—Yes, 2*s.* 6*d.* for ten miles, from Dunleer to Drogheda for barley.

23057. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is not for coal?—No, for barley.

Mr. Acworth.—It is over 3*d.* a mile; there must be something wrong.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—I believe there is a haulage charge.

Mr. Acworth.—There must be something wrong, because the railway clearly has no power to charge 3*d.* a mile.

23058. *Chairman.*—I think there is something wrong about this. You say that the rate from Dundalk to Castlebellingham is 2*s.* 4*d.* a ton for barley?—Yes.

23059. On this Note, which I have before me, it says, "Rates between Castlebellingham and Dundalk for coal in 6-ton lots 1*s.* 4*d.* per ton?"—Yes; but I do not get it in large lots like that.

23060. Let me go on: "Coal in 4-ton lots, 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton." Where do you get your 2*s.* 4*d.* from?—It is marked there for potatoes.

23061. But you said for coal?—It is for barley.

23062. *Mr. Acworth.*—You said "coal," and I took it down?—It was barley that I meant.

23063. For barley, you said 2*s.* 6*d.*, I think?—Oh, no, it was barley.

23064. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You said for ten miles from Drogheda 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton; that was for barley, was it?—eYs.

23065. *Chairman.*—I am rather glad Mr. Acworth raised that question, because it puts it right?—It is for barley.

23066. But you said coal, and we took it down "coal"?—It was a mistake.

23067. The railway rates that you have given me here, which is a quotation from the Great Northern Railway Company, Ireland, seem to me to be very reasonable for coal rates?—I think them very dear.

23068. It is 1*s.* 4*d.* a ton for 6-ton lots?—Yes.

23069. That is, a wagon of coal; and in 4-ton lots it is only 1*s.* 6*d.* a ton?—But it is the barley I mean.

23070. Barley has to be covered, I suppose, with sheets?—Yes.

23071. I mean they cannot send barley in the same way as they send coal, can they?—They have no further trouble with the barley.

23072. But they have to cover it to keep the rain off, I suppose?—Oh, yes.

23073. They have to sheet it?—Yes.

23074. Have you asked the railway company to give you an analysis of that rate—how the rate is made up?—No, I have always sent my barley that way for the last three or four years, from Dunleer to Drogheda; and it is always the same price, 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton.

23075. And you object to it?—Yes, I object to it.

23076. Have you asked the railway company to give you any explanation of the rate?—They will not take it for less.

23077. You have not asked them how they make up the rate. Do you allege that that rate is beyond their powers?—No.

23078. You have no reason to believe it is?—They would charge me 6*s.* 6*d.* to Dublin—forty-one miles; that is the rate to Dublin for barley.

23079. From Dunleer?—Yes, forty-one miles.

23080. What is it from Dundalk?—I do not know what is the rate for barley.

23081. *Lord Pirrie.*—It gives 3*s.* 6*d.* here in the proof.

23082. *Chairman.*—Is it 3*s.* 6*d.* from Dundalk?—Yes.

23082A. And 6*s.* 6*d.* from Dunleer?—6*s.* 6*d.*, yes.

23083. *Lord Pirrie.*—Which is only forty-one miles.

23083A. *Chairman.*—Make that clear for the notes, will you?—It is quite clear in my proof.

23084. But it may not be clear on the notes?—The railway rate from Dublin to Dunleer, forty-one miles, is 6*s.* 6*d.*; from Dundalk to Dublin, fifty-four miles, it is 3*s.* 6*d.* per ton for corn.

23084A. *Lord Pirrie.*—"Corn, manures, and potatoes," I think you will find it is.

23085. *Chairman.*—What are those rates for?—Corn and potatoes.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—There is a sort of war of rates going on between Dundalk and Dublin by steamer.

The Witness.—I have paid those rates for the last three years.

23085A. *Mr. Acworth.*—You do not, I suppose, know what the Drogheda rate from Dublin was two years ago?—I do not; I only know my own local rates.

23086. *Chairman.*—Now, leaving the question of goods rates, have you anything to say with regard to passenger fares?—Yes, the passenger fare from Castlebellingham to Dublin first-class is 12*s.* 6*d.* return, the distance is forty-one miles.

23087. What is the third-class fare?—I do not know about the third-class.

23088. Most of the people travel third-class, I suppose?—I only know from my own knowledge, and I am speaking now from my own knowledge. But what I wish to call attention to is the number of different fares from the same station in the same train and in the same class. There are eight different tickets, first-class tickets, at different fares; the ordinary return fare to Dublin is 12*s.* 6*d.*, then there is a fare and a quarter as they call it; that comes to 9*s.* 3½*d.*, that is on a Saturday.

23089. That is the week-end ticket?—Yes, the week-end ticket. Then, on Sunday, it is 7*s.* 6*d.* return.

23090. That is the day ticket?—Yes. Then an excursion ticket is 6*s.*; another excursion ticket is 5*s.* 8*d.*; and another excursion ticket is 5*s.* 3*d.*; and the last one, which they gave the other day, is 5*s.*

23091. Those are for advertised excursions on some particular day?—Some of them are fixed excursion tickets, and others are special excursions. And what I was saying was that the people from Ardee come into the train and sit down in the same carriage with me; they pay 6*s.* from Ardee, but the railway company make me pay 12*s.* 6*d.* in the same train and in the same carriage.

23092. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are you north, south, east, or west from Castlebellingham?—Two or three miles south from Castlebellingham. I beg your pardon. I am just half way between the three stations—Dunleer, Castlebellingham, and Dromin.

23093. Then you are south of Castlebellingham?—Yes, I am to the south of Castlebellingham.

23094. *Chairman.*—Just let us have this perfectly clear. You come from Castlebellingham and you want to go from Castlebellingham to Dublin?—Yes.

23095. And you pay for a return ticket, what?—I beg your pardon. It is Dunleer I am talking of now; I want to go from Dunleer to Dublin, and I have to pay 12*s.* 6*d.* for a 1st class return ticket.

23096. That is an ordinary 1st class return ticket that you can get at any time?—Yes.

23097. Then you say that the people from Ardee, with their cheap tickets, can ride in the same carriage with you on any day, do you?—Oh, no, only on excursion days.

23098. I see. Then the excursion days are not the same from Dunleer as from Ardee. (*The witness produced a placard and explained it to the Chairman.*)

23099. Those tickets are issued on certain dates at special fares by special trains, and you must travel by those special trains to get the benefit of those cheap fares?—Yes.

23100. There is no hardship in that, is there?—It is a hardship on me in having a man sitting beside me paying 6*s.* while I have to pay 12*s.* 6*d.*

23101. But he cannot be sitting alongside of you. If you travel by the special train, you leave Dunleer at 11.10, and he leaves Ardee at 8.45?—That is the train I go by.

23102. It is not a special train for you from Dunleer; it is an ordinary train?—It is an ordinary train for him also.

23103. It says here "special"?—But it is the ordinary train.

23104. We do not want to labour this too much. You seem to have a variety of fares; and a good

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Rates for grain, etc., Dunleer and Dublin, compared with the Dundalk and Dublin rates.

Complaint as to anomalies in connection with passenger fares.

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many of them are very low and very reasonable?—Very reasonable.

23105. But of course you can pick out one or two anomalies of this kind by getting into the same train, where the Ardee passenger is allowed to travel at this cheap fare?—But it is in the ordinary train.

23106. His cheap ticket is issued by the ordinary train?—Yes.

23107. But you could pay the same low fare if you travelled by the advertised train from Dunleer?—Quite so. The first class return fare to Dublin is 12*s.* 6*d.* from Dunleer; Dunleer to Drogheda 3*s.* 6*d.*; Drogheda to Dublin after 12 o'clock is 5*s.* 6*d.* That is 9*s.*; but you cannot re-book in Drogheda because the train is at the station, so you lose 3*s.* 6*d.*

23108. Have you been to the railway station to examine the rate books?—I have.

23109. And have you looked at them?—Yes, I have looked at the rate books, and there are forty columns of figures in all, and those eight different tickets have to be put down in all the different columns.

23110. Now you are talking about passenger fares?—Yes; there are all those tickets in the different groups, and naturally there is a lot of trouble connected with them.

The issue of mileage coupons in lieu of present railway tickets recommended.

23111. I see in your proof a great number of suggestions, but I think I will put it very broadly to you: Have you considered what is the best remedy for all your grievances?—I would suggest that it should be done by not having any railway tickets, but by having coupons, and grouping all the different stations, and having reasonable rates for all the railway stations. It is of very little consequence to a railway company whether the passenger travels a mile more or less one way or the other; and if they had the same rate for groups of stations, and carried you at any time you wished, I think it would be much better. We are troubled with tickets expiring at different dates—sometimes you have to come back the same day, sometimes you can stay an extra day or two days, and so on. But my suggestion would be that the time should be unlimited, and that at any time you wished to come back you should be able to return with your return ticket. In Scotland all tickets are available for six months.

Proposed extension of time for return tickets

23112. All ordinary return tickets, do you mean?—Yes.

23113. What are they in Ireland—the ordinary return tickets?——

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—They are available for a month.

Mr. Shanahan.—It depends on the distance.

The Witness.—For a short distance the ticket is only available for the day of issue.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It is a month generally.

Mr. Shanahan.—Yes, for 25 miles.

23114. *Chairman.*—I do not know whether the witness is exactly right about Scotland. Do you mean to say that an ordinary return ticket for, say, seven miles in Scotland would be available for six months?—From Carnoustie to Dundee is only eight miles, and the return ticket is available for six months.

23115. You know that, do you?—I do.

23116. I am not questioning your accuracy, but I do not know it, and that is why I ask you?—It is so.

23117. Ordinary return tickets are available for six months, you say?—Yes.

23118. And in Ireland they are only available for one month for long distances?—Yes.

23119. For under fifty miles you say the period varies?—Yes.

23120. Some tickets are available for seven days, and some for one day?—Yes. And I saw by the local paper the other day that some people wanted to get up to the Exhibition from a long distance, from Cookstown, and they wished to go to Dublin, to stop the night and come back the next day; but the railway company would not allow an extension of time, and they had to come back on the same day by the eleven o'clock train at night.

Lord Pirrie.—The distance is over fifty miles?—Yes, it is sixty or seventy miles.

23121. *Chairman.*—Was that an excursion train?—Yes.

23122. And it was one of the conditions of the excursion that the ticket was issued available for the day only?—Yes.

23123. There is nothing unreasonable in that if that was the condition. I mean it is a cheap fare for which a day ticket is issued. A passenger could stay a week or a month, I suppose, if he took an ordinary ticket?—Yes, he could.

23124. You are in favour, I see, of coupons—blocks of tickets, at so much a mile, with which the passenger should be allowed to travel anywhere at any time, and to give up his coupons whenever he travelled?—Yes.

23125. That would, of course, have to be a uniform fare?—Yes.

23126. Then you would do away with all these cheap excursion fares?—Yes, I think they are only irritating; and I think it would be much better to be without them.

23127. Do you think people would go to Dublin, if they did not have these cheap excursion tickets?—Yes.

23128. And pay the ordinary fare?—Yes, a reasonable fare.

23129. For instance, what is the day excursion ticket from your district to Dublin for the Exhibition now?—With the ordinary excursion ticket they gave us the other day, they take you up to Dublin at half-past twelve in the day—that is the excursion bill which they are issuing now (*producing bill*), and that is to be continued during the summer, and it is a very cheap excursion; but we arrived in Dublin late, so that we could not go anywhere. It was twenty minutes past two when we got up the other day; and by the time we had had something to eat in Dublin, and we got to the Exhibition—it takes you half an hour to get out there—we could not see much of the Exhibition. Then we had to get home again by the eight o'clock train; so that we had only three or four hours at the Exhibition; and we did not get back before 11.30 p.m., which was too late for country life.

23130. Looking at this bill, have you, what we call early closing days in those towns?—No, none.

23131. Why is Thursday selected?—I do not know.

23132. It is not a kind of half-holiday for tradesmen?—No, there is no closing day in the country.

23133. It seems to be a very cheap fare?—Very cheap.

23134. But you would do away with all these, according to what you say?—Yes, it is too late. In starting it should be 9 a.m.

23135. I suppose a lot of people travel by these excursion trains?—Very few. I wanted our workmen to go up, but they said it would not be worth their while, because it would be so late when they arrived in Dublin, that it would be nearly four o'clock before they got to the Exhibition; and then they had to come home, and it would be twelve or one o'clock before they could return to their homes.

23136. Are you a shareholder in the railway company?—I am.

23137. As a shareholder, do you consider it would be an advantage to the country for the State to purchase the railways?—I think that in a way it would be, but I would certainly not agree to the local Councils having anything to say to it.

23138. Do you mean the County Councils?—The County Councils, yes.

23139. How do you suggest they should be managed?—By their present boards amalgamating in Dublin, and working them all from Dublin by the present boards; and they should have a representative of the Government. They are all experts in Dublin, the different boards are all composed of experts; and they would manage them in the way to suit the country best.

23140. The State is to buy the railways, and the railways are to be managed by the existing railway directors; is that your idea?—Yes, for the benefit of the country. The drawback to a large central body having to do with it is that they would kill all further enterprise in making small railways. I promoted some small railways, and we had all the large railway companies in opposition. And they kill the tramways, of course; for instance, the Dublin and Kingstown Tramway would never have been heard of if the railway companies could have killed it; and the same thing in Cork.

23141. It seems to me that the tramway is killing the railway there?—Yes, it is the tramway killing the railway now, but it is because the railways are not progressive; they are too tied up with red tape and expense and wasted capital and labour on their system in working.

23142. At any rate, you favour State purchase with Irish management?—Quite so.

23143. Is that, in a few words, what you mean?—Yes.

23144. As to the details, you have not gone into that?—No.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

23145. I would just like to ask you one or two questions. Does it not seem to you, with regard to your bridge, that it would be reasonable that the people should pay for the use of the railway bridge?—Yes; they would be only too pleased.

23146. Have you ever asked the railway company to allow you to put a footpath at your own expense?—I asked the railway company to make a footpath.

23147. Their business is not to carry foot passengers but railway passengers?—They would all be railway passengers.

23148. Have you ever offered to pay the expense of making a footpath if they would allow you to use the girders of their bridge to carry it?—No, it was only in connection with the railway and its passengers that I wished to ask the railway company to carry them.

23149. You would not allow other people to use it, except people going to and from the station; you would not allow the general traffic to use it?—No.

23150. Now, tell me about the Board of Trade. Have you ever asked the Board of Trade, or ever approached them, on the subject of allowing cheaper stations to be made?—No, I have never done that.

23151. Just one other thing. I see in your proof that you point out the difference between the railway and the hatter; you say the hatter always charges the same price?—He should. If an article is worth the same money, one ought always to pay the same price.

23152. If you go up Regent-street, London, now, you will see "After Season's Sale," and you can buy a hat for one guinea for which you would have had to pay perhaps three guineas had you bought it a fortnight before. Is not that rather like the railway?—But the hatter would not have different prices upon the same day, or within one week.

23153. Is it not rather like the railway? If you want to go at your own time they charge you 12*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

23154. But if you are willing to go at a time that suits them, they charge you 5*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes.

23155. If you want to buy a hat for your wife at your own time the hatter makes you pay three guineas, but if you take the same hat when he has not been able to sell it to anybody else, he will sell it to you for one guinea?—Yes, that is so.

23156. Is not that much the same as the railway? Do you not think that a railway company ought to act as an ordinary trader?—Yes; but they do not; the ordinary trader gets all the trade he possibly can along his line; but the railway company does not take the ordinary traffic; it all goes along the roads in the farm carts. You will see numbers of them always on the road to Dundalk, which is eight to ten miles off; and they will carry barley ten miles along the road. There are long strings of farm carts to be seen there.

23157. You have never tried to help the railway company by going with them to the Board of Trade and saying, "Make easier regulations." You have not done anything of that kind, have you?—It would be no use for a private individual to do so. I am simply here on my own behalf.

23158. Are you not a member of the local authority?—Gentlemen and large ratepayers are not elected on the local authority now; they are absolutely debarred.

23159. Do they not sympathise with your view that they would like a station?—No.

23160. *Chairman.*—I do not think you understand that question—you answered that they did not want a station; but I understood you to tell me that they did want a station between these two places?—I think local boards are rather objecting to railway facilities, because through not having them the people are being kept at home. The shopkeepers, who are now the local boards, approve of the present state of things, because it keeps the people at home and they have to buy stuff locally. For instance, we have got a co-operative society in Dublin selling farm manures; and the people of whom I have been speaking do not like that, because the local trader sells manures.

23161. *Mr. Acworth.*—If the railways were managed by the State, would you have them managed on the opinion of the Irish people that it is desirable to keep the people at home, or on your opinion that it is desirable to let them travel?—It would be a very risky experiment.

23162. But I thought you wanted to hand the railways over to the State?—I want the State to have the purchase of them, because I think it would lower the rates very much through all the railways being amalgamated, and thus do away with a great deal of the present expense.

State purchase of the Irish railways recommended in the interets of economy in working.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

23163. With regard to the carting in that district, how far do you find it is economical for the people in the district to cart as against the railway rates?—They cart barley nearly eleven miles into Drogheda and hay to Dublin from Slane, 26 miles, by road.

23164. Anything else?—And they cart coals.

23165. But do you look upon ten or eleven miles as the limit beyond which it is not economical to cart?—It depends very much upon the value of labour in the district, and upon what the farmers are going to do with their horses.

Suggestion that competitive carting should be abolished by reduced rates.

23166. I rather wanted to get at what you were driving. Do you suggest that the railway rates should be lowered, so as to abolish carting?—Yes.

23167. Therefore your desire would extend for a distance of about ten miles?—About ten miles, yes.

23168. *Mr. Acworth.*—I think we had better get this right on the Notes. Return tickets are available, as I understand, for a distance not exceeding twenty-five miles for one week, and exceeding twenty-five miles for one month?—Yes.

Time of availability of ordinary return tickets in Ireland.

23169. But that is different from what you said?—I said that some of the excursion tickets are available for only the day of issue.

23170. But the ordinary tickets, I thought you said, were available for only a day for short distances?—Not the ordinary tickets.

23171. Under twenty-five miles it is available for one week, and over twenty-five miles it is available for one month—is not that so?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

23172. With regard to the rate on agricultural produce, without going into details, I suppose your contention, broadly, is that as the value of any commodity must largely depend, not only on the actual cost of its production, but on the additional cost involved in putting it on the market, it is of very great importance to you to have the costs of placing the goods on the market reduced to the lowest possible minimum, and you think that under present circumstances they are not reduced to such a point, or rather that they are fixed at such a rate as very considerably to add to the cost of production, and do away with any good which the agriculturists of Ireland have derived from the lower rents which they pay in virtue of land purchase and other matters—that those effects are nullified to a large extent by the high rates for getting their goods to market?—Yes.

23173. Would you go so far as to advocate the adoption of the Continental system. You know, of course, that in most of the Continental countries the rates for export, especially in the case of agricultural produce, are very substantially lower than for the same class of produce which remains in the country. Would you be in favour of that policy?—I think so. In Ireland we cannot get rid of our farm produce.

23174. Because the cost involved is so great?—Yes, the cost is killing in the case of, for instance, turnips and hay. To give an instance, hay will be 1*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. down in Castlebellingham, while it is 6*s.* in Dublin, and you cannot send hay to Dublin from Castlebellingham.

Alleged injury to agricultural producers by excessive rates for conveyance of such goods to market.

23175. You spoke of barley, and I think you said the rate was 6*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

23176. And I think about ten barrels go to a ton?—Yes.

23177. The value per ton would be about £6, I suppose?—Not so much.

23178. You get 10*s.* to 14*s.* a barrel, do you not?—Yes, about that.

23179. At 10*s.* per barrel it would be £5 a ton and at 12*s.* it would be £6. In other words, you consider that the proportion of the rate to the value is too great?—Very much. Potatoes again are only about £2 10*s.* a ton, and the rate is almost the same.

23180. We all know that one of the largest industries in Dublin, and perhaps in the whole of Ireland, is Guinness's Brewery, and there, I believe, it is the case that owing to the prohibitive railway rates they

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are getting a large quantity of their barley from abroad?—Yes.

23181. And, as we all know, there has been an agitation among Irish agriculturists to bring pressure to bear upon Messrs. Guinness to take the barley produced in the country?—Exactly. With regard to potatoes, a couple of years ago I tried to sell potatoes, but I found the cost of transit destroyed all the profit, and I gave them to cattle.

23182. I was rather surprised to hear you say, as I understood you, that local authorities are opposed to railway facilities and extra railway siding accommodation and other advantages of that kind?—I would not go so far as that; but I have heard several traders in the towns say that they rather disapprove of railway facilities, because when the people are at home dealing in their own shops locally they are able to make more money than when the people go to Dublin and shop.

The advantage to the community at large of extended railway facilities.

23183. There may be something in that; but I certainly do not think the experience of the country generally, judging from the evidence we have had from different parts of the country, has been in the direction that you suggest, quite apart from the gentry and men of your class being excluded from the local authority?—I have heard several people in Drogheda complain about the cheap tickets which the people get to go to Dublin, whereby they can now go and shop in Dublin instead of locally, as they used to do.

23184. That might prejudice the local shopkeeper perhaps, but he is only one of a small class as compared with the people who depend upon the shopkeeper or depend upon outside sources for supplies?—Quite so.

23185. So that for the benefit of the greater number the argument is in favour of railway facilities, naturally?—Yes.

23186. You spoke about railway facilities and excursions, of course the particular excursion you mentioned to the Dublin Exhibition seems to start very late. Has it ever been represented to the railway company that they might with advantage start at an earlier hour?—I wrote to the railway company asking them to start the train earlier, and they said that it would interfere too much with their other arrangements to let us go by the ordinary train at 9 o'clock in the morning and so have all the day in Dublin. They said it would interfere with their other arrangements, but there are three hours during which there is no passenger train running on the line at all.

Complaint as to inconvenient excursion train arrangements on G. N. (I.) Ry.

23187. I was rather surprised at what you said, because in the part of the country where I live the Great Southern and Western Railway Company give a very good excursion train at an early hour in the morning, which practically gives the people the whole day, and they have seven or eight hours at the Exhibition?—I wrote to the manager in Dublin and asked him to let us come up early in the morning, but he declined, and said that he could not do it as it would interfere with his traffic arrangements. And, of course, when we got up so late as that it meant that we could not get back until 12 o'clock or 1 o'clock, and then we had a long drive, and the people in the house, the servants and so on, were kept up and the whole place was upset.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I agree with you that it seems to be a very late hour.

Examined by LORD PIRRIE.

23188. Just one question as regards your view about the train starting from Ardee with passengers in it who have paid 6*s.* for a return ticket; when that train stops at Dunleer, you consider that you should get your ticket at the same rate as from Ardee?—Yes.

23189. You meant to convey that it was not a special train, but the ordinary train stopping at your station, and therefore you complained that you did not get your ticket at the same rate as the Ardee people did?—Yes.

23190. In a case of that sort, is it not very customary and is it not in fact an ordinary thing on the Great Northern line that, although the cheap tickets are not issued at your station, the guard will give you a ticket as if you had got in at Ardee?—No; the stationmaster declined to do so.

23191. I understood that on the Great Northern line, when there were excursion trains of that sort and people wanted to get in at intermediate stations, they were always allowed to do so on paying the same price as from the original starting place, and that, as I understand you, is all you want?—Yes; that is what I want. The stationmaster said that if I wished to book by the excursion I could wait till 11 o'clock.

23192. I am speaking of that one train which started from Ardee at 8.45 and stopped at your station—I only want to get it clear?—The stationmaster declined to allow us to travel on that at the cheap rate.

23193. *Chairman.*—A man from Ardee can leave a little after 8 o'clock in the morning, and have a whole day in Dublin for 6*s.*?—Yes.

23194. Whereas, if you want to go by that same train it costs you double that amount?—Quite so.

23195. You go in the same train and you come back in the same train?—Yes; there is no excursion train from Ardee; it is the ordinary train.

23196. The Ardee excursion passenger is allowed to travel by the ordinary train?—Yes.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—It is a privilege which is granted to that small branch at Ardee to avoid the necessity of a special excursion train. If the witness waited he could go by the regular excursion train. In the case of the Ardee train a privilege is granted to that little branch which is only four miles long.

The Witness.—It is six miles long, and we pay a county rate for it, a guarantee rate.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—That privilege is granted to that short length of line.

The Witness.—I pay 4*d.* in the pound for that Ardee branch.

23197. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That is a guaranteed railway?—Yes; the Great Northern Railway Company made that branch on condition of the Barony paying the guarantee.

Chairman.—We are much obliged to you, Mr. Walsh.

Mr. MICHAEL LYNCH, J.P., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. Michael Lynch, J.P., Representative of the Urban District Council and of the Chamber of Commerce, Omagh.

23198. Mr. Lynch, you are a Justice of the Peace?—Yes.

23199. And you appear on behalf of the Omagh Urban District Council and of the Chamber of Commerce of that place?—Yes.

23200. Have you been deputed by them to give evidence before us?—Yes.

23201. What part of the case do you wish to bring before our notice?—In the first place I wish to advocate the construction of more light railways in the County of Tyrone.

23202. More light railways?—Yes.

Construction of a light railway between Cookstown and Strabane advocated.

23203. Are there any light railways there now?—Yes, surely, there are two. There is the Clogher Valley Railway and the Castlederg and Victoria Bridge Tramway.

23204. Between what particular points do you consider that it would be an advantage to have these additional light railways?—In the northern portion of the county there is a very large district that is entirely without railway facilities, and I suggest that there should be a light railway starting from Cookstown and going on by Greencastle, Rooskey, Gortin, Plumbridge, to Strabane.

23205. What distance would that be?—About thirty-five miles.

23206. And the whole of the district that you have mentioned is now without any railway communication of any kind?—Yes.

23207. What other districts do you suggest?—That would not be sufficient for the requirements of the locality. There would be required a branch line from about the middle of the suggested line connecting with Omagh.

23208. Omagh to Greencastle?—Yes.

23209. *Mr. Acworth.*—From Cookstown to Strabane is the first you suggest?—Yes.

23210. And a branch from Greencastle down to Omagh?—Yes.

Mr. Michael Lynch, J.P., Representative of the Urban District Council and of the Chamber of Commerce, Omagh.

The probabilities of the proposed new railways :—Cookstown to Strabane Greencastle to Omagh, and Clogher to Omagh, being a financial success.

Complaints of insufficient and inconvenient passenger train service between Omagh and intermediate stations to Dungannon.

23211. *Chairman.*—What other part of the district do you suggest?—That would be sufficient for that district. Then, in the southern portion of the county the Clogher Valley Railway does not serve the locality in the way it should.

23212. There is a station at Clogher, is there not?—From Clogher direct to Omagh.

23213. *Mr. Acworth.*—Not to use the existing line to Fintona?—No.

23214. *Chairman.*—Why not use the existing line?—There is a pretty mountainous district lying between Fintona and Fivemiletown.

23215. Have you ascertained what population would be served by these suggested light railways?—I cannot give you the figures of the population of these particular localities. The reason I suggest these lines is that when this line was made——

23216. Which line?—The Clogher Valley line. It led nowhere in particular. The place where the people of the district would come to in the ordinary way for business would be Omagh. Omagh is also the capital of the county, and all the local business of the county is done there. It is an Assize town; the official business is done there. The County Council meetings are held there, and there is also a large rural district whose Council meet at Omagh. The Tyrone County Asylum (in which there are 800 persons) is situated in Omagh, as also is the County Hospital. In addition to that there are four secondary schools in the town.

23217. That is at Omagh?—Yes, All these things bring a large number of people from other portions of the county, and there are not at present sufficient travelling facilities. For instance, when people at Auchnacloy, Ballygawley, or Clogher find it necessary to go to Omagh, instead of availing themselves of the railway they drive—a distance of twelve or fifteen miles.

23218. From Ballygawley to Omagh it would be the shortest way to drive, would it not?—Yes, but there is a station on the Clogher Valley Railway at Ballygawley and also at Auchnacloy, and if they went by rail they would require to go round by Portadown, which is a very long distance, and would occupy half a day or more in travelling to and fro.

23219. The various districts in which you have suggested that it would be an advantage to have light railways are they composed of agricultural land?—Yes.

23220. Anything else?—No.

23221. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are there no minerals?—No.

23222. *Chairman.*—Is it good agricultural land?—The Clogher Valley is the best land in Tyrone.

23223. Take the districts where you suggest it would be an advantage to have a light railway, is the land well under cultivation there now?—Yes. In the Clogher Valley it is, but in the other districts—in the northern portion of the county, where I suggest a line from Cookstown to Strabane, the land is rather poor, and the district is rather congested.

23224. It would be the advantage of only the agricultural industry of that part of the county that this particular railway would serve?—Yes. It would also serve as a through line from Donegal to Belfast; it would shorten the distance considerably.

23225. In fact it would be practically a straight line?—Yes.

23226. Instead of going round?—Yes, from Strabane to Belfast. That would be of assistance in making the line a paying one, but it would not serve the people of the locality unless there was a branch line to Omagh. I might point out in reference to the Clogher Valley Railway that it is significant that the receipts from goods are larger than the receipts from passengers. I take the figures issued in June, 1906

23227. Is this on the Clogher Valley line?—Yes; the receipts from passengers were £3,846.

23228. For what period?—Six months. For goods the receipts were £4,462. I would point out that in the ordinary course the receipts from passengers would be more than the receipts from goods traffic if the railway did serve the people of the locality. I should also say that the Clogher Valley Railway was made under a baronial guarantee, and there is still a charge on the rates in the guaranteeing portion of the county.

23229. Do you suggest that these light railways should be made under a similar arrangement to that of the Clogher Valley Railway?—I think the ratepayers of the county, after their experience of the Clogher Valley, would hardly be likely to sanction the making of fresh railways—I mean under baronial guarantees.

23230. Your idea is that there should be a free grant in these particular districts for making the railways?—I do not think a free grant would be necessary in this particular case, because I believe the extra traffic that would accrue from the making of the branch line which I suggest would pay the requisite amount of interest on the outlay.

23231. Then why does not private enterprise do it if there is a reasonable prospect of its paying?—I am afraid there is not sufficient enterprise.

23232. What have you to say about the train service betwen Omagh and Dungannon and Omagh and Enniskillen?—In Omagh we complain that we have no slow train leaving Omagh in the Dungannon and Belfast direction between 1.10 and 5.55 p.m.

23233. How many trains have you in the day, do you remember?—We have four trains and the limited mail.

23234. Four trains during the day?—Yes. One of the trains is at 11 at night, so that you may say we have only three.

23235. Three trains during the day?—Yes.

23236. Do you suggest that the traffic would justify additional trains?—Yes; I think it would. We also complain that there is no local train arriving in Omagh earlier that 10.45.

23237. That is arriving at Omagh?—Yes; there is no train earlier than 10.45 from Dungannon.

23238. Omagh is a market town, is it not?—Yes.

23239. What is the population of Omagh?—About 5,000.

23240. Do you mean to say that from any point north or south there is no train arrives before that time?—Oh, no. From Dungannon there is an earlier train arriving at Omagh at 9.20, but it is the limited mail which stops only at Dungannon.

23241. What about the passenger fares in operation there?—Before I pass to that I should like to say that this is a great disadvantage to the people at the intermediate stations between Dungannon and Omagh.

23242. What is a disadvantage?—The fact that there is no slow train either in the morning or in the afternoon at a convenient time for pupils attending school or for people travelling to Omagh on business. There would be a considerable number of pupils attending the secondary schools in Omagh.

23243. Would they come from the district between Dungannon and Omagh?—Yes; from the intermediate villages, such as Beragh, Sixmilecross, and Carrickmore.

23244. You do not suggest another train; you suggest the alteration of the times, so that the trains should arrive earlier at Omagh; is that what you mean?—Yes; that would do. If this 10.45 train arrived at, say, 9.30 or thereabouts it would serve.

23245. What do you mean by that?—If the limited mail, which arrives at 9.20 or any other train arriving before ten o'clock, was a slow train which would accommodate the intermediate stations, that would answer the purpose. In the same way, in the afternoon, from Omagh. If the limited mail was a slow local train between Omagh and Dungannon it would answer the purpose.

23246. You are talking about the school children?—If the children have to go from any station between Dungannon to Omagh they do not get to Omagh until 10.45.

23247. And what time have they to leave in the afternoon?—They cannot leave until 5.55.

23248. They arrive too late and they leave too late?—Yes. Other lines are all right in that respect. The Enniskillen line has a very good train, and quite a number of pupils come.

23249. Because they arrive earlier and leave earlier?—Yes; they get suitable trains.

23250. Is that a real grievance, do you think?—It is a real grievance.

23251. You think so?—I am quite sure it is.

23252. Has this been represented to the railway company?—It has.

Insufficient facilities with Dublin alleged.

23253. The very point which you have just brought before us?—Yes. I should also say with regard to Dublin that we complain that we have not sufficient facilities.

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Mr. Michael Lynch, J.P., Representative of the Urban District Council and of the Chamber of Commerce, Omagh.

Complaint as to inconvenient passenger train service between Omagh and Dublin

23254. Between Omagh and Dublin?—Yes.

23255. What do you mean by insufficient facilities?—I mean to say as compared with other towns. It is impossible to go from Omagh to Dublin and return in the same day and do any business in Dublin. The first train we can get from Omagh to Dublin is 8.32, arriving in Dublin at 1 o'clock, whereas from Cookstown they get a train at 7 in the morning and from Enniskillen at 6.40, which arrives in Dublin at 10.30. In order to reach Omagh the same night it is necessary to leave Dublin at 3 o'clock unless you go by the night mail.

23256. That gives you only two or three hours in Dublin?—Barley two hours, whereas from Enniskillen or Cookstown, which are almost as far as Omagh, they can have several hours there.

23257. In that respect you think Omagh is at a disadvantage as compared with Cookstown?—Yes, with either Cookstown, Dungannon, or Enniskillen.

23258. With either of those places?—Yes.

23259. They are all on the same railway?—Yes, they are all on the same railway—the Great Northern. We also say that it would be quite possible and practicable to have a connection for Omagh and Derry with the 5.50 from Dublin for Portadown and Belfast.

23260. It runs to Portadown now, does it not?—Yes, and it goes on to Belfast.

23261. Does it go to Dungannon?—No.

23262. It goes on to Portadown and Belfast?—Yes.

23263. And you think it would be an advantage to the district if there was an extension from Portadown to Omagh in connection with the train?—Yes.

23264. That would be an additional train?—Yes, or it might be that the train arriving at Omagh at 7 o'clock could be altered.

23265. To make that connection?—Yes.

Suggested extension of the excursion ticket system.

23266. Then what about passenger fares?—I think think there is not so much to complain of in regard to passenger fares, except that the excursions might be a little extended, particularly over other lines. The general tendency seems to be on all the railways in Ireland to boom the places of interest on their own line. There may be places of equal interest which happen to be off their own line and on another line, but they will give no facilities at all for reaching them.

23267. You believe that in that respect there might be some improvement?—I think there is room for a great deal of improvement in that respect.

23268. At Omagh you have no competition whatever?—None whatever.

23269. It is all served by the Great Northern?—By the Great Northern. There is no competition either for goods or for passengers.

Goods rates said to be detrimental to the development of the industries of the district.

23270. With regard to the goods rates. Have you any complaint to make with regard to the rates that are charged. When I say complaint, are there any rates in operation which you think are detrimental to the development of the industries of the district?—Yes.

23271. First of all, tell us what industries there are besides agriculture?—Before I pass to that I should like to mention one point that the business people of Omagh complain of. They complain that undue preference in many respects is given to large centres of population. There are weekly excursions from Omagh to Belfast and also to Derry at a low rate, but there are no weekly excursions into Omagh. The result is that a lot of people from the town and the locality go to Belfast and Derry to do their shoping. The railway company were approached on this point some years ago, and the reply was that if they gave Omagh facilities of that kind every other town similarly situated would want like facilities.

23272. You are on the question now of special excursion fares from these other places as compared with Omagh?—Yes.

23273. But I was on the question of rates for goods—I had left the question of passenger fares?—I am coming to that now.

Staple industries of Omagh District.

23274. Is there any linen industry in the district?—No, not in Omagh.

23275. Or in the district?—No.

23276. Is there anything but agriculture?—There is. There is some shirt-making carried on, and also the manufacture of ladies' underclothing.

23277. That is rather a large industry in Ireland, is it not?—Yes, in the north-west.

23278. Are you satisfied with the rates that are in operation for that particular traffic?—No; we complain that there again undue preference is given to Derry.

23279. Can you give us some figures?—I have some figures here.

23280. Take the rates for shirts and underclothing?—The rate for shirts and underclothing from Omagh to London is 55*s.* a ton.

23281. I apprehend that for these shirts and underclothing the principal market is London?—Yes.

23282. And the through rate from Omagh to London is 55*s.* a ton?—Yes.

23283. And you say that that is unfair as compared with Derry?—Yes.

23284. What is the Derry rate?—43*s.* 4*d.*

23285. What is the distance?—Thirty-four miles longer.

25256. From Derry to London?—Yes.

23287. Thirty-four miles longer than from Omagh?—Yes.

23288. You know, I suppose, that what may give that low rate is the sea competition?—To some extent, it may be; but I think it is very unfair, seeing that the bulk of the goods are carried past Omagh.

23289. You mean that they go through Omagh station?—Yes; practically none of the goods go by sea from Derry to London.

23290. None of this shirt and underclothing traffic?—No.

23291. *Mr. Acworth.*—Surely it goes largely by sea from Derry to Heysham?—No; a small part of the traffic is carried by the Midland Railway; some by the Midland to Belfast, and some by the Great Northern, *via* Belfast or Greenore and Holyhead.

23292. Are you sure that a good deal of the traffic does not go *via* Heysham—that is, on the Midland?—No; not direct. I am quite sure that the bulk of the traffic goes *via* Belfast.

23293. *Chairman.*—But you are also certain, I suppose—I may put it to you—that the traffic does go from Derry through Omagh to London at a less rate than the Omagh rate?—Oh, yes.

23294. There is no doubt about that?—No doubt whatever.

23295. And that the traffic is carried from Omagh by rail?—That is so.

23296. *Lord Pirrie.*—It must go through Omagh by the Great Northern?—Yes. And the Great Northern, as far as they can, favour the ports of Greenore and Holyhead, because, presumably, they get larger terminal on the through rate.

23297. I suppose they carry to Greenore from Omagh?—Yes. I would say, in connection with that, that I think it is very unfair that preference of that sort should be given. I think a very reasonable check on it would be that where any special rate is given to a competitive point, the railway company should not be allowed to charge a higher rate to intermediate points.

23298. *Chairman.*—We have had a good deal of evidence on that particular point. Have you any other rates? Can you give us the rate for drapery goods, for instance, sent into the country?—Yes.

23299. Sent from England—say, from Manchester?—Yes, I can.

23300. Can you give us the rates from Manchester *via* Belfast for drapery goods to Omagh?—The rate from Manchester *via* Belfast is 43*s.* 4*d.* per ton.

23301. To Omagh?—Yes.

23302. That is, *via* Belfast?—Yes.

23303. What is it to Strabane?—To Strabane it is 34*s.* 4*d.*

23304. And to Derry?—To Derry, 35*s.*; that is third class. Then there is second-class.

23305. Which way does the traffic go to Derry from Belfast—it does not go by the Great Northern, does it?—Some of it does.

23306. Then, again, it goes through Omagh?—Yes.

23307. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I suppose a lot goes by the Midland?—Yes; but all for Strabane goes through Omagh.

23308. *Chairman.*—That is drapery goods in class three of the classification?—Yes. Then there is the second class.

23309. What is the second class rate?—The second class rate is 50*s.* to Omagh.

23310. *Chairman.*—How do you run your classes in Ireland? Surely it is the other way?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—We reun them the same way as you do, sir—ascending first, second, third, etc.

23311. *Chairman.*—But the second class apparently is higher than the third?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—That is wrong; that must be a mistake. We have the very same order as you have in England.

Witness.—That is a mistake. The finer class of goods of course has the higher rate. The figures should be transposed.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Heavy drapery is third class and light drapery fourth.

Mr. Acworth.—Then this ought to be fourth class?

The Secretary.—The word "second" in the proof should be "fourth."

23312. *Chairman.*—Will you give us the fourth class rate between the same places?—To Omagh it is 50*s.*, to Strabane, 45*s.* 10*d.*, and to Derry, 40*s.*

23313. Now give us the local rates from Belfast to those places?—I have a few figures here.

23314. You might give us the rate for bacon?—From Belfast to Omagh it is 15*s.* 4*d.*

23315. Is that station to station?—That is station to station rate. To Strabane it is 13*s.* 4*d.* carted rate, and to Derry, 10*s.* 10*d.* station to station rate. It must always be remembered that Strabane is fifteen miles further from Belfast than Omagh.

23316. It depends upon which way you go, does it not?—Not from Belfast.

23317. Suppose you go from Belfast round by Derry?—Then it is much farther still.

23318. In actual distance, is it?—Yes; very much farther.

23319. Is the shortest way from Belfast to Strabane through Omagh?—Yes; by the Great Northern. Then the flour rate from Belfast to Omagh is 8*s.* 4*d.*, that is station to station; to Strabane, 7*s.*, and to Derry, 5*s.*

23320. You know the reason of the 5*s.* rate to Derry?—Yes.

23321. But you do not see why Strabane should be better treated than Omagh?—No.

23322. That is your point?—We cannot see why it should be. I should say in connection with that, there is another point in connection with which the bakers of Omagh think they have a grievance against the railway company. The railway company carry baked bread from Belfast at a special rate for the large bakeries in Belfast. I am unable to give you the figures, because these are special rates which are known only to the railway company and the senders of the bread.

23323. But the rates are in the Rate Book, are they not?—These are special rates.

23324. But special rates are in the Rates Book?—They may be, but I have not had access to the figures.

23325. You could have had. However, you do not know the figures?—No.

23326. They are for baked bread?—Yes.

23327. Is that a daily traffic?—Yes, a daily traffic.

23328. Competing with the bakers at Omagh?—Yes.

23329. *Lord Pirrie.*—But the railway company do not carry it at a lower rate than that at which they carry flour, do they?—I would not say that, but it should be a great deal higher.

23330. No doubt it is a great deal higher than the rate for flour?—It may be something higher.

23331. But you do not know?—No; I cannot give the figures for that. I tried to get them, but the local bakers could not give them to me. The result of the competition is that there are not one-half the number of bakers in Omagh now that there were a few years ago.

23332. *Chairman.*—This is all within your own knowledge?—Yes, within my own knowledge and memory.

23333. That this particular industry in Omagh has been crippled and partly destroyed by the low favourable rates from Belfast, is that what you say?—Yes, for bread.

23334. Is it carried by goods or passenger train?—Mostly by goods train, but some by passenger train.

23335. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is the early train in the morning, I suppose?—I am informed that they receive it at night. They have a special arrangement for receiving it at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. As a matter of fact, there are now only five bakers in Omagh, while a few years ago there were twelve.

23336. *Chairman.*—You surprise me at any rate. Judging from what you have said, your opinion is not a favourable one in regard to the treatment you have received on the Irish railways?—We think, in Omagh, that we receive exceptionally bad treatment.

23337. And you have laid all these particular grievances before the railway company?—I cannot say that with regard to the question of bread. I am not concerned in that industry, and I am not aware that it has been formally put before them.

23338. Neither are you aware of what rate they charge?—No—not further than the rates for flour.

23339. You are of opinion, I see, that there should be through rates from station to station—from any station to any station in Ireland?—I am.

23340. For Goods and parcels?—Yes.

23341. Is not the small parcels scale in Ireland available for any station in Ireland?—It is, to some extent.

23342. *Chairman.*—Is it not to every extent; is there any limitation?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—There are two exceptions—the Waterford and Tramore and the Cork and Macroom Railways.

23343. *Chairman.*—With those two exceptions, the small parcels' scale is available?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—I thought you were speaking of the scale for parcels by passenger train, sir.

Chairman.—I am—the sm all parcels' scale.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It applies between all the railways in Ireland with those two exceptions.

23344. *Chairman.*—With those two exceptions?—(*Witness*).—There are exceptions to that which I want to point out.

23345. We have a positive statement; what is your correction?—My correction is with regard to the carriage over the railway system of newspapers and printed matter from the publishing office to newsagents. What I complain about is this. I happen to be a director of a printing and publishing company, and we are charged higher rates for the carriage of newspapers than the published rates for parcels, although newspapers are generally supposed to be carried at very low rates; but the railway refuse to carry them at the ordinary parcels' rates.

23346. Is that from Omagh?—Yes.

23347. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do they carry them into Omagh at the regular rates?—They carry them from Dublin and Belfast at rates which we do not know.

23348. And at rates at which they will not carry your newspapers from Omagh?—I am not in a position to say, but they charge us special rates, which we consider very high.

23349. *Chairman.*—More than the small parcels' scale?—Yes.

23350. Can you give us one or two instances?—Yes, I will give you the particulars of this. They mark out a rate at ½*d.* per lb., and they give 33 per cent. off that for payment for twelve months in advance; they do not book the papers and they will not guarantee the delivery, nor will they be responsible for loss or non-delivery.

23351. You are speaking of newspapers?—Yes.

23352. *Chairman.*—I think there is a general scale in England for newspapers somewhat similar to that?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—We understand that they are sent at special rates for printed matter. It is the same as in England; there are special rates for printed matter—for newspapers.

Witness.—We have had to do with other railways also. For instance, the Donegal Railway, before it was taken over by the Midland and the Great Northern charged us at a rate which amounted to something less than ¼*d.* per lb. Immediately the Donegal Railway was taken over by the Great Northern and the Midland the rates were increased to about double what they were before. In other words, they put on the same rate for the Donegal Railway that they were charging us on the Great Northern.

23353. *Mr. Acworth.*—Surely you never got 4lbs. carried for a penny; you said ¼*d.* a pound?—It worked out at something less than that. It was a contract.

23354. For what size of parcel?—For all sizes.

23355. You do not suggest that if you sent a 2lb. parcel you would be charged less that ½*d.*?—No, I do not suggest that. They do not book in parcels—they do not make any note whatever of them. The parcels are simply handed in with the addresses printed on them; they are thrown into the van, and then they

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Through rates from and to all stations in Ireland advocated.

Complaint of excessive charges for the conveyance of newspapers and printed matter from Omagh to stations in the district.

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are thrown out again at the station to which they are addressed. The average quantity is weighed, and on the basis of the weight they charge. The result is that sending parcels of newspapers from Omagh to Stranorlar or Donegal, a distance of thirty or thirty-eight miles, the net rate that we pay would be about ¾*d.* per lb.

23356. *Chairman.*—The rates of which you are now complaining are the same, I understand, by other railway companies as well as the Great Northern?—No; they are not the same.

23357. Do the Midland Railway Company of England own the Donegal Railway exclusively?—We have not much to do with the Midland. Our transactions with them are very small, and I cannot speak as to their rates.

23358. You say that when they took over the Donegal Railway the rates were advanced to the same scale as was in operation on the Great Northern?—Yes, on the Donegal Railway.

23359. Therefore it would look as if some general scale is applicable to the whole of Ireland?—It had not been in operation on the Donegal Railway certainly.

23360. That might have been an exception?—We complain that for short distances, such as from Omagh to the villages and towns where all our newspapers are sent—the distance is so short as compared with the distance, say, from Dublin to the same towns—we complain that we should be charged even the same rates.

23361. Is it not like the penny post—whatever the distance the rate is the same?—No. That does not follow either.

The general scale of charges for conveyance of newspapers on Irish railways.

23362. *Chairman.*—Have you a newspaper scale, Mr. Smyth?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It is different. We charge a special rate in Ireland; it depends very largely on the quantity of newspapers sent. It is a special arrangement altogether. We will be able to give you particulars later on.

23363. *Chairman.*—Is it not in your books?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It is not in our public time table.

23364. *Chairman.*—You do not charge each newspaper separately?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Not at all; it is a general contract.

23365. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is a contract made with each individual newspaper centre?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—It is a contract applicable to each different town. For instance, with Dublin and Cork and large centres, where newspapers are published, we have a certain rate.

23366. *Mr. Acworth.*—If there were two rival newspapers in Omagh they would get the same terms?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Yes.

23367. *Mr. Acworth.*—But they would not get the same terms necessarily as newspapers in Enniskillen?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—They probably would, but they would not get the same terms as Dublin, where they send such large quantities.

Complaint as to increased charges on parcels of newspapers owing to absence of through booking to all stations.

Witness.—What we complain of is that in sending newspapers, say, 12 miles, if they have to go over two railway lines a double charge is made, and we have to pay the full rate to each company—for instance, to the Clogher Valley Company and the Sligo and Leitrim Company and the Donegal Company.

23367A. *Lord Pirrie.*—There would be three rates there.

23368. *Chairman.*—If there were three companies there would be three rates?—If there happened to be three companies it would be so, but I do not know any case where there are more than two companies concerned. The rates run up to over ¾*d.* per lb., which is considerably higher than the ordinary parcels scale.

23369. With regard to the rates for agricultural produce in the district, have you anything particular to mention?—No, except that it is generally believed that it would largely increase the income of the farmers if they had better facilities for sending their produce to market.

Lower rates for conveyance of agricultural produce recommended.

23370. Do you agree with some of the evidence we have had that it would be an advantage if the agricultural produce was charged at a less rate for exported traffic than the rates for imported traffic?—I think it would certainly be to the advantage of the senders of produce.

23371. Take grain, for instance. Do you export grain?—No; not from Omagh.

23372. No, I suppose not. I suppose Ireland itself does not grow sufficient grain for the food of the people?—No.

23373. It has to be imported; an enormous quantity must be imported into Ireland?—A considerable quantity is imported.

23374. Then it must be to the general advantage of the consumers to have as low a rate as possible inland?—Yes.

23375. What is your point with regard to agricultural rates then?—My point is that if the rates for flax, butter, potatoes, and produce like that, which the farmers have to sell, were lower, and there were better facilities given for sending small quantities, it would be a great advantage.

23376. You mean low local rates?—Yes.

23377. In Ireland?—Yes.

23378. You think that it would tend to encourage the growth of those particular articles in your district?—Yes. For instance, in regard to articles like potatoes which have small value as compared with their weight, a low rate would encourage the export of them. At present a man in a remote locality might have a fine crop of potatoes, but when he takes into account the cost of exporting them he would have nothing left.

23379. Do you think that the railway companies as at present owned and managed would seriously reduce their revenue if they made these reductions?—No; I think not. I think that substantial reductions could be made in local rates on goods of all kinds without seriously decreasing the revenue. When we take into account the fact that passenger traffic is perhaps 55 per cent. of the total receipts of railways in Ireland, I think that in regard to the particular classes of traffic, such as agricultural produce, the rates could be substantially reduced without materially affecting the total receipts.

23380. And have your Council considered the question as to what would be the remedy for these complaints which you have been making?—Generally the opinion in the locality is that no remedy would be sufficient short of taking over all the railways and running them under one management. Whatever the management might be, the impression is that it should be subject to public opinion in Ireland.

23381. In other words, that the State should purchase the railways and that they should be managed by some central body in Ireland?—Yes.

23382. Is that what you mean?—Yes.

23383. I suppose you have not considered as to how it is to be done?—Well, we have considered it——

23384. Have you considered it personally?—Yes.

23385. Have you formed any opinion upon it?—Yes. My opinion is that some elected body would be the best to control the railways. It would be more likely to meet public opinion. I think that if the railways were run under one central management a good deal of the grievances would remain unredressed; we think that if there was a little mixture, so to speak, in the management, it would be better. At present nearly all the railway directors reside in the large cities of Dublin and Belfast; their interests are there, and the interests of the smaller towns in the country are entirely neglected. I think it would be an advantage to the railways generally to develop the inland towns; by so doing they would be sending increased traffic over the lines. But at present they do not do so. A great many of the directors of Irish railways have not much experience of business of any kind.

23386. That is your view?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

23387. You complain, I notice, that you get worse treated than Enniskillen in the matter of trains. Do you know that Enniskillen has been before us to tell us how badly they are treated?—No doubt they know their local grievances best.

23388. Just so. Do you not think that other towns would like more and better accommodation if they could get it?—I presume they would.

23389. You say that there are only four trains all day. Those trains are not over full, are they?—In what direction do you mean?

23390. I am speaking generally. The trains that come in and go out of Omagh station—they are not crowded, are they?—Sometimes they are.

23391. But generally they are pretty thin, are they not?—As a rule, they are not overcrowded.

23392. Perhaps thirty or forty passengers?—Considerably more than that.

Mr Michael Lynch, J.P., Representative of the Urban District Council and of the Chamber of Commerce, Omagh.

23393. Fifty?—It would be more.

23394. You could not expect the railway companies to run many more trains, could you?—No; I do not think it would be reasonable to expect them to do so.

23395. Suppose there are only four or five trains; is it really possible to make them run just at the time when everybody wants them?—No; I do not think it is

23396. Take, for instance, the train which you say gets in at 10.40. I daresay it is true that it would suit the school children if it could get in at 9.40, but how about the people who start from Belfast? That train comes from Belfast. What is to happen to them?—They might do with that as they do with other express trains from Belfast, and make it a slow train between Dungannon and Omagh. They have done that with one train: they have made it a slow train between Dungannon and Omagh, calling at intermediate stations.

23397. They have done that to please you?—Not exactly.

23398. But it does please you?—Yes.

23399. You agree that they could not make all their express trains stop at every station?—No; it would not be possible.

23400. You see the difficulty. You cannot get as good a service out of five trains a day as you could out of fifty?—No.

23401. And you cannot hope to run fifty?—No. But there is no reason why there should not be as good a service between Dungannon and Omagh as between Enniskillen and Omagh.

23402. Now tell me about the Clogher Valley line. What is the assessment in the £ now?—I could not say at present what is it; it was as high as 8*d.* at one time.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is 9¾*d.*

23403. *Mr. Acworth.*—That line has been built twenty years, has it not?—Over twenty years.

23404. That line just about pays its working expenses?—About that. And the whole of the interest on the capital has to be paid by the baronies and the Treasury.

23405. You have said that this is the best line in the county?—No; I say it is badly constructed and badly laid out. It starts from a small station on the Great Northern and ends at another small station on the same line, neither of which is a place to which anybody wants to go.

23406. I was not meaning that. It is the best line in the country?—Yes; it is a very good line, that is, it passes through a good agricultural district.

23407. Though it may not run in the best direction, still it serves a very good district—you have told us that?—That is what we complain of—that it does not serve the district at all.

23408. You told us that this district up above Greencastle is poorer land?—It is very much poorer.

23409. And, of course, as far as through passengers are concerned, between Strabane and Cookstown you would be taking passengers off the existing line, would you not?—Yes, but the public would be served better.

23410. So that we must not say much about that. The through passengers would not help the earnings, taking the line as a whole. These places that you mention are very small—Newtown Saville is one of them?—That would be on the Clogher Valley system—from Clogher to Omagh.

23411. Do you know what the population of Newtown Saville is?—As a matter of fact, it has not a defined population at all; it is simply a village, part of a townland.

23412. It has a population of 121, according to the official guide, which I have here. Then Ballygawley is another place?—That is really a station on the Clogher Valley line.

23413. That has only 350 people?—There is a very good district around Ballygawley.

23414. What population has Greencastle got—I cannot find it in this book at all?—It is the centre of a thickly populated district; it is not what you can call a village.

23415. But is as thickly populated as an agricultural district in poor land can be?—Yes.

23416. Do you think it is possible that any of these new lines if they were made could pay better than the Clogher Valley line?—I would not say at all that the line I suggest from Cookstown to Strabane would pay depending on local traffic; in fact, I do not think it would pay more than working expenses.

23417. Then where is the money to come from; you say that the baronies do not want to pay any more?—At present they are endeavouring to get the locality scheduled as a congested district.

23418. That is to say, to get the national purse to pay?—Quite so.

23419. What you really suggest is this, that you would like a railway which you admit would not pay provided you could get it given to you gratis; but you would not pay anything towards it yourselves?—What I say is that I do not think the ratepayers of the county generally would consent, but if the capital was found between the through traffic and the local traffic the line should pay.

23420. I am not blaming you in the least, but you would like to get it gratis if you could?—Yes.

24321. You think that you have just as good a right as anybody else to get it for nothing if there is anything going?—Quite so.

The probability of increased traffic resulting from cheaper fares.

23422. I am not blaming you in the least; I only want to understand your position. You spoke about excursion trains. You said that there were excursion fares from Omagh to Belfast, but none from Belfast to Omagh?—No, not so much that, as that there are no excursion fares from surrounding towns to Omagh.

23423. You want excursions from smaller places into Omagh?—Yes.

23424. Is there enough population to justify that?—I do not see that population affects it very much. There would be a larger number of people, I should say, travelling from the surrounding districts into Omagh than from Omagh to Belfast.

23425. You are not asking for special trains, but only for cheap fares by ordinary trains?—Yes, excursion fares only.

23426. Now, about the bread. Why do the people in Omagh buy the bread sent from Belfast?—They buy it because it is brought there in competition with the local bread.

23427. It is either cheaper or better at the same price, or they think so?—It is not anything cheaper; it is quite as good.

Belfast competition with the Omagh bakeries discussed.

23428. Why do they buy it unless they think it is better in some way?—The bread is retailed by different shop-keepers. The retailer is not a baker himself. The Belfast merchant comes to him and induces him to take an agency for his bread, and the shopkeeper sees an opportunity for increasing his trade.

23429. And the people buy it because they like it better than the Omagh bread at the same price?—I would not say that.

23430. Then, why do they buy it?—Because it is taken up and pushed by certain people.

23431. They are made to like it then; I do not say they ought to like it?—The man they happen to deal with supplies it, and they take it from him.

23432. The people think it is an advantage to buy it in the same shop as their other goods instead of going to another shop?—It is quite open for them to do so.

23433. Do you think the railway company ought to put up its rates in order to stop that trade?—No I would not say that they should put up their rates. I say they should make the rates reasonable in comparision with the charges for flour.

23434. But you do not know what the rates are; for all we know they are reasonable?—They may be, but I am giving you what is alleged by the local bakers—that they are not reasonable.

23435. If other men are getting the local baker's trade, he is not likely to think the rates are reasonable, is he?—Quite so.

The alleged excessive rates charged for Omagh newspapers.

23436. We will not say anything more about that. Then, with regard to your newspapers, I do not understand the position at all. You said that in some cases it came to ¾*d.* a lb., and that that was considerably higher than the ordinary parcels scale?—Yes.

23437. But the ordinary parcels scale begins at 4*d.* for 1 lb.?—Yes, but that is taking the lowest. If you go up the scale it averages about ¼*d.* a pound.

23438. It all depends on the size of the parcel, does it not?—Yes; but in this case the parcels are all bulked together.

23439. With regard to your parcels, do they go in separate newspapers or in bundles?—In bundles.

23440. How large is the average bundle?—That depends on the locality. Some would be twenty or thirty pounds.

23441. That is the biggest?—Others might be only two or three pounds.

July 3, 1907.

Mr. Michael Lynch, J.P. Representative of the Urban District Council and Chamber of Commerce, Omagh.

The alleged excessive railway charges for carriage of Omagh newspapers.

23442. If it was three pounds weight it would cost 5*d.* on the ordinary parcels scale. I have it before me—it is on page 57 of the guide. Three pounds for any distance is 5*d.*?—According to the table I have here from one to three pounds is 4*d.*

23443. I was taking the through scale. Let us take it at the table you have. From one to three pounds is 4*d.*; for three pounds, that is 1½*d.* a pound?—Yes.

23444. Thirty pounds would be 8*d.* That is just over ¼*d.* per lb.?—Yes.

23445. Suppose you put those two together—three pounds for 4*d.* and thirty pounds for 8*d.*, that would make 33 pounds for 1*s.*, if you sent one parcel of three pounds and one of thirty pounds. What would, say, ¾*d.* a pound come to?—2*s.* 0¾*d.*

23446. So that it really depends on the average size of your parcel, does it not?—No, it does not.

23447. Supposing your parcels were all three pound parcels?—It would not make any difference whatever in this rate.

23448. If your newspaper parcels were all three pound parcels it would be a great deal cheaper than the scale, because for three pound parcels the scale is over 1*d.* a pound?—Yes, but that would be assuming they were all three pounds.

23449. If you assume that they are all thirty pound parcels, you are charged much higher than the scale?—Yes, whether they are large or small.

23450. So that whether you are charged higher or lower than the ordinary parcel scale depends on the size of your average parcel?—No, it does not at all. You are assuming that the parcels were taken singly and booked, but they are not.

23451. Really, whether the charge for your newspapers is higher or lower than the charge for ordinary parcels depends upon what the ordinary size of your newspaper bundle is?—No; not quite that. You are assuming that parcels would be sent singly and weighed singly.

23452. But they must be sent singly if they are single parcels, must they not?—If they are sent at ordinary parcels rate they would be booked singly.

23453. They are all thrown into the van and they have all to be taken out separately for the different people at the different stations, have they not?—They are thrown out of the van on to the platform, and people go and take them away. But I quite follow what you are trying to convey—that if the parcels were all sent and booked at the ordinary rates, perhaps the average would not be so much higher. But it would be considerably higher considering the average size of the parcels. Further than that, the company would be responsible, and they would have all the trouble of booking the parcels. At present they have no such trouble, and they take no responsibility whatever, and yet they charge considerably more than the ordinary parcel rate for a thing that has very little intrinsic value.

23454. I think I see your point?—We send out considerably over a ton a week of parcels.

23455. A ton a week?—Yes, of weekly newspapers.

23456. I suppose they go out pretty much at the same time—on Friday morning, or whenever it is?—Towards the end of the week.

23457. And pretty much within an hour or two, I suppose?—No; on three different days.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

The route traversed by the Clogher Valley Railway. Proposals for extension to Bawnboy Road and Cavan and Leitrim Railway.

23458. With regard to the Clogher Valley Railway, am I right in saying that it is little more than a common tramway; it runs along the public road for the greater portion of the district?—Yes.

23459. What is the length of the line?—I have not the exact figures.

23460. About 37 miles, is it not?—Yes.

23461. I think you said that its utility was largely impaired by the fact that its terminal points landed you nowhere?—Quite so.

23462. Is there not a proposition, and has it not been proposed on more than one occasion in the last few years to connect Maguire's Bridge with Bawnboy Road on the Cavan and Leitrim system, and then, on the other hand, to connect with Newry *via* Keady?—That will not alter the local position in the least; it will not be any advantage so far as local traffic is concerned.

23463. You spoke just now of the importance of promoting the development of small inland towns, did you not?—Yes.

23464. And I suppose you would go so far as to say that it would also be desirable to promote the development of the smaller ports, such as Newry?—Yes.

23465. At all events, not to sacrifice them?—Quite so.

23466. If you linked up the Clogher Valley and the Cavan and Leitrim system you would have a through connection right away from Cavan and Leitrim along the Clogher Valley Railway to the Port of Newry on the three-foot system?—I think that would be an advantage to Newry.

23467. I suppose you will admit that it is desirable?—I think so.

23468. And also bring the Clogher Valley, which you say does really pass through a very fertile district, into connection with the Cavan and Leitrim system, which is one of the best paying lines of light railways in Ireland?—I think it would be desirable.

23469. I am glad you admit that. I think there is a proposal, too, on the part of the Government to make a grant from the Development Grant of £75,000 for the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway, provided the company can raise the rest of the capital?—Yes; I understand that is so.

23470. Are any steps being taken in regard to the construction of that line?—Yes; I think it is under construction at present.

23471. And, as a matter of fact, I think £12,500 are in the estimates for the present year?—I believe so.

23472. I notice that the Clogher Valley Railway serves a very considerable district in County Tyrone and Fermanagh?—It serves it, but very badly. It does not bring the people where they have business, or where they want to go.

23473. How would their interests be better served by some of these extensions that you have spoken of?—The extension that I suggested would give a branch line from Clogher to Omagh direct.

23474. Would not that be gained by this other proposal?—That would not be served so well, because it would mean a junction and you would have to get connecting trains. There is a valley that runs for pretty much all the way from Omagh to Clogher.

23475. You consider that Omagh is a town of such importance in the county that it would be a great advantage to the people in the district if they were put into touch with it?—There would be sure to be a larger passenger traffic over the line.

23476. With regard to these rates to Strabane which you say prejudicially affect you, I suppose the reason that Strabane gets a lower rate as compared with Omagh is due to the fact that if it did not get that rate the traffic would go either *via* Belfast and the Northern Counties to Derry, and it is only a short distance on the Great Northern from Derry to Strabane?—And there is also the fact that they have the canal there.

23477. So that in every way they are very happily situated?—Yes.

23478. At any rate, the fact is that in the matter of shirts, Omagh is placed at a disadvantage of 11*s.* 8*d.* a ton as against Strabane?—That is so.

23479. Is there a shirt industry in Omagh?—Yes.

23480. That means a very serious matter to you?—As a matter of fact, it would mean in some cases 2*d.* a dozen on the freight from Omagh to London.

23481. There is only one other question I wish to put to you. You said that the Irish railways should be compulsorily amalgamated. Would that answer imply necessarily State purchase, or would you be in favour of the railways being amalgamated under the control of one big railway company?—It would mean a State guarantee.

23482. That is another point. You do not confine your remark to saying that the railways should be placed under the State; you would not oppose their being amalgamated in the hands of one powerful railway company?—Our experience of amalgamation has always been unfavourable. For instance, when the old railway from Omagh to Belfast was in existence there were considerably lower rates, but as soon as the amalgamation was carried out the rates went up—in many cases by 20 per cent.

23483. That might be guarded against by having a Bill for the amalgamation of the railways into one system, accompanied by a Bill providing for a uniform scale of rates and charges over the whole system?—Yes. That would be an improvement, but I think it would be still better if there were some Government or popular control.

23484. That might also be provided for by having a Government representative, and probably it would be if the railways were amalgamated. The Central Board, however constituted, would probably be assisted by some Government representative, who would see that the interests of the public generally were safeguarded, and that the centralised railway system should not unduly penalise the public?—Quite so. Anything that would prevent the possibility of the management of the railways trying to earn big dividends at the expense of the public would be an improvement.

23485. Your idea is generally that railways should be worked in the interests of the public?—Quite so.

23486. And that their dividends should be only such as would give a reasonable return on the capital outlay and the cost of renewals?—Yes.

23487. Failing the State acquiring the railways and supervising them entirely, would you be in favour of the railways generally in Ireland being placed in the hands of some one Railway Board, subject to Government control and subject to a scale of uniform rates and charges for the whole of Ireland, and perhaps also, to cover the further point which you raise, subject to the shareholders in the amalgamated system being guaranteed against any loss which they might suffer from a general reduction of rates and fares by a guarantee of the gross receipts of which they have been in possession for the last five years—something of that kind?—I believe that would be a very great improvement on the present system.

23488. You would favour that in the event of the State not being prepared to take them over?—Yes; certainly.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

23489. You complained a good deal of the railway companies not giving facilities for cheap trains into Omagh?—Yes.

23490. Is that the opinion of the shopkeepers or of the people in the surrounding district? I see you represent the Urban District Council and the Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

23491. Therefore, it is on behalf of the shop-keepers that you say that, and not on behalf of the people in the outside districts. Are the shops sufficiently good in Omagh to induce the people to come to Omagh rather than to Belfast, where they have, I presume, a much larger number of shops from which they can buy their articles whether of a dear or cheap quality?—Omagh is a very good town and has very good shops.

23492. Could the articles be sold as cheaply in Omagh as in Belfast?—Yes, more cheaply.

23493. I do not see how they could be sold more cheaply if they have to pay the railway rates from Belfast, or from Greenore, or from Dublin, to Omagh?—It is quite true. As a rule the rate of profit put on by shopkeepers in towns of the size of Omagh, where rents are low and expenses generally lower than in a large town, are considerably smaller than in Belfast.

23494. Because the trader in Omagh has to pay a low rent he can afford to sell at small profits?—Yes. You ask me whom the complaint comes from. It comes from the shop-keepers of Omagh in the first instance.

23495. I can quite imagine the shop-keepers saying so, but I should have thought that the people of the district would have preferred getting a cheap train to Belfast, where they can go from one shop to another and see what the prices are, and then come back to one and say, "I will give you so much for this if you will let me have it." Is not that done frequently?—There is not much of that now, I believe. There would be an inducement to go to Omagh if there were proportionately cheap fares given, because the distance would be shorter and the travelling cheaper.

23496. Then, take the question of bread. Have the bakers not lost their trade in Omagh, as in many other towns in the North of Ireland, because the bakers would not give the shopkeepers a commission? As I understand it, the bread from Belfast is sold at exactly the same price as that of the local baker, and the Belfast baker gives a commission to the man who sells it, but the bakers in Omagh will not give the shopkeepers a commission—they want the people to buy the bread direct from themselves?—They do give a commission.

Belfast competition with the Omagh bakeries discussed.

23497. To the shopkeepers?—Yes, but not in every case. Most of the bakers bake for their own consumption solely, but there are several who bake for the district.

23498. But the majority bake for their own customers, and get the full price for their bread, whereas the Belfast baker sells it through the shopkeeper, and gets a commission?—Quite so. But it is really a question of dumping on the part of the Belfast bakers, to some extent. They want to get rid of their surplus production. They have their machinery going, and they put on a shift of men at night, so that they reduce the average cost.

23499. *Mr. Acworth.*—You call it dumping, but it must be a permanent dumping; it cannot be an occasional surplus, that they wish to get rid of, can it?—It has become constant.

23500. You do not want bread one week and none the next?—No; that would not do.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

23501. Have you reckoned the mileage of the proposed new lines of light railway which you have suggested?—No.

The effect of the sea rates on the freights by rail from Belfast to Derry.

23502. With regard to the question of Colonel Poë, as to the traffic passing over the Great Northern system going that way on account of the cheap rates as against Belfast and the Northern Counties, you must be aware that as far as Londonderry is concerned, all the rates, whether the goods travel over the Great Northern or the Belfast and Northern Counties, are governed by the sea rates either from Derry to Scotland or from Derry to Heysham. The sea rates settle what the rates shall be to Derry. You understand that, do you not?—The sea rate is not the same; there is a margin between them. The sea rate is less still.

23503. But the sea rate is the competitive rate against which the railways have to work; that is the thing which decides in their mind at what rate they can carry goods so as to get some share of the traffic. You follow that, do you not?—Yes, that is quite true. But what I complain of is that an identical industry, because it happens to be thirty miles up the line from Derry, should be penalised by an extra 15*s.* a ton, although it deals with exactly the same class of goods, which go to the same market, and are carried a shorter distance by the same railway company.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *o'clock.*

FORTY-FIRST PUBLIC SITTING—THURSDAY, JULY 4TH, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, BART. (Chairman); Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Colonel WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. ANTHONY MACKEY examined by the CHAIRMAN.

July 4, 1907.

Mr. Anthony Mackey, Castleconnell, Representative of the Inland Fisheries Board (Ireland).

23504. You appear on behalf of the Inland Fisheries Board?—Yes, and on my own behalf also as a fishery proprietor.

23505. What district do you come from?—From the Shannon. I am the lessee of the eel fisheries of the Shannon under the Board of Works.

23506. Are you satisfied with the arrangements made for the transit of fish to the English market?—Yes; the company is certainly doing its very best to facilitate the expeditious carrying of our fish, especially since the amalgamation.

23507. Then, with regard to the railway companies you are not here to make any complaint against them either as regards facilities or as regards rates?—Yes, I have something to state as regards rates; but you asked me the question as regards carrying the fish expeditiously, and I answered you in the affirmative—that I think the company is doing its best to expedite the carrying of the fish.

Complaint as to high rate for eels to the London market from Killaloe.

23508. Just tell us in your own words what it is you wish to mention with regard to the rates?—Well, with regard to my own fish—eels principally—I have to send them to London. I should rather say that London is my principal market. I have to compete here against the Danes particularly—the Dutch a good deal, but of late years the Danes, because prior to a few years ago the system that then prevailed was that the Dutchmen bought all the Danish catch and brought them here in their vessels to the Thames, but by the cleverness of the Danes they instituted a form of box which enabled them to send their fish overland. It was from that time that the Danish trade has struck against the Irish eels in the trade in London. The rate from Denmark to London is £1 per ton.

Rate for eels from Denmark to London, and the extent of the Danish competition with the Irish trade

23509. Direct by sea?—And rail—the rate by sea and by rail. They come to Harwich by steamer from Ejsberg, and then from Harwich to London. That is where they are principally gathered in Denmark; they are brought from different points of the country to this particular port, so as to suit the markets; they get the fish together there, and they are brought from there to Harwich and from Harwich to London by express train, the same as we are now getting from the company in Ireland. The rate right through from Ejsberg to London is £1 per ton. My rate from Castleconnell to London is 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. My rate from Killaloe is 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt., and from Athlone I have not got the exact rate.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—3*s.* 9*d.*

Witness.—3*s.* 9*d.*—Yes.

23510. *Chairman.*—4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. would be 95*s.* per ton?—Yes. That is the rate to London as against the Danish £1.

23511. That is 95*s.* per ton against £1 per ton?—Yes.

Mr. Smyth (G. S & W. Ry.).—It is 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. by passenger train.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The other is by ship from Denmark.

Witness.—The ship traffic is both ways—both from Ejsberg to Harwich and from North Wall to Holyhead.

23512. *Chairman.*—Your rate, whatever it is—4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt.—from those stations which you mentioned to London is by passenger train to Dublin, I suppose?—By passenger train—yes.

23513. And by passenger train on the English side?—Yes, and in the case of the Danes it is the same.

23514. Are you sure of that?—I spent a little time yesterday in making myself certain on that point. I made inquiries, so that I could answer you affirmatively or otherwise.

23515. Now, what quantity do you send, as compared with the Danes?—Well, I do not think I can answer that. We send large quantities. My fisheries are perhaps the largest, or the second largest in all Ireland, but I cannot give you the exact figures.

23516. Could you give us any idea of your own figures independently of any others?—I do not know that I can give you any, and I do not think that if I could, any fishery proprietor ever cares to say within reason what he is doing. All I can tell you is this—that it takes me all my time because of the heavy charges I have to meet—I do not say the railway charges are the only ones, but there are other charges such as rent and taxes—to cover my liabilities.

23517. What is about the average consignment?—I could not tell you that at all. The catching of eels is rather different from salmon. Salmon is a fish which must be sent away as it is caught, whereas eels are not treated in that way, because we tank the eels and endeavour to get them away according as the market requires them. That is done in all countries.

23518. *Mr. Aspinall.*—From Ejsberg to Harwich do not the consignments of perishables, including fish, amount to 300 tons?—I am not able to answer you, but that information is very easily ascertained if you wish to have it. I am sorry I cannot give it to you. Do you mean to say 300 tons daily?

23519. A full steamer load per week?—I do not think so. I think it is on the mail boat that they are carried. I am informed that it is on the mail boats they are brought. It would be impossible for them to keep back their goods until such time as they could get a special steamer. Eels cannot be handled in that way.

23520. You do not know of your own knowledge exactly what the figure is?—I know it is never the case that 300 tons of Danish eels arrive in London. I have been in London many a time on their arrival, and I never heard of or saw anything of the kind, and I know the Danes would not do it, as it would ruin their trade, because they must be sold on the day of arrival or the day after.

23521. *Mr. Acworth.*—You can surely tell us whether you only send one box, or two boxes, or twenty boxes—you can give us some idea?—I remember one day having to send eleven tons of eels.

23522. That is a very big consignment?—That was an excessive consignment, and that happened because the eels could not be kept alive owing to the very low water that prevailed, and they had to be sent away to all the different markets all over England.

23523. What is the common amount you send away at a time?—Every day from each station we send some eels—one box, two boxes, five boxes, or ten boxes, according to the order. If I can I will have my goods ordered.

23524. A box weighs one hundredweight?—Approximately—about that.

23525. Then the fish sometimes, at any rate, goes away one box at a time?—Sometimes we will send one box off at a time. Sometimes the trade is bad, and some must be sent away, because they must be kept every day in the tanks to keep them in good health. All large fishery proprietors endeavour to do that, but small proprietors get out their eels first, because the fishing is generally at the same time all over the country. It is the result of excessive rains which brings the fishing at certain times of the year, and the smaller men get out of their goods first.

23526. *Chairman.*—Is there a close season for eels?—Yes.

23527. When is that?—There is a close season against catching. There is no close season against selling; but against catching it lasts from January 31st to July 1st in the Shannon. It varies in different parts of the country.

23528. We have had the rates. Now, is there anything you have to suggest that the railway companies might do which they do not do at present?—No. I should like to give you some idea of the salmon rates as representing the Limerick Fishery Board. The rate on salmon from Glynn to London, and from Limerick to London, I am informed, is £5 per ton, and the rate on salmon, I am told, from Kilrush to London (that is, on the other side of the Shannon—I am speaking now of the tidal portion of the Shannon) comes out at about £5 10*s.* to London.

23529. Those are the rates for salmon?—Yes.

23530. Are there any other rates you wish to mention?—The rate from Denmark to London is 27*s.* per ton.

23531. But is there any salmon that comes from Denmark?—Yes; I was informed so yesterday. The rate is 27*s.* per ton. Salmon also comes from Norway.

23532. Yes, from Norway there is a lot of salmon of course?—The rate from Trondhjem (which is the starting point) *via* Newcastle is 3*s.* 6*d.* per cwt., or £3 10*s.* per ton. That is from Trondhjem *via* Newcastle-on-Tyne.

23533. *Mr. Aspinall.*—By sea all the way?—No; by rail from Newcastle-on-Tyne.

23534. *Mr. Acworth.*—Where to?—To London. That is the information which was given me yesterday. If you like I will give you the name of the firm who gave me the information.

23535. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—None comes directly by sea from Trondhjem to London?—Never, except under frozen conditions. Every sender of salmon endeavours to get as quickly as possible to market. Salmon will not stand much of a sea journey.

23536. *Chairman.*—Are there any other rates you desire to call attention to?—There is a complaint which I have been asked to bring before you with regard to the transit of salmon to London from different points in Ireland. An empty box weighs about 60 lbs. The ice required for that would be about 20 to 28 lbs., or a quarter of a hundredweight—that would be the amount some people put into their salmon boxes. Then they pay on the gross weight rate for salmon. Have I conveyed myself clearly on that point?

23537. Oh, yes?—That is a very great hardship; so the salmon senders tell me, especially when salmon falls in price, as it very often does. Oftentimes salmon is sold at 10*d.* per lb. in London if the fish is plentiful, and even at 9*d.*; it is sold at a comparatively low price in London, and they have of course to fight against competition from all parts of the world—from Europe and from other parts of Ireland—and it tells, they inform me, very heavily on them, because of the weight of the box, which they have to pay for as if it were salmon, and also the weight of the ice.

23538. *Mr. Acworth.*—How many pounds of salmon are there in a box?—About 140 lbs.

23539. *Chairman.*—Is there anything else in the shape of rates you desire to allude to?—There is another little point as regards my own business. If my boxes average, say, beyond 1 cwt.——

23540. You mean when the box is full?—Yes; when they have the fish in them—if they exceed 1 cwt., say, by 10 lbs., then I do not get that extra weight charged at the rate of 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt.; I will have to pay an excessive rate then.

23541. Please make that a little more clear?—If I send a box of eels, say, weighing 1 cwt. 0 qrs. 10 lbs., my rate for that would be 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt., that is the railway rate. Then for the 10 lbs. extra I sometimes would be charged considerably beyond 4*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. for the additional weight in pounds—as much sometimes as 1*s.* for 10 or 12 lbs. extra on the box.

23542. Have you represented that to the railway companies?—I cannot say that I have done my business thoroughly in that direction. Some time ago, I did, I believe, call the railway company's attention to it, but on investigation this year, when I knew I would be coming to give evidence before you, I found that condition of things to prevail, with the result that I had my own business gone through carefully to see how it worked out. I do not particularly mention any railway company, because the railway companies have been very fair to me in many ways, but, still, I think that is unfair.

23543. But is it not possible that that may be a clerical error?—It has gone on through a whole season, and I have got the sheets here. I have had the whole season examined throughout, and any time that it prevailed it is the case all through. The sheets are here to be seen by any railway man in this room who would like to see them.

23544. Is this the minimum charge upon a hundredweight?—The minimum would be one hundredweight; even if I sent under one hundredweight in a box I would have to pay 4*s.* 9*d.* I have understood that always.

23545. Are there any other rates or particulars you wish to mention in connection with this fishery business?—No; I think not. Those are the two principal fish that we export.

23546. I will repeat the question I put just now. Have you any other suggestion—or any suggestion—to make as to what in your opinion the railway companies ought to do that they do not do at present?—In the abstract that I sent to your secretary I mentioned that the railway companies might attend to the question of icing fish sent by small senders. But I am aware that if the summer is warm, or the autumn, we cannot export from Ireland at all, practically, many of the fish that are often wanted in England for want of ice.

23547. Is not that putting something on the railway company altogether beyond their business as carriers?—You asked me if I had any suggestion to make, and I thought I might submit that to you.

23548. But do you think that is a reasonable suggestion?—When I am aware of the fact, sir, that the Danish railway people do it, and take a good deal of trouble to facilitate the export of fish from Denmark, I think that our Irish railway companies ought to try and do something also, because every extra ton of fish that goes means that they have a certain freight on that ton of fish; therefore I think it would be a reasonable thing to do.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—I am informed that the Great Northern do it at Derry, and I think the Great Southern and Western do it at another place.

23549. *Chairman.*—We will take the suggestion from you, Mr. Mackey, but you tell us—I suppose from information you have got—that it is done in Denmark?—Yes.

23550. At the ports?—Along the route over the interior of the country.

23551. But are you sure that there is salmon sent from Denmark at all?—That is my information, received yesterday from Messrs. Forbes Stewart, who are the biggest fish salesmen in London. I had that from their representative yesterday.

23552. That is one suggestion. Now, what other suggestion have you?—I thought, with great respect to you, sir, that you might take me along the suggestions made in my abstract of evidence.

23553. I am looking now at what you say here in reference to the terminals. Have you a copy of this proof?—Yes, I have it before me.

23554. You suggest that the railway companies should have the means of weighing at both ends?—Yes, I suggest that.

23555. Have they not got weighing machines at both ends?—I was not aware of that. I heard yesterday something to that effect for the first time, and the reason I made the suggestion was this: that a great deal of trouble arises from time to time as between the

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Complaint as to extra charges on any weight over 1 cwt. in boxes of salmon

The icing of small senders' consignments of fish by the railway companies suggested.

Prevalence of this practice in Denmark.

The necessity for weighing consignment of fish at both forwarding and receiving stations urged.

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senders and the salesmen who receive the goods respecting the weights. That is one trouble that we had to contend with.

23556. Take London. Supposing every railway company had to weigh all the fish in London before it was delivered to the market, do you not think the fish would very often miss the market?—They might if it was done at the market. I said the terminals.

23557. The railway company would have to do it at the terminal?—If there was a system like this brought into existence, it would of course only be brought into use when necessary. I cannot afford, nor can any other centre afford, to have an agent at the point of destination to look after matters of that kind. The Danish Government have an agent to look after their goods, whereas, so far as I know, we have no direct representative from Ireland in the market, and consequently the only party to take the place of the representative, in my opinion, would be the railway company, who take the goods from me in Ireland weighed in, because if they did not weigh them, they would not know the charges, and therefore I think it is the same people who ought to see them weighed out in case there is a difference as between the weight I put in and that received, or said to be received, by the salesman.

Agent employed by Danish Government in England to look after exports.

23558. But the weight received in all cases where ice is packed with the fish must be considerably less than the weight when sent away?—I do not use ice with eels except in warm weather. The Danes use it, and we may when we adopt the same system of icing. But at present I do not use ice, because I keep my fish as much as possible for the cold weather, which enables them to come in good condition to the market.

23559. What have you to say about the railway companies assisting the senders and consignees in cultivating this business?—Do you mean with regard to the propagation?

The desirability of the railway companies supplying information to senders of traffic as to suggested suitable markets and consignees.

23560. No, I mean as regards communications between the senders and the salesmen?—Oh, yes; it is very often hard for people like myself to find out responsible—I do not like to say respectable, but responsible people—people whom we can depend upon to pay for the fish received. Sometimes we meet with people who do not pay, and I would suggest that the railway companies (and I think they would be inclined to do it from what I have heard recently) should name salesmen in different towns in England to whom fish senders in Ireland do not at present send fish. I suggest that the railway agents might name certain parties in certain towns to whom fish could be sent, and who would pay for the fish. The railway companies would serve their own interests by serving the senders in that way also. The more the fish is spread, and the greater the price we get, the more it would induce the spirit of production and the greater would be the advantage to the railway companies.

23561. You mean the representatives of the railways in London, for instance, would be more likely to know whether a salesman is substantial, and to be trusted, than you in Ireland could know who know nothing whatever about them?—Yes; and in addition to that there are fish salesmen in London who would not perhaps trade at all with one special kind of fish. He might be good for one kind of fish, and not for salmon or for eels, and I would want to know what particular man would best know my class of business.

23562. That is a suggestion which you make, and you think that if that were acted upon, it would tend to increase the business from Ireland to the London market?—I do, and not only in London, but in all the markets over England.

23563. But London is the principal market?—London is my principal market, but perhaps it would not be the principal market for other people. Liverpool is a good market, and so is Birmingham, and so is Manchester. I send to about twenty different markets.

23564. *Mr. Aspinall.*—The biggest market is London, I suppose?—Yes; and then there are Wolverhampton, Sheffield, Leeds, and Bristol, and other places.

Free railway travelling for representatives of the fishing industry suggested.

23565. *Chairman.*—I see you make another suggestion in reference to people engaged in the fishing industry being allowed to travel free over the railways?—Yes, I do, because in developing the fish business it is very hard for those in that industry—I feel it so myself—very hard indeed to be paying their railway fare.

23566. But why confine it to the fish business? Why not boldly make the suggestion that everybody engaged in business should travel free?—No, if I did that I might be scouted out of court. I tell you the reason why I suggested that in regard to fish. The fish business, so far as I know, is more scattered and more difficult than any other business as far as railways are concerned. Take the west coast of Ireland; if a man wants to travel, say, from the mouth of the Shannon, and he wants to get to Galway, perhaps, or some other point, he may have to go to the interior of the country before he can get about. The railway companies will benefit as I say—they must benefit materially, because of the higher rate we pay, and if we send extra quantities of fish, they will reap the benefit. Why should we have the entire development thrown upon us? There are hotel expenses, and there are many other expenses besides railways in connection with the development of the business, and why the railway companies should not help us in developing it, I cannot see. They will get the goods. We cannot send them except over the railways. There are one hundred and one things to be done in connection with the development of the business which I know is very different from any other class of business in the country. Therefore I venture to make that suggestion.

23567. Is there not a system of traders' season tickets on the railways in Ireland?—I believe there is, but I have not participated in it, and if I had, it would only refer to myself so far as I am personally concerned.

23568. Persons engaged in any trade paying so much a year to the railway companies are entitled to tickets at greatly reduced rates?—A fishery proprietor would have different managers besides himself engaged in the development of the trade, and as far as I am aware (perhaps I am wrong in this) it would only refer to one individual concerned—this means of travelling at a cheap rate.

23569. May I ask if you have in Ireland a system of traders' tickets such as we have in England?—All I have to say is that the benefit of the traders' ticket has in no way reached me at this time in the developing or carrying on of my fisheries.

23570. Were you aware that there was such a ticket issued?—Well, I have not personally participated in it. I have heard some rumour of the kind, but I am not really aware of it, and I have never participated in it. It has not reached me up to this time, though I am all my life in the business, and my ancestors before me, and I have always had to pay my own way, and the way of every man that I have had to send here and there about in connection with my fisheries up to this date. I am fully aware of that.

23571. Your next suggestion is with reference to pilferage. Of course railway companies, we know ought to take every possible precaution to prevent that?—Yes.

23572. And I suppose they do really, do they not?—They have not been successful in preventing it.

23573. Is that a general complaint?—It has been, so far as I am personally concerned. It has very largely occurred year after year, and I have done my best to bring it to the knowledge of the railway companies through their agents in London, and that is one of the chief reasons why I suggested in reply to the other question that you put to me that the means of weighing out should be provided at the terminals, so that the railway companies could see for themselves what happened.

23574. But I put to you the other fact, because I happened to know that in the case of fish arriving in London the object of the railway company is to deliver it in the market with the least possible delay. You know that, of course?—I do.

23575. And often it makes a vast difference whether the fish reaches the market to-day instead of to-morrow?—Quite so—a material difference

23576. And if fish had to be weighed in London, it would create a very great delay?—I do not think it need be done daily at all. If it once was established, it need only be done when necessary, because when I advise my goods to a salesman, and they have come to his stand, and he says that the box does not weigh that which I had advised him, and there is a third party who can see what the state of things is.

23577. I suppose they are weighed when sent away?—In every case they are weighed by me at my fish stations, and they are weighed again at the railway stations. Last year I asked the railway companies to mark the weight at our end, so that they would know what they had received as they came along. That is, the London and North Western

Railway would know the weight they received when the goods arrived at North Wall.

23578. You mean, marking the weight on the label, or on the box?—On the box, generally—with a blue pencil on the wood.

23579. You said you did not ice eels?—No, I do not ice eels.

23580. I think we have practically exhausted the question of fisheries?—No, there is No. 8, I would ask your attention to, about the propagation of fishes.

23581. Oh, yes, you have got a suggestion to make with reference to that?—Yes, I have—that it is within the power of any fishery proprietor to increase the quantities of any fish in his rivers or lakes, as the case may be, provided it is worth his while doing so, by the importation of fishes from other directions—say, from the North of Ireland to the South, if you like, or from England. I myself once imported live eels from London, which came from the Continent.

23582. You brought the live fish from the Continent, and put them into your rivers?—Yes, they came from the Continent, on board a ship, and I got them from London to Ireland, and put them into the River Shannon, and I considered that if I could do that with advantage, at least the railway company ought only to claim the price of bringing the fish back again when they had grown, and that they ought to do something to take them over free while they are in a condition in which they are not fit for market.

23583. What you suggest is that for propagation purposes that particular traffic should be carried free by the railway companies?—Yes.

23584. Because, when the fish has matured, and is sent away, they would get the full benefit of that traffic?—Yes, and I will prove it in this way, if you will permit me. Say it takes twenty small eels to make a pound in their immature condition. If those twenty eels live for, say, two years—it is very hard to prove the growth of them—but if they grow, say, to twenty lbs. instead of one lb., the railway companies would get the advantage of carrying them back again, and they at least ought to participate with us to that extent in endeavouring to develop the business.

23585. Is the rate the same for these small fish?—Just the same, I think.

23586. No difference is made?—No difference.

23587. But that is not a regular traffic?—No. I would repeat the experiment, but it is too expensive to do so, or I would have done it again and again.

23588. Was your experiment successful?—Well, I got the eels grown, and some salesmen here in London did the same, I think. So that it would be worth while for the railway company, I think, to entertain that idea.

23589. What have you to say in reference to the sheep and swine traffic?—I do something in the farming as well as in the fishing business, and that is why I have some knowledge of that in addition to fisheries. I think there is a very great expense thrown upon a man in the exportation of sheep. A wagon of cattle is worth considerably more than a wagon of sheep. A man has to pay practically for a wagon-load in the case of sheep as much as he would in the case of cattle, whereas the weight might not be more than a fourth in the case of the sheep; I do not see why the railway companies could not put in a partition. The one tier of sheep will not be more than two feet six inches in height on the average from the bottom of the wagon, so that there may be four or five feet overhead, which is not used for the time being, and I do not see why a partition could not be put over the lower tier, leaving, of course, sufficient area for their requirements and carrying another tier overhead.

23590. A double-decker, in fact?—Yes.

23591. Two-decked wagons?—Quite so. I do not see why that could not be done, and if it was done, let there be a proportionate charge put on for the extra quantity of sheep carried, because we do not want, of course, the railway companies to carry these extra sheep for nothing.

23592. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is done in England, is it not?—I have not seen it in England, but speaking with regard to Ireland, I have never seen it there, and I think it might be done in connection with the sheep, and that by doing that, the railway companies would help to make trade progressive.

23593. *Chairman.*—Even with the double-decker wagon, the load for sheep would not then be, as far as weight is concerned, the same as a load of cattle?—It would not. I never saw a wagon yet that was not stipulated to carry six tons, so far as those big wagons that carry sheep and cattle are concerned. Well, of course, thirty sheep is about the average number that can go into one of these wagons, and thirty sheep, at an average of eighty lbs. a sheep, would give you a weight very different from the carrying capacity of a six-ton wagon. The lambs and swine would be treated in the same way, of course.

23594. Have you considered the question of State purchase of railways?—In reading over some of the matter that has been referred to by your Commission for the time being, I have done so, but not beyond that.

The amalgamation of the smaller Irish lines with the greater railways recommended.

23595. But I think you have formed some conclusion in your own mind as to what the Government ought to do in reference to certain railways in Ireland?—Yes; I have stated in my abstract of evidence that I thought it would be a benefit to the country if the smaller railways were amalgamated. I have come to that conclusion from the fact of observing that amalgamation, so far as I can perceive, in the South has been beneficial to us, because of the amalgamation with the Great Southern and Western. We were on the Waterford and Limerick system before the time of the amalgamation, and although other representatives may not perhaps agree with me, so far as I am personally concerned I have come to the conclusion that amalgamation has been a benefit. We have better trains to Dublin; we have our system improved very much through it; therefore if it has been beneficial to us, I consider it would be equally beneficial elsewhere. I take the case of the West Clare Railway for instance; perhaps the narrow gauge there would prevent the transhipment of perishables, because of the smallness of their wagons, but if it was a broad gauge I am quite sure it would be of as much benefit to the people in that district if they could send their goods right through, and book right through, and have the same authority right through from the starting point, as it has been to me in the case of the amalgamation with the Great Southern and Western.

23596. We had evidence with reference to that West Clare Railway?—Yes, I saw it some time ago.

The granting of State subsidies towards the reduction of rates to encourage local industries suggested.

23597. Do you think the Government should subsidise any of the railways?—I think so, where they could afford it.

23598. I do not quite understand—where who could afford it? You suggest that the Government should subsidise certain companies?—I do, and the reason that I think they ought to subsidise is that I know there are some systems which can't afford to be very generous towards us. They are not able to pay very large dividends as it is.

23599. Some pay none at all?—Some pay none at all, and therefore I think it would be very unfair for me to come here and make a suggestion to you that the railway companies ought to be generous when they can't afford it.

23600. I think what you say, very fairly, is that you can't expect the railway companies to sacrifice their revenue for the benefit of the trade of the country, and that it ought to be done by some Government subsidy?—That is the essence of my intention. Of course I must say this much to the railway companies: If you can increase your traffic by lowering the rates in certain directions you might do so; but I could not ask the railway companies to lower the rates when they can't afford to do so, when there is not a prospect of that kind so far as increase goes.

The lowering of rates would induce development of stagnant industries.

23601. But you are strongly of opinion that if the rates were lowered a great many industries which are now in a stagnant state might be developed?—I believe so; that is certainly my belief.

23602. Particularly with regard to the fisheries—I suppose you have no doubt as to that, and no hesitation?—No.

23603. You have no doubt that lower rates would develop a great deal more of that particular traffic?—I believe so.

23604. But you do not blame the railway companies for what they are doing?—No; I have received a great deal of kindness from the railway companies, and whenever I have had an application to make to the Great Southern and Western, and

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London and North Western Companies, they have always met me very reasonably. I believe they are inclined to do the best they can, but I know the way they are hampered—because, perhaps, of the over-capitalisation of the companies, amongst other things, especially the Irish lines.

23605. You are of opinion that the amalgamation of the Waterford and Limerick with the Great Southern and Western Railway has been of direct advantage to the district?—That is my personal experience.

Advantages alleged to have resulted from the amalgamation of the G. S. & W. and W. & L. Ry. Cos.

23606. We have had rather more evidence to the contrary, but that is your opinion?—If you will pardon me for a moment, I would say this much with regard to the Limerick County Council. When the question of amalgamation came before that Council I supported it, and I am not sorry to this day for having done so.

23607. With regard to the through rates between England and Ireland, I think you are of opinion that they should be the same both ways?—I am, because I have read, during the course of your inquiry, of the extraordinary differences which prevail in connection with many manufactured articles—that a man manufacturing certain articles in London may be competing with a man in Ireland manufacturing the same articles, and the man manufacturing in London (I do not, of course, speak of London alone, but only use that for the sake of illustration) can send his goods to Ireland at a lesser rate than the man manufacturing in Ireland, even though the distance in the latter case is sometimes not half the distance in the former case.

Equality of rates for inwards and outwards cross-channel traffic advocated.

23608. Then, again, local rates in Ireland are, in your judgment, out of proportion to the through rates?—Altogether so, in many cases which I have seen mentioned in the course of the proceedings of this Commission.

Local Irish railway rates alleged to be excessive.

23609. Do you think that if the Irish railways were taken over by the State and managed by some local authority, or authorities, in Ireland, these anomalies might be corrected?—I believe they would be.

23610. And are you of opinion that that would be the best remedy?—I am of opinion that a remedy of some kind is needed, and that that might be the remedy if it could be brought about. But I want to come to the question of nationalisation, and I say that the authority that would manage the railways—if such a solution did come about—should be an Irish one. I want to make that clear.

State ownership of and control by an Irish authority with safeguards for vested interests advocated.

23611. That was my question—that they should be managed by a central authority in Ireland?—Yes, and let the conditions then be arranged so as to satisfy the people who invested the money.

23612. You are of opinion that many industries might be further developed if this took place?—Of that I have not the least doubt in the world—not the least.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

Double-decked wagons not considered a necessity for poultry traffic.

23613. You have been speaking of the great advantage—and I quite agree with you—of having double-decked wagons for sheep and so on. Would it not be equally advantageous to the great poultry farms, which I suppose you have in the South of Ireland? The poultry are sent alive, are they not—they are not killed and sent to market?—Well, in connection with fowl, they are all sent in packages.

23614. But they cannot put one on the top of the other, can they?—Oh, yes, up to the top of the wagon.

23615. How do the poor things get air?—It comes in at the sides of the wagon; the sides are perforated; and then again, the top is all open.

23616. Then, for poultry, these double-decked wagons are not essential?—Not so essential, because you can get plenty of poultry into a wagon.

Complaint as to the charging of a minimum weight of 1 cwt. for each fish package.

23617. Did I correctly understand you to say that if you sent a package weighing ½ cwt. you were charged for a full cwt., or is it merely that you do not get the low rate?—I have sent packages under one cwt.

23618. But assuming a packet weighing ½ cwt.?—I do not think I have sent a package of ½ cwt. That sheet which I have handed in will show some under one cwt.

23619. Then if the package is 8 lbs. or 9 lbs. under 1 cwt., they charge you the higher rate?—Yes.

23619A. He pays for 1 cwt. whether he sends the full cwt. or whether he sends only 70 lbs. or 80 lbs.

23620. *Mr. Acworth.*—I have been trying to make something out of this document. I find here four consignments of the same weight all going from Killaloe to London, and charged, one of them, £1 10*s.* 9*d.*, another £1 10*s.* 2*d.*, and so on?—Not one package.

23621. No; four consignments of the same weight and to and from the same places; in one case, the charge is £1 10*s.* 9*d.*, in another, £1 10*s.* 2*d.*, in another, £1 9*s.* 9*d.*, and in another, £1 10*s.* 10*d.* It seems to me that somebody wants to go to school and learn arithmetic?—Those figures are taken from the sale notes that come across.

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—Those are taken from the salesman's bills; we are not in any way responsible for those figures.

23622. *Mr. Acworth.*—They are not the weights which the railway companies recognise?—If you will allow me to explain it, it is at this side (in England) that the charges are paid; there are a couple of senders in Ireland who prepay, but my system is not to prepay; and any time when I have ever asked a salesman to send me the pay note to compare with what he has charged me in the pay sheet, it has always corresponded.

23623. *Chairman.*—The salesman pays the carriage?—Yes.

23624. Then he sends you an account of the railway carriage which is, so much; market dues, so much; commission, so much; and that is the account which you have handed in?—Quite so.

23625. And his commission is upon the amount of the sale?—He makes all the charges, but each one is separate and distinct from the other.

23626. Therefore, if the price of the fish varies, those amounts would vary too?—Oh, no.

23627. This is not the railway charge, is it?—Yes, it is the railway charge.

23628. *Mr. Acworth.*—The commission merchant takes off so much for railway carriage; but clearly the weight which the commission merchant acknowledges to have received will have varied something from what the railway company acknowledges to have received at the other end, that is, in Ireland, because the water will have drained out and that sort of thing; more or less water will of course have drained out?—We generally drain off the water; that is the system.

23629. But it must lose a little in weight in transit, clearly?—Yes.

23630. Probably those packages were all the same weight when they left Killaloe?—Yes.

23631. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is the payment on the parcel as it arrives at its destination, or when it leaves. Supposing you put three-quarters cwt. of fish in, and one quarter cwt. of ice in, the box then contains one cwt. when it starts?—I have explained to the chairman that I do not put ice in.

23632. I was not speaking of your particular case, but of what is the rule in the fishing industry. If ice is packed with the fish, and the package is weighed with the ice in it when it leaves, is the charge made on that, or is it weighed when it gets to London, when the ice has all disappeared?—It is weighed with the ice at our own end.

23633. At the sending end?—Yes.

23634. Therefore the railway company are gaining all the time by the reduction in weight, are they not?—That would be so; they would have less weight to give out.

23635. *Chairman.*—Do you mind my giving these sheets to the railway company to look at?—Not a bit, you are quite welcome to do so.

Chairman (to Mr. Croker Barrington).—As Mr. Acworth has pointed out, there are four consignments here of the same weight all differently charged, and it rather points to some error somewhere (*handing document to Mr. Croker Barrington*).

23636. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is the weight the salesman acknowledges to have received, but it is not the weight the railway company acknowledges at Killaloe?—It is the salesman who weighs.

23637. *Lord Pirrie.*—In one of your answers to the chairman you said that you weighed it before it left your station?—Yes; and the railway company weigh it also when they receive it, and the salesman weighs it at the other end.

23638. I thought that was what you wanted the railway company to do?—I want the railway company, when I think it necessary when there is a difference between my weight and the salesman's weight—a difference between what he says he has received, and what I state I have sent him—then I

want that a third party should be there; and I consider that no other party ought to be more interested than the railway company which carries the goods.

23639. You have spoken about ice, or refrigerating, for the wagons, but have you any steamers running from Ireland to any of the English ports with refrigerating space, so that the fish are put on board under proper conditions as to refrigeration?—I am not aware of any.

23640. Would that not be very important?—I know that in the mackerel trade, which is a very heavy business, and in the herring trade, the English companies who purchase from a certain number of boats that go to fish, or perhaps they purchase generally, hire steamers of their own to Milford.

23641. They do that because the regular steamers from Irish ports to English ports do not put refrigerating machinery in their steamers?—It is all done by ice.

23642. Would it not facilitate the Irish fish traffic, and the butter traffic, and all that sort of thing, if the steamers trading to those ports were refrigerated, or if ice were used, or however you like to put it?—Anything in that direction would be very beneficial to us. We have no steamers of that kind; and our small senders must send overland. The best fishing is done on the west or north-west coast.

23643. That fish goes to Dublin I suppose?—A fair share goes to Dublin, but a great deal goes to England.

23644. You go to England?—From Greenore to Dublin, or from North Wall to Holyhead; and then there is the Great Western route also.

23645. Have the fishing people ever made an application to the various steamship companies pointing out the great importance of having refrigerating space on board?—This is the first time I have ever had an opportunity of expressing myself upon this matter generally; I have never had an opportunity before; and therefore this is the first time, I may say, I have ever given it as evidence.

23646. For the benefit of the fishing industry, you would advocate that being done by the companies?—The railway companies have not steamers in Ireland, only the English companies.

23647. But they work in conjunction?—Let them do the work in conjunction, and I think it would be good for all.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

23648. I understand that you would like to see powers conferred on the Board of Agriculture, or on some other public body in Ireland with regard to complaints and disputes between the traders and the railway companies?—I think that would be very beneficial; and my reason is, that no individual like myself could take it upon himself at all to face the Board of Trade.

23649. You know, of course, that the Board of Agriculture is now empowered to take up complaints of traders before the Railway and Canal Commissioners?—I did not know that they would do so and bear the expense of it.

23650. It is a heavy expense, as you know?—That is the reason why we fight shy of it, because it is such a heavy expense.

23651. Are you aware that there is a cheap procedure of complaint to the Board of Trade?—No; I am not aware of it.

23652. It is not, I understand, taken much advantage of in Ireland?—We do not know of it. I, at least, for one, did not know of it.

23653. Would you favour the transfer of such powers as are conferred by the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, upon the Board of Trade in that respect to the Board of Agriculture in respect of Irish complaints?—If the Board of Agriculture could become the central authority, and if it could be done free of charge to people like myself, and would help to facilitate business and bring about the settlement of such disputes as may be a cause of complaint, then I think it would be a good thing if the Board of Agriculture had it in hand.

23654. The same powers as the Board of Trade now possess?—I thought you said as an intermediary between the sender and the party who made the complaint to the Board of Trade.

23655. No. What I want to know is, whether you would be in favour of the Board of Agriculture in Ireland possessing the same powers with regard to complaints and disputes as between traders and railway companies that the Board of Trade possesses in England?—Well, of course I am entirely in favour of having authority centralised in Ireland.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

23656. I think you said that the weight of salmon in a box was about 7 cwt.?—No, about 140 lbs.

23657. About 1½ cwt.?—Yes.

The hardship of having to pay on the gross weight of fish packages at the contents rate.

23658. And that, in addition to the actual weight of fish sent in the box, you were charged on practically what amounted to nearly another hundredweight in the shape of the box itself and the ice?—Yes.

23659. So that, speaking approximately, you are charged 4*s.* 9*d.* for dead weight and 4*s.* 9*d.* for the actual weight of the fish?—Yes, about 2 cwts. almost.

23660. Which, of course, is practically anything you like from 70 to 100 per cent. on the value of the fish?—Quite so.

23661. Then, I think you said that you sustained considerable loss occasionally in the value of the fish or the weight of the fish as received in London, we will say?—Yes; oftentimes 20 lbs. are abstracted from a box of fish on the way.

The question of pilferage of fish in transit and the means of checking the evil.

23662. The salesmen on the other side receive 20 lbs. short?—Yes; and in some cases it has been proved. When boxes have been broken open, it often happened that the boxes were so well opened that the salesman could not say positively whether they had been tampered with or not. We found out subsequently that there were appliances in the hands of the servants of the railway company by means of which they were able to open the boxes in such a way as not to be discovered. The boxes are made in such a way, with light nails and so on, that they can easily be opened by means of proper implements. But in the case of a broken box which had been roughly opened it was found that as much as 20 lbs. had been abstracted from a box of fish on the journey.

23663. And does such loss occur in the case of other fish besides salmon; does it occur in the case of eels and other fish?—Well, salmon are different from eels; we never count our eels, whereas a man always counts his salmon. It would take only seven salmon of 20 lbs. weight each to make 140 lbs., whereas of course in the case of eels the average weight may not be one pound. So that they are never counted at all, but only weighed.

23664. But in regard to the actual weight of eels received, is there any complaint on the other side?—Yes, oftentimes.

23665. You consider that if the railway company at the receiving end, were to weigh the boxes as received, then, in the event of a complaint being preferred by the salesman, they would be in a position to check the weight, and to corroborate your statement?—That is my position. A salesman and myself in many cases have fallen out over the question of weights, which was against the interest of both parties, because I would not wish to lose a good salesman, and he, doubtless, would not wish to lose me as a sender. Then, I say that the railway company ought to be the third party, there being no other authority representing the country in the market to check the matter.

The extent of the fishing industry in Limerick and Castleconnell districts.

23666. Are you in a position to give the Commission any idea as to the value of the fish sent by yourself and other small traders in your own district to the London market—the annual value?—I will give you one answer to the question. In sixteen years I paid a rent of something like £35,000 for eel-fisheries.

23667. That is about £2,000 a year?—Over that.

23668. For the rent of eel-fisheries?—I paid considerably over £2,000 a year for the eel-fisheries which I rented during the sixteen years.

23669. That is your own particular industry?—That is my own particular industry, yes.

23670. Are there any number of industries at all approaching the magnitude of yours in that district?—Not in that district. But on the Bann there is another. Of course the salmon industries are very much on the Shannon.

23671. Could you give the Commission any idea on this point: you say that the rent

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you pay in respect of your industry is, roughly, £2,000 a year. Could you give us any idea as to the total figure for the whole industry?—The Laxweir Fishery at Limerick is an old fishery which has been in existence since the time of the Danes—"Lax," I believe, is Danish for salmon. That fishery is still carried on, and that fishery last year, or the year before, was formed into a limited company of £9,000. I was present in the Four Courts at Dublin when five salmon weirs on the Lower Shannon were sold to a Mr. M'Auliffe for £7,500 about two years ago. And there are larger industries than that on the Lower Shannon.

Increased Statutory powers for the Irish Fishery Board as to the preservation of Salmon throughout the Shannon district suggested.

23672. At any rate, the figures you have given show that the fishing industry in your district is a very important one?—I know that it is important, and I know that it ought to be of far greater importance; only, unfortunately, we cannot do that which is essential in order to enable us to make it far more important; that is, to have far greater quantities of fish in the Shannon. We had a meeting the other day in Dublin of the Amalgamated Boards of Ireland; and about three-quarters of them attended from the North of Ireland to the South; and we are endeavouring to get a short Bill passed through Parliament. The reason why I mention that now is that I think the railway companies should help us to get Bills. The essence of this Bill would be to prevent the country people from killing the salmon within a few weeks of spawning, when they are unmarketable and uneatable, and when no man, who knows what fish ought to be, would think of eating such salmon. Yet, throughout the entire Shannon district, which would mean about 2,000 miles of river and tributaries, those fish can be killed on 31st October, the last day of the season; and yet many of those fish which come into the Shannon in the month of January cannot be touched when they are worth 4*s*. a lb. Now, we have been endeavouring to get a Bill passed through the House of Commons for years which would enable our Inspectors of Fisheries to inquire into the matter and to get the Fishing Laws altered when and where necessary. We asked Mr. Bryce when Chief Secretary, as also Mr. Birrell, to receive a deputation, and we subsequently conveyed to each in turn an explanation of our requirements. We also had the matter before former Chief Secretaries, and we held that amalgamated meeting the other day, with Lord Massey in the chair; but nothing has yet been done.

23673. But surely the power of the Fishery Board in Ireland is sufficient to deal with those points?—They cannot touch them at all; there is no authority in Ireland which can cut off the month of October when all this damage is done. The laying powers of the salmon are equivalent to 1,000 eggs to the lb. weight of fish; almost all the small-sized fish leave the main river and go to the tributaries in the month of September or October; and then they are making good their beds and arranging their grounds. And they go sometimes up the very sides of the mountains; and, when the water subsides, no protection can be afforded. Our annual income is about £2,400 per annum, made up of licence duty, 10 per cent. rate, and some few small contributions. Otherwise we would require fully double that sum to give anything like adequate protection.

23674. Unless I am mistaken, the Irish Fishery Board has power to deal with all these matters of which you are speaking, and to make recommendations?—They have not.

23765. Have they no power over inland fisheries?—I do not say none; because we can collect £2,000 and we can carry on prosecutions, and we can employ bailiffs so far as we can pay them. But we cannot do all that is necessary, neither can the Department of Agriculture, which is the head authority in Ireland on fishery questions.

The assistance afforded by the Department of Agriculture in developing the Irish fishing industries discussed.

23676. Under the Act establishing the Department of Agriculture certain powers were transferred to it from the Board of Works in regard to fisheries?—I am aware that the Board of Works were able to transfer some of their powers to the Board of Agriculture; they were two distinct bodies.

23677. Certain funds which were administered under the Board of Works in respect to the sea-coast fisheries were subsequently transferred to the Department of Agriculture?—We got one grant of £900 in order to relieve us from an immense liability to the Bank; they gave us £900 in order to wipe off that debt. That is all that we have seen from the alterations which you have referred to.

23678. They have power to administer certain funds which are not perhaps very large, but they have power under the Act. Further than that, do you receive any assistance or instruction in the way of the points which you mentioned just now as to the best methods of packing your fish or sending it to market, and the nature of the boxes in which you send them, or as to the propagation of the fish? Do you get any instruction or assistance in those matters?—The Department, I think, are very anxious to improve every industry that they come in contact with.

23679. We have had evidence that they have given a great deal of valuable information and assistance to the agricultural producers in the way of specifying the boxes in which butter, eggs, and so on should be sent?—And they have done a good deal with reference to agriculture, too.

23680. Have they done anything in regard to your industry?—No, we have never called upon them to do so; we have only called upon them to analyse waters which we thought were doing harm in the river and matters of that kind.

23681. *Lord Pirrie.*—Did they help you in that?—Yes, they did; I have nothing to say against the Board of Agriculture. The chief difficulty is that on the River Shannon the most valuable fish in Ireland, or perhaps in England or any other country—the salmon—can be killed indiscriminately in the month of October when they are in the small rivers, and we are not able to prevent it, because we cannot afford to pay bailiffs; and we only begin our duties of protection really on the day on which the season closes, the 31st October. But those rivers are left open for the destruction of those fish: and appeal after appeal on our part has been disregarded.

23682. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It is a very extraordinary state of things?—The Board have no power.

23683. But they could bring it before the notice of the Legislature if they thought it advisable. At any rate, the trade is such a valuable one that you consider the railway companies ought to give you every assistance in the way of weighing goods at the other end, so that there might be a check?—Yes. But that is not the most serious part of the matter. I have been friendly towards the railway company, and they have been friendly towards me.

23684. Then you said that something might be done by the railway companies in the way of bringing you and other traders into closer touch with the salesmen?—Yes, I think it would be a benefit to both of us.

23685. You are aware, of course, that the Great Western Railway Company, to speak of only one of the English Railway Companies, issue pamphlets in which they give information with regard to butter, fruit, vegetables, and so on, and that they give lists of traders and salesmen with whom producers can be put into touch; and you think that something of that kind might be done to the advantage both of the traders and the railway companies?—Yes, and of the consumers. The more we get to the consumers the better.

23686. With regard to amalgamation, do I correctly understand you to say that your experience of the pre-existing state of things, that is to say, the state of things which existed prior to the amalgamation of the Waterford and Limerick with the Great Southern, is that there was a certain antagonism of interests, that the identity of interests was not the same when the railways were in the hands of two or three companies?—Yes. I found that the Waterford and Limerick could never help us in the sending of our fish from Castleconnell and other stations which were on the Waterford system, in the manner in which the Great Southern and Western do and are inclined to do.

23687. The conclusion you draw, confining yourself to your own district, is that if the West and South Clare system were amalgamated with the large railway company nearest to it, that would be an advantage?—Yes; and it is not alone fish, but seaweed and many other things could be brought to the interior from the coast if that business were developed as it might be and if the companies were amalgamated and through rates given, which could be taken advantage of.

23688. Then I think you said that it would be good policy for the Government to subsidise to some extent the railways?—The reason why I said that was because the Danes carry eels at £1 a ton. Honestly, I could not ask the railway companies to carry my eels at £1 a ton; I do not think they could afford to do so; and I have to sell my eels against the Danes, and they have the advantage over me of something like £3 or £4 in the carriage alone, which is of course almost sufficient to knock me out

23689. If such a subsidy were given by the State it would naturally entail some expense upon the general taxpayer, would it not?—If I am driven out of the trade, the general taxpayer has to pay a considerably higher price for his eels. If we are driven out, then the consumer, who is also the taxpayer, would have to pay a higher price for his goods.

23690. And do you think it would be good policy for the State to make concessions also in the interests of the manufacturing industries of the country, even though some expense were incurred and it fell upon the general taxpayer?—Quite so. When we, in the development of our industry, have to meet this extraordinary competition, I think that somebody should step in; and I suppose the State is the only body that could help in a matter of that kind.

23691. Then you say you would not be satisfied with the nationalization of the railways, unless it were accompanied by control in the hands of an Irish authority?—Yes, that is my opinion—that we have not in Ireland been trusted to the extent to which we are capable of carrying on our business generally. I do not want to enter into the political aspects of the matter at all, but I think we have men in Ireland and, unfortunately, men who have gone out of Ireland, who have been able to help in the development and control of other countries, England included, and who have done it to the satisfaction of all those countries; and I think that we in Ireland, with the same material, would be able to do our own business equally well.

23692. Failing the State allowing such a controlling authority to be established, would you be in favour, rather than see the existing state of things continued, of allowing the State to administer the railways?—I think I would prefer the existing order to continue until the other can come about.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

23693. Sir Herbert Jekyll asked you with regard to the Agricultural Department being applied to rather than the Board of Trade if some arrangement could be made to give them the necessary powers. I wanted to put it in a little different way. Would the people whom you have come in contact with in connection with fisheries be quite satisfied if the Agricultural Department were the party to be appealed to in the event of disputes with the railway companies?—I think so.

23694. With regard to the transit of Irish perishable goods on the English side, do you make use, for fisheries purposes, of the Inspectors from the Agricultural Department who are sent over to England to inquire into all kinds of matters relating to transit?—No, I have not done that.

23695. Were you aware that there is resident, or has been resident, in Manchester until quite recently, even if he is not resident there now, a gentleman who represents the Agricultural Department, and looks after all the details of transit—sees how Irish butter, for instance, is dealt with in the Manchester market, how it is handled on the railways, and how it is handled as compared with foreign butter and foreign perishables—were you aware of that?—Yes, I am aware that that has been the case recently; I think it has been so only within a year.

23696. My object in asking that is really to ask whether it would not be an advantage to you to get this gentleman to co-operate with regard to the fish traffic as well as with regard to the other traffic?—Yes, that might be done profitably, but I was only aware that that institution which you referred to took place last year, in the selection of some gentleman for that purpose, and then I considered it was chiefly relative to butter. I believe the butter business—and properly so—is receiving a good deal of attention, but I did not know, and I am still not aware, that that gentleman's authority at all referred to the question of fish.

23697. But would it not be an advantage to get that gentleman to co-operate with your section of the work, so as to see that you get all the advantages that are to be got out of personal inspection of what is going on?—I have no objection at all, from whatever quarter the relief will come, but I mentioned the railways as I thought that in my case they were really more concerned, because it would prevent my making complaints and claims on them for losses on fish, and would stop a good deal of the communications which embarrass me a great deal, or any other fishery proprietor who has his work to attend to. I would prefer the railways doing it, but if some other authority did it equally well, that of course would satisfy me.

23698. With regard to Limerick traffic, is there a large importation direct into Limerick of American bacon?—There is importation direct to Limerick, as far as I know, from Liverpool.

23699. I do not mean from Liverpool; is there not importation direct from America into Limerick?—I have never heard of it.

23700. Is there any direct importation of margarine into Limerick?—I am not in that line myself, but a boat does come from Holland, or Antwerp, or some of those places.

The effect of direct foreign imports to Irish ports on home industries.

23701. There is a large exportation of margarine from Limerick, is there not?—Yes, there is a gentleman there with the repute of making margarine.

23702. So that in speaking of competition with the home industries, it must not be forgotten that those things come in some cases direct into Limerick by sea from the port of origin?—I wish to convey to you that I have no connection with the margarine business, and I am not here to offer an opinion on that subject. If I had evidence to give, and it would serve my country, I would be happy to give it, but I have no evidence worth mentioning to give upon that subject.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

23703. You spoke of a rate from Trondhjem through Newcastle for salmon of £3 10s. per ton?—Yes.

23704. Are you sure as to that?—I have given you the name of the biggest firm in London from whom I received that information; I went down last evening to get that information, and I took it down on the spot. I can only say that that is the information that I have received.

The question of the alleged excess of the Irish rates to London over the Norwegian and Danish rates for fish traffic.

23705. The local rate for salmon, unless I am mistaken, from Newcastle to London would be 70s., so that it would look as if the steamer got nothing?—I am only given you what has been given to me.

23706. You have no consignment note?—No.

23707. You do not know whether it is a through rate, or one charge of the steamer and another of the railway company?—It must be a through rate.

23708. It must be a through rate of the steamer then, because the railway company would not quote a through rate?—Yes, they would, just as I have from Castleconnell.

23709. But you can't find an English railway company who will quote a through rate to or from most foreign places?—I will give you a point which may throw some light upon your question. A tradesman told me with regard to the Danish eels, that it would cost a man more to send his goods from Harwich to London than it would cost him to send the goods from Ejsberg through Harwich. That may be analogous to your question.

23710. Now, I want to ask you this. You mentioned that the Ejsberg rate was so much a ton?—Yes.

23711. Your rate is so much a hundredweight?—Yes; it is the same thing.

23712. The rate is quoted to you per cwt.?—It is an advantage to the Danish man to send per cwt., because in my case it used to be that I would get more concession if I sent a big quantity than if I sent a smaller quantity, whereas I found on making inquiries that the Danish man has the same advantage whether he sends one box or fifty boxes.

23713. You think the Danish man can send for 1s. per cwt.?—He can send one box and get the same advantage as if he sent 1,000 boxes.

23714. Are you quite sure that he can get a rate from Ejsberg to London of 1s. per cwt.?—I know

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there is never a hundredweight sent at all; a box contains five draughts of eels, which is about 1½ cwt.

23715. Are you sure that he can send that box for 1*s.* 6*d.*?—I am quite sure that he can send one box at the same rate as fifty tons.

23716. Are you sure of that?—That is the information that I have received.

23717. Can you tell me this? The eels do not grow in Ejsberg, of course, any more than they grow in London; they are brought into Ejsberg from other places?—I have never been in Denmark.

23718. Ejsberg is a shipping town, of course, and the eels are sent there from other places where they are caught. You do not know, I suppose, what they have to pay before they get to Ejsberg?—I am told they are brought across the country from where they are caught, and that the Government do what is possible to bring them in good condition, and that the railways—which I believe are Governmental—afford every opportunity and help to bring the fish to London in good condition.

23719. You do not know the charge for bringing them to Ejsberg?—No, I have no idea of the rates in the interior of Denmark; I can only give you the information which I have received here in London.

23720. You see what I mean—that it is not fair to speak as though the eels only paid £1 a ton, because they have got to pay to get to Ejsberg; they have to pay something obviously, though what it is I do not know, and apparently you do not?—I have told you so far as I know.

The suggested suitability of double-decked wagons for pig traffic.

23721. Now, will you tell me this? In speaking of these double-decked wagons, you mentioned swine?—And sheep and lambs.

23722. I have seen them very often used for sheep in Scotland, but I have never seen them used for pigs. Would you get a pig to walk up a steep ladder?—It would be very easy for the railway companies to arrange a means. I know that they can so arrange a sort of platform from the wagon, and extend it to the land, as to make it quite easy for the animals to be driven up it.

23723. It would add to the expense, would it not?—I suppose it would add some little expense.

23724. Do you think it could be used for pigs as well as for sheep?—I believe it could be used for pigs.

The suggestions that the railway companies should ice fish and supply traders with information.

23725. Now, I want to ask you another sort of question. You want the railway company to do a good many things for you that they do not do at present. You want them to do the icing, and to do some more weighing?—I do not ask it for myself.

23726. I quite understand—it is for the fish industry?—For small senders particularly.

23727. And you want them to find buyers for you?—No, I do not.

23728. Well, to put you in communication with buyers?—Yes, to put me in communication, or to put my countrymen in communication, with the people who would be best for the particular trade of the different senders.

23729. You do not, I suppose, expect that they should warrant them?—No, I do not. I do not ask them to do that at all—only that they would use reasonable diligence, because of course a station-master or a railway agent in any great centre knows pretty well the men who are well in business, and are carrying on such a trade as to justify a sender in dealing with them.

23730. And you want them to carry the people concerned in the industry specially cheap?—I do. I suggest that to them. I suggest that that would be a benefit to the railway companies themselves, as well as a benefit to many poor men, because we are not very rich in Ireland, and many a man has to stop at home who would otherwise be able to get about and help to develop trade simply because he cannot afford to pay to travel about.

The proposal as to free travelling for representatives of the fishing industry and free conveyance of young fish for propagation.

23731. And you want them also to bring in the young fish at a particularly cheap rate, or at no rate at all?—I do, where it can be done.

23732. Now, fishing is only one of the industries of Ireland. Supposing I am in the horse-raising line; do you think it would be reasonable that a railway company should be asked to bring in a stallion free to enable me to improve the breed of my horses?—I know that in the case of shows, if a man has poultry, for instance, to show in any part of Ireland, the railways will take them free one way; they will bring them back from the show free. I am told that that privilege is given already in many businesses.

23733. I only want to see whether you are of opinion that what you think should be done for the fisheries should be done all round?—A ton of immature fishes might weigh, say 20 tons when matured. They do not all live, of course; but supposing they all lived, the railway company then would get 20 tons of produce which would pay high rates, and which would very well repay them for bringing the one ton free.

23734. Might not the same be said of the other industries?—Let every man look after himself; I am looking after this business which I know most about.

23735. Would you think it fair for a man who was in the poultry line to ask to have pedigree cocks brought in free?—I think that that poultryman might make a suggestion of the same nature as I am making. If the railway company carried in a ton of eggs free, and afterwards got 20 tons of eggs as ordinary freight at regular rates, they would be very well repaid. I think the poultryman would have a good argument if he could prove that that would be the result, as I have proved in my own case.

23736. Then you would be prepared to advocate the same principle all round, and apply it to the bringing in of pedigree stock, and so on?—My chief business is in connection with the fishery business in Ireland, and I am here more in connection with the fisheries than anything else; but if I had thought that it was necessary for me to give evidence upon the general products of my country, I would have made up my mind in that direction; but I have not done so, and therefore it would not be fair for me to enter into suggestions that I have not considered the possibility of.

23737. As you know, we are here to consider not the question of fisheries alone, or of cattle alone, but everything in connection with the railways of Ireland; we have to consider the matter all round?—I know, but you take each witness as he presents himself, and question him upon his own special subject, and it would be unfair for me to make suggestions with regard to everything.

23738. I will not press you beyond the point you wish to go to?—I would give you the evidence freely, if I had considered the matter.

23739. Now you mentioned a thing which interested me, and which I did not know. The Danish Government, you say, has a representative in London. Is that at Billingsgate?—Yes.

23740. A representative solely for the fishing industry?—Yes, I have been told so, and I have been introduced to him. That was some time ago. I do not know that he has any other occupation.

23741. Would not the right thing be, not for the Irish railway companies to undertake to represent you in London—which is not their business—but for the Irish fisheries to have a representative in London? Would not that be the reasonable thing?—I do not care from what body the relief comes, but I say it is necessary and fair to me and the salesmen, in the case of disputes, that there should be some third party to refer to, and I will repeat again that so far as I have considered the question, the railway companies are the most concerned to be that third party. They must lose if robbery takes place, and if there is a charge of abstraction by the salesmen, the proper third party to step in, it seems to me, would naturally be the railway company who would have to pay for that abstraction if it were proved.

23742. I was not thinking so much of the abstraction as of the question generally?—I do not think the railway company ought to have anything at all to say on the general question of the fisheries, or the reports of markets, or the like of that. I say a Governmental authority of some kind ought to be there—some authority from the Board of Agriculture in Ireland, or some other such body.

23743. You would like to have some representative of your industry at the buying end?—At the selling end.

23744. Well, at the consuming end?—Yes. I think we ought to have that, because I know salesmen in London and other markets whom no man could make a charge against—men of undoubted respectability—but, unfortunately, it often happens that things will occur, and they will say the fault is at my end, and

I say it is at their end. We are separated by 500 or 600 miles. That is a difficulty I have been in, and I told someone to-day that I was going to give this evidence here, and they were very pleased to hear it.

23745. What you really want is someone to act impartially, so you suggested the railway, because they were the first people who occurred to you. But you would be quite satisfied to have it in the hands of a Government representative, representing the industry?—Quite so.

23746. About icing—do you suggest that the companies should supply the ice for nothing?—No, not for nothing at all. I am aware that in connection with many parts of the coast (I am not referring now to myself at all) little fisheries spring up at times when there cannot be buyers. I have seen soles lost practically for want of ice, and many other classes of fish, and the poor people could not send them for want of ice, and I suggest it would be a good thing to supply them with ice, and I do not see whom it concerns more than the railway companies, because they are bound to get their freights, and consequently I consider the railway companies ought to be interested in developing the industries of the country as they must be developed in accordance with the policy which I have suggested.

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Mr. Anthony Mackey, Castleconnell, Representative of the Inland Fisheries Board (Ireland).

The provision of ice for sale by the railway companies at certain depots, recommended.

23747. You suggest that at convenient places the railway companies should have ice depôts, and should sell ice?—Yes. I am not pointing out any particular places, of course; the railway companies could very well settle that question themselves.

23748. I only wanted to know whether you think they should charge for the ice or not?—I would not ask them to do it for nothing. They could amalgamate all these small people at one given point and they would lose nothing by it. The ice would be paid for, and they would get the freight on the fish, which would never be sent at all but for that ice being supplied.

23749. *Chairman.*—In fact it would be additional traffic for the railway companies?—Yes, it would help to bring about additional traffic.

Mr. W. A. Lindsay examined by the Chairman.

23750. You come before us on behalf of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce?—And the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society also.

23751. Are you engaged in business in Belfast?—Yes, I am a managing director of Lindsay Brothers, Limited. We are wholesale dry goods merchants, and have been in business in Belfast between eighty and ninety years.

23752. Of course as wholesale merchants you import and export, and send traffic all over the country?—Yes, we import goods from Great Britain and various markets, and sell them to traders throughout Ireland, and we export Irish goods to Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, and so on.

23753. One of my colleagues would like to know what "dry goods" are?—Dry goods is really an American term; we are wholesale drapers, and we sell to drapers, and tailors, and so on.

23754. *Mr. Acworth.*—You are warehousemen?—Warehousemen—precisely. Perhaps before I go any further, I may be allowed to say that I am not interested directly or indirectly in any Irish railway company.

23755. *Chairman.*—You appear absolutely in the interests of the trade of the country?—Yes.

23756. I suppose you are a member of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society?—I am a member of the Councils of both.

23757. And you are pretty well acquainted with the railways in Ireland and also in England?—Yes. Perhaps I might say that I have studied railway matters since I came of age, twenty years ago, and I always watch the working of them both in this country and in Ireland. I may add that I have lived in England more than in Ireland.

23578. You do not propose to go into any detail with regard to rates and charges and general complaints against the railway companies, do you?—Well, I propose to offer some evidence under your heading of evidence, 3 (*a*) with regard to one or two matters.

23759. 3 (*a*) deals with local goods, mineral and live-stock rates, and their effect generally on trade and on the development of industries. Do you propose to make any remark on that particular clause?—Yes, I do.

23760. Let us have it in your own words?—I wanted to mention how the railways in Ireland treated shows. I am giving this evidence on behalf of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society. But, first, there is another point with regard to that Society. I have the report here of that Society, which has 1,000 members, 150 of them being *bona fide* farmers. In order to obtain information for you I requested the Secretary of the Society to communicate with all the farmer members, pointing out to them that the Society was being represented before this Commission, and asking them to communicate with regard to any points which they wished brought before you. We only received three replies. We did not communicate with the whole 1,000 members, but with the 150 farmers, because if we had communicated with the whole 1,000 members it would have been rather duplicating what the Chamber of Commerce had done.

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No complaints of any consequence against the Irish railways received from the farming community.

23761. You sent out 150 invitations to *bona fide* farmers in the country, asking them what they had to say on that particular clause, and you only received three replies?—We did not confine them to that particular clause; we asked them generally if they had any complaints which they wished to bring before this Commission.

23762. And you only received three replies?—Yes.

23763. What was the tenor of those replies?—They were all trivial. One member suggested that the time-tables of the Clogher Valley Railway might be improved; the second suggestion was that there was a shortage of wagons at Lurgan; the third complaint was that the rate for potatoes from Moira to Balbriggan was too high. They are all trivial, and that would appear to me to indicate that there was no very widespread dissatisfaction amongst our members at any rate.

23764. The complaints are very trivial, as you say, and we will leave them alone?—Yes. You had the same evidence given by the Belfast Chamber—that they only got some three or four replies.

23765. Yes, we had the same evidence?—I would like to mention how the Irish railways treat the traffic in connection with shows. They treat us much more generously than the English railways treat show traffic on this side.

23766. I do not know that we need go into that?—They carry back stock free of charge.

23767. Can you tell us one or two of the differences between the English and the Irish system in favour of Ireland?—Yes, this is one; they carry back stock free from all shows on the signing of an indemnity note. That is not the practice in England.

Show traffic treated more generously by the Irish railways than by the English.

23768. I rather think it is?—It is not in the case of some things I am interested in. Taking the question of dogs, I happen to be a member of the Kennel Club, and the Kennel Club presented a petition to the Clearing House in February last, asking not even to have the dogs carried back free from the shows, but asking to have exhibitors' tickets issued at a fare and a quarter like golfers and fishermen, and the Clearing House absolutely refused to grant that concession. Now, in Ireland the railway companies always give tickets at a fare and a quarter as the maximum, and very often they are issued at single fares for the return journey.

23769. With regard to the arrangements with reference to agricultural shows in Ireland, I understand that those arrangements have been very fair and reasonable and more generous than in England?—Yes.

23770. Then we will pass on from that?—I did not know exactly what detail you wanted me to go into. As to the question of railway rates, I have some instances here which seem to me to be reasonable. Of course it is rather difficult for an outsider to say

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what is a reasonable railway rate, but I have one before me, for instance, where the linen rate from Belfast to Cork, a distance of 280 miles, is 25*s*., and another to Dublin, 113 miles, 10*s*. 9*d*. As I say, it is difficult for an outsider to say what is a reasonable rate, but these rates strike me as being fair.

The Irish railway rates alleged to be reasonable.

23771. I think we would rather hear—at least, not rather hear, but we are here to consider what you regard as unreasonable. We must begin by assuming that the bulk of the rates are reasonable and fair, but that there are instances of unfair and unreasonable rates which perhaps have never been brought under the notice of the railway companies. You have no cases of that kind to bring under our notice, I take it?—No, as far as I have seen, the rates are fair enough. I have had opportunities of reading the evidence which has been given before you, and I have noticed that most of the people who are in favour of nationalisation have given evidence with regard to what they consider unreasonable rates, and I, who am not in favour of nationalisation, rather thought that I might give some rebutting evidence.

23772. But you have done that by stating that in your judgment the rates are fair and reasonable?—I only thought that an instance or two might strengthen my position.

23773. We assume, as I have said, that the bulk of the rates are fair and reasonable?—I may say with regard to the linen rate to Cork it was put on really at the request of the Cork people, who wanted to have a market in Belfast. I am making that point, because in the case of one of your members at all events he appears to think Belfast unduly favoured.

23774. Is your opinion the same with reference to passenger fares?—Yes. But, first, there is the question of inward and outward rates.

The alleged disparity between the Belfast to Strabane and Belfast to Omagh rates.

23775. I had overlooked that. We should like to hear you upon that question?—There was one other point which I might mention—that is the question of differential rates. That is to say, there was one instance brought before you which affected me, because I have customers in both places. I refer to the statement that the rate from Belfast to Strabane was less than the rate from Belfast to Omagh, although Omagh is nearer to Belfast. I discussed that question with traders there, and they wanted the rate to Strabane taken as the basis of the Omagh rate. I pointed out that the rate to Strabane was probably too cheap on account of the water competition, and asked them if they would be satisfied if the Strabane rate was raised to the Omagh rate. Of course they said that would not help then in any way. It seems to me that all the traders want the railway company to do their business at the cheapest possible rate.

23776. Is not that a natural thing on the part of traders?—It may be, but I am afraid it is not very paying for the railway companies.

23777. We quite appreciate that everybody wants the lowest rate?—Whether that rate is remunerative or not they do not seem to mind.

Contention that all cross channel through rates apply equally to "inwards" and "outwards" traffic.

23778. The public do not consider that. Of course we have not heard the railway companies' case yet?—I made some inquiry with regard to the allegation that the inward rates in Ireland in many cases were less than the outward rates. We discussed this matter at the Chamber of Commerce when we were arranging to send representatives to you, and we all agreed that it was a very improper state of affairs if it were in existence. I applied to Mr. Gamble, the Goods Manager of the Great Northern, and to Mr. Cowie, the Local Manager of the Midland at Belfast, and both those gentlemen assured me that there was no instance in which the inward rates were less than the outward ones. I could find no such instance myself.

23779. We shall get all this from the railway companies, you know—I mean to say your evidence is secondhand in that respect. You have inquired from the railway companies, and you are giving evidence upon their assurance. Now, you are in business in Belfast—have you any instances within your own business?—No, but there is one instance which I think was brought before you, and upon which I have a letter here. It was alleged that the Midland Great Western only got 15*s*. on the through rate to Galway for chairs from Bavaria, but that the rate was 50*s*. if the chairs were sent from Dublin to Galway. Mr. Heyn, who was giving evidence at that particular sitting (the matter had been mentioned by Mr. Wood, the Secretary of the Irish Reform Association) made inquiries of the people who are the agents in Dublin of the shipping company, and his letter which I have here shows that what the railway company get from Dublin to Galway is 46*s*. 5*d*., and not 15*s*.

23780. There again we shall have that from the railway companies direct?—Well, here is evidence that even the railway company is not concerned with. I have one instance of interest here. The linen rate from Belfast to London is 41*s*. 9*d*., but the linens coming from London to Belfast pay 60*s*., and of course the reason is that there is a special linen rate from Belfast to London, and if linens come from London to Belfast as they do sometimes—German things, and so on—they go, I think, as heavy drapery, or something like that.

23781. *Lord Pirrie.*—What do they charge?—60*s*.

23782. And 41*s*. to London?—41*s*. 9*d*.

23783. *Chairman.*—That is a case quite in the opposite direction to the evidence we heard that the inward rates were less than the outward?—That is the reason I instance it.

23784. Belfast being a manufacturing centre, there are special rates for linen from Belfast to various places. London is not a special manufacturing place for linen, and it tumbles into the ordinary classification, and is charged accordingly?—That is so.

23785. *Mr. Acworth.*—You have never taken the trouble to apply to the company about that?—No, the traffic is so small.

23786. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—It would be against your interests to do so.—Well, we are merchants, but it would be against the interests of the Belfast manufacturers.

23787. *Chairman.*—Are there any other instances that you wished to mention?—No. The only thing that occurs to me is that the outward rates do not seem unreasonable when £4,000,000 of eggs are sent out yearly according to the Agricultural Returns.

23788. What have you to say to passenger fares?—I notice that many witnesses allege that passenger fares are higher in Ireland than in England, and I have got a few comparisons before me, but perhaps you do not care for them. I have taken roughly the same distances on certain Irish lines and on certain English lines. From Belfast to Dublin is 113 miles, and from Euston to Birmingham is the same. The first-class single fare from Belfast to Dublin is 20*s*.; the first-class single fare from Euston to Birmingham is 17*s*. 4*d*. The first return from Belfast to Dublin is 30*s*., and the first return from Euston to Birmingham is 33*s*. However, perhaps the third-class fares would be more interesting.

23789. Can you tell us just in a few words what is the average rate per mile which a first-class passenger is charged in Ireland—is it 2*d*., 3*d*., or what?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—2*d*.

Chairman.—And the second-class?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—1½*d*.

Chairman.—And the third-class?

Mr. Smyth (G. S. & W. Ry.).—1*d*.

Witness.—The return fare in Ireland is not nearly so largely in excess of the single as it is in England.

23790. *Chairman.*—It varies considerably in England. On the Midland, for instance, the return fare is double the single fare, but on the South-Western the return fare is practically a fare and a half?—I have an instance here of Waterloo to Exeter. Waterloo to Exeter is 171½ miles, and the third return is exactly double the single—28*s*. 7*d*. From Dublin to Cork is 165½ miles, and the return fare is 23*s*. You see, it is six miles shorter, but the return fare is 5*s*. 7*d*. less. The fares, I may say, on the Midland Great Western are rather higher than in the case of the other principal companies in Ireland.

23791. On the whole, from your knowledge of the fares in Ireland and of the fares in England, you are inclined to think there is no great cause for complaint against the ordinary passenger fares in Ireland?—I do not think so; but it is very difficult to say what is a reasonable fare.

23792. We must judge of the reasonableness by comparing the actual fares with the powers of the railway companies. Are the fares fair and reasonable within the powers that they are allowed to charge? Do you know what they are allowed to charge?—No, I do not.

23793. *Chairman.*—I take it that it is 1*d.*, 2*d.*, and 3*d.* by Act of Parliament.

Mr. Shanahan (*Secretary*).—Yes.

23794. *Chairman.*—The Act authorises them to charge 1*d.*, 2*d.*, and 3*d.*?

Mr. Shanahan (*Secretary*).—Yes.

23795. (*To Witness*).—To your knowledge, are there any 3*d.* a mile fares in Ireland for 1st class passengers?—Not that I am aware of. But the only way in which one can do these things is to compare them with the fares in other countries; it may be a rough method, but it seems to me to be a reasonable one. There is one other instance I was going to give you which is rather interesting, because it is the Midland Company in each case. From Belfast to Londonderry by the Midland is 95 miles; and from St. Pancras to Leicester is 99½ miles.

23796. That is the Midland Company in both cases?—Yes; and in both cases the traffic is pretty keenly competitive. It is one instance in which we have effective competition in Ireland. The 3rd class return fare from Belfast to Londonderry is 13*s.*; and from St. Pancras to Leicester, 16*s.* 1*d.* There is a difference in the distance, of course, of eight miles.

23797. In favour of Ireland?—The Irish distance is eight miles shorter; but 3*s.* 1*d.* is the difference in the fares.

23798. Broadly speaking, judging from the figures you have mentioned and the experience you have had, the fares in Ireland compare with those in England in a favourable manner?—Yes.

23799. And with the fares in Scotland, too?—Yes.

23800. Practically the fares in Scotland are the same as those in England, are they not?—Yes; I think in every instance the 3rd class return fare is higher in Great Britain than in Ireland.

23801. Of course we know that other witnesses could get out other instances which would tell the other way; for instance, there are the London and North-Western Railway 2nd class fares?—Oh, yes. I know the 2nd class fares in Ireland are always higher than the 2nd class fares in England; but then the 3rd class traffic is so much greater in proportion that it seems more important to show the third class than the second class fares.

23802. Then, of course, there are special fares, such as week-end fares, and all that sort of thing?—I have a note on those later.

23803. So much for the fares?—Well, there was something more I wanted to say about them. I made some comparisons with Belgium, for instance, because I noticed the last time I was at one of your sittings that Colonel Poë referred to Belgium as a cheap country. If you take into consideration that practically there is no free allowance for luggage there, the difference between the 3rd class fare in Belgium and the 3rd class fare in Ireland is not so very marked. They only allow hand luggage free in Belgium.

23804. They only allow you to take what you can carry in the carriage?—Yes; and they charge, I think, a centime and a half each 55lbs. per kilometre. So that if a man has any luggage and travels any distance at all, a 3rd class passenger would pay as much in Belgium as he would in Ireland.

23805. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The third class passenger is not, as a rule, much encumbered with luggage.

23806. *Chairman.*—What about the man without luggage?—Of course he has an enormous pull, I quite admit. But the Belgian train service on the whole is not so good as the train service in Ireland—I mean the speeds are not so great.

23807. Do you know that?—Yes, from the Continental Bradshaw, which I have always found fairly reliable. I have some instances of that in my Notes. Of course, Belgium is the most densely populated country in the world, as you are aware. I take the instance of Brussels to Antwerp, in which two places there are nearly a million of people. The distance is nearly 27½ miles, and their fastest train takes 42 minutes. Of course, that train does not stop, and one train takes as long as 1 hour 39 minutes. Now, we would not regard that as satisfactory in Ireland. It is only fair to compare what is given in return for the money. The fastest train in the Belfast to Dublin service travels 43 miles an hour, although it makes three stops; and there are a great many others which make six stops and which travel at 38 miles an hour inclusive speed.

23808. I do not think we have had any complaints at all with reference to the speed of the express trains in Ireland?—No; but the Belgian system has been held up as to cheapness, and the point I am making is this—Is it not reasonable to compare the services rendered?—You cannot, of course, have a 60 h.p. motor car at the same price as a 20 h.p. one.

23809. You have not given us at all the Belgian fares?—The Belgian third class fare is 3-5*d.* per mile.

23810. If you have it accurately we had better have it on the Notes?—There is no first class fare for Belgian passengers, except upon through trains going to and from other countries. But the second class fare is just over 1*d.*, and the third class is 3-5*d.* per English mile.

Comparison of the fares and services on the Belgian railways with the Irish.

23811. What do you mean by saying that there are no first class fares on the Belgian railway system? Surely there are first class carriages between Antwerp and Brussels?—Only on international trains. I may say that they do run what is called a Voiture Salon; but there is no first class, strictly speaking, except where the carriage comes through from other countries.

23812. *Mr. Acworth.*—The passengers there pay excess, just as we do when we get into a Pullman car?—Precisely.

23813. *Chairman.*—At any rate, what you have called their second-class is really their first-class?—Yes.

23814. They have two classes?—Yes.

23815. In the one case they are called second and third, while in the other case they are called first and third?—There is a difficulty of comparison when you have to compare two classes with three—that difficulty always does arise of course in those cases.

23816. But the accommodation in those coaches is much the same as that of the first-class in this country?—I have not been in Belgium for some little time, but certainly when I was there last the first-class accommodation was not as good as our first-class. I only referred to the speeds for the reason I explained to you.

Speed of Continental trains.

23817. I know. We must take all these things into consideration in comparing the figures of the fares?—I have come here rather to stick up for the Irish railways; and I think it is only reasonable to put before you anything in their favour. The question of speeds, of course, is a matter which ought to have a great deal of consideration. I have before me the instance of the Brussels-Paris express, which travels only at the rate of forty miles an hour to the frontier with a non-stop run. Now, in Ireland we have an express train—it is a tourist train from Dublin to Mallow—which travels a distance of 144 miles at 48 miles an hour.

23818. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you tell us how fast the Brussels-Paris express travels as soon as it gets on to the French railway?—No.

32819. It is, I think, sixty miles an hour?—I know the French train is much faster, but I was taking the Belgian only.

Comparison of Australian and Irish passenger fares.

23820. *Chairman.*—So much for the passenger service?—There was another instance which I have thought it proper to bring up, because it is in connection with the fares in Australia. They are mainly State lines there; and I thought, as many people advocate nationalisation in Ireland, it was only fair to point out what they are doing there. I have here the six time tables of the Australian Colonies (I have not got the New Zealand) which I happened to get accidentally, and not for the purpose of this Commission. I have run through them all, and I do not think their fares compare so very favourably with ours. Of course, there again they have only two classes, first and second, in the Australian Colonies, so I presume you would have to compare their second with our third.

23821. No?—Well it is the lowest class.

23822. I have, perhaps, misunderstood you?—They have only two classes in Australia; and I have compared their second class fare with our third class.

23823. That is the only thing you can do, of course; that is quite right?—I take from Melbourne to Albury, which, I am afraid, is not a very good example, but the Victorian time tables do not give proper particulars as to fares, like those of the other five Colonies do; and this was the only one I could pick out. The distance is 190½ miles, and the fares are:—First, single, 34*s.* 1*d.*;

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return, 51*s.* 3*d.*; second, single, 22*s.* 8*d.*; return, 34*s.* 1*d.* With that, I compare Dublin to Killarney in Ireland, where the distance is 185¼ miles, slightly less than the Australian distance I have given you, and there the fares are:—First, single, 32*s.* 6*d.*; return, 54*s.* 3*d.*; Third, single, 15*s.* 5*d.*; return, 25*s.* 9*d.*

23824. 25*s.* 9*d.* as against what?—As against 34*s.* 1*d.* The Melbourne to Albury train takes 5 hours 38 minutes, as against 4 hours 10 minutes—Dublin to Killarney. The New South Wales instance which I have taken is from Sydney to a place called Mullion Creek, a distance of 207 miles, which is practically the same distance as from Dublin to Tralee. The fare there was commented upon, I noticed, at one of your previous sittings by Mr. Sixsmith, one of the witnesses who gave evidence before you, and who was a commercial traveller.

Comparison of Australian and Irish passenger fares.

23825. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is the distance the same?—It is the same within a mile; 207 miles is the Australian distance, and 206 is the Irish distance. From Dublin to Tralee the first class single fare is 36*s.*, and the return fare is 60*s.*; the third, single, is 16*s.* 7*d.*, and the third, return, 27*s.* 9*d.* Now, the Sydney to Mullion Creek first, single fare, is 41*s.*, and the first, return, 61*s.* 3*d.*; while the second, single, is 27*s.* 3*d.*, and the second, return, 41*s.* So that there is a difference there on the return fares of the cheapest class in each case of 13*s.* 3*d.*, or just about 50 per cent. more.

23826. *Chairman.*—We have had no evidence really as to the passenger fares in Ireland, except from New Zealand. I do not think it was ever represented that the passenger fares on the Colonial railways would compare favourably with the Irish fares?—No; but it was represented, as far as I remember from reading, I think, Sir Joseph Ward's evidence, that nationalisation was a great thing.

23827. That was for New Zealand?—I presumed that the remark applied to the Australian Colonies as well.

23828. No; I think not; I think it was confined to New Zealand?—Well, Mr. Sexton has always held the Australian Colonies up as a good instance of the State management of railways.

23829. We have had no evidence really that passengers fares were considerably lower, or at all lower, in the Colonies than in this country?—But if I could show you that they were considerably greater, would not that rather make a case against the nationalisation of railways.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I think the last witness who gave evidence here admitted that the Australian fares were higher.

23830. *Chairman.*—The evidence given was far more in relation to the development of industries, and not so much with reference to passengers. Then, there were a lot of concessions which were mentioned, where they gave special rates, and where they carried children free, and that sort of thing?—I see, in these Australian time tables, they show all kinds of holiday fares. There is another Australian instance which I should like to give, if I am not boring you. I want to bring it before you, because it shows how a State-managed line acts when it is brought face to face with competition. Newcastle is 104 miles from Sydney, and the fares are:—First, single, 12*s.* 6*d.*; return, 20*s.*; second, single, 8*s.*; return, 12*s.* 6*d.* Those really seem very cheap for the distance. When they are brought into contact with water competition, the steamer traffic from Sydney to Newcastle cuts them down; and then what they do is this: the fares to stations nearly thirty miles nearer to Sydney than is Newcastle are practically the same. That is, practically, the Omagh and Strabane instance over again, or the Navan case, which was before you. There, the point I make is that, even the Government has to face competition at times and to act like an ordinary company. The same thing takes place in the case of Sydney to Melbourne. For instance, the fare from Sydney to Seymour is the same as to Melbourne, although it is sixty miles nearer to Sydney. I am rather giving this evidence, because I happened to be present when the Secretary of the Irish Reform Association gave evidence; and he rather suggested that State ownership would mean equal mileage rates; and I am drawing attention to that, because the Australian experience does not bear his contention out.

23831. We do not place any great value upon equal mileage rates; in fact, I think that in his cross-examination the witness you refer to admitted that it could not be carried out?—But he was a direct advocate of nationalisation; and I am only trying to bring anything I can to prove that he was not correct.

23832. *Mr. Acworth.*—Who was the witness you are speaking of?—Mr. Wood.

23833. *Chairman.*—I think he modified his views with reference to equal mileage rates?—He did, if I correctly remember his cross-examination. There is only one fair thing to say about Australian fares, that you cannot compare Ireland with Australia, any more than you can compare Ireland with Belgium, because the density of the population is so different. I would like to say something, if I am not detaining you too much, about the excursion rates in Ireland; because you have asked the question in your Heads of Evidence. I have here one or two instances: Belfast to Portrush, for example, the return, excursion fares, are:—First class, 5*s.*; second class, 2*s.* 6*d.*; and the distance is 67½ miles. Those fares are in force every day during July and August, and for two or three days of the week during the other summer months. The excursion trains only run in June on three days, but in July and August every day. During those months of the year they run an express at noon from Belfast, with a luncheon car attached, at those fares, and back, with a dining car. It is really for golf they do this—67½ miles, as I say, is the distance, and a man gets carried that distance twice; he goes down in a luncheon car, and comes back in a dining car at 8 o'clock, and the railway company do that for 5*s.* I might say that it is as if you were to carry a man from Waterloo to Winchester and back in a dining-car at that price, and I do not know whether you would consider that remunerative. That is an instance of a cheap fare in Ireland.

23834. I daresay you could give us plenty of evidence of that kind—in fact, we had instances on the West Clare, where very cheap tickets were issued to golfers?—I know of no similar instance in England. I used to go to Littlestone, in Kent, to play golf, and I think that distance is eight miles further, from Charing Cross, than the distance from Belfast to Portrush. As a special concession to members only, they gave us a first class return for 13*s.* 6*d.* Now, proportionately, that is a great deal more than we are accustomed to pay in Ireland. There are a great many other cases I could give you; for instance, Belfast to Newcastle, County Down.

23835. That, again, is golf, is it not?—Yes; the first class return fare is 3*s.*, the distance being thirty-six miles, by the shorter route. Then, there are other instances, such as, Belfast to Dublin; they have constant excursions there, and the distance is 113 miles, and the third excursion return fare is 4*s.* I am only giving you these trivial instances because it seems to me that, if the railway companies act generously in these small matters, they are not, perhaps, the extortioners they have been held up to be by some people.

23836. We have had no evidence of that kind. Sitting here, I have never heard anybody complain anything about the railways at all, except isolated cases?—Mr. William Field, who gave evidence before you, is very strong against the railway companies in his pamphlets.

23837. You must not judge him by his pamphlets. His evidence before us was very reasonable indeed. We must not deal with pamphlets, which are quite outside this Inquiry. I gather from what you say that, so far as your experience goes, in Ireland, on the whole, not only ordinary passenger fares, but excursion fares are just as favourable as they are in England, or in other countries?—Certainly, compared with England, the Irish fares are much the cheaper.

23838. Take it on that broad issue—I do not think we need have any more instances?—There is a question about commercial travellers.

23839. But we have had the commercial travellers before us?—What I have been able to find out is rather opposed to the evidence they gave.

23840. We have had the representative of the commercial travellers here. What particular statement of his do you wish to controvert?—Well, generally as to the way they are treated. I read Mr. Sixsmith's evidence. My own firm would have between thirty and forty travellers out at different times, and I asked them, for the purposes of this Commission, how the railway companies treated them, and they all said that they treated them exceedingly well. The only

thing they complain about is, that sometimes the railway companies are a little too strict in the matter of luggage, and that a little laxness would not be amiss. That is mainly on the southern lines; but they have no complaint to make such as I saw made by the commercial travellers' representative before this Commission.

23841. What is the particular evidence you object to, the particular point—is it important?

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—He said that he was up to his knees in water.

23841A. *Mr. Acworth.*—He represented, I suppose, the whole Commercial Travellers' interests?—He said here that he considered that the first-class fares should be brought down to the level of the first-class fares in England. Well, they cannot be brought down to the level of the first-class fares in England because they are below them already, as a rule. I was only taking that as an instance of his inaccuracy.

23842. *Chairman.*—You are aware, I suppose, that the first-class fares on the Midland Railway in England are 1½*d.* per mile?—Yes.

23843. Are there any such fares in Ireland?—I have already given you the comparison.

23844. Those are special cases?—I picked them out from three big Irish companies and three big English companies.

23845. But you know that the first-class fares in England on the Midland Railway are 1½*d.* per mile?—Yes.

23846. In Ireland, I understood, generally they were 2*d.*?—Well, from Belfast to Dublin, 113 miles, the fare is 20*s.*

23847. That is an exception. Take two inland places. Do not take instances where there is water competition——

23848. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I should like, too, to remind Mr. Lindsay that the limited mail fare from Belfast to Dublin is 2*s.* 6*d.* more?—The water competition to Dublin does not affect the passenger fares. No one goes from Belfast to Dublin by water. It does affect the goods rates, of course, but not the passenger fares.

23849. *Chairman.*—I do not suppose that anyone ever goes from Belfast to Dublin by water. Let us confine ourselves to that statement; there is nothing really to contradict it, is there?—No, except that he is inaccurate in stating that on the whole the first-class Irish fares are higher than in England.

23850. They are in some places. We do not place any particular weight upon that. We know what the fares are, or we can easily ascertain them. In some cases they are higher, and in some cases they are lower?—He made the statement generally.

23851. But you cannot contradict it generally, because, as I tell you, in England the Midland Railway Company charge 1½*d.* per mile first-class, and other companies competing with them charge the same?—But one of the cases that I took was a comparison of the Midland in both countries.

23852. That is a special fare. But, speaking generally, that is what he meant?—But there is no special competition at all.

23853. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you give me the reference to that question?—It was question 9097.

23854. Yes, I have it. He says, "I consider that if the first-class fares were brought down to the level of the first-class fares in England, a great many people who now travel second-class would travel first-class." He made a quite general statement?—I could not compare every instance, but those I have compared show that he was wrong.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Before the adjournment for lunch, sir, I should like to say this. You handed to us some papers this morning in the course of Mr. Mackey's evidence with regard to inequalities in payments on certain consignments of eels from Castleconnel to Euston. We sent up to Euston and had this document compared with the actual way-bills; and we find that in every case there has been added the market toll and delivery charge, in every single case the railway rates are all right.

Chairman.—That is exactly what I thought.

Mr. Acworth.—Of course it is quite fair from the salesman's point of view.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Oh, yes.

Chairman.—That explains what looked like apparent anomalies in four consignments of the same weight from the same place to the same place being charged for differently. But, if you remember, I did point out to Mr. Mackey that it must be the market toll and other things added; and now you have proved that that is so.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Yes, sir.

23855. *Chairman (to Witness).*—Perhaps you are aware that it has been represented to us by many witnesses that a general reduction of rates and fares in Ireland would considerably increase the prosperity of that country? What have you to say upon that?—Before I go to that, might I put in a ticket which I got from a member of a Commercial Travellers' Association, showing the prices at which yearly tickets are issued to all centres on the Midland and Great Northern? It only bears out that the railway companies in Ireland are very reasonable in their charges. (*Ticket handed in*).

The issue of cheap yearly tickets to commercial travellers by the Irish companies.

23856. *Lord Pirrie.*—This is a Commercial Traveller's ticket, is it?—Yes. I got it from a member of a Commercial Travellers' Association.

23857. You call that a traveller's ticket, do you?—No, that is a membership ticket of the Commercial Travellers' Association, and you will see that the Great Northern and Northern Counties Companies issue yearly tickets to these people exceptionally cheaply.

23858. Available on each other's lines?—No, separately. With regard to what you were saying, if you have noticed, in my proof I do not propose to give any evidence on that point. It is rather a difficult thing to say, and, after all, it is only a crude opinion.

The extension of the existing arrangements for running through carriages over the Irish lines recommended.

23859. *Chairman.*—Then let us go on to the next subject with regard to the local services of the railway companies?—They are really very trivial things. Simply some small complaints about the train service to a place called Bangor, in County Down. The trains, on the whole, are very good, except that the connections south and west are not quite what one might desire, and there are delays at Cavan and Mullingar. So much so that it is almost as well for a man travelling to Galway to go *via* Dublin as *via* Cavan. There are quite considerable delays in each direction, but I need not bother you with particulars of those. I think if I might suggest it, it would be a good thing if the Great Northern could be given running powers to Mullingar. I have heard some rumours that they were thinking of applying for them. I think that would probably do away with considerable delay there. But what I wanted rather to draw your attention to is absence of through carriages in Ireland. You will see that I have mentioned that subject in my proof. They are practically unknown. Almost the only instances are the three principal companies that run into Dublin. Through carriages are run down to Kingstown Pier, but that is a very short distance. The Great Northern works a train from Newry to Greenore over the North Western line, and the North-Western run a through carriage from Greenore to Londonderry. I think those are the only instances in Ireland of any companies working on a foreign line. What I would suggest is that some pressure should be brought to bear upon railway companies to run through carriages each way every day between Belfast and Cork, and between Belfast and Galway; I suggest that they should do that as a start to see how the thing would work out.

23860. *Mr. Acworth.*—*Via* Mullingar—that would improve the train service if they run the through carriage *via* Cavan?—If you travel *via* Dublin you travel *via* Mullingar.

23861. I meant *via* Cavan?—Yes.

23862. *Chairman.*—Your opinion is that the system in operation in England of running through carriages between certain centres is a great advantage to travellers, and you think that the same result would follow if a similar system were established in Ireland?—Yes. As regards Dublin, there was a difficulty, because the communication between Amiens-street and Kingsbridge was very bad until recently, but now that the Great Southern and Western line enters Amiens-street they have a regular service there, and there does not seem any difficulty in running through carriages at all.

23863. Are you of opinion that some of these small, unremunerative railways should be absorbed by the larger ones?—I was about to make a remark in regard to goods. There is a question about goods in the same paragraph of my proof.

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23864. I do not want to overload your evidence with what I may call immaterial points?—It is a matter of railway working. There are considerable delays in the sending of goods from Belfast to the south and west, but I now understand you do not want any details.

23865. I think we will go on to the subject of amalgamation. Is it your opinion that the interests of the country would be served if these small independent lines were absorbed by the larger companies and worked as part of their systems?—I think there is a question of subsidies you were asking me about?

The amalgamation of the smaller Irish railways with the greater suggested.

23866. No?—I have a note of subsidies down before the point to which you were referring. But I certainly think the lines of the smaller companies ought to be amalgamated. It is only following out the tendency which has gone on in Ireland in the past.

Four separate companies proposed.

23867. Then you would compel the smaller companies to sell their undertakings to the larger companies?—Yes; but I do not see how you can compel the larger companies to buy. My idea is that all the smaller lines about Cork and in the South and South-West generally should be absorbed by the Great Southern; that the County Down, the Sligo and Leitrim, and the Cavan and Leitrim should be absorbed by the Great Northern; that the Ballycastle line should be absorbed by the Midland; that the Lough Swilly should become part of the Donegal joint lines, and so on; and I think it might be a good thing if the Great Northern bought the Dublin and South Eastern as well. What I mean is that practically there should be four companies in Ireland.

23868. Your idea is that four large companies would be better for the country than the large number of independent companies which now exist?—Yes; because the four large companies would leave you practically the existing competition.

The granting of subsidies by the State disapproved.

23869. You are opposed to subsidies being granted to railway companies?—Yes; I do not think it is a reasonable thing. The general question of subsidies was reported on, you may or may not know, in connection with the Financial Relations question, and in a report signed by Lord Farrer, Lord Welby, and Mr. Currie, I think, the granting of subsidies was utterly opposed. They said that they thought subsidies were always misapplied. I think the subsidy business has been rather overdone, and it practically tends to pauperise the people.

State ownership and control of trading concerns objected to.

23870. Then I gather that you are in favour of the railway system being concentrated into four or five large companies, and you are opposed to any question of State ownership?—Yes; I am decidedly opposed to State ownership. I oppose State ownership, first, generally speaking, and then specially as regards Ireland. I do not think a State department ever manages a trading concern well. The Post Office, of course, is the great instance we have of assumed success. Although it is always held out as making some £4,000,000 a year one is never told what capital it takes to earn that money. So that whether it is properly remunerative or not one has no means of ascertaining.

23871. Now we may take it shortly that you are in favour of four or five large systems as against the present system, and that you are opposed to State ownership or State management of the Irish railways?—Yes; but I thought you would want to have some reasons why I arrived at that conclusion.

The necessity for further railway extensions in Ireland.

23872. No. Your opinion seems to be very emphatic upon the point. I do not think we need have the reasons for it. I suppose you would agree that there are large portions of Ireland without any railway communication at all, and that it would be in the interests of those particular districts if light railways or other railway communication were provided?—Certainly it would be; but at whose expense?

23873. But if railways could be provided it would tend to develop the agricultural districts that are now unprovided with any means of communication?—I should think so; but I have no particular knowledge on the point. These are matters for the people in the particular districts.

23874. We have had considerable evidence before us on the point?—I should think it probable.

23875. Do you not think that the railways play a very important part in the agricultural development of a country?—Undoubtedly.

23876. But is the state of the agricultural development of the country any better or worse than what you know it to be in England?—I do not think so. It is a question with which I do not profess to be particularly conversant—I am a trader, I am not an agriculturist. I think there are agricultural districts in England that have periods of depression, just as they have in Ireland. I think they run together pretty well. I always understood that Lincolnshire was an instance of an agricultural district having chronic depression.

23877. I may just take it in this way, that you are very strongly opposed to the nationalisation of railways or to State purchase, or to State management of the railways in Ireland?—Yes.

23878. But you rather favour some system, if it could be adopted, whereby there should be four or five large independent systems controlling the whole of the railways in Ireland?—Yes.

23879. That is, generally, your view?—I have gone further than that. I am an advocate of English purchase if possible—the purchase of Irish lines by English companies.

23880. Do you think, in those cases where Irish lines have been absorbed by English companies, the policy has been beneficial on the whole?—The only instance we have is the Midland and Northern Counties line, and I think that that unquestionably has been an advantage.

23881. We have had evidence to the contrary?—So I have seen; but the witnesses have not given any instances in support of their opinion, and the reason I wanted to give some instances in support of my opinion is that unsupported opinions are not, I think, very satisfying. For instance, you had a witness, a Rev. Mr. Stack, from County Tyrone. I think it was his opinion that the purchase of Irish lines by English companies ought to be stopped, but he did not give any reason why he thought so. I can give a definite reason for my opinion that it was a desirable thing for the Midland to have acquired the Northern Counties line.

23882. This is a case brought before us yesterday. It was stated in regard to the acquisition of the Donegal line by the Midland Company that immediately it was done the rates were raised?—That is a joint line.

23883. But it was given in evidence here that as soon as the acquisition took place certain rates were advanced. Surely that cannot be to the interests of the district?—No; but I have seen so many wild statements that I should like to have that corroborated.

Mr. Acworth.—I think the statement was that the rates were raised up to the level which existed on the Great Northern before.

Chairman.—But they were raised on the Donegal line.

Mr. Acworth.—Because the Irish Great Northern got hold of it, not the English company.

Witness.—Of course that is a hardship on the face of it; but perhaps they paid too little before.

23884. *Chairman.*—If you were in the district, and that result followed, naturally you would think that the purchase of the Donegal railway by the English and the Irish companies had not been a very great benefit to the district?—There is another aspect. Surely some, at all events, of the lines that were acquired had some sort of subsidies. I do not know the precise terms on which the two companies took over the Donegal line, but I should imagine that some of the subsidies have been done away with; and, if so, if you are charging people more for the carriage of their goods you are taxing them less.

23885. At any rate you are strongly in favour of the capital of English railway companies being spent in Ireland for the purpose of acquiring existing Irish railways?—Yes.

23886. *Mr. Acworth.*—I think the Donegal Railway was a pure Balfour line; it was built free gratis and for nothing, and presented to the district?—No; some of it was made before the days of Mr. Balfour.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I think Mr. Acworth is right, and that there are no subsidies paid by the county at present.

Witness.—The Donegal Railway originally ran from Strabane to Stranorlar.

23887. *Mr. Acworth.*—But not onwards?—It ran to within four miles of the town of Donegal, and then stopped.

23888. All the new additions were given by Mr. Balfour?—You mean Killybegs and Glenties.

23889. Yes?—I think they were.

23890. A little bit from Strabane to Derry was

built by themselves because it paid them?—Yes; that is so far as I know; I cannot give any precise information upon it.

Mr. Acworth.—I do not think there were any subsidies.

23891. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And the loans they had incurred were paid off some time ago?—Possibly.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

23892. Of course we do not know the average rate received for passengers either in England or Ireland, but I gather that your view is this: that the first class fares in Ireland are much the same as on the English lines—that is 2*d.* a mile first class single, and it is roughly 2*d.* in England?—Yes.

23893. It is roughly 2*d.* in England, except on the Midland and places influenced by the Midland?—Yes.

23894. Your 17*s.* 4*d.* to Birmingham is lower than 2*d.* because the Midland runs to Birmingham, and their route is not much longer?—It is a little longer.

23895. But the Midland at 1½*d.* would be lower than the North Western at 2*d.*?—Yes.

23896. On the other hand, your evidence is that the Irish reduction in return fares, first class, is bigger than the ordinary English reduction?—Yes.

23897. It seems to be on the basis of one-half as against two-thirds or three-fifths?—Yes. That hardly applies altogether to the Midland and Great Western; they are rather higher.

23898. As for the third class, I gather it is universal to make considerable reductions on the two single fares in Ireland?—Yes; it is about one-half as much again.

23899. Whereas in England the universal practice, except on the North Eastern, is to charge two full single fares?—I think it is.

23900. So that the third class return in Ireland is markedly cheaper than in England?—Yes.

23901. Cheaper even than the North Eastern, because the North Eastern is one and two-thirds, while the Irish is one and a-half fares?—Yes.

23902. Then you refer to Brussels and Antwerp. You have commented on the very slow running between two large towns with trains not stopping between, but simply trotting along at about 38 miles an hour?—Yes.

23903. I daresay you know that the Belgian people do not like it either, and private enterprise proposed to construct an electric line, but the Government declined to be competed with, and would not allow the scheme to pass?—I have heard of that.

23904. I gather that if that were the attitude of a State-owned railway you do not like it; you want competition, as I understand?—Certainly; I am an absolute believer in competition.

23905. Dealing with Ulster, as you said, the great instance is Derry and Belfast?—Yes.

23906. There you no doubt get a competitive service and a very good service?—Yes; there was an instance of very fast running last year.

23907. Yes, we know that is a very good service, but I want to take you to a general question. Ulster is pretty rich and progressive, and may fairly be compared with England; it can afford competition. But take your mind away from Ulster to the poorer parts of the country. Are you satisfied that it is in the interests of the poorer parts of the country to have competition?—What parts were you thinking of, particularly?

23908. For instance, you know that within the last few years the Great Southern have got into Sligo and compete for traffic all across the Midland Great Western district, and take it round to Rosslare or Dublin?—Yes.

23909. That of course has weakened the Midland Great Western. I cannot blame the Great Southern. It is their business; that is what they are there for, to make money if they can; but are you sure it is in the interests of the district?—I cannot see why it is not.

23910. You would agree that it is in the interests of the district to be served by a reasonably strong company?—Yes.

23911. A company that can afford to spend money?—Yes.

23912. If the Midland dividend has gone down and the security has gone down, are they not less likely to spend money?—That is so, but will not competition force them into spending it rather. Practically you are asking me to say whether I would rather have a strong non-competitive company not likely to spend money——

23913. Or a weak competitive company which does not spend money, because it cannot get it?—But will it not be driven to spend money by competition.

23914. Can it get the money?—I think so.

23915. With shares at 60 it is an expensive thing to raise money?—The Great Central is an instance in point; they raised money.

23916. I will not discuss the Great Central. You have called attention to another thing—to the fact that in Australia a State railway can exclude competition inside its own ring fence, but it has got to face water competition?—Yes.

23917. You have instanced Sydney and Newcastle?—Yes.

23918. How do you apply that to Ireland?—If you nationalise the Irish railways, taking Belfast, which I know best, you would still have carting on the roads. They cart out for a distance of thirty miles. You would still have the water competition, and so on.

23919. And the competition of the different ports?—Certainly. I was only taking the immediate district.

23920. Would it not be that the State would have keen competition, and have to do its business at a very low rate in those districts; would not that rather excite the feelings of the people in the non-competitive districts, and would there not be all sorts of pressure on members of Parliament to have their rates brought down to the rate fixed by the keen competition—brought down to the level of the competitive rates?—Yes, and would not that practically mean that the railways would be worked at a loss?

23921. In other words, I gather your attitude to be this—that it would not be possible to avoid special low rates where you have water competition?—Yes, or else give up the business.

23922. And you might not be able, commercially, to afford—whatever you might by taxation—to reduce your non-competitive prices to the prices which would be forced in competitive cases?—Political pressure would be brought to bear; the people would not be satisfied. The Omagh and Strabane case would be dealt with in a different way by a State line.

23923. That is a railway only, and you would adjust your railways on the basis of advancing up to a certain point by both routes, and then overlapping between Strabane and Omagh?—There is an instance in connection with the Dublin and South Eastern charging some quite small return fares inside the tramway competition. For nine and three-quarter miles they charge 10*d.* return, but when they get to nineteen miles, or just double the distance, they charge 2*s.* 8*d.* The distance was doubled, but the price was increased more than three times. My opinion is that if that was an instance of a State-owned railway the people at a longer distance would complain effectively.

23923A. That would mean, as you say, either giving up the competitive business or reducing the non-competitive rates to the competitive level, and making up the difference by taxation?—Precisely. The point I was wanting to make is that railways would not be put in the position which the Post Office is in; they would not have an absolute monopoly.

23924. I see you say in your proof that you do not think any general reduction in rates and fares would result in a remunerative increase of traffic?—I went on to say that I had only formed a crude opinion on the subject.

23925. I do not know how much importance you attach to the word "general." You spoke of carting for thirty miles?—Yes.

23926. Do you not think it would be business to try and get the traffic on to the railways?—I think it would. But there are special circumstances. Sometimes they can cart more cheaply than the railway company could possibly do it because they would have to cart to and from stations.

23927. It is a common thing to say that the railways cannot touch the distributing traffic within twenty miles of London?—Yes.

23928. But there are cases—taking the case which we have heard of again and again—of men driving ten miles along a railway in a car rather than pay the fares?—In Ireland you mean?

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Mr. W. A. Lindsay, Representative of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society.

The possibility of competition under State ownership of Irish railways.

The probability of a remunerative increase of traffic resulting from general reduction in rates and fares

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Mr. W. A. Lindsay, Representative of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society:

23929. Yes; would it not be better to get those passengers at ¾*d.* than not get them at all at 1*d.*?—Yes, undoubtedly. The train is there.

23930. Is your objection to subsidies so strong that you would object to something of the nature of a temporary guarantee against loss of revenue, to try the effect of a reduction of fares?—The difficulty I have about subsidies is this. I do not see why I or any other man should want to travel at somebody else's expense. If a man is a pauper, and you take the thing away from business lines altogether, you go into sentiment. I have no claim to travel at the expense of the State or of the community.

The desirability of the State guaranteeing railways against a temporary loss of revenue resulting from reduced rates and fares.

23931. But you are in a big way of business, and you can afford to start a new branch and lose a thousand a year for a time, if you think it will pay you in the long run. That is business, is it not?—Yes.

23932. But a little man could not do that; he could not raise the thousand; he could not afford to stand the racket?—That is so.

23933. Does not something of the same kind apply to the State. Would it not be worth the State's while to cast its bread upon the waters, if it was likely to find it again after many days?—Yes, but you assume an increase of traffic.

23934. Assuming you have reason to think that in the long run it will pay?—You are assuming that where you have three men travelling alongside the railway, you will increase those three to a dozen by reducing the fares.

23935. I am assuming that it is a case of putting out £1,000 which you think will be well invested in the long run. Assuming that is the position, would you object to a State subsidy?—But the railway companies are in a large way of business. Why should they not make the speculation?

23936. Could any chairman face his shareholders if he said "We are paying 6 per cent. now, but for the next half-year we propose to pay 4 per cent., because we are going to make an experiment with passenger fares"?—I quite see the difficulty, but I do not see why I or any other taxpayer should be called upon to interfere so much in the internal affairs of a railway company. They have to do their business on the lines of an ordinary business man.

23937. I hope it will not be a reflection upon you to say that the prosperity of Messrs. Lindsay and Co. is not so important to the country as the prosperity of the railways?—Quite so.

23938. I think there is a difference?—There is an entire difference, of course.

The anticipated effect of the acquisition of the Irish lines by English companies.

23939. Now, another matter. You spoke about the English companies coming in and taking over the Irish railways to a considerable extent. I suppose your view is that that would be generally welcomed in Ulster?—I think so.

23940. There is no feeling of national self-consciousness being injured, or anything of that kind?—No; not at all; in fact, as far as Unionist people (to use a political term) are concerned, they think it tends to make for unionism. But I have not considered that point particularly myself.

23941. I think the position taken before us has been, not that the service would be worse, but that Ireland wanted to paddle its own canoe?—That is where Irish provincialism comes out at times.

23942. We will not discuss that?—Why should a man who lives in Wexford object to the railway by which he travels being run from Paddington any more than a man who lives in Pembrokeshire?

Suggested method for the amalgamation of the Irish railway.

23943. I see you would compel the smaller companies to sell, if necessary, but you would not compel the larger companies to buy?—That is so.

23944. Now, carry that a little further. You will not compel the smaller companies to sell except on what we call compulsory terms?—Yes.

23945. What they can show to an arbitrator their line is worth, and perhaps a little more?—Just the same as if a railway company were acquiring land.

23946. We will say full value, plus 10 per cent. Now we know where we are. That is the price which you think the purchaser ought to pay?—Yes, if he is willing to pay it.

23947. You think, for instance, that the Schull and Skibbereen line ought to be taken over on those terms?—Do not make me entirely agree with you; I do not say it ought to be taken over on those terms; that is a matter for the Great Southern and Western.

23948. I think I understand your point now. I do not think I did before. What you mean is that if the Great Southern and Western is willing to give Lands Clauses terms, it ought to be entitled to take the line?—Precisely.

23949. I did not follow your point before. If, on the other hand, the Great Southern and Western is not willing to give those terms the Schull and Skibbereen line must go on to the end of time?—I am quite aware that you put me in an awkward position. I quite see the difficulty; but there is such a difference between compelling a man to sell, and compelling a man to buy. You cannot say to the Great Southern and Western Company, "You must buy this railway," because Sir Wm. Goulding may say: "I have not the money." As a matter of fact, I do not think the difficulty would arise; I think it could be got over amicably enough. I think most of the smaller companies would sell.

23950. On Lands Clauses terms?—No, not necessarily.

23951. You think they would be rather glad to get rid of their undertakings?—I think a great many would. It is only a thing which has been going on in both Ireland and England as well—amalgamation.

23952. You will remember Sir James Allport's report of twenty years ago. There has not been very much amalgamation of railway companies since then?—No, not much.

23953. The little odds and ends are still lying about?—Yes.

23954. The Waterford and Limerick, which was a fairly strong concern, has been taken over, but the tiny things are still there?—Yes.

23955. You have had a precedent in Ireland lately; I do not know whether you think it a good one. A tenant pays so many years' purchase and the landlord receives so many years' more, and the State makes up the difference. Do you think that is a good precedent?—I do not. I am afraid I am rather out of sympathy with that.

23956. Then your last point was that you do not think the depression of Irish agriculture is more than the depression of English agriculture?—I think it is rather difficult to give an answer, as I am not an agriculturalist.

23957. It is of the same class and of the same kind, and probably brought about by the same causes?—I do not want to go into the fiscal question at all; I did not mean to do so when I mentioned the Corn Laws. It is not because Ireland is Ireland; it is simply because Ireland is the agricultural portion of the United Kingdom.

23958. It is the agricultural portion of the United Kingdom, subject to the same fiscal legislation as the rest of the United Kingdom?—Precisely.

23959. If the problem of agricultural depression is to be tackled, your view is that it wants tackling on the lines of fiscal legislation, and not on the lines of railway legislation. Is that what it comes to?—I do not think the railways have anything to do with it.

23960. Take Lincolnshire, for example. You do not consider that the depression in some parts of Lincolnshire is due to the default of the Great Northern Railway of England?—Certainly not.

23961. And you say the same of the depression in Ireland—that it is not due to the Great Northern of Ireland?—Probably if one could make sufficient investigations he would find that in the agricultural portions of England the decrease of prosperity began before they had railways at all to affect them. When the Corn Laws were repealed there were very few railways in England.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

23962. You spoke of desiring that the railways should be divided amongst five of the largest companies?—I think I said four.

23963. Four or five, and you went on to say that you thought it very desirable that there should be some better through communication across country along routes which might be said now to be not the recognised routes?—Not entirely. The principal thing I wanted to see were through carriages from Belfast to Cork, and that is a recognised route.

23964. I quite understand, but my point is this: would it not be much more likely that you could get through communication from Belfast to Cork or from

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some other town across country, if the railways were in one hand rather than in four or five?—Undoubtedly.

23965. So far as that is concerned, you would gain more by amalgamation of the railways into one than into four companies?—I had rather in view, in suggesting four companies, that the Great Northern and the Great Southern should not amalgamate; I am hoping eventually that the Great Western will buy the Great Southern and the North-Western the Great Northern.

23966. You would agree surely that cross country routes would be much more likely to be opened by one great company than by several companies?—If the companies were not the same between Dublin and Cork, it would not do away with my through carriages. It is the same in England, is it not? You can get plenty of through carriages, and they travel over foreign lines.

23967. But through carriages mean great co-operation between interests which may possibly be diverse?—Yes; but has that not been successfully overcome in England?

23968. I think not. Having expressed this view about the four or five companies, have you at all considered the other view—although I quite understand you would not agree with it—of the amalgamation of the railways into one great company and their management as a commercial company in some way or other controlled by the Government?—Yes, I have to some extent, but not very closely.

23969. I only want to ask you one question upon that. If you have considered such an arrangement, have you at all thought out how it could be managed with advantage to the country, retaining the commercial points of the railway, but still controlling it by some form of Government control?—Is not that rather an unheard of thing as far as this country is concerned; there is no instance of anything like it at present. It is hard for me to bring my mind to appreciate such a state of affairs. There is no instance of a commercial concern here being controlled by the State in some more or less direct way. That is the difficulty of answering your question, and then it would do away with any competition that we have in Ireland.

23970. For competition you would substitute some form of control which would take care that there was no unfairness?—I am afraid some form of control will not give the effective train service that competition does produce occasionally.

23971. You do not look forward to that as being a good thing?—No.

23972. *Mr. Acworth.*—You mentioned that you have been appointed to give evidence on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society. I take it that the details of your evidence are your own, of course?—Absolutely.

23973. It has not been submitted in any way?—No. In connection with the Chamber of Commerce we had a small committee and discussed it. Then as regards the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, they simply left it to me.

23974. You do not, of course, claim that every word you have said is authorised as you said it, but I gather that you feel that you are representing their general attitude of mind towards these questions?—I can certainly say this, that I think both bodies would be practically unanimous against nationalisation. The details of such evidence you cannot submit.

23975. Would they be in favour of your view as to competition, do you think?—I think the bulk of them would.

23976. Ulster believes in competition?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

23977. With regard to State ownership, I think you have said that you anticipate that the probable effect of State ownership in Ireland would be that owing to the railway fares having to be reduced where they had to face competition, the State would probably be called upon to reduce the fares in other directions, and thereby to incur a loss?—I would not say that that would certainly be the case, but it is possible.

23978. You spoke generally as to State ownership in Australia and New Zealand. I daresay you know that Sir Joseph Ward and other gentlemen who gave evidence on behalf of those States said that the policy in New Zealand and Australia was openly and avowedly to incur loss in the development of certain districts, provided there was a net gain on the whole system of railways; what they lost in one direction they covered in another?—Yes.

The Australian policy of using the net gain on the whole railway system to help the poorer districts.

23979. And that the State was perfectly willing to incur such a loss?—Yes. Of course, the New Zealand State railways, if you take interest into consideration, do not show a profit.

23980. I think the evidence we have had and what we have seen for ourselves is to the effect that of late years they have paid a fair return on the capital invested. They do not wish to earn anything more than will pay a fair rate of interest on the capital outlay?—But the point I was making is rather this. New Zealand has borrowed its money practically from England at 4 per cent.

23981. *Chairman.*—Less than 4 per cent., is it not?—I think the average will be about 4 per cent.

23982. I think the average is 3½ per cent.?—Some of the older loans bear a higher rate of interest.

23983. I think Sir Joseph Ward said that the average rate was 3½ per cent.—that the State was paying 3½ per cent. for its borrowed money?—I see according to the last report that the New Zealand railways were really paying just about 3½ per cent.

The policy of granting public money to reduce rates and thereby relieve the depression in Irish agricultural districts.

23984. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You admit that the State has made large grants of public money for the development of railways in the North and West of Ireland?—Yes.

23985. Of course, these grants have been at the expense of the general taxpayer?—Yes.

23986. What objection is there to incurring an expenditure which will involve taxation if it can be shown that by so doing the development of the agriculture of the country, which is the main industry of Ireland, would be promoted?—Surely these grants were made to poor districts.

23987. Certainly; but is it not unfortunately the fact that the greater portion of Ireland is very poor?—I do not think so. The grants were made practically to congested districts, and avowedly as charitable contributions. If you put it on the basis of charity, I do not mind, but I do not think you should tax the taxpayers additionally to enable a man who can afford to pay his proper fare to pay a smaller fare.

23988. I agree, but the bulk of the evidence we have had has been to show that the rates, while not in themselves unreasonable, owing to the nature of the traffic, which is so small, and in the hands of a number of small people, do certainly tend to keep the industries in a depressed condition, and that anything that would materially reduce the rates would lead to a large increase in those particular industries?—I would answer your question by instancing the witness who was here this morning, who wanted the State to give a bounty to the railway companies to enable him to put his goods in the London market to compete with the Danes. If you are going into the bounty system is is perfectly right, but——

23989. You thought the same causes as contributed to the depression in England had led to the agricultural depression in Ireland, and I think that probably most people would agree with you. At the same time you will admit that the effect of that depression is very much more severely felt in a purely agricultural country like Ireland than in a country like England, which has large manufactures to rely upon?—That is taking Ireland as a separate entity. But if you take it as part of the United Kingdom——

23990. Is not that the misfortune of it, that we are circumstanced in such a way that we must be considered as a separate entity?—Irish people can go to Liverpool or Glasgow if necessary.

23991. Oh, if you think it is for the benefit of the country to expropriate the people?—If you are going to take it in any other way you are going into sentiment purely. A man must be prepared to go where he can earn his living.

23992. Ireland, as you know, must be more or less dependent upon its one industry of agriculture?—Yes.

23993. And, therefore, while we have such competition from Denmark and America, and elsewhere, we must take exceptional measures to try and put the agriculturist in Ireland on fairly level terms with his competitor on the Continent. How can we do that but by some—I do not say subsidies; I quite admit

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that subsidies are demoralising to a certain extent—but if you had State ownership and a uniform scale of rates and charges over the whole of Ireland considerably lower than the rates at present, it would not be a subsidy. You and I and everybody else in the country would have the benefit of it. It would not be demoralising to a poor man any more than it would be to you. It is not putting a dole into his pocket. Pending any change in the fiscal policy, do you not think that might be desirable?—If the State bought the railways it would require a certain capital sum, and the interest would have to be paid on that. If you reduce the rates in order to allow the Irish people to compete with their competitors on the Continent, and so on, you should not reduce them below the point which will enable them to pay that interest on capital, otherwise you will be paying a bounty.

Reduction of rates below the point enabling interest on capital to be paid, objected to.

23994. That might be, but it would be a bounty to three-fourths of the people of Ireland for the time being, until the effect of the reduction began to yield results. Would it not be the same thing if you went in for Protection straight away, and avowedly protected a man against his competitor?—Why bring it in in a side way?

Comparison between Belgium and Irish railway fares and facilities.

23995. We will not follow that. With regard to Belgium, you rather criticised my point as to the cheap rates at which a Belgian traveller was able to get about the country?—I did not mean to criticise.

23996. You spoke of their being subject to penalties for luggage. You are aware, I suppose, that every passenger can carry 56 pounds of luggage free?—Yes, in the carriage with him; but I am told it is very inconvenient in practice for the passengers.

23997. As a matter of fact, the luggage of a third class passenger does not often exceed 56 pounds, so that he would not be any the worse off. But even assuming he had to pay ½*d.* per mile per cwt. The third class passenger fare is five-eighths of a penny, so that he could take 1½ cwts. of luggage, ½ cwt. in the carriage and a cwt. in the goods van, and the whole charge that he would be called upon to pay would be only a fraction over a penny?—I admit that he pays less, but the discomfort of having all this luggage in the carriage might outweigh the economy to some effect.

23998. The accommodation and the speed, and so on, are not on the same footing as in Ireland, I agree?—And there is the question of population.

23999. I am not saying it is a fair comparison, but I think it is the fact that the Belgian rates are very much lower than the rates in Ireland?—Certainly. But we cannot get a fair comparison between Belgium and Ireland.

Reduction of second class fares in Ireland.

24000. With regard to second class fares, do you not think it would lead to a great development if the second class fares were lower in Ireland; they are 1½*d.* a mile; in some cases rather more. On the Midland and Great Western they are a little more?—I entirely agree; I think the second class fares are too high.

24001. And then, generally speaking, you think the intervention of the English companies is for the benefit of Ireland?—The Midland is the one instance we have. The tourist traffic is what I have in my mind, and it seems to me to be obvious that the Midland Railway have a greater interest in getting people into Donegal than into Ross-shire. They would rather take a passenger from London to Londonderry than to Perth, and they do that wherever they can by extensive advertising. Surely if that were extended, if the North Western had some interest in taking people from Euston to Donegal in the same way, it would be beneficial to the country.

The effect of the English acquisition of Irish lines on the flow of traffic.

24002. Possibly. But we have had a good deal of evidence to show that the effect of this large intervention of the English railways has been rather to kill the smaller ports, Londonderry, Drogheda, and Dundalk?—I have some evidence on that point. It was alleged at the last sitting that I was at, when there was not time to take my evidence, that Belfast was unreasonable with regard to taking traffic from Dundalk and Greenore. It was said that the Meath and Louth cattle traffic, instead of being shipped from Dundalk or Greenore, came to Belfast. But there was a perfectly good reason for that. When you get to Belfast you have five different routes daily to distribute the cattle over. From Dundalk you have only two, and from Greenore one. As a matter of fact, the cattle were mainly intended for Scotland. I do not want you to go away with the idea that we are unreasonable, grasping people.

24003. I suppose every railway likes to get the longest haulage it possibly can?—Undoubtedly. I had a letter from the Great Northern saying that the steamship companies running into Dublin were giving preferential rates with regard to cattle. So that Dublin, instead of Belfast, was rather grasping in that case.

24004. Broadly speaking, you do not think that the interests of the small ports round the coast of Ireland, which are fairly numerous, are to be taken into consideration as against the greater interests of the larger ports?—I do not think the English companies are hurting them. Take Greenore, which is a small port. Surely if the North Western acquired the Great Northern of Ireland it would not injure Greenore in any way?

24005. Naturally you must admit that the effect of the Midland coming in has been to take traffic from Londonderry which formerly went to Belfast, and the effect of the amalgamation in the South has been to divert traffic which went from Waterford and Cork to Rosslare and Dublin; I think that is admitted?—I do not see how the Midland can divert the traffic very much, because there are steamers running from Fleetwood and from Liverpool into Londonderry. The competition remains there. The mere fact that the Midland Company instead of the Northern Counties own the line will not enable them to divert the traffic from the natural routes.

24006. I am only taking the evidence which has been given by traders from Londonderry and Sligo and other parts, showing that this has been the effect?—I have read a great deal of the evidence, and I think a great many of the witnesses have given opinions without substantiating them in any way.

24007. But these are facts in regard to which figures were given?—On man came from Limavady and he made a statement which he did not substantiate; he was a man who was against the Midland, and he said that Belfast was very grasping. But he merely made the statement without giving any reasons.

24008. I did not refer to that kind of statement, but to the evidence of actual traders, who gave figures to show that trade had declined?—Yes.

Examined by Sir Herbert Jekyll.

24009. I think you are in favour of the action of the Board of Agriculture in settling disputes between traders and the railway companies?—Yes. I have read the report and it seems to me to be a splendid thing they were doing, because they were doing it in an amicable way.

24010. You think that that action might be extended?—I should like to see it extended very much.

24011. You are familiar, no doubt, with what is called the conciliation clause of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888?—I am not.

24012. It is a clause which confers powers upon the Board of Trade to hear complaints of traders and to endeavour to bring about an amicable settlement. Do you think it would be advantageous if those powers were conferred upon the Board of Agriculture in respect of complaints made in Ireland?—If it would extend their powers and improve their position, yes. But they seem to have done very well under existing conditions.

24013. Without any powers at all?—Virtually without any powers at all. I think perhaps if you give people power they are more inclined to shake their fist at the railway companies, so to speak.

24014. There are no powers except to bring the parties together; there is no compulsion at all?—That being the case, the Board of Agriculture would be practically in the same position as now, would they not, because they do approach the companies, as this report shows? The report shows that the complaints were mainly trivial, and that, as a rule, when the railway companies gave an explanation there was no further reply, which seems to show that the complaints were made without proper knowledge.

Mr. JAMES M. BURKE, J.P., examined by LORD PIRRIE (in the chair). *July* 4, 1907.

24015. You are a magistrate in County Cork?—Yes.

24016. And a member of the Cork County Council?—Yes.

24017. And you propose to give evidence in connection with the Baltimore Extension Railway?—Yes, and the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway.

Mr. James M. Burke, J.P., Representative of the Skibbereen Urban District Council, Baltimore and Skibbereen Harbour Board, and the Committee of Management, Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway.

24018. You propose to tell us something about the proposed extension of the Baltimore and Skibbereen Railway?—Yes. The Baltimore and Skibbereen Railway was one of the Balfour railways. It was made at the expense of the State, but for two reasons it has not been a success. In the first place, on account of the fact that the railways in Cork were not linked up. You may say that the west of County Cork at present is land locked and cut off from the rest of Ireland. Now you are aware a Bill has passed the House of Commons authorising the linking up of the various railways in the City of Cork. In the second place, it is felt that inasmuch as the railway was not carried out to the deep water pier, it was of no advantage to the fishermen for whom it was primarily intended. At the present moment the pier is a very long distance away from the railway station.

24019. What do you call a long distance?—A quarter of a mile, and the worst road in the whole of Ireland.

24020. About 440 yards?—Yes.

24021. And you say that it is a bad road?—Fearfully bad.

24022. Is it because it is in holes or because it is not macadamised?—It is bad in every possible way it can be. The result is that people will not unload their fish at the pier on account of the expense of carrying it from the pier to the railway station. As a result of that, there are four or five large fish merchants, who can afford to hire steamers, and these have practically a monopoly of the fish trade, and they put on the price not according to the market value, but according to what they think it is themselves. They form a regular ring for the purpose of keeping the price according to their own ideas.

24023. What have the Cork County Council done?—They have done nothing in the matter of the Baltimore Harbour pier. We have been for years trying to get a grant from the Treasury.

24024. But you have done nothing yourselves?—We have done nothing, because we could not do anything.

24025. Is it not in your own district?—It is; but we have no power to do anything.

24026. You have no power to make good your own road?—I am sure the Cork County Council would be satisfied to give a grant if they had power to do so.

24027. They would?—I have no doubt whatsoever.

24028. Have you made an offer to the Congested Districts Board?—They are perfectly satisfied to give £3,500.

24029. Who prevents it being done?—The Treasury.

24030. It is the Treasury who refuse to make the grant?—The Treasury refuse to make the grant. The Congested Districts Board are satisfied to give £3,500. The Cork and Bandon Railway would give £3,500, and in addition to giving that sum they would work the line which will connect the present station with the deep-water pier.

24031. You are putting your view before the Commission to see whether we can do anything with the Treasury to assist you?—Yes; to assist us in getting the remaining £3,000.

24032. You say the Cork County Council will help?—They will, I have no doubt, if they have the power.

24033. Does not that make up the full amount? If you get £3,000 from the Cork County Council and £3,500 from the Congested Districts Board, and £3,500 from the Cork and Bandon Railway?—I did not say the Cork County Council would give £3,500; I said they would do something if they had the power.

24034. And supposing it was completed, who do you propose should work the line?—The Cork and Bandon Company are perfectly prepared to work the line. They have several times given that assurance. There is no doubt that it would be highly advantageous to the fishermen of the district, especially as the link lines are to be made in Cork.

24035. Therefore, your evidence, broadly, is that the fishermen are in the hands of these one or two local steamers for selling their fish?—Undoubtedly they are.

24036. On account of the want of the link lines?—On account of the want of the link lines. They would be able to get their fish on to the railways if they had this pier, where they could land it.

24037. What about the coal merchants of the district?—At present the coal merchants of Skibbereen have only two ways of getting their coal. One is to bring it into the River Ilen, which is about three and a half miles from Skibbereen, and they have then to bring it in barges or else to cart it. At certain times, when the tides are low, they cannot use the barges, with the result that they have to cart it three and a half miles.

24038. How far do they take the barges?—To Skibbereen.

24039. And then they load it on the railway?—They bring it to their own stores in Skibbereen; whereas, if they had a deep-water quay at Baltimore, ships could run right into the pier, and unload the coal, and it could then be run from Baltimore to Skibbereen.

24040. If the railway was extended to the pier it would facilitate the traffic a very great deal, do you think?—The coal merchants of Skibbereen say so, at any rate.

24041. Have you any tourist traffic about that district?—There is a little. A lot of people take houses there in the summer time; it is a very nice seaside place.

Advantages to traders anticipated from a deep-water quay at Baltimore.

24042. What would the extension of the pier do for the excursionists?—It would not do much for those, but it would for the people going to Cape Clear.

24043. The pier would be useful to them?—Yes; because they could run right down to the boat, which carries them to Cape Clear.

24044. Does the boat go there now as it is?—Yes.

24045. But they have a quarter of a mile of bad road to go?—Yes, and to get their luggage transferred; and I need not tell you how they charge in a country village when you have luggage to transfer.

Government Grant sought for the Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway.

24046. What is the second part of your evidence?—If we could get a grant or a subsidy for the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway——

24047. That is purely a tramway?—Yes.

24048. Just tell us about the tramway?—I will give you a short history of it.

24049. Am I right in saying that you are nominated by the committee of management to give evidence?—I was; I am on the committee of management.

24050. Have you any resolution with you?—It was forwarded to Mr. Shanahan.

The Secretary.—I have the resolution from the committee.

History of the Light Railway.

24051. *Lord Pirrie.*—Just tell us about the tramway in your own language?—The tramway was constructed in 1886 under the provisions of an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1883, called, if I remember rightly, the Public Companies and Tramways (Ireland) Act. By virtue of that Act there was an Order in Council authorising this line to be constructed at a cost of £57,000, which was to be perpetually guaranteed by the baronies of the East and West Carbery, at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum—three-sevenths on the east division of Rosscarbery and four-sevenths on the west division of Rosscarbery.

Alleged defective design, construction, and equipment.

24052. Was it built?—It was. A contract was given to a gentleman named Avigdor, a London contractor.

24053. How long ago?—In the year 1886.

24054. What gauge is that line?—A three-foot gauge. The contractor rented a very big mansion in the neighbourhood, and kept a pack of hounds and a very excellent table, and did extremely bad work.

24055. Was the line well designed although the work was bad?—It was badly designed and the work was even worse. But he entertained the authorities in the most sumptuous fashion, and notwithstanding all defects the line was duly passed.

24056. Did the price which you speak of include the rolling stock?—Yes, which rolling stock consisted mainly of three engines which struck work from the first, however. They seemed to have a constitutional objection to hill-climbing of any kind.

Useless engines supplied.

24057. Was it the engines or the men who struck work?—The engines. They defied all the laws of motion, and instead of going forward they imitated the crab and began to go backward. One has now disappeared into space, and was sold for £25, and degenerated into scrap iron.

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24058. Having made the railway, how much did it cost?—£57,000. It ran along the county road, so that there would be nothing paid for the acquisition of land.

24059. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is fourteen miles long?—Yes.

24060. *Lord Pirrie.*—What about the rates. Seeing that the county paid such a large guarantee, have the traders got rates which are fair and reasonable?—The rates are fair and reasonable enough for traffic, but if you mean the rates they have to pay to the County Council, it was quite a different matter. The traffic rates were all right. The legend that the engines bore was S. & S. R. which meant Schull and Skibbereen Railway; but the people of the district, on account of the state of the engines interpreted it as "sick and sore railway."

Line closed seven months after opening owing to unsatisfactory construction and equipment. Condemned by the Board of Trade at second inspection.

24061. Have you done anything to improve the rolling stock?—We have done a great deal. The line was opened for traffic in August, 1886, and it had to give up working in March of the next year. General Hutchinson, who originally passed the line came down and made a report, in which he practically condemned it because he said that everything had been done wrong. If that report has not been handed up, I will now hand it in. It seems that everything was done wrong by the contractor. General Hutchinson was the gentleman who originally passed the line, and having passed it he came down five or six months afterwards and condemned it, and said that everything had been done wrong.

24062. You have already said that the rolling stock has been greatly improved?—Of late years, yes.

24063. Was that out of earnings?—It was not out of earnings, because the earnings are nothing except loss.

24064. Where did they get the money then?—Out of the ratepayers.

Loss on working and consequent heavy tax on the County in respect of payments under guarantee.

24065. And your 5 per cent. guarantee is still going on?—Our 5 per cent. and a great deal more is going on, and will go on like the river for ever, I think. Last year the actual loss was £4,092 3*s.* 4*d.* on fourteen miles. By virtue of an Act of Parliament the Government pays 2 per cent. of the dividend on the capital of £57,000.

24066. *Mr. Acworth.*—What do you mean when you say the actual loss?—I am afraid I have not expressed myself very clearly. The working expenses of the line were £1,242 3*s.* 4*d.*, and in addition there was £2,580 for the 5 per cent. guaranteed on the capital.

24067. That the County Council had to pay?—They did not pay all that.

24068. You have not taken off from that the 2 per cent., which the Treasury pay?—The Treasury pay 2 per cent.

Recoupments by the Treasury and from the local taxation account.

24069. What does it cost the county?—I cannot give you it in that way, because in the first place you have to take off the 2 per cent. There is no trouble about that. Then, by virtue of the Local Government Act, when a tramway rate is more than 6*d.* in the £ the local taxation account refunds one half of the excess. If the rate was 8*d.* the local taxation account would refund 1*d.* In addition to that, in the County Cork there was a baronial guarantee for the Ilen Valley portion of the Cork and Bandon Railway, but there was a provision in the guarantee that if at any time the Ilen Valley Railway made more money than would pay a certain percentage on certain capital, they were to refund to the baronies all that the baronies had paid for them in the earlier stages. The result is that the Ilen Valley Railway is making considerable refunds to the baronies, and that complicates the matter.

24070. You cannot tell us exactly what it costs?—I know that in the town of Skibbereen the rate is about 7½*d.* in the £.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—Can we not take it from this return, Mr. Shanahan.

The Secretary.—Yes.

Annual baronial contributions to the Schull and Skibbereen line for five years.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It shows that for the last five years, though the actual baronial contribution was only £1,710 owing to the loss on working expenses, they have been called upon to pay £2,900.

The Secretary.—To be exact, £2,858. Then, there would be the refund from the local taxation account to come off that.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—That would only be one half of the difference between 6*d.* and 1*s.* in one case, and 6*d.* and 8*d.* in the other.

The Witness.—In addition, all this rate is paid by the farmers, by the occupiers, and none of it ever fell on the landlords.

24071. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is there no landlord living in the district?—The Act of Parliament provided that it should all be paid by the occupiers, and that he was to be entitled to no deduction from the landlord in respect of this rate.

24072. But if the landlord occupied his house he would have to pay?— He would have to pay for his own house, but I mean where a landlord has, say, a hundred tenants.

24073. Each tenant paid his own taxes?—Yes. Here is the injustice. When the Land Commission came round to fix the rents they would add proximity value of 15 or 20 per cent. on to the tenants for the line which they had built themselves, because their land happened to be near the line.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

24074. With regard to this report of General Hutchinson's in 1887, you said that he condemned himself. Is it not the fact that the Board of Trade inspection preparatory to the opening of a line is confined to satisfying the inspector as to whether the line is safe in the interests of the public?—That is a question I cannot answer.

24075. The Board of Trade inspection is confined simply to satisfying the inspector on the point of safety. Subsequently, as you say, in 1887, a few months after the line was opened, it broke down owing to the bottom of one of the engines tumbling out, and they could not go up the steep gradients. Then General Hutchinson was called upon by the Board of Trade to inquire into the reasons for this breakdown, and he reported, as you said, that the engines were inadequate, that the line was not properly ballasted, and so on. He also called attention to the fact that the line was very badly constructed, inasmuch as there were two very sharp curves, I think, of something like two to three chains radius?—Yes, they were very stiff.

24076. And one or two gradients of one in 30, exceeding a couple of miles in length?—Yes, all holes and hollows.

24077. To be fair to the Board of Trade, General Hutchinson in the first instance had no voice in the matter; he could not express an opinion, nor could he question those matters to which afterwards his attention was directed?—I misconceived his function in the matter.

24078. You said the Baltimore line cost practically £56,700. I think you got a free grant?—Yes.

24079. For a distance of seven miles, which really works out at something like £8,000 a mile. But £57,000 for a length of fourteen miles in the case of the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway works out at only £4,000 a mile?—That is all, but in the case of Baltimore they had to take up a lot of valuable house property in Skibbereen, and build a bridge across the river.

24080. That will account to a large extent for the expenditure?—They had to acquire land the whole way from Skibbereen to Baltimore. In the case of the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway they run along the county road.

24081. Am I right in saying that the Schull and Skibbereen Tramway was really built and financed by a London company? Sir John Lubbock's company financed it.

24082. And the local people had really no voice in the matter?—Absolutely none.

24083. I suppose that that is an argument in favour of our looking after our own affairs better than the English—you would agree with that?—I think that that line has been taken over by the County Council?—Yes; they had to take it over after five years.

24084. In 1891?—Yes.

24085. And they have been managing it ever since?—Yes.

24086. Of whom does the Board of Management consist?—Of six members—five members of the County Council and one merchant in Skibbereen.

24087. Have any of these gentlemen any practical knowledge or experience of railway management?—I am afraid not. But they are as experienced as their predecessors.

24088. Then they cannot be expected to promote the efficient working of the line?—I do not disagree with you there.

Mr. James M. Burke, J.P., Representative of the Skibbereen Urban District Council, Baltimore and Skibbereen Harbour Board, and the Committee of Management, Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway.

24089. Has any representation been made to the Board of Works, because, after all, they are interested in the matter to the extent of the Treasury contribution; has any representation been made to them as to the state in which the line is at present, or as to steps being taken to improve its administration?—I am sure they have been informed of the condition of the line.

24090. But you cannot speak on that point from your own knowledge?—No, I cannot.

24091. At any rate, it is in such a condition that it is of the greatest importance that steps should be taken to remedy these very sharp curves and gradients and to provide proper rolling stock?—Yes. We have a new engine to haul sixty tons.

24092. Was the purchase price of that provided by the taxpayers?—It was payable in three years; we got a loan from the bank.

24093. What was the cost of the engine?—£1,220, and it was made by Pickett's, of Bristol.

24094. Is the whole of the county answerable for that?—The two baronies.

24095. With regard to the Baltimore line, can you give an idea of the value of the fishing trade of that district. You spoke of the necessity of getting a pier?—The steamers employed by the fish buyers made sixty trips.

24096. Have you any idea of the value?—I could not tell you, but I could send it. There are at least fifty fishing boats in the harbour at present.

24097. Is the fishing trade as profitable now as it was twenty years ago?—There were more then than now, I think. I mean the fishing boats are now scattered over a wider area. You will find them not only in Baltimore, but also in Schull, Crookhaven, Glendore, Union Hall, and Castletownshend.

24098. Twenty years ago it was given in evidence that the value of the Baltimore fishing industry was anything from £10,000 to £20,000 a year?—It is more scattered now. The fleet then was all concentrated in Baltimore, but now it is scattered round in Castletown, Crookhaven, and Schull.

24099. So that the whole trade would not go by the Baltimore railway?—No.

24100. Baltimore is the village where the Lady Burdett Coutts spent such a large sum of money, is it not?—She started the fishing industry.

24101. And gave a loan of £10,000 on very low terms?—Yes.

24102. Is the school that was started still going on?—It is in a more flourishing condition now than ever.

24103. They train boys for the fishing industry?—Yes, and they have a large number of pupils—about 180. They give them a practical knowledge of fishing, and in addition to that they give them a technical knowledge of the trades connected with fishing.

24104. They make nets, I think?—Yes

24105. And sails?—Yes, and jerseys such as the fishermen wear, they repair boats, and all that class of work.

24106. How many pupils did you say there were?—180, about.

24107. Twenty years ago there were only forty-five, so that that shows very satisfactory progress?—And it is practically out of all its financial embarrasments.

24108. And to start that school involved something like £10,000?—Yes.

24109. I suppose the school provides the great bulk of the fishermen in that district?—It does with nets.

24110. And also for working the fishing industry?—Yes.

24111. Have any steps been taken under the Department of Agriculture—they have power to expend money in the provision of piers and such like aids to sea-coast fisheries—has any application been made to the Department in that respect?—No, not so far as I know. It was only to the Congested Districts Board that application was made.

24112. The Board of Works also have a fund—there is not much of it left, but it was originally a quarter of a million—for the improvement of fishery piers and harbours; has any application been made to them to assist you?—No. The principle of the Act of 1883 was a very bad one.

24113. Quite so?—Perpetually guaranteeing the money on the counties instead of having it as a loan by the Government in the ordinary way.

24114. I do not think we had better go into that?—It would have been paid off before now.

24115. The eastern portion of the County of Cork has had a good deal done for it in the way of railway facilities, has it not?—Yes.

24116. In the shape of free grants and baronial guarantees, and your contention is that not sufficient has been done for the western portion of the county, and I think that that is apparent from the map?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

24117. The Baltimore line belongs to the Cork and Bandon Company, does it not?—It is worked by them; whether they have the ownership of it I cannot say.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—It is leased.

24118. *Mr. Acworth.*—So that they have the profit on it?—Yes.

Sources from which the cost of the Baltimore extension could be obtained.

24119. What you want is to get that extended to the pier?—Yes.

24120. And they are prepared to pay one-third?—Yes.

24121. And the Cork County Council—is it—are prepared to pay another one-third?—The Congested Districts Board.

24122. The Congested Districts Board are prepared to pay another third?—Yes.

24123. And you want to get the other third out of the Government?—If we can.

24124. I do not understand why you do not mend your road meanwhile?—It is unmendable, if I may use the word.

The possibility of improved management of the Schull and Skibbereen line.

24125. You say the Schull and Skibbereen Railway is a pretty bad railway?—There is no question about it.

24126. You only get two trains a day along it?—Two trains each way, except one day a week, when we get three.

24127. How is it that it costs so much to work?—Because there are so many curves and gradients that there is a great deal of coal required, and the wear and tear is greater.

24128. Do you really think you work it cheaply?—We work it as cheaply as we can.

24129. It is managed by a Committee of the County Council?—Yes.

24130. And you do not pretend to be railway experts?—I do not, at all events.

24131. Can you give your colleagues a testimonial as experts in railway matters?—I do not want to say anything about them, and I do not want to run down myself in comparison with them. They are all doing their best, and we compare very favourably with the old Grand Jury Committee.

24132. Does it seem to you that it is an economical way of working a railway?—According to all known principles it would be better if it were in the hands of some railway experts.

County Council prepared to hand over the Schull and Skibbereen line to any company to work.

24133. Why is it not worked by the Cork and Bandon Company? Do you run into their station?—Yes, and pay a rent of £125 a year.

24134. Why do they not work it? I know it is a different gauge, but they could manage it?—Obviously because they do not want to lose £1,200 a year.

24135. Would it not pay you better to make a bargain with them, and let them make some money?—Unquestionably; but it takes two to make a bargain. We certainly would make them a present of it, and give them our blessing into the bargain.

24136. I have been looking at the figures, and I see it costs you a good deal more per mile to work two trains a day than it does the Clogher Valley line to work four?—And the engineer specially pointed out in his report that it was attributable to the curves and gradients, and that the rolling stock was in a fearfully bad condition.

Total payments by baronies to the line.

24137. Are your people prepared to throw any more good money after bad? Would they pay anything towards putting it into decent order, or anything of that kind?—I have no authority to speak for them on that point, but speaking for myself, I would rather the thing was torn up. The baronies have put £80,000 into it already.

24138. If anybody would take it off your hands, free, gratis, for nothing, and work it for you, you would be glad?—We would give them our *Benedicamus*, that is, provided they took over all liabilities and undertook to work the line.

July 4, 1907.

Mr. James M. Burke, J.P., Representative of the Skibbereen Urban District Council, Baltimore and Skibbereen Harbour Board, and the Committee of Management, Schull and Skibbereen Light Railway.

24139. *Mr. Acworth.*—I hope the Cork and Bandon Company will take notice that there is a railway going begging.

24140. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—At the time of the construction of the Schull and Skibbereen Railway the Grand Jury gave a guarantee on the understanding that the Cork and Bandon Company would work the line, but the undertaking was subsequently receded from?—There was one of those vague promises which mean anything or nothing. The Cork and Bandon Company gave a vague promise.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—And the guarantee was given on the understanding of that vague promise.

Mr. R. N. Boyd examined by Lord Pirrie (in the Chair).

Mr. R. N. Boyd, Representative of the Belfast Provision Curers' Association.

24141. You have come to give evidence on behalf of the Belfast Provision Curers' Association?—Yes.

Peculiarity of the North of Ireland Bacon Curing.

24142. I take it that one of your principal lines is in connection with ham and bacon?—Yes. As you know, in Belfast there is a special form of curing peculiar to the North of Ireland, where the pigs are marketed dead. It only applies to the North of Ireland.

24143. Therefore you content yourself with speaking of the province of Ulster, and of the railways in Ulster?—Yes, terminating in Belfast.

24144. You heard the previous witness from Ulster who said he represented the Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

Disagreement with the opinion expressed on behalf of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce on Irish railway management.

24145. And the resolution passed there was to the effect that the Chamber of Commerce were of opinion that the system of railway management at present existing in the North of Ireland on the whole meets the public requirements satisfactorily?—We do not at all agree with that.

24146. You have heard of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society?—Yes.

24147. And you heard the witness state that, in reply to 150 circulars sent out to members of the Agricultural Society, only three members made one or two little complaints—are you a member of that Society?—That is the North-Eastern, is it not?

24148. No; the Royal Ulster?—No, I am not a member.

24149. It is called the Royal Ulster; it was the North-Eastern a year or two ago. You are not a member of it?—No.

24150. Are the members of it mostly the aristocracy of the neighbourhood, or are they traders?—Yes, and there are a good many farmers, but there are not many traders; they have not got hold of the traders.

24151. Have you any reason to give why they have not?—I do not think they represent the body of them on this question.

The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society not representative of the farmers or the traders.

24152. You do not think the Royal Ulster Society represents the body of traders?—No, I do not think they are at all a representative body. They have to do more with horse and cattle shows.

24153. With horse shows?—Horses and cattle; the breeding of cattle and sheep.

24154. And not the trade of the country?—Not with the trade of the country at all.

Resolution of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners expressing satisfaction with the existing state of affairs on Irish railways not endorsed.

24155. Another public body in Belfast, the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, also passed a resolution similar to that of the Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

24156. To the effect that they were perfectly satisfied. You do not agree with that either?—No. Of course we deal particularly with the facts and figures which affect this trade, and I think you will see that they are startling.

24157. You differ altogether from that body?—I do. Mr. Pollock, whom you know, is a member of that body, and he takes a very strong view on some of those through rates. In fact, I think his firm had to open a house in Liverpool to get rid of the handicap caused by the 2*s.* 6*d.* differential rate on the Midland Railway.

24158. Was he not present when they passed that resolution?—I do not know; but he was talking only this week in a very aggrieved manner about it.

Average weekly number of dead pigs brought into Belfast by rail.

24159. Would you point out the grievances that you have with the railways that come into Belfast? What is your average quantity?—Coming into Belfast there are about 4,000 carcases per week.

24160. Of what weight?—Of the average weight of 1½ cwt. each. That is rather understating it, but that is about it.

24161. Do they carry these pigs in vans specially made for the purpose?—Not at all; they use empty coal wagons. The wagons are supposed to be swept out, and the pigs are piled up in them just as they come from the farmers' carts. We do not so much object to that, because the pigs when they come in may be washed, if necessary, and the coal dirt removed.

24162. Do the railway companies carry other goods such as corn and meal at cheaper rates than pigs?—Yes, a great deal.

24163. And you consider that pigs are just as easily handled?—If I were a railway company, I would rather take a consignment of twenty tons of pigs than of meal.

24164. Have you, as an association, ever urged that claim on the railway companies?—When the Railway and Canal Commission were sitting in 1891 they put us in class 1, whereas grain was in class 1.

24165. *Mr. Acworth.*—Class C?—No; Class 1, in lots under two-ton. Bacon and hame were put into Class 2. We found we were paying in a great many cases more for Class 1 than they were charging for Class 2—that is for the cured product.

24166. *Lord Pirrie.*—Therefore, the Railway and Canal Commission did not give you any actual advantage, as far as money was concerned?—It lowered our classification, but did us no good.

24167. As far as money is concerned?—No.

24168. Have you any complaint as regards actual prices from Ballymena and other towns outside Belfast?—We have a very special complaint.

24169. What is it?—You know that a great deal of the provision-curing industry of Belfast has been transferred to the outside towns. There is a very big industry—the Scottish Co-operative have opened a curing place within this last few years at Enniskillen, where they cure from 1,000 to 1,500 pigs a week; at Ballymena they cure 2,000 pigs a week; and at Portadown they cure about 1,500 pigs a week.

24170. Are these industries which have been established within the last ten or fifteen years?—They are industries which have been growing up and increasing.

24171. While that of Belfast has been going down?—While that of Belfast has been going down; and we say that it is all on account of the preferential rates which the railways give against us.

24172. Can you give us a case with the actual figures of what it is against you?—I will take Enniskillen, which is the furthest away. The rate for pigs from Enniskillen to Belfast is 18*s.* 7*d.*; we pay from Belfast to Glasgow 14*s.* 2*d.* on the cured product; there is also cartage across the town, 1*s.* 3*d.*; that is what the Belfast curer pays who gets his raw material at Enniskillen.

24173. You pay 34*s.* from Enniskillen to Glasgow?—Yes, but from Enniskillen to Glasgow the freight on smoked hams—the most valuable part of the pig—is only 22*s.* 6*d.* That works out at about 11*s.* per ton difference.

24174. Is that practically the same weight—you would not have it in the same shape, would you?—We bring in the pigs. Our pigs are Class 1, and this other cured stuff is Class 2, so that, if anything, it should be dearer than ours.

24175. Instead of that, they get it delivered at Glasgow at 22*s.* 6*d.* to 24*s.* 6*d.*, as against your 34*s.*?—Yes. It works out that they save on the pig of about 1½ cwt. 9*d.* a pig. You see, that is 6*d.* per cwt., and that on 1,000 pigs a week would make £30 or £40 a week difference.

24176. And does practically that same proportion or thereabouts go on between Portadown, Ballymena, and Enniskillen to Glasgow and Liverpool?—No; that is Enniskillen, the furthest away.

24177. But is it about the same proportion in the other places?—If we take Portadown and Ballymena, the rate on cured products to Glasgow, including transit across Belfast, is 15*s.* This means that Ballymena and Portadown curers get their goods delivered

in Glasgow at the same rate as we do from Belfast, for we pay 14*s.* 2*d.* and cartage, say 1*s.* They thus save 8*s.* per ton on the pigs which we in Belfast have to pay from Ballymena or Portadown.

24178. Then there are other towns in your proof?—You see how that works out in these other towns against Belfast. With regard to Enniskillen, there is a very important matter. The rate from Liverpool to Enniskillen for American bacon is 14*s.* 2*d.* I think you were asking some questions about inside and outside rates.

24179 and 24180. *Mr. Acworth.*—And how much is it from Enniskillen to Liverpool?—I do not know there is a through rate. There is a 30*s.* rate from Enniskillen to Liverpool made up as follows:—16*s.* 8*d.* Enniskillen to Belfast, 1*s.* transit across Belfast, and 12*s.* 6*d.* Belfast to Liverpool. At present it is possible to send from Belfast to Liverpool at 5*s.* per ton caused by a competing boat, but I do not refer to that.

24181. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is 30*s.*, against 14*s.* 2*d.* into Ireland; that gives an advantage to the American farmer against the Irish?—Yes. I have here a letter offering a through rate from Montreal to Enniskillen of 22*s.* 6*d.*

24182. *Via* Liverpool?—Yes. You see the American or Canadian farmer would have comparatively cheaper delivery into Enniskillen than the Belfast man would have.

24183. Have the Association which you are connected with brought that before the railway companies?—We have had several conferences with them.

24184. With the Great Northern?—Yes.

24185. And the Midland?—Yes. There is another thing with regard to these railways which constitutes a serious grievance. They often charge less for the cured product than for the raw material. For example, their charge on dead pigs from Londonderry to Belfast is 18*s.*, but they take cured meats, including American bacon for 10*s.* 10*d.* between the same towns.

24186. You mean to say that they carry the cured meat frequently at a lower rate than the raw material?—Yes; very often. For instance, the rate from Portadown to Belfast is 7*s.* 6*d.* on the cured provision, less cartage at both ends; you can take off practically 2*s.*, which brings it down to 5*s.* 6*d.*, and we pay 8*s.* 8*d.* on dead pigs from station to station.

24187. But the workers in mills and factories reap the advantage of it, although the farmer may not, in getting cheap food?—In getting cheap American bacon.

24188. Yes?—We do not mind that; we only ask for fair play.

24189. You want to get yours at the same rate, whatever it is?—Yes. If it pays to carry the one do not give us any worse terms.

24190. Your request, broadly speaking, on behalf of the Provision Curers' Association, is that you want to be treated in the same way as the American farmer is treated?—Quite so; that is our contention. We say it is only fair, and that is what we ask for.

24191. I will pass over that; some of my colleagues will doubtless take it up. Have you anything to say about passenger fares?—We do not want to water our case down. Passenger fares do not affect us as curers. We have this grievance. With regard to the Northern Counties, they charge perhaps from 10*s.* to 12*s.* or 15*s.* a ton from Belfast to various stations on their line, but on through rates from English towns they charge only 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton.

24192. 2*s.* 6*d.*?—Over their whole line as compared with Belfast.

24193. Provided the goods come from England?—Provided the goods came from England.

24194. Do they not charge the same from the same towns to England as they do from England to those places?—Yes, I think they do.

24195. It must be a through rate?—It acts against Belfast as a distributing centre. For instance, a Belfast man might have to pay 12*s.* or 15*s.* a ton to get the same work done that they do for an English company for 2*s.* 6*d.*

24196. There is one point I would like to ask you. Have you ever applied or gone to the Board of Trade about any of these questions?—No. This is the first step we have taken.

24197. Have you any reason for not going to the Board of Trade?—Until we came to look into the matter we did not know we were really so badly treated, because the buyer buys the stuff f.o.b.

24198. And it is only since you commenced to investigate?—That we found the box we were in or the disease we have been suffering from all the time, and this is the first attempt we have made to get it remedied.

24199. You have heard of the powers of the Department of Agriculture?—This is the first thing we have done; we have never gone to them.

24200. Therefore, you are very anxious, as a trade, that this through traffic and the arrangements between steamers and the railways should be investigated by somebody?—Quite so

24201. That whatever the rates are, Belfast should get fair play?—That the through rate to Cross-Channel markets from such places as Enniskillen and Portadown for the cured meats should not be less than the carriage on dead pigs to Belfast from such places plus the steamboat freight from Belfast to the same Cross-Channel markets.

Neither the Board of Trade or the Department of Agriculture appealed to for redress as to the high local rate charged by Irish Railways in proportion to the amount they accept out of through rates.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

24202. You want Belfast to get fair play?—Yes.

24203. I daresay you know that there are a great many neighbours of Belfast who think that Belfast gets no fair play at all, but a great deal more than fair play?—We want figures.

24204. Then let us get some. The last instance you gave was that of the Midland Northern Counties charging 15*s.* as the local rate as compared with 2*s.* 6*d.* on a through rate?—Yes; they charge 2*s.* 6*d.* on a through rate.

The question of preferential cross channel through rates.

24205. From where and where to?—The rate to Leeds from Ballymena is 32*s.* 6*d.*; Belfast to Leeds is 30*s.* a ton. If you take the rate from Ballymena to Belfast——

24206. But suppose you took it the other way round?—That is the way we take it, because we are in Belfast.

24207. Supposing you sold one pig to one man at 5*s.*, and another pig to another man for 4*s.* 6*d.*, why should I assume that you took it all off the head or all off the tail of the pig instead of spreading it all over the pig?—I do not think that that is relevant.

Ballymena and Leeds rate instanced.

24208. Is not that what it comes to?—I do not think so.

24209. You say they charge from Ballymena to Leeds 32*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

24210. And they charge 30*s.* from Belfast to Leeds?—Yes.

24211. Let us suppose that the one works out at 1½*d.* a mile, and the other at 1¼*d.* Why should we not suppose that they spread the reduction over the whole of 200 miles or whatever the distance is?—I do not care where they spread it. Where we are pinched is that we have to buy in Ballymena market.

24212. You only get 2*s.* 6*d.* advantage although you are many miles nearer?—We do not get any advantage, but we pay the same railway company for carrying pigs from Ballymoney to Belfast, about 12*s.*

24213. Whereas the man curing in Ballymoney pays only 2*s.* 6*d.* more to send it all the way. I quite follow that, but I do not think it is quite fair to say that they only take 2*s.* 6*d.* for that distance. They only get 2*s.* 6*d.* extra, but it is not on that distance only, it is on the whole distance?—But we put it on at Belfast and are charged 30*s.*

24214. Now, about dead pigs. I remember when you came to Parliament sixteen years ago, and you made out a case for putting dead pigs in a class that only applied to Ireland—the first class?—Yes.

The equity of the present classification of dead pigs in comparison with other goods traffic.

24215. If it had been in England it would have been like any other dead meat, and would be in the fourth class?—Yes.

24216. The fourth class rates are about two and a half times as high as those of class 1?—Yes.

24217. So that you got a special concession in Ireland for dead pigs?—We did on paper, but it did not work out any good to us.

24218. You got pigs carried from Portadown to Belfast in two-ton lots at 3*s.* 6*d.*?—Oh, no; we pay 8*s.* 8*d.*

24219. I beg your pardon—I have it wrong. You are charged 8*s.*?—Eight shillings and eightpence for anything under three-ton lots.

24220. Do you really think that pigs ought to be as low as meal?—I do. I know that if I were a railway company I would rather carry pigs.

July 4, 1907.

Mr. R. N. Boyd, Representative of the Belfast Provision Curers' Association.

24221. What are pigs worth per lb.?—They are not worth as much as the cured article.

24222. About how much a pound?—From 6*d.* per pound.

24223. Meal is worth a penny?—Hardly a penny, and Indian meal at that.

24224. Corn before it is ground is even lower than that. Do you think it is fair then to charge the same rate or a lower rate for a thing that is worth 6*d.* per pound than for a thing that is worth a penny?—That is not the basis I am taking.

The equity of the present classification of dead pigs in comparison with other goods traffic.

24225. But is not that the basis on which the railway companies charge?—I do not think so.

24226. I think you will find that it is?—We are competing with Americans and Danes, and their dead meat rate is as low as the corn rate.

24227. You want to be fair to both sides, of course?—Yes.

24228. But you naturally see your own side, and you admit the value is very different. Do you really think that a bag of meal is as liable to be damaged as a dead pig?—More liable.

24229. If a bag of meal received some hard knocks in being got in and out of the van would it do it much harm?—Hard knocks would not do any harm.

24230. Surely meat gets very much damaged by rough handling—bruised?—Not after it is killed.

Complaint as to delay in delivery of dead pigs.

24231. You complain in your proof that in some places thirty or forty miles away pigs are not delivered for six or seven hours?—We have had a great deal of trouble in regard to the shipping train, which should arrive at Belfast at 5.35.

24232. You say that six or seven hours for thirty or forty miles is too long?—We complain of having to keep our men after seven o'clock, when the train is due at 5.35; we have to pay them overtime.

24233. Your complaint is that during the summer months they have to wait sometimes, and the pigs, thirty or forty miles away, are not delivered for six or seven hours?—Yes.

24234. I take it that it is bad for pigs to be kept waiting about in summer weather?—Yes; we want them at the time they are due—5.35—or before seven o'clock.

24235. Supposing the railway company kept the meal for a couple of days it would not go bad?—Oh, no.

24236. Do you still think it is as expensive for the railway companies to carry meal as to carry dead pigs?—I do, because it is by their ordinary service, and they are running three or four goods trains a day. I do not think it is any hardship for those who have to carry goods to bring them by a train which will be in at a reasonable time.

The advantage of dead pig traffic as suitable back loading for trucks to the ports.

24237. If they had only two or three trucks of meal you would not expect them to run it specially, would you?—No. That is one of the points we make with regard to pigs. They know that the market is held weekly, and that they will have from ten to twenty tons; they could leave their empty coal wagons. At the time to which you referred just now the railway companies made it a special point that in Ireland they should get higher rates, because they had not any traffic back, that they sent coal inland, but they had not a traffic back to the sea-board. This is a traffic that they can use, their empty coal trucks for and take back in them.

24238. You agree that the traffic in dead pigs is a traffic that has to be done very quickly?—In the summer time they have to be delivered the same day; in the winter time they are delivered the following day. But you see it assists the railway companies as well as anything else, because they have no demurrage, our carts are waiting upon them, the wagons are emptied as soon as they come in; we are only too glad to get them.

24239. Surely you see that it means that they must run the trains even though they have only a couple or three wagons?—They do not run any special trains for this traffic.

24240. They must run a very light service?—No; it is their ordinary shipping train; they put us on to it.

24241. I think the railway companies would say that this is an expensive traffic to handle?—I am speaking as a person who attends the markets and who knows what is done, and I know that if I were a railway company I would take dead pigs rather than any other traffic, because if it rains on them it makes no difference, they are not protected in any way from the weather; they can pile them up three or four tons in one wagon, and away they go.

24242. In England you would pay the same rate as for dead meat, which is two or three times as high as that for meal?—I think the same rate applies to England now.

24243. For dead pigs?—Yes.

24244. It is not an ordinary English traffic. If you sent dead pigs in England, unless they were coming through from Ireland, you would have to pay the same as for beef, which would be about three times as much as for meal?—You see the classification which applies to England.

24245. It was put in because they said it was an Irish traffic and not an English traffic?—It is only Ulster that this applies to. There is one other point I think should be mentioned. The Ulster system of curing is progressive. For instance, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, and Dundalk have started dead pig markets where previously there were live pig markets, and in every case where a dead pig market has been opened it has flourished and always continued.

24246. You mean that pigs are being more and more killed before they start?—The farmers would rather have it, because they are not taken in in selling by the cwt. The live pigs were sold by "eye," and the farmers did not know what they would get. The other is the more satisfactory way; they can calculate beforehand and know what they will get.

24247. Do you not sell them by live weight in Ireland?—No; they were merely judged by the eye.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

24248. Just one general question with regard to subsidies. I suppose the industry which you represent is, in your own opinion, quite as important as the industry which Mr. Lindsay, the last witness but one, represented. You were in the room perhaps when Mr. Lindsay was giving his evidence?—Which industry did he represent?

24249. He represented the dry goods industry, the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and the Ulster Agricultural Society, and he was managing director of a large dry goods business?—I think that from the Irish farmers' point of view there is no industry that either pays him as well or is as important to him as the pork industry.

24250. At any rate, the industry you represent is a very important one?—I want you to take note of that fact. I may mention that the Irish farmer gets in the neighbourhood of 6*d.* a pound for his pork; that is more than the Danish farmers get, and 2*d.* per lb. more than the American farmers get. It is the only thing for which the Irish farmer can get an enhanced price. He cannot get more for his beef. He gets one-third more for his pigs than his competitors get, but he can get no more for his beef than his competitors can. So that it is a thing which pays him.

24251. It goes without saying in such circumstances, seeing that as a rule we are placed at a great disadvantage, that everything ought to be done to encourage that trade from your point of view?—Yes, certainly. The farmer has to pay these rates of 18*s.* or so from Enniskillen; and if we buy in Enniskillen the farmer has really to pay the freight. The American farmer can send from Montreal to Enniskillen for 22*s.* 6*d.*, whereas the Irish farmer has to pay 18*s.* 7*d.* from Enniskillen to Belfast, and 34*s.* if he takes it to Glasgow. We consider that these are figures which ought to be put before you.

24252. In furtherance of your contention would you be prepared, if it were desirable to reduce the railway rates in the interests of the farmer and the dead pig trade, that the State should, if necessary, give some small subsidy for a limited period to cover any loss that might during that period be incurred by the railway companies?—Quite so. We say that.

24253. You heard Mr. Lindsay say that he was totally opposed to subsidies, that they were thoroughly demoralising, that there was no reason why subsidies should be given to develop the trade of the country, that the trade could look after itself; you do not agree with that opinion?—I do not think so. There are some cases where people are situated in an abnormal way and ought to be treated abnormally; where the traffic is small, and there is a hope of developing it.

24254. You come from Ulster and Mr. Lindsay

came from Belfast. That shows that on this point there is a difference of opinion. Two people from practically the same district, both representing important industries, seem to hold very different views on the subject. Your view, at any rate, is that a material reduction of rates and fares would be of appreciable benefit to your particular industry?—Yes. We want to get fair play. There is Messrs. Burns; they charge 14*s.* 2*d.* on cured provisions from Belfast to Glasgow, dock to dock, but in a through rate they, in conjunction with the Great Northern and Midland, will carry the same article at 15*s.* from Portadown or Ballymena, including transit across Belfast, though the Belfast curer has had to pay 8*s.* per ton on dead pigs, his raw material, from Portadown or Ballymena to Belfast, station to station. The railway companies will not tell us how much Messrs. Burns charge, but we lose 8*s.* per ton between them. We think that where a company like Messrs. Burns is given a through rate the railway company should be made to disclose the analysis of the rate and be subject to some regulation that would prevent undue preferences. That is the suggestion we want to make.

24255. In furtherance of that, you would be of opinion that, if there could be some means, by payment or otherwise, of getting an analysis of the through rates given to other traders, it would be a great benefit?—Yes.

24256. So that every trader could see, on payment or otherwise, exactly how he and his competitors were circumstanced?—Yes, quite so. We wish the Government would take some steps to prevent altogether preferential rates, such as I have quoted. There is another matter which has been brought before you—a rate of 4*s.* on grain from Derry to Belfast. They charge 18*s.* 1*d.* on pigs, and a special rate of 10*s.* 10*d* on bacon. I do not think it is for the good of the country. They are talking about competition: if the 4*s.* rate is a paying rate we should not be paying 18*s.* 1*d.*; if the 4*s.* rate is not a paying rate there is no reason why they should use the money of one class of traders to squeeze out competition, so that when the competition has been squeezed out they can revert to the higher rates. I think that that is against the interest of the trader. With regard to competition, I could give some figures. There are carters from Portadown to Armagh. These men cart one-third of the traffic. The railway do business for 3*s.* a ton from Armagh to Portadown. That is because of the carting competition. If you take Dungannon, about four miles further, where there is no competition with carts, they charge double the rate—6*s.* That means that they use the money of the traders to put down competition.

24257. You rather imply that where they can the railway companies would practically incur a little expense to stifle competition?—Yes; to stifle competition.

24258. And then raise the rates upon them?—That is against the interests of the traders.

24259. Manifestly. There is only one other question. You say that the right of appeal to the Board of Trade is beset with difficulties, so that individual traders suffer rather than resort to an appeal. Are you not confusing that with appealing to the Railway and Canal Commission? There is no expense in appealing to the Board of Trade to intervene or to try and rectify any complaint—it only involves a penny stamp?—I suppose we have been suffering from what the man called ignorance. People have the idea that, especially for a private trader, it is a big job to tackle a railway company. We had the idea that it would require counsel, and so on.

The resource of an application to the Board of Trade not availed of.

The expense of appeal to the Railway and Canal Commission Court objected to.

24260. That only applies to the Railway and Canal Commission?—That is what we were referring to.

24261. You can invoke the assistance of the Board of Trade at a very small cost?—It is the Railway and Canal Commission we were referring to.

24262. *Lord Pirrie.*—I take it from your evidence, though I do not think Mr. Acworth took quite the same view, that you contend that you supply a return traffic for the railway company's empty wagons in which they have brought coal or feeding stuffs from Belfast; you supply them with a freight back to Belfast, and that is one of the reasons why you say you should get your goods carried at a cheaper rate per ton than meal, which is carried from Belfast, and then the wagons have to go back empty?—Yes; that is so. One of the arguments used against us as a country at the Railway and Canal Commission was that that the railway companies had a traffic only one way.

The advantage of the dead pig traffic as suitable back loading for trucks to the ports.

24263. That you had no export traffic. Now, you supply an export traffic and yet the railway companies charge you nearly double rates?—Yes.

24264. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are you sure that the traffic is always more into the country than back from the country to the ports?—The question is as to the total balance, is it not?—The point was made against us at any rate.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *a.m.*

FORTY-SECOND PUBLIC SITTING.—FRIDAY, JULY 5TH, 1907,

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

In the Board Room of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Offices, Westminster, London.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, BART. Chairman; Right Hon. LORD FITZGERALD, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON, POË C.B.; Mr. W. M. ACWORTH; and Mr. JOHN AUDLEY FREDERICK ASPINALL;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. J. ORMSBY LAWDER, M.INST. C.E., D.L., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. J. Ormsby Lawder, M.Inst. C.E., D.L., Representative of the Ratepayers' Protection Association, co. Leitrim.

24265. Mr. Lawder, you are a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, I believe?—Yes.

24266. I think you are Deputy-Lieutenant for the County of Leitrim?—Yes.

24267. Do you appear here in your own individual capacity or as representing any association?—I represent the Ratepayers' Protection Association, County Leitrim, and I also represent myself as one of the largest ratepayers in the district.

24268. Do you wish to give evidence on any particular subject before us?—I want to give evidence with regard to this railway—the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway.

24269. Do you live on that line?—Yes.

24270. And are you a ratepayer?—Yes; I am one of the largest ratepayers on the line.

Rate levied on the ratepayers under the guarantee on the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway.

24271. What is the rate that the ratepayers have to pay in connection with this railway?—The present rate is 1*s.* in the pound; and, were it not that under the Local Government Act the rates are relieved to the extent of 3*d.* in the pound, it would be 1*s.* 3*d.* in the pound—that is to say, after the Government have given their contribution.

24272. Is the rate of 1*s.* in the pound levied on the whole of the district?—On the rateable area. The area was determined by the grand juries, and included the districts which were supposed to be benefited by the line. Approximately, about five miles of country on either side of the line.

24273. But is the 1*s.* rate levied throughout the whole area, or does the rate vary according to the area?—It is levied on the whole area.

24274. It is 1*s.* in the pound now?—1*s.* in the pound.

24275. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is that net—is it 1*s.* that you actually pay?—Yes, allowing for the Government rate and also the 3*d.* that the Local Government Act relieved us of.

24276. You do pay net 1*s.*?—1*s.* net at present.

24277. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—That only applies to the Co. Leitrim, I think. Cavan pays less, does is not?—Cavan pays 6*d.* in the pound. I am acting only for the Leitrim ratepayers.

Inception of the line.

24278. *Chairman.*—Had you anything to do with the inception of this railway?—Yes; I was the originator of the line; I acted as hon. secretary first, and then as joint engineer-in-chief with Mr. James Barton. After the line was completed I acted for a few years as engineer, and then I resigned.

24279. Then you are thoroughly acquainted with the whole history and circumstances of the line?—I am.

24280. How long did the railway take in construction?—From the day that I called the first public meeting to consider the scheme until the main line of 33¾ miles was opened for traffic was four years and one month from the first inception to the opening of the railway line; and the tramway portion, which is 14¾ miles, was very far advanced at that time, and was opened shortly afterwards—in May, 1888.

Cost of construction per mile.

24281. First of all, tell us what was the cost per mile of the tramway portion of the railway?—The cost of the tramway portion of the railway per mile was £3,000, and the cost of the railway portion was £4,500 per mile. The line was made, completed with rolling stock and everything else, at £6,000 under the engineer's estimate, and £26,000 under the Board of Works' estimate.

24282. How many miles are tramway and how many miles are railway?—The railway portion is 33¾ miles and the tramway portion is 14¾ miles. Perhaps this little sketch map here, which I as hon. secretary sent round to the various grand juries and ratepayers, and so on, before we went to the grand juries, would be useful. The line which we promoted is shown in the strong red line, and the dotted lines show the other schemes which were to be tails to our comet, so to speak.

24283. I think we had better get at once to what I may call the present day conditions, if you do not mind. The railway has been open eighteen or nineteen years, I think?—Yes.

24284. What were the earnings of the railway in the year 1905-6?—£4 8*s.* 4*d.* per week per mile.

24285. And what were the working expenses?—The working expenses were 93·6 per cent. If you will allow me, I may state that before we went before the grand juries the provisional committee had a pamphlet published which I, as hon. secretary, was ordered to print, and which I have here; and it was stated in that pamphlet that taking other lines already constructed which went through similar country in Ireland adjacent to our line, with a population the same or slightly less than that on our line, and with a valuation per square mile slightly less than that on our line, those lines were made at a certain cost, which was very much larger than what our line cost, and that their earnings were so much per week per mile. And, basing our calculations on these figures, which were the only figures we had to go upon, lines adjacent to our own, the provisional committee thought that we ought shortly after opening to be able to earn £6 per week per mile for the whole of the line.

24286. That was the estimate?—That was the estimate.

24287. What were the adjacent lines?—I will just read from the pamphlet.

24288. We do not want to hear extracts from the pamphlet. What were the adjacent lines you compared with?—One was Lord Lucan's line—the line from Athlone to Westport; another was the Clones to Cavan line, which is a branch of the Great Northern, and there was also the Cootehill branch of the Great Northern.

24289. In comparing the receipts of those lines your provisional committee estimated that the receipts of this particular line, the Cavan and Leitrim Railway, ought not to be less than £6 per mile per week?—Yes.

24290. After being at work eighteen or nineteen years, instead of £6 per mile per week, what do you say was the average?—£4 8*s.* 4*d.* in 1905-6. And it was estimated at that time that the working expenses of the light railways—at that time there was very little experience of them—with a three-foot gauge

or a metre gauge, as in India or on the Continent, would come to about 50 per cent. of the gross receipts. At that time the big railway companies' working expenses were something like 52 per cent.

24291. If your anticipations had been realised the ratepayers, instead of paying 1*s.* in the pound as now, would probably not have been called upon for anything?—That is so. I may say that the ratepayers up to this, from the year 1884, the time of the inception of the scheme, up to 1st May, 1905, that is, two years ago, which are the last statistics I could get from the County Council—the Leitrim ratepayers had paid £76,453 in rates, and that is up to 1st May, 1905. Now, if you take the figures for the next two years, that is, up to 1st May, 1907, the present year, it would be approximately £82,000 that we have paid.

24292. That is the contribution of the ratepayers towards this railway?—Yes; irrespective of the Government contribution.

24293. Has the passenger traffic much increased since the line was opened?—No; the passenger traffic has gone down. When the line was first opened it was decided to charge $\frac{3}{4}d.$ a mile to the third class passengers, and after a time that was raised. After we opened the passenger traffic on that line amounted to 8,685 passengers per month on an average.

24294. That was the first year after opening?—Yes, and then in 1905-6, after working some eighteen years, the passengers numbered 7,834 per month; so that the passenger traffic has gone down.

24295. I suppose the population has decreased?—The population has decreased, but I do not think that that affects the railway very much, because the population, taking them as a whole, are not a travelling population; they do not travel much.

24296. You attribute the reduction of the number of passengers carried to the increase in the fares?—I do.

24297. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Are those single-journey passengers?—I cannot tell you; it gives it in the half-yearly reports, the number of passengers that travel on the line.

24298. *Chairman.*—Those would be single journeys. Your figures are from the half-yearly reports, and they would be compiled in the ordinary way?—No doubt.

24299. *Mr. Acworth.*—When were the rates changed?—About two years or so after the line was opened.

24300. That would be 1891 or thereabouts?—1890 or 1891.

24301. *Chairman.*—I need perhaps hardly ask you this question—I suppose the ratepayers are not very well satisfied with the 1*s.* in the pound?—They are not, indeed.

24302. Did you not tell us that you are one of the largest ratepayers?—Yes; my contribution last year was £18 towards this railway rate.

24303. What was the highest rate the ratepayers have had to pay in connection with this railway?—The highest rate the ratepayers have ever paid was 1*s.* 10*d.* in the pound.

24304. What was the lowest?—It went down to 8*d.*

24305. What year was that, do you know?—I think about three or four years ago.

24306. To what do you attribute the fact that the rates have gone up to 1*s.*?—The reason the rates have gone up is that within the last three or four years the Directors decided to have a reserve fund, which I urged them in the beginning to put by. I urged them to set apart a small sum which would not have been felt by the ratepayers at all, say, a couple of hundred pounds each half-year, which would not have raised the rates more than a farthing or a halfpenny in the pound, as I knew the day would come when the rolling stock would have to be increased, or when the engines would give out and require renewal, and so on. But they did not do that, and there was no reserve fund until within the last two or three years. Then they started this reserve fund, which I think has been chiefly the cause of raising the rates, that is to say, the ratepayers' contribution.

24307. Has there been, during the last four or five years, a certain amount taken out of revenue and placed to a reserve fund?—Yes.

24308. And that has increased, of course, the contribution of the ratepayers to the railway?—Yes; they have had to put new boilers in the engines, and to get new rolling stock, and they have bought a lot of new sleepers, and all that comes out of revenue instead of out of the reserve fund, as it would have done had they provided one in the beginning.

24309. Where are the head offices of this railway?—In Dublin. The Manager's office is in Ballinamore, on the centre of the line, and the Locomotive Superintendent's office is also on the centre of the line, at Ballinamore, and the Engineer's in Enniskillen.

24310. Have you got the last balance sheet of the railway?—Yes, I have.

24311. What are the Dublin expenses, do you know?—That I cannot say.

24312. They are not shown in the half-yearly accounts?—No.

24313. *Mr. Acworth.*—General charges, £391 for 1905 and £397 for 1906. Do the Directors get any fees?—No, but when they go to Dublin they, of course, get their free passes up, and they get their expenses in Dublin.

24314. That is for the meetings?—For the meetings.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The rent of the head office is £40 a year.

Location of head offices of Cavan and Leitrim Railway in Dublin objected to.

24315. *Lord Pirrie.*—Are the Directors' meetings held in Dublin?—All the Board meetings are held in Dublin. They have Traffic meetings occasionally in Ballinamore, but the head offices are in Dublin, and the ordinary Board meetings are held there.

24316. Does the Secretary travel?—I am not quite certain.

24317. *Mr. Acworth.*—The Directors all have local addresses, I see?—I can tell you who the local men are.

24318. *Chairman.*—I do not think it is necessary. The Chairman lives on the line, and the Deputy-Chairman lives in the County Leitrim?—Yes, that is so.

24319. Most of them are, I see, living in one or other of the two counties?—Yes.

24320. Have you ever been on the Board?—No; I was offered a seat on the Board, but I did not take it.

24321. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is not from want of Directors that the line is not well managed?—No; my view is that there are too many, and that if there were two business men who would do the thing properly the work would be done a great deal better.

Number of Baronial and Shareholders' Directors respectively.

24322. *Chairman.*—I see there are fourteen Directors altogether?—Yes; there are six Baronial Directors, and eight Shareholders' Directors.

Refusal of the Directors to receive a deputation of the traders and ratepayers.

24323. I suppose the ratepayers and traders in the district have made complaints to the Directors or to the Manager with reference to the working of this railway from time to time?—Yes; they asked me to ask the Directors to receive a deputation of the traders and ratepayers on the line in order that they might put before them some of their grievances. The Directors refused to receive the deputation, and the Secretary wrote on the 8th September last, "I am instructed to say that if any trader or customer of the line has any grievance or complaint to make the Directors will be glad to give it full consideration if submitted to them in writing." This was considered very unsatisfactory, because the traders and ratepayers wanted to put before the Board of Directors certain of their grievances, and they considered that if the Directors depended upon the reports put before them by their officials they would only receive practically a one-sided view of the matter, and they wanted to do it verbally and to show the Directors exactly how the shoe pinched.

Representations made to Directors as to location of the head offices on line instead of in Dublin.

24324. What were your grievances? First of all did you ever complain of the offices being removed to Dublin?—Yes; we complained as long ago as 1891, shortly after the railway was opened. The Grand Jury of the County Leitrim passed a very strong resolution urging upon the Directors to bring the head offices to Ballinamore, the centre of the line, where it was considered that the work would be better done. It is usual on most railways that the head offices should be on the line, and not off the line. The Directors sent in a long reply to the Grand Jury, in which one of their chief reasons for having the offices in Dublin was that their Secretary would be able to deal with the through rates and the traffic in the Clearing House, and the Conference as to rates, and soforth.

24325. Have you got that letter there?—I have not the resolution, but I have the reply.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. J. Ormsby Lawder, M.Inst. C.E., M.I., Representative of the Ratepayers' Protection Association, co. Leitrim.

24326. I mean the reply?—Yes; here it is (*handing same to the Chairman*). It is a long letter, but what I have told you is practically their answer.

24327. I see the objection raised here is this. I will just read the paragraph: "My Board are aware that it would be difficult to get competent officers to reside at Ballinamore, and if obtained these officers and the necessary clerks must be paid higher salaries as compared with the salaries paid in Dublin"?—Yes; that is their view, but it is not my view.

24328. No, I understand that; I am reading their answer to you. That was one of the objections?—That was one of their objections, but that was wrong.

Reply given by the Directors on the subject of the head offices.

24329. Then it says also that it would be necessary to incur considerable expense in enlarging the offices in Ballinamore, and then it goes on to say: "An important factor in the company's business consists in the arrangement of the rates and the division of the proceeds of the Irish railways, the steamship companies, and the English railways, and in the correspondence resulting therefrom, not only with those companies, but with the Railway Clearing House and with the British Traffic Conference"?—Yes.

24330. Now, the Lough Swilly Company is a large, important and well-paying railway in Ireland. Do you know it?—I have been over it once.

24331. Do you know whether their offices are in Dublin?—No; they are down on the line, I think.

Mr. Shanahan.—They are at Londonderry.

The situation of the head offices of other Irish light railways

24332. *Chairman.*—Do you know any other light railway that has got offices in Dublin?—The only light railway in Ireland, so far as I am aware, which has offices in Dublin is the West Clare. The Clogher Valley, the West Donegal, and all the other light railways—even the Castlederg line, which is only a short line of seven miles—have their offices on the line.

24333. Well, I think we may pass from that. You raised the question on behalf of the ratepayers, and suggested that in your and their opinion the interests of the company would be better served if the offices were in the district itself instead of in Dublin. The directors declined to adopt that suggestion, and gave their reasons for it?—Yes. I may say with regard to the objection that the offices were too small, that when the line was being made I drew up the designs for the offices, and proposed to put a two-storey building there for the officers, considering that it would be necessary to have a certain amount of room in the offices; but the then manager said it was too big, and that a one-storey building would be amply sufficient. Consequently the directors ordered that a one-storey building should be built, and it was so built. But those offices now are not alone offices for the railway company, but they are also the offices of the Arigna Mining Company, which is a separate concern altogether. The two are worked in one set of hands, and even if the worst came to the worst, and if they wanted to enlarge those buildings, they could quite easily put on a second storey, because I provided for the walls of the lower portion to be sufficiently thick to carry a second storey.

Extent of the office accommodation at Ballinamore, (Cavan and Leitrim Railway)

24334. At any rate, the chief offices are still in Dublin?—Yes.

Complaint as to the absence of cart weigh-bridges at the stations.

24335. That was one of your grievances; now, what other grievance have you?—Another grievance was that the traders and ratepayers had no means of checking the weights of the goods that they got. Freights are charged by weight, and there is no cart weigh-bridge at any one of their local goods stores. There are eight goods stores on the line, and they have no cart weigh-bridges on them, and no means of weighing their coals or anything else. Originally I proposed to put in cart weigh-bridges, which would have cost £20 a station, and we had plenty of money in hand to do it, but the manager then suggested that it would be unnecessary to put in these cart weigh-bridges—that they had a wagon weigh-bridge at Ballinamore, the centre of the line, and that any trader or ratepayer who had any objection, or thought there was any wrong weight given, or pilfering, or anything of the kind, could get the weighing done at the Ballinamore station, and he said that he could bring back the wagon and weigh it at Ballinamore free of charge on this weigh-bridge, and that was done for some little time.

24336. I suppose you know that a cart weigh-bridge is not provided in any country at all stations?—Not at all stations, but there are very few stations, as far as I am aware, judging from lines that I have been on—and I have travelled a good deal—where they do not exist. There are cart weigh-bridges at most stations, and I consider it is a necessary equipment for a railway station, otherwise the trader has no absolute check upon what he is getting.

24337. Unless he weighs the goods himself?—Unless he weighs them himself. Well, there are very few people who have cart weigh-bridges at their own houses. I happen to have one, and I have found that during the last three or four years there have been shortages in my coals in each wagon (some are six-ton wagons, some eight tons, and some ten tons) of from 17 cwt. down to 3¼ cwt., excepting one, the other day, when I got a wagon which was quite right—only half a hundredweight short. Another ratepayer told me that he had got four tons of coal from Sligo not very long ago, and that he weighed it on the town weigh-bridge, and he found that there were 18 cwt. short out of the four tons. Another trader told me in Ballinamore that he had got a wagon of six to ten tons, and that there was a shortage of 30 cwt.

24338. At any rate, you made a complaint on the subject; you suggested that you wanted these cart weigh-bridges, and the directors declined to supply them?—Yes, and they charge at most of these stations a fee for weighing of 2*d.* per cart, and my view is that the railway company would be at no loss in putting up these weigh-bridges—that they would get paid back in the fees.

24339. Why did not you put them down when you were engineer?—I proposed to do it, and brought it before the Board, but the Board were led by the then manager, who suggested that it was an unnecessary expense, and that the wagon weigh-bridge at Ballinamore, the centre of the line, would be sufficient for the whole of the line; consequently I was over-ruled in the matter.

24340. *Mr. Acworth.*—You mean a wagon weigh-bridge?—Yes.

24341. *Chairman.*—Could you put a wagon weigh-bridge down for £20?—Not a railway wagon weigh-bridge—a cart weigh-bridge.

24342. That is two complaints we have had—what other complaints are there?—Well, the next complaint is that since 1904 when we get our coal the railway company supply an advice note, and they decline to give any weight or any rate. *That* is one of their coal advices (*handing same to the Chairman*). *This* is the usual advice note for all goods (*handing another document*), and that form of advice note was given for coal also until they brought the new one in in 1904, which gives neither weight nor rate, but merely says there is so much to pay. I do not think that is right. Everything is charged by weight, and I consider that the weight and the rate ought to be given in the advice note.

24343. Is this advice note exceptional for the Cavan and Leitrim Railway?—As far as I know, yes—it merely advises you, "You are to pay £2 10*s.* 6*d.*"—or whatever the amount may be—"for whatever we choose to give you." I think it is most unfair whether it is legal or not.

24344. That is one of your grievances?—Yes, and I think it is a very serious grievance, because we know as a matter of fact that the pilfering is going on on the line. We have represented it to the directors. I may tell you that originally, when the line was opened, I was managing director, and when I started the Arigna Mining Company I found that part of every consignment of coal we sent from Arigna was being stolen on the line, and I had to take means of whitewashing the wagons, and in that way I stopped the thefts in a month.

24345. You mean the top of the coal?—Yes; I whitewashed the top of the coal, so that if anyone took any of it away we could see the black spaces in the whitewash at once, and see that it had been taken away.

24346. Is not the coal carted some distance from Arigna?—It is carted from the mines to the station.

24347. How far is that?—About 2½ miles.

24348. It might be lost there?—Oh, no, because it is weighed at the station on a cart weigh-bridge supplied by the Arigna Mining Company. Then when it was put into the wagon the whitewash was sprinkled over the top, and I suggested to the railway directors that now with this pilfering going on, which it surely is, if they would do the same at their two termini—Belturbet and Dromod—they would stop the thefts in a week.

24349. *Mr. Acworth.*—For ordinary goods you have a weight note, but not for coal?—No—not for coal.

24350. *Chairman.*—With regard to these notes that you have handed in, your complaint is that within the last three or four years the Cavan and Leitrim Company have issued a special advice note for coals to send to consignees without giving the weight or any particulars, excepting the money that is to be paid?—That is so.

24351. Whereas the goods advice note is made out in the ordinary way with the weight and the rate and the charge?—That is so, and the coals were done exactly the same until the last three or four years.

24352. Have you represented that to the company?—Yes, I have.

24353. What is the reply of the company to that?—Merely that they give us what they get, and that they know nothing about it, and are not responsible for, any shortages that there may be; whereas my reason for following up the matter and trying to get this rectified is that I have evidence of my own from railway people that the coal is taken by railway servants for burning in their engines. I want the directors to stop that pilfering. What occurs is that the Arigna Mining Company supplies the coal for the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company's engines, and that they are also supplying it to other distant places, sending it to Dublin, Sligo, and other places, to Mullingar and all over the country, and that they give the best coal to outsiders and the worst coal to the engines of the railway company; and the unfortunate firemen and people who have to light the fires have a great difficulty in lighting those fires.

24354. You are on another subject now?—No, I am not; that is the reason they take our English coal.

24355. You are drifting into another subject. Let us confine ourselves to this, and get on to the next complaint—I daresay you will come to that later on. With regard to the advice-notes, I think we have settled it that the advice-notes are different from any advice-notes issued on any other railway in Ireland; is that not what you say?—I think so, as far as I am aware.

24356. I am bound to say I do not know of anything of the kind being done on this side of the water?—No, and I have never heard of it being done on any other railway in the world.

24357. Is there any other grievance you have—for instance, with regard to the cattle traffic?—I will give you an instance with regard to the cattle traffic: over two years ago I sent some cattle from Ballinamore to Shrewsbury to the cattle sales there, and one beast got its leg broken in Dromod in transhipment. I never from that day to this got any information from the railway company that any accident had happened to one of my beasts; and it was only by accident that a friend of mine happening to hear about it at Dromod and sending me information that I heard of it. I did not take any action in the matter against the railway company, simply and solely because I had taken the precaution of insuring my cattle from start to finish—that is a thing which people very seldom do with cattle, but I did it. But I think that the railway company, irrespective of any law or requirement, ought to have had the civility, when an accident of that kind had happened, to send their customer a line to say so.

24358. That was two years ago?—Yes.

24359. If you have no more recent case than that, we may as well leave it. I suppose such a case as that is quite exceptional, is it not?—No, it is not at all exceptional. There are other cases I can tell you about. There was a case that occurred some years ago when I used to send turkeys over to England at Christmas, American Bronze turkeys—I used to sell them here in England. A large box of them was sent over; and, instead of being delivered before Christmas, they were delivered several days after Christmas. And when I sent in a claim, I was written to officially; and the manager said that he had looked into the matter carefully himself, and that his company, the Cavan and Leitrim Company, were in no way to blame; and that the London and North Western Railway Company disclaimed any liability. So, I came over and looked into the matter—I did a little bit of detective work, and I found out that, instead of my box of turkeys being sent through *via* Greenore, the way they were directed, they were kept at Ballinamore station twelve hours, at the point of starting, and were then sent in the wrong direction to Dromod *via* Dublin; and consequently they did not arrive in time. At that time I had a monthly account, and I wrote to the railway company and said that I would deduct the value of the loss I had sustained, £3 18*s.* 6*d.* I think it was; and I deducted that out of my account and sent them a cheque "in full of all demands." Twice I did that, because the railway company tampered with my first cheque—I had made it out "in full of all demands," and they struck that out and passed it through their bank. I think that is a very strong proceeding.

24360. *Chairman.*—I do not know whether you were right in taking that course.

24361. *Lord Pirrie.*—You should have taken an action against the company?—Speaking as a rule, the unfortunate part with us is, that if we take an action against the railway company for any wrong whatsoever, the costs of that action come on the ratepayers in any event. That is to say, the railway company employs counsel and solicitors and all that, and the ratepayers have to pay the costs of both sides. Even if I win my case, it means that the ratepayers pay both sides; so that I do not want to bring actions against the company if it is possible to avoid doing so.

Unsatisfactory treatment of claims by the company.

24362. The bank would have been liable for cashing that cheque?—The way it happened was that the first time it was done the railway company's bank passed it on to my bank, and the manager of my bank thought I had done it, but had omitted to initial it; and he passed it through the first time. But the second time, when he found it done in exactly the same way the next month, he would not pass it.

24363. *Chairman.*—As I stated just now, the cases you are giving us must be exceptional?—They are not exceptional.

24364. The first case you mentioned, that was, the one with regard to your cattle, was two years ago?—Yes.

24365. Have you not something more recent?—Well, I will drop the cattle altogether.

24366. And you had better drop the turkeys, too, I think?—Now I will give you something about salmon. This happened June, 1906. I was sent a salmon on 21st June, and when it arrived it was done up in iris leaves, those broad leaves, and it was very nicely packed. Well, it was delivered to me, and when I cut the string I found that the tail and a good portion up was eaten away by a dog. The iris leaves had been doubled over and re-tied in such a way that no person in the world could have told that anything had happened to it. I live three miles from Ballinamore, and I got my man to put the horse in the trap; and I cut off the end of the salmon, and I sent it into the manager at once and showed him where the dog had eaten it and how the string had been tied up, the label put on, and everything made to look all right. For all that, I got nothing, they did not even say, "We are sorry"; and I made no claim for it. But that is the way things are carried on; and I do not think it is right or proper.

24367. *Lord Pirrie.*—You made no claim in that case?—No; I merely sent it in. But I think in the ordinary course common civility ought to have suggested to them to say, "We are very sorry, we will make inquiries into the matter and see who is to blame." Only the other day another gentleman told me that he had been spending a lot of money in furnishing a house; and he had got a couple of tons of cement by train—that he had paid over £60 in freight the last year or so, and that when it arrived he happened to be away from Ballinamore, and that when he sent up for his cement it was refused, until one of the shopkeepers in the town, who saw that his work was going to suffer, gave a cheque himself, and then they sent it up. I am certain that none of the English railways would ever treat a client in that way.

24368. *Chairman.*—Was the client known?—He was a local solicitor, and well known in the place, and was as sound as a man could be.

24369. Let us see if we cannot find something a little more substantial. You mentioned just now about the Arigna coal; when was that coal first developed?—In the year 1888.

Date of first development of the Arigna Coal Mine.

24370. Had you anything to do with that?—Yes, I was the originator of that, too.

24371. Is the coal worked now?—Oh, yes.

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24372. What is the output?—That, I cannot tell you; I am not connected with it now.

24373. But the output is sent by railway, a good deal of it, I suppose?—I think most of it is, nearly all of it is, I think.

24374. Over this light railway?—Yes.

24375. They use it for their engines, I think you said?—Yes.

The connection of the Arigna Mining Company with the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company.

24376. Is it a limited company, this Arigna Coal Company?—It is a separate company; but the directors of the Arigna Mining Company are for the most part directors also of the railway company.

24377. You are not connected with it now?—No, I was connected with it, but I got out of it—I sold my shares and resigned my post.

24378. Really you have no interest in it now?—No interest at all.

24379. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Is not the manager of the railway company also the secretary of the coal company?—Yes, that is so.

24380. *Chairman.*—I understood you to say that their offices are in the same building, and that the railway people are interested in this coal?—Here is their last report (*handing same to Chairman*). Their yearly meeting is held in the Dublin offices of the railway company.

The refusal of the Leitrim County Council to accept a Government Grant for extension of the railway to Arigna Mine and to Rooskey.

24381. Has any effort been made to connect the railway with the collieries?—Yes; recently, the Government offered a grant of £24,000 to make a short branch up from the present Arigna station to the mines, and also a short extension from Dromod to a point on the Shannon called Roosky; and the ratepayers compelled the County Council to throw that out; they refused to accept a free grant.

24382. Why was that, do you know?—The ratepayers consider that there has been a gross breach of faith with regard to the way in which this coal has been manipulated. When the line was first started the ratepayers were asked to guarantee two miles into the County Roscommon up to the Arigna Railway Station. The county boundary is at the Shannon there, and there are two miles up to the Arigna station.

24383. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Which way do the coal mines lie from Arigna?—North.

24384. *Chairman.*—The mines are 2½ miles from the railway?—Yes. The ratepayers were asked to guarantee the two miles up to the Arigna station; we had to go before the Roscommon Grand Jury after going to Leitrim; the line was originally to go on to Boyle, so as to connect with the Midland Great Western, and so get to Sligo; and also there was another scheme for another railway (promoted by other promoters), from Boyle to connect with Castlerea, and from this end, from Dromod through Strokestown, and so on. That was the original scheme as proposed. The Leitrim ratepayers were asked to guarantee the two miles up to Arigna station, and they asked, "Why should we guarantee the two miles up to Arigna station in County Roscommon?" The answer was given to them at public meetings that in the event of Roscommon throwing out the portion in County Roscommon, if they guaranteed up to Arigna station they would be able to have cheap coal. At that time, mind you, the Arigna Mining Company was not even started, but it was proposed that the minerals should be developed in the Arigna Valley, and that the means for developing the minerals was, to guarantee up as far as Arigna; so that if the County Roscommon Grand Jury threw the scheme out we should not be stranded altogether, but could still develop the mines. They did it on the promise that they would get cheap coals. And in the pamphlet which was published—which I have here, and which I shall be happy to show you if you would like to look at it—it was stated that the turf round Ballinamore had been entirely worked out, and that the question of fuel was becoming a very serious matter. This is the pamphlet published at the time by the Provisional Committee for distribution.

Refusal alleged to have been due to excessive price for coal charged the local consumers by the Arigna Co.

24385. When was this offer of a free grant made?—Some two years ago.

24386. Supposing we confine our attention to that. Was that accepted?—No.

24387. Why was it not accepted?—The ratepayers compelled the County Council to refuse it on the ground that there had been a gross breach of faith with the ratepayers with regard to the price they received these coals at. At present, a ratepayer in Leitrim will have to pay 15*s.* 6*d.* a ton for his coal on rail at Arigna; whereas the same coal, the best of it, is given to outsiders who never did anything for the development of this mineral district at all, and they are getting it at 11*s.* or 12*s.* a ton on rail at Arigna. Therefore, the ratepayers in Leitrim say "We, who are the means of your prosperity, have been very ill-treated"—because the Arigna Mining Company has been one of the most prosperous companies, for a little company, that I ever heard of. It paid 5 per cent. almost from the start, and it has paid two bonuses of 50 per cent. each; so that the shareholders have got back their whole capital; and their Reserve Fund and Investments are equal almost to their capital.

24388. That sounds very large; but what was their original capital?—Oh, it was very small, only £3,300. But what the ratepayers feel is that they are prevented burning their own coal. Remember, that when the line was started, the turf, as stated in that pamphlet, was nearly all cut out from the Ballinamore district, and the question of fuel was a very serious matter; and they were told, "If you guarantee these two miles to enable the minerals to be developed, you will get cheap coal." Whereas now they, who were the means of developing this small company, are charged some 4*s.* 6*d.* a ton more for their coal as compared with outsiders.

24389. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is there any reason for that?—The reason, I consider, is bad policy, bad business, and in every way breach of faith with the people.

24390. *Chairman.*—At any rate, the grant was refused and the railways not made?—Yes.

24391. Why do not the Arigna Company make the line?—That is their affair; I do not know. I may tell you that originally the late Earl of Kingstown was Chairman of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway and also Chairman of the Arigna Mining Company. It was on his property that these mines were developed, and he put his whole heart into the development and opening up of this district. But for him, neither the one nor the other would have been made.

24392. In speaking of the grant which was offered of £24,000, was there any contingent liability on the ratepayers?—A very large contingent liability. Though the grant was to be free, supposing an accident happened on either of those two branches, and a jury awarded a sum of money for the killing of a man, say, the Leitrim ratepayers would have been held responsible and they would have had to pay for it. Not very long ago there was a man killed at Ballinamore station, and the jury awarded £1,500. Well, that would represent sixpence in the pound on the taxable area of Leitrim.

24393. *Lord Pirrie.*—You could have insured for a small sum against that?—But I do not think they do insure.

Rev. Mr. Digges.—The case was brought to the Court of Appeal after passing through the King's Bench, and the company won in both cases, a decree being given in favour of the company.

The Witness.—Quite right. That is to say, there was a technical point of law.

24394. *Chairman.*—Never mind the technical point—they won on appeal?—Yes; but the ratepayers feel that if there was a similar accident the railway company would be held responsible.

24395. Are the ratepayers generally satisfied with the working of the railway independent of these isolated complaints which you have mentioned?—They are not.

24396. Why not?—The ratepayers consider that a lot of traffic has been sent away from the line that used to come by the line; it is sent on to another railway already, the Midland Great Western Railway.

24397. It is carted?—Carted a longer journey than to our own station.

24398. What is the reason for that? Surely the Cavan and Leitrim try to get hold of the traffic?—I do not think they do.

24399. Do they allow it to go?—Yes.

24400. And take no action to get it over their system?—I have pointed out where the traffic is going away; I have asked some of the directors to come with me, and I have said that I would take them to the traders and that the traders would tell them their own story, so that they would see for themselves. They never have come, nor tried to inform themselves on the matter.

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24401. Have you any complaint to make with regard to the passenger service?—I think the train arrangements are bad. The Great Northern at Belturbet has six trains in and out at their station where we join.

24402. Six trains a day?—Six trains a day, in and out.

24403. Are they mixed trains, or passenger trains?—Passenger trains, I think, most of them; there may be one or two mixed.

24404. But still there are six trains carrying passengers?—Yes.

24405. How many has the Cavan and Leitrim got?—Three. Then, the Midland Great Western at the other town, Dromod, has five trains each way; but we have only three trains to meet them. Now, a passenger from Ballinamore cannot get to Sligo or Longford and back in one day and do any business at either place.

24406. Do you think there is traffic sufficient to justify additional trains?—Well, I think, and have always thought, that without four trains a day it would be absolutely impossible to make any train connections with those two railways. At present there are a good number of special trains run; but, if there was a fourth train, it would mean that there would be fewer specials.

24407. What you are suggesting is, that living in the neighbourhood and knowing it as you do, you think the railway company would not suffer, while the public would gain if there were four passenger trains instead of three trains a day?—Yes.

24408. Let us leave it there; you need not labour that point; that is your suggestion?—Yes.

24409. Now, with regard to the goods rates. I suppose that on the whole you have nothing to complain about there?—Well, I have some complaints to make with regard to the rates. For instance, on this line, to show you how traffic is driven off, there are two districts, Newtowngore and Corrawalleen——

24410. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is there a station there?—There is no station at either of those places; it is an outlying district, lying towards the Killeshandra direction.

24411. Eastward?—Yes, from Ballinamore, out towards the Killeshandra district. There is a considerable amount of flour comes for bread-making and so forth, and it used to come to those two districts to Ballinamore. The rate for wagon loads is 11*s.* 8*d.* from Belfast to Ballinamore in six-ton loads—they will not take less than six-ton loads at the wagon rate. The Great Northern, the Midland Great Western, and all the northern railways take five tons at the wagon rate. The result is, that now the people at Newtowngore and Corrawalleen get their flour to Killeshandra at 2*s.* 3*d.* a ton less than what is charged to Ballinamore, while the distances are practically the same, there are only two or three miles difference. The Cavan and Leitrim Railway wagons only hold five tons; and if a six-ton lot is sent it has to go in two wagons. Therefore, the people in Newtowngore, the shopkeepers who distribute this flour, get it now to Killeshandra in five-ton lots at 2*s.* 3*d.* a ton less, and they cart it three or four miles further, though they are in the taxable area and are paying a tax for this railway.

24412. *Chairman.*—Has that been brought to the notice of the railway company?—Yes, I brought it before the chairman of the company, and I asked him to come with me, and I said that I would take him round and show him the very shopkeepers, and let them tell him their story. It was also stated at a public meeting in Ballinamore, held not very long ago, when they wanted to close some stations; and nothing has been done to rectify it as far as I am aware.

24413. And no explanation has been given?—No. I will give you another instance, if you like.

24414. Yes, give us another, if you wish?—At the present time the farmers in Ireland are learning the use of oil cake for feeding cattle.

24415. The oil cake is made in England, I suppose?—Some is made in England, and some is made in Ireland; some is made in Belfast, and some in Dublin; for instance, I have been in the habit of getting all my oil cake from a company in Liverpool; I have found it very satisfactory, and I get very good stuff, and I stick to people who treat me properly and well. Oil cake is a thing that you cannot get in large quantities and keep it for a long time, it gets mildewed and damp, and therefore the consumer gets in a stock according to the number of the cattle he is feeding.

Anomalies in the rates for oil cake between Liverpool and Ballinamore.

24416. In other words, you get your supply from hand to mouth, as it were; you do not store it?—No, I get one ton at a time. I used always to pay 19*s.* 2*d.* a ton for it from Liverpool to Ballinamore.

24417. How was it carried?—It is carried either from Liverpool to Belfast and from Belfast to Ballinamore, or it is carried from Liverpool to Dundalk and to Ballinamore by railway, or from Liverpool to Dublin and thence by rail, or to Sligo by ship and thence by rail to Ballinamore. The rates are the same in all cases. We used to pay a rate of 19*s.* 2*d.* for the oil cake, but the railway company in recent years have raised the rate to 26*s.* 8*d.* They charge for 4-ton lots 14*s.* 2*d.*—that is the present rate; for 2 tons and under 4 tons, they charge 15*s.* 6*d.*; and for under 2 tons, 26*s.* 8*d.*

24418. When you talk about the rate being raised in recent years from 19*s.* 2*d.* to 26*s.* 8*d.*, how long is that since?—Well, I am not quite able to tell you that. But here is a receipt in 1902 from this company (*handing in receipt*).

24419. That gives me the date?—It might be after that.

24420. *Mr. Acworth.*—It had been changed in February, 1904, you say?—Yes.

24421. In 1904 it had been raised, and in 1902 it had not been raised?—That is so.

24422. *Chairman.*—Were you advised at the time of the advance in the rate?—No. How I came to know it was that I went to the manager in 1903—I think the end of 1903—and somehow the question of the rate came up, whether it was that I had been charged 26*s.* 8*d.* or not I cannot tell you at this moment. But he said, "The rate is 26*s.* 8*d.*" So I called out the stationmaster of the line, who was on the platform close by, and I said, "Mr. Sanson, will you come over here, please. Can you tell us what the rate is from Liverpool for oil cake"? "19*s.* 2*d.*," was his reply. Then I said to the manager, "It is 19*s.* 2*d.*" "Oh, no," said he, "it is 26*s.* 8*d.*" The stationmaster said, "It is 19*s.* 2*d.* in the books, and that is the rate we have always charged." "Well," he said, "the books must be altered; they are wrong." I then wrote to him and asked him about it; he wrote to me a letter, which I can hand in if desired. On 1st December, 1903, he wrote as follows:—"The present rates for oil cake at owner's risk, Liverpool to Ballinamore applicable by all routes are: 4-ton loads, 14*s.* 2*d.* per ton, station to station; 2 tons and under 4 tons, 15*s.* 6*d.* per ton; under 2 tons, 26*s.* 8*d.* per ton. A small percentage additional is charged for small parcels not exceeding 3 cwts." That was on 1st December, 1903. On 15th February, 1904, he writes to me: "In booking a consignment of 10 bags of oil cake for you on 8th November last, the clerk at North Wall (Midland Great Western Railway) omitted to include the charges from Liverpool to that point (7*s.* 9*d.*), which I am now asked to collect. The charge already paid by you is 14*s.* 10*d.*, being the rate from Dublin. Kindly say if you will pay. Senders are Messrs. Phœnix Oil Cake Company, Rumford-street, Liverpool." I wrote back and said, "Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of 15th inst., I beg to say I got no oil cake on 8th November from anywhere, and no such item as 10 bags at 14*s.* 10*d.* was charged in my account, and I did not pay it. I find that the Phœnix Oil Mill Company, Liverpool, dispatched to me one ton of oil cake in 19th November, carriage paid. I will have nothing to say to local bookings when goods are consigned through. You say the rate from North Wall is 14*s.* 10*d.*, and from Liverpool to there 7*s.* 9*d.*, or total, 22*s.* 7*d.* May I ask on what basis then did you quote me on 1st December at 26*s.* 8*d.*"? I got no answer. The two local bookings in that instance came to 22*s.* 7*d.*, and yet the through booking is 26*s.* 8*d.* Since then I have gone into the matter with the Phœnix Oil Mill Company, and I wrote and said, that I could not make out why it was that I was asked to pay 26*s.* 8*d.*; that their rate for single tons was 17*s.* 9*d.*—1-ton lots, 17*s.* 9*d.*; 2-ton lots, 16*s.* 1*d.*; 6-ton lots, 13*s.* 6*d.*—those were the rates they had in their books for Ballinamore. I then asked them to write to the various shipping companies that connect and to get through rates from them. They wrote to the various shipping companies, and the quotation of the Sligo Steam Navigation Company was: in

Correspondence with the Cavan and Leitrim Company.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. J. Ormsby Lawder, M.Inst. C.E., D.L., Representative of the Ratepayers' Protection Association, Co. Leitrim.

Anomalies in the rates for oil cake between Liverpool and Ballinamore.

single ton lots, 19*s.* 2*d.*; and that of the Dundalk and Newry Steampacket Company was 26*s.* 8*d.* I thought that perhaps the Liverpool agent of the Dundalk and Newry Steampacket Company, which has the shortest sea route and the shortest rail route, and is therefore the natural route my traffic would come by, had made a mistake, and I wrote to the Secretary and asked would he kindly give me these rates; and he gave them to me, and he put in a further request that I would order my stuff to come by their route. I wrote back and said, "I am sorry I cannot order my stuff by your route, because you seem to have combined with the railway company to charge 26*s.* 8*d.* for what used to be only 19*s.* 2*d.*" Then they wrote back and said, "In reply to your letter of the 8th inst., our local rate for oil cake, Liverpool to Dundalk, is 7*s.* 6*d.* per ton, and in ten-ton lots 6*s.* 8*d.* per ton. I am informed that the Great Northern Company's rates from Dundalk to Ballinamore, including Dundalk cartage, are as follows:—under 6 tons, 11*s.* 8*d.* per ton."

24423. What is it for one ton?—There is no special rate for one ton; that would be included in "under 6 tons." Then they go on: "You will observe in the former case the combined rates amount to exactly the same figure as you had been paying formerly; and if you order in 6-ton lots, it can be brought for 16*s.* 11*d.* I have no note of the rates of 14*s.* 2*d.* and 15*s.* 6*d.*" (that is for the bigger lots) "which have been quoted to you by the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company as applying to oil cake, and will make an inquiry about this, and will endeavour to have those rates put in force by our route *via* Dundalk and Ballyhaise, and will advise you further." Since then I have written several times to that Steampacket Company and on each occasion they reply, "We have got no further," "We cannot get any redress," "We cannot do anything in the matter." So there the matter rests, and the last lot of oil cake which I got the other day I ordered to be sent *via* Sligo, because they quoted at 19*s.* 2*d.*

Ineffectual representations to the Company.

24424. *Lord Pirrie.*—This man quotes 19*s.* 2*d.* also?—Yes, subsequently.

24425. He has quoted you 19*s.* 2*d.*?—Yes, but I am talking of when I ordered the last oil cake. I have not ordered any since then. The last oil cake I ordered them to send *via* Sligo, but it was captured and it went *via* Belfast, and it came to me, and I only paid 19*s.* 2*d.*

Alleged neglect on the part of the Company to obtain equitable through rates.

24426. *Chairman.*—The poor Cavan and Leitrim had nothing to do with this?—I think so. I think they are conniving at this. I think that if the Cavan and Leitrim Company wanted to do any good to the district, and to encourage its trade, and to get farmers to go in for oil cake as much as possible, they would put their back to the wall.

24427. And take the same action that you have taken?—And say to them—"If you do not alter your through rates we will knock off our through rates altogether, and get two local rates."

24428. The absurdity of the thing is, according to your statement, that if you book locally it is 19*s.* 2*d.*, and if you have a through rate it is 26*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes.

24429. I suppose that would cover the grain rates as well as cake?—I am not prepared to state that. I will not state anything which I am not personally aware of. It may be so. What is more, I may tell you that the other day I was talking to a commercial traveller who comes from Belfast, and who deals in oilcake in this district too, and he tells me that if I book it locally from Liverpool to Belfast, and from Belfast to Ballinamore, the rates, including a sum of 10*d.* for cartage across Belfast, will amount to 19*s.* 2*d.* And commercial travellers have told me, with regard to that Newtowngore and Corrawalleen district, and the flour trade there, we are losing £200 a year in freights, because it all goes to Killeshandra.

The competition of the M. G. W. Ry. at Killeshandra Station for Ballinamore district traffic.

24430. And, of course, the ratepayers have to pay?—Yes.

24431. *Lord Pirrie.*—Where is Killeshandra?—On the Midland Great Western branch. May I point it out to you?

The Witness pointed out the position on the map.

24432. *Chairman.*—Do you think that all those points which you have mentioned operate against the development of any particular industry in your district?—We have unfortunately no industry except the agricultural industry, but I think no matter where you go in any country, if you check any trade, you prevent industry of any kind developing.

24433. You have industries, I suppose, in the way of eggs, and bacon, and poultry?—Yes, those are sent every day—lots of them.

24434. And you think that more liberal treatment on the part of this railway would tend to develop those industries?—Certainly. To show you how it works, I may say that, in that case of the £200 a year lost in the flour trade, the way it works out is this—that you not alone lose on the Cavan and Leitrim by the loss of that flour coming in, but you lose on the return of the carts. A cart goes in with eggs and butter and takes back a load of flour, and that is sent away, so that the Cavan and Leitrim loses both the eggs and the butter going out and the flour coming in.

24435. The Arigna coal industry, I suppose, gives employment to a certain number of men in that district?—When we started the Arigna Coal Mining Company, there were practically no earnings at all; it was a very poor district, and there was no employment at all. I do not think there were twelve coal-miners in the district. For a century or more there used to be a little grubbing at the surface—more like a rabbit burrow than anything else—and any man that went in for coal-mining went over to England and Scotland and worked in the mines there. But in that particular locality there were only some dozen men employed. Now in the Arigna Mining Company there are over 100 men working, and the company is paying over £4,000 a year in wages, so that it is a very great benefit to that district.

24436. You told us that the directors of the railway were interested in this coal mine?—Yes.

24437. Surely, then, they would do everything they could to encourage the traffic to go over their railway?—Well, it is this way. In ordinary trade, as you know, people living in the locality of a coal mine generally are charged more, perhaps, than people at a distance, where you come into competition in the ordinary course of trade. If the mining people think that the people locally are in the hollow of their hands, they can charge more for the coal than they can at distant places where they are competing with other coal districts and mines. But in this case it differs, because the Leitrim ratepayers were asked to help the development by giving their guarantee for this two miles into Roscommon which enabled the company to start the work. Consequently when the coal is sold to outsiders at a cheaper rate than it is sold to people in the district, and the people in the district are practically prohibited from buying it, there is a very great grievance on the part of the Leitrim ratepayers.

24438. Are the pits themselves in Roscommon?—Yes.

24439. Right on the border of the two counties, I suppose?—Two or three miles inside Roscommon.

24440. You are strongly in favour of that railway being extended, are you not?—I have always approved of the two extensions. I shall be very glad to see the two extensions made, but it was originally never intended that the line should be made up to the mines. It was the intention in those days to go on to Boyle, and to put the Arigna station sufficiently near, so that the Arigna Mining Company, or any other company, might make a mineral line of their own down—a tramway—as they do in Wales, and in hundreds of other places—but not with that little capital that we started with. Then the Government came in, and offered £24,000, and I should be very glad to see that £24,000 spent there. I would also like to see that the Leitrim ratepayers were safeguarded, so that if any accident occurred, they would not be held liable for it.

24441. They do not want to incur any additional liability?—No. They are paying a lot of money for this line already.

24442. Have you considered what in your judgment is the best remedy for what you have been complaining of in connection with that particular railway, the Cavan and Leitrim? First of all, are you in favour of these railways being acquired by the larger companies?—Well, either one of two things; it certainly should be acquired by somebody, and whether it be by the larger companies or by the State is the point. I gave evidence before Sir James Allport's Commission in 1887, and there I was in favour of the State purchase of all railways, and I believe in that still.

24443. You are still of the same opinion?—Yes, but in the event of the State not buying up all the railways, I think that this line ought to be bought

up by the State and handed over to the Great Northern Railway Company on terms.

24444. Naturally you want the ratepayers to be relieved of this burden?—Yes. I have travelled a good deal, and have been all over India, and have seen what our State railways in India have done, and I think that had we had State railways in Ireland for a number of years it would have been the salvation of Ireland. When we started this Cavan and Leitrim Railway we intended that the line should be worked in the way that a State railway in India would have been worked. They would have had probably only two officers on the whole line, and it would have been worked economically, but the tails of our comet were all cut off from Dromod to Woodlawn, and from Arigna to Castlerea, which was part and parcel of the whole scheme, and that, of course, handicaps the Cavan and Leitrim very considerably; and with the existing management and everything, I do not think it is possible under any circumstances to work the line economically and properly.

24445. The opinion you expressed before the Allport Commission as to State purchase you still hold after all these years of experience?—Yes.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

24446. You stated that the Grand Jury took up very strongly in 1891 the question of the better management and the question of the bringing of the offices back, but have you ever done anything since then or since the County Council came into existence?—No; what the County Council did was this. They stepped into the shoes of the Grand Jury, and they had then the power of appointing four local directors in Leitrim, and two in Cavan.

24447. But the Grand Jury had the same power?—Yes, and they exercised it. I may tell you that in that pamphlet which I handed in just now——

24448. Never mind the pamphlet?—I want to show you where there has been another breach of faith with regard to the people of Leitrim.

24449. You are not answering my question. What I want to get clearly on the Minutes, and to get my mind clear upon is, what action has the County Council, who are now the responsible authority to the ratepayers, taken in connection with the management of the line—in other words, what have they done to bring down the expenses, whether by bringing the officials to the offices at Ballinamore, or in any other way? Has anything been done since 1891?—As far as I am aware, they have done nothing beyond appointing the directors, as I mentioned just now.

24450. Further than that, they have done absolutely nothing?—No, and those four directors do not even report to the County Council.

24451. Do you not think, considering the number of complaints you have brought forward, it would have been advisable to have done something? Have you individually not gone to the Board of Trade, or to the County Council, and complained, and got them to put pressure on?—No, I have spoken to individual Councillors, but I have not gone to the County Councillors as a body.

24452. Do you not think it would be desirable as a large ratepayer—the largest ratepayer, I think you said—to do that?—I am not the largest ratepayer.

24453. Well, as a large ratepayer, would it not have been desirable?—I do not take that view of it, but I have spoken to County Councillors on the subject, and they have four County Council Directors on the Board, one of whom cannot read or write.

24454. In one of your answers to the Chairman you said there were four additional directors put on?—Yes, by the shareholders.

24455. By the shareholders—so as to get a majority?—Yes.

24456. Have you been aware of any divisions between the directors? Do those that are put on by the County Council complain that the others do not treat them properly, or are they unanimous?—I read in the papers the speeches that County Councillors have made, and what they say is that they are in a minority, and can do nothing. They also state that to have these four extra men appointed by the shareholders is wrong and improper—that, originally, when it came before the Provisional Committee and was brought before the Grand Juries, they stated distinctly there that the Leitrim ratepayers would appoint four, so that the ratepayers would always have a majority on the Board with the control of the moneys spent for the benefit of the district.

24457. But has no action been taken by the ratepayers of the district to point out to the Government this illegality, if it is illegal?—They can appoint forty shareholder directors if they like. That pamphlet was published before the Order in Council was made, and went before the Grand Juries, and then when the Order in Council was printed (I had nothing to say to that) the four shareholder directors were left out.

24458. But nobody in the county seems to have either brought it before the Board of Trade, or the Lord Lieutenant, or any Government authority at all to see whether it is correct or not?—As far as I am aware, no.

The question of the legality of the coal advice notes issued by the Cavan and Leitrim Company.

24459. With regard to these coal advices of which you have been complaining, have you put that matter before the Board of Trade?—Yes, and before the Railway Commissioners. I wrote to them.

24460. Do they admit that it is correct?—They do not admit that, but they say they have no power.

24461. If they have no power, that shows it is legal?—Well, I do not know; I was referred to the Railway Commissioners, and I wrote to the Railway Commissioners, and suggested a weigh-bridge at the station.

24462. That is a different thing; I want to keep to the one point. Have you put that particular document, which you have shown to us, before the Board of Trade?—I did not send that document.

Correspondence with the Board of Trade and the Railway and Canal Commission as to weigh-bridge accommodation at Ballinamore station.

24463. Do you not think if you had sent that document to the Board of Trade, you would have got a definite answer as to whether it was legal or whether it was correct? I mean, you have complained direct to the manager and to the officers of the company, but you have not gone to any higher authority?—I put it before the Board of Trade that the railway company had issued this advice note, and that they gave no weight, and no rate on the note.

24464. *Chairman.*—It is rather important, if you have a letter from the Board of Trade?—Yes, I have.

24465. Do not give us any details—Lord Pirrie merely wants to know what answer you got from the Board of Trade?—I first of all wrote to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, or rather, I first of all wrote to the Directors and asked them, and then we sent a petition, which was signed by all of the magistrates, the clergy, and a number of shopkeepers, and so on, asking for a weigh-bridge.

24466. *Lord Pirrie.*—Keep off the weigh-bridge?—The weigh-bridge and this go together. What I stated was that we paid rates on our coal, etc., by weight, and had no means of checking the weights. Then I wrote to the Board of Trade and explained the matter to them. It was a long letter, which I can read if you like, and then they replied.

24467. That is what I want—give me their reply?—"In reply to your letter of 21st inst., with regard to the question of the provision of a cart weigh-bridge at Ballinamore station on the Cavan and Leitrim Railway, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state that they have no power to require the company to erect weigh-bridges at their stations. The Board have, however, forwarded a copy of your letter to the company for such observations as they may desire to offer in the matter."

24468. That does not touch this advice note.

24469. *Mr. Acworth.*—What is the date of that?—26th January last. In writing to the Board of Trade, I said:—"At the last Petty Sessions at Ballinamore, County Leitrim, I was requested by my colleagues on the Bench to ask you if the Board of Trade can compel the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company to put up a cart weigh-bridge at their goods store at Ballinamore to enable traders to check the weights of their goods; and, if so, if you will kindly do so, as part of the necessary equipment of a railway. Traders and customers have found considerable shortages in the weights of their goods, especially coal. The railway company in their advice notes for coal have in recent years adopted a form in which they refused to give either weights or rates, and refused to weigh it on their wagon weigh-bridge."

24470. *Chairman.*—But you did not ask the Board of Trade their opinion on that point?—Yes, I did. "The public are therefore obliged to accept whatever

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is given to them, and have no redress. A memorial signed by the magistrates, clergy, traders, and customers was sent to the Directors on the 24th September last, asking that this should be done."

24471. *Lord Pirrie.*—Apparently you did not bring this point forward except as mixed up with the weigh-bridge, and therefore I think you have lost a very important opportunity?—It is only an error of judgment.

24472. I agree; I only want to point out that you really had a much stronger case, than, apparently, you put forward in that letter?—I merely referred to that. Then in a subsequent letter they wrote and told me to refer to the Railway Commissioners. I wrote to the Railway Commissioners, and they replied that they were a judicial body, and could do nothing unless the matter was brought before them in the way of legal proceedings.

Correspondence with the Board of Trade and the Railway and Canal Commissioners as to weigh-bridge accommodation at Ballinamore station.

24473. To the Railway Commissioners, I suppose, you made the same case as you had made to the Board of Trade?—Yes.

24474. You did not point out in a special letter that the railway company had adopted a new advice form without giving weights or anything. Is not that correct?—On the 1st April I wrote to the Secretary of the Railway and Canal Commission:—"The Board of Trade inform me that they have no powers, and suggest that I should apply to your Commission."

24475. That is about the weigh-bridges. We will pass on, but what you have said is now on the minutes with reference to this advice note, and the matter will be taken up later on, I am quite sure, by the railway company. There is one point in your evidence that I should like to put a question about. You state that since 1901 you have been gradually decreasing your traffic each year until now you have come down to £15 or £16 a year. Has your traffic been taken over another route?—No, what I mean by that is that I paid by cheque to the railway company each year, and I found that owing to the way we were being annoyed and worried, year by year, my traffic got less and less.

24476. You got less goods?—Yes.

Company's loss of traffic owing to alleged faulty management of line.

24477. Have you been doing less traffic, or getting your traffic by another route?—I have stopped the traffic altogether. For instance, after the turkey incident, I stopped sending turkeys altogether.

24478. You have reduced your traffic not only with this railway company, but the district has lost by it?—Yes, and then with regard to coal, I used to get all my coal for use in my house from the Arigna Mining Company; then when they raised the rate to the exorbitant price of 15*s.* 6*d.* on rail at Arigna I left off buying it. There was a strike in England, and, of course, the prices of coal went up both in England and in Ireland; but when the price went down in England it still remained 15*s.* 6*d.* with us.

24479. You did not do without coal, I suppose?—I got English coal, and then they went on stealing it—17 cwt., 12 cwt., 8 cwt., and so on.

24480. Did you get it over the railway?—I did.

24481. Then the Cavan and Leitrim Railway were making more out of it by your getting it from England, because the distance it came over their line was more than double?—The Cavan and Leitrim would carry from Belturbet to Ballinamore, which is practically the same distance, or there is very little difference.

Turf, as fuel, replacing coal.

24482. It is three or four miles further, is it not?—It may be a few miles more. But now, since they have taken to pilfering this coal, what I do is this—I cut turf and use that for fuel.

24483. That is what I wanted to get at; you are using less coal?—Yes; I used always to get coal for all my household requirements, but now the only coal I get is for my kitchen range; otherwise I burn turf entirely in my house.

24484. So that you have reduced your traffic over the railway?—Yes.

The refusal of the County Council to accept the Government grant for railway extensions.

24485. Now, another question. You seem to be rather strong in your opinion that that grant would have been a very desirable thing, except for the very great risk that the county would have been running?—Yes.

24486. Have you considered at all that that risk of nearly killing a man, or dog, or some other injury of that sort, could have been insured against for a very small sum. Do you not think that the county and the traders, and the people in the district were very foolish not to look upon it in an ordinary business way, and insure against that risk?—Supposing they had wished to relieve themselves of that responsibility, they could have done so for a very few pounds per annum, and then there would have been no risk whatever to the county or the ratepayers?—The way I look upon that is this—What is every man's business is no man's business. The County Council would be the parties to do that.

24487. But you could have attended the County Council meeting, and made the suggestion that in order to get over this great liability (which I admit is a very serious one) it was possible to insure against the risk for a very small sum?—I think the answer that would have been given if I had done so would have been that they were already paying 1*s.* in the £ for this railway, and that they did not see the use of going to any further expense. That, of course, is prophecy on my part; I can't tell what would have happened.

24488. But to lose a branch line and a grant of £24,000 for the mere sake of an expenditure of £7 or £8, or £10 a year, seems to me a very foolish action on the part of the people of this district; that is all?—Yes.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

24489. I think at the time this railway was promoted, in 1883 or 1884, it was on the understanding that the line would be continued in one direction to Dromod, and in the other to Boyle?—From Dromod.

24490. From Dromod to Roosky, and then possibly further on into Roscommon?—From Roosky on to Woodlawn. That was the scheme in 1883.

24491. And it was estimated that if those extensions were made that the mineral traffic in the one direction, and the cattle traffic in the Roscommon district (which I believe is very good)—the traffic resulting from those two extensions would be such as only to involve a rate of 4*d.* in the £ on the baronial areas?—Yes; it was calculated that after a few years we would practically have to pay nothing at all.

24492. I think that when the Bill came before Parliament the Dromod extension to Roosky was thrown out on some informality?—It never went before Parliament; it went before the Privy Council, and was thrown out by reason of an informality, that informality being an informality not on our part, but on the part of the other company which was promoting that line. They put in a clause in their Order in Council that the ratepayers should appoint all the directors on the Board.

24493. We need not go into that. At any rate that extension was thrown out on an informality, and the result has been that, instead of having a very good district, and being fed in both directions, the line has been practically self-contained, and has had very little opportunity of developing its traffic?—Yes.

24494. I think that the Arigna Valley is known to be rich not only in coal, but in ironstone and flags?—Yes.

24495. I do not know whether you have seen—probably you have—the pamphlet written by Rev. Mr. Digges?—Yes.

24496. I suppose the statements in that pamphlet are fairly accurate as regards figures?—Well, it purports to be a "digest" of the history of this line, but, instead of that, I think it is only a "Digges jest."

24497. I see Mr. Digges states in his pamphlet that in 1903 a Liverpool trader offered to take 20,000 tons of paving setts, and the contract fell through—or the tender fell through—owing to the lack of facilities. Would that be correct? He says that?—I have no means of saying yes or no to that. There are a great number of statements in that pamphlet that are quite incorrect. You will see that he puts in a map, and he states all through—and has given evidence to that effect before the Congested Districts Commission—that the original intention of the railway was to go up the Arigna Valley. It was no such thing. That never was the intention.

24498. The original intention, as you pointed out, was to go down to Boyle?—Yes. That is one of the original maps (*handing in the same*) that was distributed broadcast amongst the ratepayers and Grand Juries, and everywhere. You see here he states that that was the intention originally, to go up the Valley.

24499. That is a matter of detail; but in that pamphlet he speaks of considerable employment being given as far back as 1833, both in connection with the

coal and in connection with the ironworks. He goes so far as to say that in 1833 something like 5,000 men were employed there. Of course that was before your time?—I will not attempt to give you the exact figures now, offhand, because it is a good number of years since I was working in connection with this matter. At the time we started with that railway I had all the figures connected with the Arigna Mining Company at the ends of my fingers, but a number of years have elapsed since then, and I have forgotten the details. The Arigna Valley was being worked some 150 years ago.

24500. We need not go back so far; let us confine ourselves to the question I asked you. At any rate, in the year 1833 there was considerable employment given both in working coal and in working iron?—Yes; I have got the last pig of iron that was made.

24501. Of course in those days it was taken by carts to Sligo, and by Grand Canal to Dubiln. I believe the carts were rather deficient, and the waterway was not very good, and the natural result was that under those circumstances, the trade came to an end?—Well, as to that, my knowledge, gained from all the old papers and books that had been connected with the working of the Arigna district, is that what really killed that Arigna district was the want of railway communication. When the mines and furnaces in England and Scotland were developed, and connected by rail with the ports, they killed Arigna at once, because Arigna's chief market for its iron was America. It went down in boats. It was carted from Arigna Ironworks into Lough Allen, and then shipped for America. But when the furnaces of England and Scotland got connected with the ports, Arigna, not being connected with the railway, was shut up at once.

24502. That is very possible. All I wanted to point out was that if there is any truth in the statements in this pamphlet, it seems to be of the highest importance that these mineral deposits, both of coal and iron, should be worked?—Certainly.

24503. The pamphlet states that the iron ore contains a high percentage of manganese, and is especially suitable for the production of basic steel?—Yes.

24504. You have got coal and iron in conjunction, which is not often the case in Ireland, and I suppose the coal would be suitable for working up this basic steel?—Yes.

Lord Pirrie.—What percentage of manganese is there in the ore?

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—The pamphlet states that the ore contains a high percentage of manganese and 39 per cent. of phosphorus.

Lord Pirrie.—The Spanish ore contains 87 to 90 per cent.

24505-6. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is just about the same, I suppose, as the ordinary English ore?—We have got not alone the coal, but we have got limestone also there, and sand, and everything excepting railway communication.

24507. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—If the ore is admittedly of the same value as the English iron ore, and you have coal close to it, it stands to reason that it is desirable to work these minerals, and it seems to me inconceivable that the railway company should not do anything to promote the development of their district, and not only the railway company but the local authorities. I will come to that in a moment, but you mentioned that your particular traffic, owing to the want of accommodation and facilities by the railway company, has decreased, I think you said something like 70 per cent., if you take what you paid in 1903?—Yes.

24508. I see by the figures that you gave us that the receipts of the railway for the last year are only £4 8*s.* 4*d.* per mile per week as against an average of £4 12*s.* per mile per week during the previous five years—showing a decrease of four shillings per mile per week. It is not much, certainly, but I suppose if other traders in the district follow your example, the time will come when the railway will get no traffic at all?—Well, that is owing to the policy, which I think is wrong. If the Great Northern Railway had the control of this line I believe they would double the traffic in twelve months or a little more.

24509. I think before the Coal Company was started in 1888, the cost of coal to the railway company was very high—28*s.* or something like that?—That was the best Welsh coal.

24510. No, but the Arigna coal?—No, the Arigna coal was 10*s.* 6*d.*

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24511. Before the Arigna mine was opened they were using Welsh coal which cost 28*s.*; then the Coal Company started, and they were involved in difficulties for some years; it was not till after the lapse of three or four years that they began to get on their feet?—That is the usual thing, I believe, in all small businesses; their troubles come at the beginning.

24512. The result was that when they began to find coal, and to work it at a profit, they supplied the railway company with coal, and actually at the present moment they are supplying it at something like 14*s.* per ton?—They supply at 14*s.* 2*d.* per ton to the railway on rails at Arigna, and they charge full rates to Ballinamore—16*s.* 2*d.*

Alleged excessive price paid by the Cavan and Leitrim Co. for Arigna coal.

24513. What is the cost of cartage from the coal mines to the Arigna station?—I do not know exactly; 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton, I think.

24514. At any rate, the result of the cheapened cost to the railway company of the coal—their getting it at 14*s.* 2*d.* instead of 28*s.*—is manifestly to reduce the liability of the baronial taxpayers?—No; I want to explain to you that that coal at Ballinamore costs them 16*s.* 2*d.* You are not to compare that with the best Welsh coal that was bought in 1887. The reason that we then bought the best Welsh coal was that we got our engines from Stephenson and Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne. At that time we had no Arigna coal at all, and we had to subject those engines to a test, and in order to test them we got the best Welsh coal. Now the question is the saving as between Arigna coal and Scottish steam coal.

24515. What do you pay for Scottish steam coal?—You can get Scotch steam coal delivered into Ballinamore at very little, if at all, over 16*s.* 2*d.* I, as an ordinary customer, can order through Belfast Scotch coal delivered at 19*s.* a ton for 6-ton lots; and a railway company taking 2,000 tons or more, could get it at very little, if anything, over 16*s.* 2*d.* a ton. But where the ratepayers find it hard, and complain greatly, is that the Arigna Mining Company is charging 14*s.* 2*d.* on rails at Arigna for 2,000 tons supplied to their very best customer, while they are supplying other people, like the Dublin Union, the Sligo Lunatic Asylum, and other buyers, such as Boards of Guardians and so on, 11*s.* or 12*s.* a ton. What the ratepayers say is, "We guaranteed this line; we allowed you to make money out of this mining company, and we think that we ought to get the coal for the railway engines as cheap as, if not cheaper than, outsiders." But instead of that they are charging 3*s.* 2*d.* a ton more. So that instead of the ratepayers saving, as this pamphlet says, £1,000 a year in the coal bill, I say that the ratepayers are paying £320 a year more than they ought to pay.

24516. I do not quite follow. On your own showing they could not get the Scotch coal under 16*s.*?—That is so.

24517. They are only paying the Arigna Company 16*s.*?—But they are supplying outsiders at less.

24518. But is not the reason this—that if they did not supply these outside people at less they would not get them to take their coal at all. I should say that was the sole reason for that?—But we say, "If you can sell it to these outsiders at a profit at this price, you ought to supply it on the same terms to the railway company, who are your best customers."

The employment of the Manager of the line as Secretary of the Mining Co. condemned.

24519. The contention of the gentlemen you represent is that the identity of control which the Secretary of the Coal Company and the Manager of the Railway Company exercises in his dual capacity is not in the interests of the local people?—Certainly not.

24520. And you would prefer that those two appointments should be held separately?—They should be absolutely separate.

24521. You rather criticised the action of the railway company, and seemed to blame them for lack of enterprise and for not having met the local authorites in the way which you consider they should. But as against that, is it not a fact that in 1903 the railway company approached the County Council and submitted a scheme to them under which, if a capital sum of £20,000 were raised, half to be provided by a grant from the Treasury and half to be guaranteed by the baronies, this extension in the direction of the Arigna Valley could have been made; they also pointed out that while of course the baronial

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guarantee in respect of the sum which it was proposed to raise in the locality would involve a contribution of 3 per cent., or £210 per annum, but, as against that (correct me if I am wrong) that the resulting traffic from these minerals and so on would increase the earning capacity of the railway by about £1,000. In other words, that after deducting the £200 odd which the barony would be called upon to pay, it would leave a profit of £700 or £800 per annum, which would go to reduce the general liability?—Well, I am not aware of all this myself, and I do not think I can give an answer on those figures. I do not agree with the figures you have given.

The action of the Leitrim Co. Council in rejecting the Government Grant for railway extensions criticised.

24522. Is this correct? It is pointed out that at that time, while the majority of the Leitrim County Council approved of it, a certain section of the County Council, representing North Leitrim, opposed it unless the estimate were increased very largely in order to provide them with a railway extension in the north of the county?—I believe that is so, but I am not quite aware of it myself; I did not attend the County Council meetings, and I merely read it in the local papers.

Inconsistency of the Council who had previously approved of Scheme.

24523. So that at any rate, if my statement is at all correct, it shows that at that time, in 1903, the railway company were very anxious to promote this extension. Is it a fact that two years afterwards, although this scheme was rejected by the County Council, the same County Council passed a resolution in favour of extension?—I am not going to stand up for the County Council.

24524. I only want to put the railway company right. A deputation was appointed, was it not, partly composed of the County Council and partly of the railway people, to wait upon the Chief Secretary, and the result of that was that Mr. Long, who was then Chief Secretary, visited the district, and promised them a grant of £24,000, subject to two conditions. The first was that an independent report should be sent in showing whether the estimate of £24,000 was sufficient to properly complete this line—I think that was the first—and the second was that there should be some local contribution; subsequently, I believe, it was pointed out that the local contribution would not be forthcoming; and Mr. Long eventually withdrew that condition. The independent report was furnished, I think, by Mr. Barton, and it was quite satisfactory; he said that he believed the estimate would complete the line?—No; up to the point where it would suit the Arigna Company. But what the local people objected to was that it should go up to the end of the Arigna valley, which was about a mile further on, so as to enable other property to be developed if necessary.

24525. Is not the Arigna Company's pit—their present pit—situated on some high ground?—Yes; but where they proposed to make this extension was on the old original tram line made by the old Iron Company about 100 years ago.

24526. But if the tramway did not go down too far on the original proposition, would it not be the best way to run up the valley?—On that old line, certainly. But I want to impress upon you that they only laid it out up to the Arigna Company's works; whereas they could have gone on further.

24527. Probably the money would not be provided for that; and one has to cut one's coat according to one's cloth?—They went before Parliament for that scheme; I do not know what their reason was.

24528. At any rate, the County Council when the grant was made received it, I believe, with acclamations of goodwill and joy, did they not?—I believe so.

Conditions under which grant was promised discussed.

24529. But they subsequently took up a totally different attitude?—Yes; the ratepayers compelled them to do so. Owing to the rates they were paying and owing to the breaches of faith, they did not think they ought to give them any more liberty.

24530. Do you know that subsequently, after the change of Government last year, the Treasury wrote and said that they could not see their way to act upon Mr. Long's suggestion of withdrawing the condition as to the local contribution, and that they must insist upon some guarantee being given by the local authorities that in the event of any deficit in working expenses, the loss would be made good—I think that was the case when the present Government came into office—was it not?—I am not aware of it.

24531. And in consequence of that, these eight shareholder-directors signed a personal guarantee saying that they would be personally, jointly and severally, liable to make good up to £200 a year, £25 each, I believe; and all they asked was that the four Baronial Directors should also join in that guarantee. Eight of those Directors signed this guarantee, and if the other four Baronial Directors had joined in it they would have made up a sum of £350, which would surely have been enough to pay more than sufficient to guarantee and protect the ratepayers in the most ample manner?—I do not see that.

24532. Leave out this gentleman who is going to be killed, and the question of the £1,500. I think we need not go into the question of that problematical gentleman who is going to be run over; because, if you followed that out in every case, there would be no railway construction at all?—No; but there was no provision for that in any way—and there was another accident on the line where they took out a train without a staff, and very nearly killed two men on their motor-trolley—they smashed up their motor-trolley, as I was informed by one of the Directors, that it was not reported to the Board of Trade or to the Board of Directors. So that that sort of thing might possibly happen on either of these branches. And, when they are paying such a large sum in rates now, they want to protect themselves. But, as I have said, if anybody will guarantee that the ratepayers are not in any way to pay any more for those two extensions, then, I think, the ratepayers would all be very glad to have them.

24533. If these statements are correct, does it not seem to show that these shareholder directors have done everything they possibly could to protect the ratepayers from any loss?—I think you said the amount was £350.

24534. They offered to guarantee that sum for five years?—That is to say, supposing a man was killed, and £1,500 or £2,000 damages were given, the Directors would plank down £350, and the ratepayers would have to provide the balance.

24535. But, as Lord Pirrie pointed out, for £10 or £12, that contingency could be provided against, or even a much heavier liability; and, as he said, very properly, I think, it seems inconceivable that a grant of £24,000 should be absolutely thrown away for the sake of a problematical liability which may never occur, and which, if it did occur, could be so easily and cheaply provided against?—That was the County Council's business.

24536. I think that at the meeting when this grant was rejected, a number of different reasons were assigned—one man said it was taken out of the Development Grant, and that that was originally intended to be applied to educational purposes. No doubt that is perfectly true, but it seems to me to be rather a far-fetched reason?—I was not at the meeting, but I saw a report of it in the papers.

24537. Another reason assigned for the refusal was, that it would injure the local carters?—That is rubbish; I attach no importance at all to that.

24538. At any rate, the result was that the County Council threw out the grant, and meantime the extensions which are so much required in the district are left in abeyance?—I hope that if the State takes up the railways, which I hope they will, these extensions will be made.

24539. I will not follow that point any further. I should like just to ask you a question with regard to this railway, which is supposed to tap your line, this Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway which was proposed three or four years ago, with the object of connecting the Clogher Valley and the Cavan and Leitrim systems, and of promoting all these extensions you are now talking about. I think that when the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Company brought forward those proposals they did not consult the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company at all—they went straight to the Leitrim County Council and got a resolution passed in favour of those proposals; they never took the trouble to consult the other railway companies; was not that so?—I cannot speak from my own knowledge of that; but, as far as I have heard, I do not think it was quite so. I heard that this railway company, the Ulster and Connaught as it was called, had made a provisional agreement with the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Directors with

regard to its scheme; and that then they went before the County Council. I went before the County Council, and I opposed it.

24540. First of all, they passed a resolution in its favour; and subsequently they reversed their action and refused to entertain this proposal; and they in fact appointed a deputation to oppose it in Parliament. The County Council appointed a deputation of the Councillors to oppose the Bill in Parliament. What was that done for?—I cannot tell exactly what was the reason for doing that; but I think one of the reasons was that if there was a line from Newry to Keady and Tynan, and up the Clogher Valley, and then to Bawnboy road. Well, my view of that was, and I put it before the County Council at the time, that what that company wanted was, to acquire this Cavan and Leitrim Railway, to acquire the Arigna Mining Company, and to get a grant from the Government to make those two extensions. At present, taking Bawnboy-road as the point of junction, any cattle or goods can get from Bawnboy-road to Newry in four and a half hours—I think it would be four and a half hours less by the Great Northern than it would be by this line of the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway Company, *via* Clogher Valley. Further, the present cattle traffic from Roscommon and that district at present goes to Belturbet, and it goes to Belfast, and to Dundalk and to Greenore. So that if that line were made, the Newry people would in every way facilitate trade with their own port, which is a poor port—it is a tidal port with steamers running only twice a week, I think it is; and they have to go up a canal three or four miles long which has small lock-gates, so that only light, small vessels can get in; and therefore it would be an absurdity to imagine that any cattle going for cross-shipment to England or Scotland would ever go *viâ* Newry.

24541. So that, from your point of view—and I am very glad to have it from you—you think that the proposed line, if it is ever made beyond Tynan, and the connection between Maguire's-bridge and Bawnboy opened up, would be opposed to the interests of your railway?—I think it would be opposed to the interests of our railway, because it is quite possible for a railway company to block traffic. Supposing this extension was made to Roosky, there is a very good breed of cattle there, and people come from all parts to get those cattle. A dealer will come to Roosky and ask for a certain number of wagons for Belfast, and he will be told: "I am sorry I cannot give you the wagons. Why did you not tell me beforehand? I will get them for you the day after to-morrow." Then the dealer would say: "I cannot wait till the day after to-morrow. I must send them across to Scotland or England, and I will drive them over and send them by the Midland to Dublin." Our line loses that traffic altogether. Therefore, it would have been a suicidal thing. And, mind you, the Ulster and Connaught scheme did not in any way propose to reduce our liability in Leitrim. We might, and, I think, would, if that Ulster and Connaught scheme had been passed, instead of paying 1*s.* in the £, probably have been paying now double that amount.

24542. Referring to that liability, of course your maximum liability which you willingly undertook at the time of the construction, was something like £5,700 a year; is not that so—3 per cent. on £200,000 odd?—It is very hard to carry all these figures in one's head.

24543. You were liable for that amount, and you willingly undertook it; but, owing to the line ever since its opening having been worked at a profit of about £1,100 a year, your liability has been reduced to something like £4,600?—We thought when we went in that we should have nothing to pay after a time.

24544. A good many guarantors think that?—But we have found it quite the contrary.

24545. But as regards that point, I think you are much more happily circumstanced than most of the other guarantors in Ireland; the returns will show that?—I have seen some of them.

24546. Most of them not only pay their full guarantee, but pay a considerable amount of the working expenses. Now, there is another point: you spoke of a reserve fund which has just been created, I think, at the instance of the Board of Works; is not one of the great defects of all these Light Railway Acts, beginning from 1883, and coming down to the present time, the absence of any reserve fund out of which provision could be made for improvements and renewals, and so on? In other words, the whole of the capital in the first instance, has been spent on the construction of the line and upon legal and promotion expenses?—You mean that there is no provision in the Order in Council which authorises us to make the company put by a reserve fund?—There is no order to that effect at all; but I think that as ordinary business men, in going for these railways they ought to provide for a reserve fund; and that is a point which I pressed very strongly at that time.

The omission of any provision for compulsory reserve funds from the Irish Light Railway Acts regarded as a serious defect.

24547. That is a very serious defect?—Yes, it is.

24548. And it has resulted in many of these railways requiring a large expenditure to make good their rolling-stock, permanent-way, and so on, which might have been obviated if a little had been spent in time?—Yes. When a railway is made it is provided with rolling-stock and other things sufficient for the requirements of the day; but we all know that even if you make a railway to Uganda, you get extra traffic as the line develops.

24549. At any rate, the Cavan and Leitrim Company have agreed to the proposal put before them two or three years ago by the Board of Works?—It ought to have been done twenty years ago.

24550. That proposal was made to several other light railways, but only two or three, I think, have accepted the proposal; the majority have refused; and I believe the Cavan and Leitrim, the Cork and Muskerry, and the Clogher Valley have agreed to the creation of a reserve fund?—Quite right.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—I think that that rather contradicts your assertion about the want of a spirit of enterprise on the part of the railway company.

Mr. Shanahan.—The Cork and Muskerry Company have since withdrawn, I may mention, from the reserve fund arrangement, owing to the action of the Directors, who did not care to abide by it. So that the Clogher Valley and the Cavan and Leitrim are the only two companies now participating in the arrangement.

24550A. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The reserve fund is to be under the joint control of the railway and the County Council, is it not?—I do not know, but I think at any rate a reserve fund is quite a right and proper thing, and that every railway situated as we are should be compelled to have a reserve fund.

24551. And in the case of any future extension, there ought to be some such provision?—As far as any future extension is concerned, I do not think myself, knowing Ireland as I do, that you will ever get another line to be guaranteed in all Ireland by the people of any district.

Improbability of any further baronial guarantees for railway extensions in Ireland.

24552. I am sorry to hear you say that?—I do not believe you will. I believe that if there are any extensions to be made they will have to be made by the State. There is plenty of room for more lines, but the only hope for those lines being made is that the State will take over the railways. When we went for our Order in Council, previous to that the Great Northern and the Midland Great Western were approached with the object of trying to get them to make an extension. There were 1,000 square miles of country inside the existing railways unprovided for by the railways, and it was only when I started this scheme through the country—the other companies would not join it at all, and gave nothing towards the preliminary expenses, and nothing towards making the line, although we are a very big feeder—one of the best feeders of the Great Northern.

Further extensions dependent on the acquisition of the Irish lines by the State.

24553. I am not defending the policy of any of these Light Railway Acts, but surely the principle that where any local authority receives a large amount of public money, they should make some effort themselves to financially assist the enterprise, is a good one, is it not?—Yes; but you have to deal with these County Councils as you find them. I do not think, for instance, that our County Council of Leitrim—I do not want to say more than is necessary, but I do not compare them with the County Council of Down, for instance, or with the County Council of Kildare, and I do not think that we have men on our County Councils sufficiently able to grasp this point.

24554. We need not go into that question. It was only in consequence of your saying that any extensions in the future will have to be undertaken by the State, that I asked you whether you did not think it was a proper principle that in the case of any such

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extensions the local authority should be asked for a contribution. No doubt, the system on which these railways are constructed might be very much improved. Do you think that you might bring about that improvement by giving over the management and control to some Government Department?—In 1887 I said that the Government ought to have the control over all railways, the same as in India, and I think it is a very necessary thing to have that control.

Control of the Irish railways by a State Department advocated.

24555. There is only one other point. With regard to this question of weighing, of course you know that, by Act of Parliament, the railway companies are empowered to make a charge for weighing?—I am quite willing that a charge should be made.

Enforced weighing of all goods by the railway companies recommended.

24556. *Chairman.*—I think you said that 2*d.* a ton would be fair?—Yes. Here in London coal carts are bound to carry weights, and if I buy a ton of coal from a carter in the street he is bound to weigh it, and I think a railway company which charges freight for coal and other goods by weight ought to be compelled to weigh these goods for me.

24557. If you pay a reasonable sum to them for so doing?—Yes; and that is the only way you can stop pilfering.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

24558. If it was desired to continue this railway up to the mines, would there be any great difficulty in doing it?—None at all.

24559. The land is fairly level, is it?—Fairly so.

24560. Would it not be a serious matter to do it?—Oh, no, very simple.

24561. Are the mines deep mines. That is to say, have they shafts, or have they only what are called "day-holes?—When the mine was started there was a shaft of 175 feet sunk down to the coal; but now that shaft is done away with, because they work from that shaft out to the surface, and they work it by an adit.

24562. I was wondering why the coal was so dear. If it is so easily worked I do not see why the coal should be so expensive. Perhaps you could tell me another thing. Why was the Cavan and Leitrim made narrow gauge, when it joins up to the Great Northern at Belturbet, which is broad gauge, and to the Midland Great Western at Dromod, which is also broad gauge?—Well, half a loaf is better than no bread. We went into the estimates, and found that to make a broad gauge railway would cost £1,500 a mile more, and the result was that we went in for the cheaper article. We know that, as I have seen in India, where the metre gauge is nearly the same as the three feet gauge, they are able to carry everything that a broad gauge can carry; and, as a matter of fact, our three feet gauge wagons carry the same amount of cattle as the broad gauge wagons; in fact we have a little more superficial area.

The advantage of having uniformity of gauge on all connecting railways discussed

24563. You have been complaining about the cost of carriage of flour. Of course, flour or anything else that has to go to Ballinamore would naturally be transferred at Belturbet, which, of course, adds to the cost?—Very little—3*d.* a ton, or 6*d.* a wagon-load of cattle.

24564. Would you say that traffic destined for the district between Ballinamore and Killeshandra now goes, because it is all in one hand, on the Midland Great Western, and gets to Killeshandra quickly, and can be distributed more quickly than if it went by the other route on to Ballinamore?—No; from Belfast it comes, by Great Northern, to Cavan; they join there with the Midland Great Western, and then it goes by the branch to Killeshandra.

24565. It is in the hands of two companies?—Yes; it is the 2*s.* 3*d.* per ton that kills it.

24566. Do you know of your own knowledge whether it suits the Cavan and Leitrim Company better to have the traffic sent direct to them, or *via* Dundalk—which do they get most out of?—I cannot say.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

The relative cost of building narrow and broad gauge railways.

24567. With regard to what you said about the narrow gauge, if my recollection is right, the Irish Government, after the Act of 1883 was passed, let it be known that they would not subsidise anything but narrow gauge railways?—Quite so.

24568. So that your hand was forced?—Yes.

24569. It would not subsidise an independent company, except with a narrow gauge?—Yes.

24570. I gather that in those days you thought it was good policy to have a narrow gauge?—We thought it was the only chance of getting a line.

24571. As an engineer, you thought it was worth putting in the narrow gauge, because you saved money?—£1,500 a mile.

24572. You thought it was worth saving that £1,500 a mile; are you still of that opinion? If you had to make the line again, and could make it as you liked, would you make it broad or narrow gauge?—I say, without hesitation, that if I had to do it again under the same circumstances I would still make the cheaper line.

24573. You still think it is worth standing the transhipment in order to save the capital cost?—Yes. If I had to make the line again, however, and if the ratepayers were not to guarantee it, then I might go in for broad gauge.

24574. Do you commit yourself to that view of the saving of £1,500 a mile? Do you really think it would have cost £1,500 a mile extra to make the line broad gauge?—I do.

24575. To come to another matter, the whole of the capital of this line is in the shape of guaranteed shares?—Yes. There is some unguaranteed capital which has not been issued.

24576. The whole of the issued capital is guaranteed?—Yes.

24577. There is no ghost of a prospect of the shares ever earning more than 5 per cent. off the railways?—No, never.

24578. In other words, the shareholders are really mortgagees of the county rates?—Yes.

24579. Yet the management of the railway is entrusted to them, though they have no interest whatever in the result?—Yes, that is the position.

24580. I suppose you regard that as wrong in principle?—Yes.

24581. You say that you would expect—and you naturally would expect—shareholders who have no interest in the development of their property as shareholders to manage the property badly—that is your case?—Yes.

24582. And you think that in practice they have managed it badly?—They have, yes.

24583. Just one other question. You have spoken about the Arigna Mine; as I understand, what you say is this: that the people of Leitrim are thoroughly dissatisfied with that company?—Yes.

24584. They do not approve of it, and they will not have anything to do with it, even in the case of an extension, not even if they could get an extension given to them gratis?—Without having any liability, of course they would not object.

24585. They would not object if they could have it without any liability?—Without the contingent liability.

24586. I presume that if they had been in love with the company they would have chanced the liability?—I dare say.

24587. I have here a copy of the pamphlet by Mr. Digges—I presume that is the Mr. Digges who is resident on the line, and who is one of the directors?—Yes.

24588. Is he a baronial director?—No, he is a shareholder director who owns £100 in shares in the line; but I do not think he is a ratepayer.

24589. At any rate, he is a local gentleman who takes an interest in that district, no doubt. The statement he makes is quite different. This statement here is to the effect that the extension to Arigna was refused because the carters on the road terrorised the County Council?—I believe, from what I have heard, that is so. I was not present at that meeting.

24590. I expect they talked a great deal about it in the neighbourhood afterwards?—They talked a lot about it. I think myself the carter question was only humbug and rubbish. It was the ratepayers who compelled the County Council to reject the offer. Previous to that, the County Council had passed a number of resolutions and done a number of things which tied their hands; and it was very hard for them to get out of it. Then the ratepayers went to the County Councillors and said, "We will smash your head."

24591. "The ratepayers' argument was carried on with blackthorns"; that is accurate, is it?—As far as I know, yes; but I was not there.

24592. You do not doubt that blackthorns were freely flourished, do you?—I do not.

24593. But you do not think the carters had any great influence in the result?—No.

24594. Because we have had evidence in other cases of railway extensions being refused for fear of injuring the carting trade?—With regard to that, you must remember that the carters in this instance are

not County Leitrim carters, but are carters from County Roscommon; and I am perfectly certain that the County Roscommon carters would have no influence on the County Leitrim ratepayers, who are paying one shilling in the pound. Further, I know that when we made the Cavan and Leitrim Railway the opposition to a certain extent with regard to the carters came up; but the carters were not able to carry their point.

24595. Then I gather that you do not think it was the carters who had any serious influence in the rejection of the proposal?—I do not think it was.

24596. But you think it was partly a general distrust of the company and partly a vague fear of further liabilities which might be imported under the head of "working expenses"?—Yes.

24596A. I gather that you do not think Leitrim was wise in that refusal?—If I had been consulted, and if I had gone into the matter, I should have advocated (and I did advocate in anything I said to anybody privately) the extensions being made, always, however, safeguarding the ratepayers. And I think that if a clause had been put into the Bill so as to provide some guarantee, a really substantial guarantee, against further loss by the ratepayers, the scheme might have been carried. Mind you, the Arigna Mining Company did not give any guarantee.

24597. But do you suggest, as a broad principle, that it is reasonable that the people of Leitrim should say, "We are prepared to have a new railway for our great benefit, on condition that it is supplied to us ready-made without a penny risk or cost or anything of the kind to us. Somebody else is to provide and cook the dish and put it into our mouths with a spoon." Do you think that reasonable?—I think that is a strained way of looking at it.

24598. But is not that what you are suggesting?—Not at all. What I suggest is that we have already got our line, and that certain things have not been done according to the promises made to us.

24599. Do not let us go back on the past. As a question of policy, do you suggest that it is a reasonable attitude on the part of the County Leitrim ratepayers, or on the part of any other body, to say, "We want somebody else to supply us with a line ready made, with every penny of its cost paid for us, and with a guarantee that under no circumstances shall it ever cost us a penny." Do you think that is a reasonable request?—The benefit that you say would arise is so problematical that it might not arise.

24600. Be it so?—Supposing, for instance—I am not assuming that it is likely to happen, but I will give you an instance——

24601. I wish you would answer my simple question. Assuming that the line is not likely to do any good to anybody, it ought not to be made by anybody at all, ought it?—No.

24602. But suppose that people are agreed that the line will be a benefit?—To whom?

24603. To the locality?—That is Roscommon?

24604. I say "the locality." Call it "X," or anything else you like. Supposing the people of a particular locality are agreed that a line will be of benefit to them—I am not talking of Leitrim; I am putting to you a general proposition, do you think such an attitude as I have described reasonable?—It is the Leitrim ratepayers I am thinking of.

24605. Very well, let us get it as a concrete case, if we cannot get it in any other way. Do you say that a line to the Arigna Coal Mines would be of no benefit whatever to people in County Leitrim?—It might be, and it might not be.

24605A. What is your own opinion—that it would be, or that it would not be?—I really could not tell whether it would or would not. If you made a line up to the Arigna Valley, and if, instead of the 15*s.* 6*d.* a ton which is now being charged, they charged 18*s.* for the coal, then I say it would be no benefit to the Leitrim ratepayers at all.

24606. I only want to know what your view is.

24606A. *Chairman.*—I think his view is, that, as a ratepayer, he has been so punished by the 1*s.* rate and the other rates which he has had to pay, that he is not disposed to take any further liability whatever for any purpose.

24607. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is that your view?—That is the view of the ratepayers.

24607A. Then I will put the question this way—If the ratepayers are not prepared to take any risks, do you think they have any right to expect that somebody else should supply them with a railway?—What they think is that the Roscommon people would benefit by it. It is the Roscommon people who are benefited by it; they are getting this £4,000 a year in wages. The Arigna Mine is in Roscommon, and the Roscommon people have got all the benefit for the last twenty years; but they have never paid anything at all.

24608. *Chairman.*—You told us that the cartage from the coal mines would cost about 2*s.* 6*d.* a ton?—Yes.

24609. If the railway was two miles long, the actual cost of the carriage on that railway would be 2*d.* per mile?—The carriage which at present they charge is 1¾*d.* per mile.

24610. Take it at 2*d.* per mile, if you like; that would be 4*d.* for two miles?—It would be more than two miles.

24611. At any rate, the cost would be considerably less than the cost of cartage?—Oh, yes.

24612. Then, if the ratepayers in your county got the benefit of that difference in the rate, would not that be an advantage?—How do we know that we shall?

24613. I am putting an assumed case—assuming that they did get the benefit of that; what then?—I say if you assume that, and also assume that they get the coal at the same price as outsiders, then it would be a great advantage.

24614. *Mr. Acworth.*—And if there is an advantage, do you think they ought to pay any of the cost?—They have paid.

24615. If there is going to be a new—an additional—advantage, do you think they ought to pay any part of the cost of getting that new and additional advantage, or do you think that somebody else ought to pay the whole of it?—Personally, myself, I would not hesitate to give an extra contribution.

The justice of the ratepayers contributing something towards the proposed extensions.

24616. Do you think it would be reasonable for other ratepayers to do the same?—I think it would be.

24617. *Chairman.*—You mean if they had the benefit?—But we have not had the benefit, and what the ratepayers think is that they have been "salted," if I may use that expression, very considerably, and they have paid £82,000 already.

24618. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I was surprised to hear you say, in reply to Mr. Acworth, that you put the difference of cost between a light narrow gauge railway and a broad gauge railway at £1,500 a mile?—It depends entirely upon the country.

24619. But, apart from the country, surely in the one case you would have to provide a lot of rolling stock and engines?—So we had in the other case.

24620. But if you had a continuous broad gauge line—a small line joining on to a larger line—surely the rolling stock on that larger line could work the traffic on the smaller line?—I will give you my reasons. The present railways in Ireland in no case have more than enough rolling stock. I will give you an instance.

The question of gauge and the advantage of the interchange of rolling stock.

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—No, do not trouble to do that, I was only trying to get an answer to the question on general grounds.

24621. *Chairman.*—I gathered from your evidence that it was not the question of rolling stock you had in mind, but the cost of construction of the line?—The construction of the line.

24622. And your evidence, speaking as an engineer, was that to make the line broad gauge, would have cost £1,500 a mile extra?—Yes. I can give you details of how the cost worked out.

24623. No, no. Is not that what you said—that to make the line broad gauge would have cost £1,500 per mile extra?—Yes. I may tell you that in this particular county, Leitrim, you have one part of the country dead level, another part of the country is hilly. Our country has hills all over the place.

The relative cost of building narrow and broad gauge lines.

Cross-examined by Mr. CROKER BARRINGTON, Solicitor.

24624. I understand that you do not approve of the way in which the Board of this railway company get their coal; are you aware that they advertise their coal contract every year?—I am not aware of that.

24625. You made that statement without being aware of that fact. Well, I may tell you, that they take the Arigna coal because it is 2*s.* per ton cheaper than the Scotch coal?—I have asked several of the railway directors and County Council directors, and

The cost of Arigna coal to the Cavan and Leitrim Co.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. J. Ormsby Lawder, M.Inst. C.E., D.L. Representative of the Ratepayers' Protection Association, co. Leitrim.

also the County Council auditor, as to whether this Arigna coal is advertised or not. I get the local papers, but I have never seen any such advertisement in the papers, and have never been able to get any information on the subject.

24626. I think I understood from you that the receipts of this line were falling off?—No, I am not saying that the receipts are falling off.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—I have a table here showing a steady increase.

Lord Pirrie.—His answer to me was that his own payments were falling off.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—I have the table here.

Chairman.—We shall hear all about that afterwards, no doubt.

The alleged inefficient management of the line.

24627. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—Quite so, sir. (*To the Witness*).—These baronial directors are supposed to take care of the interests of the ratepayers; by whom are they elected?—By the County Council.

24268. By whom are the County Council elected?—By the people.

24629. By the ratepayers?—Yes.

24630. As far as you know, do they work harmoniously with the other directors?—I do not know anything about it.

24631. Well, the result of their working is that in 1906 they made a profit of £1,000, in relief of the rates—are you aware of that?—Yes, I am quite aware of it. But what are your gross receipts per mile per week.

24632. Only one more question. These small companies, sir, are perhaps more sensitive than the large ones. As to the price of the coal, when you were managing director of the Arigna Mining Company, what did you charge the railway for the coal? The price now is 14*s.* 6*d.*, is it not?—14*s.* 2*d.*

24633. What was it then?—When we started, and for a long time after, we charged them 10*s.* 6*d.* per ton. Afterwards we got into difficulties (the Arigna Mining Company); all sorts of troubles arose, with the miners, and with faults, and so on. Our capital was very small, and the price went up.

24634. In the year 1889, can you tell me what the price was?—I am coming to that. The price had to be raised to pay our weekly wages bill, and it went up to 17*s.* 6*d.* That was only for a short time, until we were able to get over our difficulties. Then, when I was ill in bed, the secretary of the company sent in an account for one fortnight at one time, without my knowledge to the railway company at £1 a ton, so as to meet the wages bill for the miners. The railway directors refused to pay that, but a short time after I had left, the price was raised to £1 a ton, and the railway company paid £1 a ton for some time until these difficulties were got over. As I need not tell you, with all companies, big or small, their difficulties chiefly arise when they start, but that is ten times more the case with a little company trying to start a coal mine on a capital of £3,000. It is not an easy job.

Chairman.—We have got the figures, and you tell us that this advance of price was in consequence of the difficulties of the coal mining company.

24635. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—Are there weigh-bridges at each of these towns?—Which?

The complaints as to weigh-bridges, and coal pilferages.

24636. Are there public weigh-bridges at each of these little towns?—There are.

24637. Now, as to the charges of pilfering coal. Of course we will have that matter looked into, but I think the only charge you made was investigated, and it was discovered that it was the stationmaster's own coal which was taken. You wrote that he was pilfering it?—That refers to a matter which I did not mention in my evidence at all. I saw the coal being carried away from the station. There were four wagons of English coal, and one wagon for the cottager who minded the cottage, in which I believe there were two tons, or one ton, of Arigna coal. I saw the man carrying away a few yards from the station two large lumps of coal.

24638. And you naturally supposed he was stealing it, but it turned out that he was not?—I reported it, and the answer I got was that these two large lumps had come out of the wagon of this cottage person—out of the Arigna coal—and that it was not the English coal. That was a yarn I would not believe, and I wrote back to the directors that that was a yarn that ought to be recorded in the annals of the Horse Marines. Human nature is human nature all over the world.

24639. As to the cow that got its leg broken at Dromod, I think that was five years ago?—I do not think it was; I could tell you when I get home.

24640. *Chairman.*—I think he said two years ago?—It was a few years ago. What I complain of is that, when an accident of that sort has occurred, the railway company should have taken no notice of it. They ought to have written and said to me:—"Dear Sir—We are sorry to tell you that a beast of yours which was being transhipped has met with an accident."

24641. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—But if they wrote and told you so, you would not believe them. Would you tell me where that salmon came from concerning which, when you opened the parcel, you found that a dog had eaten its tail?—Yes.

24642. Where did it come from?—Newport, County Mayo.

24643. The dog may have been a Mayo dog?—I cannot say where the dog came from. I know that when the salmon was handed over to the Midland Great Western at Newport it was perfectly right, and that when it was handed to me it was done up in this way I have described after the dog had eaten it.

24644. It was most annoying—except for the dog?—I made no claim for it, but I think civility is a very cheap thing, and I think when I took the trouble to send a man three miles to complain of it, I ought to have got a reply to say, "We are very sorry about it; we will make full inquiries, and see whether it has been done by a railway dog knocking about." Instead of that, the company took no notice at all.

24645. Only one more question. I am asked to ask you whether you are aware, as a fact (of course you are intimately acquainted with this line), that the price of maintenance at the time when you were working it, and working it most efficiently, was just as high as it is now. Are you aware of that?—No, I am not aware of that.

Sir Charles, I would like to say generally, that the gentlemen representing the Cavan and Leitrim Company are inclined to give a flat contradiction generally to most of this witness's evidence. But they will have their turn later on, and, of course, I cannot go into everything now.

Chairman.—No. We are much obliged to you, Mr. Lawder.

Mr. Robert Griffith, J.P., examined by Lord Pirrie (in the Chair).

Mr. Robert Griffith, J.P. Representative of the Lisburn Urban District Council.

24646. You are a member of the Lisburn Urban District Council?—Yes.

24647. On behalf of whom do you propose to give evidence—the Lisburn Urban District Council?—Yes.

24648. Were you appointed by the Council to give evidence on their behalf?—Yes.

24649. What trade are you particularly connected with?—I am particularly and specially connected with the poultry trade—poultry, game, and fish. I have been engaged in that trade myself for nearly thirty years.

24650. For all that time in Ireland?—No, my business is in Birmingham at the present time. I started business there twenty years ago, and the business is still being carried on. I have retired from the business myself.

24651. And you now live at Lisburn?—Yes, I am a member of the Urban District Council.

24652. Do you buy your poultry in various districts in Ireland?—As a rule we sell on commission.

24653. Do you mean to say that you get the poultry from the farmers?—Not from farmers, from dealers.

24654. You take it practically from the dealers?—Yes, we take it from any person, but as a rule from dealers.

24655. Dealers go round the country and collect the poultry and bring it to you and you sell it?—Yes, and return them the money.

Mr. Robert Griffith, J.P., Representative of the Lisburn Urban District Council.

24656. In addition to dealing at Birmingham, do you deal at other towns, or do you go even outside England?—We sell other goods besides Irish and English; we sell foreign as well.

24657. What foreign goods do you sell?—Russian, German, French, and Canadian.

24658. You import a great deal into Ireland?—No, to England, at Birmingham.

24659. Oh, you are speaking of your Birmingham firm?—Yes.

24660. Have you any information as regards the freights of the railway companies?—Yes.

24661. Just put it into your own language?—Perhaps it will be better for me to give the freight charged for foreign goods first, and then we can compare it with the freight charged for local goods.

24662. Have you got from your own personal knowledge any reason to complain of the Irish rates, as compared with foreign rates?—Yes.

24663. Do you find them higher or lower?—Considerably higher; I will give the figures.

24664. How much higher would you say? Is this your statement that they are from 20 per cent. to 50 per cent.?—Yes.

24665. You are able to show that by your figures later on, are you?—Yes, sometimes a good deal more than that is charged for Irish and English goods. What I say is from 25 to 50 per cent. of the value of the goods. Perhaps you will just listen to the figures.

24666. *Mr. Acworth.*—What goods are you talking of?—Frozen rabbits from New Zealand to London.

24667. But you say that in the case of some Irish goods put on the English market the railway rate is from 25 to 50 per cent. on the value of those goods?—Yes.

24668. What goods?—Poultry or game or rabbits—poultry in particular.

24669. Irish rabbits—you say 25 per cent. of the value?—Yes.

24670. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Poultry generally?—Yes.

24671. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Do you mean poultry, game, and fish?—Yes.

24672. *Lord Pirrie.*—Taking first from Irish towns to England, will you give one or two instances. Take, for example, Enniskillen to Birmingham?—We have three rates—a goods rate, owner's risk rate, and company's risk rate, so that if you notice on your paper you will see "O. R." That means owner's risk. The sender of the goods runs the risk of loss in sending them.

24673. The owner's risk rate from Enniskillen to Birmingham is what?—£5 1*s.* 8*d.* a ton.

24674. Company's risk?—7*s.* 7*d.* a cwt., or £7 11*s.* 8*d.* a ton.

24675. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Are the bulk of the goods sent at owner's risk or at company's risk?—As a rule at owner's risk.

24676. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are these goods train rates or passenger train rates?—I am taking passenger train rates.

24677. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—How do they go?—Greenore.

24678. *Lord Pirrie.*—There is no one particular route; it would go by Fleetwood or Heysham or Greenore; would that rate apply to all the companies?—I do not think I can answer that question; I have not inquired.

24679. But that is the rate you pay?—The direct route to send to Birmingham would be by Greenore and Holyhead. It would be sending them round if you sent them by Fleetwood, and they would not be in so early in the morning.

24680. You generally get them *via* Greenore?—Yes.

24681. Now, give us one or two other towns. Take Mullingar?—From Mullingar to Birmingham, £4 10*s.* a ton by owner's risk and £5 10*s.* a ton by company's risk. That is for dead poultry.

24682. Have you got a rate for live poultry?—Yes.

24683. What would that be from Enniskillen?—It would be £5 10*s.* a ton at owner's risk, and 6*s.* 11*d.* a cwt. company's risk.

24684. Now, take the rate from Mullingar to Birmingham for live poultry as compared with dead?—It is £5 10*s.* owner's risk, and £6 18*s.* 4*d.* a ton company's risk.

24685. Have you got the rates between the same towns back again; have you any rate from Birmingham to Enniskillen?—No, we never get any poultry from England to Ireland, except perhaps some prize fowls

24686. Have you any information as regards the rates between certain inland towns and certain Irish ports?—Yes.

24687. Will you give us one or two instances of what you actually know yourself?—From inland towns to Irish ports?

24688. Yes. Have you Enniskillen?—Goods rate, 24*s.* 8*d.*; they have no passenger rate.

24689. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Is that from Enniskillen to Dundalk?—Yes.

Rates for Poultry, etc., between inland Irish towns and ports compared with the rates from English ports to the interior.

24690. *Lord Pirrie.*—What would be the rate for live poultry?—28*s.* 2*d.* per ton.

24691. *Mr. Aspinall.*—That would be to Greenore, would it not?—To Dundalk.

24692. *Lord Pirrie.*—You have not the rate from Mullingar, have you?—No.

24693. At any rate, those compare with what we have already got. Can you give us any comparison as regards ports in England?—Yes.

24694. From Hull to Birmingham, say?—Yes, from Hull to Birmingham the owner's risk rate is 75*s.* per ton passenger train.

24695. That is against £5 in Ireland. Do you know the distance between Hull and Birmingham? £5 in Ireland would mean a through rate; this is only from Hull to Birmingham.

24696. Enniskillen to Dundalk is 24*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes.

24697. You have given us the rate from Hull to Birmingham at 75*s.*?—Yes.

24698. Have you the distance between those two places?—No.

24699. We can get it for ourselves. You gave us a comparison with inland town in Ireland; can you give us a similar comparison in England—say, from Sheffield to Birmingham?—Yes; from Sheffield to Birmingham the rate is 50*s.* a ton; from Leeds to Birmingham it is 70*s.*, and from Craven Arms to Birmingham it is 33*s.* 4*d.*

Rates from Irish ports to English towns and to Scotland.

24700. Have you any information as to the rates between certain of your Irish ports and England—say, from Belfast to Liverpool?—Yes, from Belfast to Liverpool the rate is 30*s.* per ton dead poultry, and 40*s.* per ton live.

24701. Have you ever sent them *via* Fleetwood; you would pay less, or more, or at the same rate?—We should pay more by Fleetwood.

24702. *Via* Fleetwood from Belfast would be what? 36*s.* 8*d.* for dead poultry, and 60*s.* for live.

24703. *Mr. Acworth.*—Fleetwood to Liverpool is not from an Irish port to England?—There is a Fleetwood steamer leaves Belfast.

24704. But you have on your proof, rate from Fleetwood to Liverpool?—Yes.

24705. That is not a rate from an Irish port to England?—What I mean is a Fleetwood boat from Belfast.

24706. *Lord Pirrie.*—*Via* Fleetwood?—Yes.

24707. Therefore Fleetwood does not compete with the direct service?—No. The reason of that would be the length of the railway they have to carry over.

24708. You do not send any goods by that route, I presume?—No.

24709. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Do you send anything from Belfast, *via* Fleetwood, to Liverpool?—No.

24710. *Lord Pirrie.*—The rate is prohibitive?—Yes.

24711. Have you a rate from Belfast to Scotland?—Yes. From Belfast to Glasgow it is 35*s.* a ton; that is for dead poultry. For live poultry, at owner's risk, it is 40*s.* per ton, and at company's risk 65*s.*

Rates from the Colonies compared with English and Irish rates.

24712. In order to compare them with English and Irish rates, have you any foreign rates, or any rates between any of the Colonies and this country?—Yes.

24713. Will you give us the rate, say from New Zealand?—From New Zealand it is from 30*s.* to 31*s.* a ton.

24714. That means the ordinary port in New Zealand, I suppose?—Yes, the ordinary ports.

24715. They are all alike, from port to port?—Yes.

24716. That does not include any inland charges? No. I might mention that these goods are frozen, and that they are kept in cold stores throughout the whole of the passage, and the boat companies insure the sender against loss. That is a thing that is not done between England and Ireland.

24717. Is all the poultry sent to England or Scotland from Ireland sent in cold chambers?—No.

24718. If it was you would consider it an advantage to you, would you?—Oh, no, it would be a disadvantage.

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Mr. Robert Griffith, J.P., Representative of the Lisburn Urban District Council.

24719. It would be a disadvantage to put it in a cold chamber?—Yes.

24720. Why do you put it in?—To keep it fresh.

24721. You don't find any disadvantage in the dead poultry coming over by steamer without being put in a cold chamber?—No, there is no necessity for it, because it comes over in one night.

24722. *Mr. Acworth.*—Is there any poultry from New Zealand?—Not a large quantity.

24723. This is a rabbit trade?—It is largely a rabbit trade.

24724. You said that the company from Ireland did not insure it?—The Boat Company does not insure it against loss.

Complaint that sea insurance is not covered by cross-channel through rates.

24725. But if you pay company's risk rate then it is insured, is it not?—No. When you send it at company's risk you pay a higher freight and you have less difficulty in getting your claim.

24726. If you pay company's risk rate from Enniskillen to Birmingham, that is an insurance rate, is it not?—No, it is not an insurance rate.

24727. *Lord Pirrie.*—If it is an ordinary rate-book rate it does not insure against the ship going down? No.

Representative of the Railway Companies.—If it is damaged on the rail the company pays.

24728. *Mr. Acworth.*—Suppose it goes in a North-Western Railway steamer, can the North-Western Railway Company exclude insurance on the steamer?

Representative of the Railway Companies.—No.

24729. *Mr. Acworth.*—If it is a railway steamer it is an insurance rate right through?

Representative of the Railway Companies.—Yes.

24730. *Mr. Acworth.*—On both steamer and rail?

Representative of the Railway Companies.—Yes.

24731. *Lord Pirrie.*—From Belfast to Liverpool and from Belfast to Glasgow it does not include the insurance?

Representative of the Railway Companies.—No.

24732. *Mr. Acworth.*—We are simply concerned with railway business?—I say it entails more cost to the steamer to have cold storage than if they had none, consequently they have less for the carrying of the goods.

24733. *Lord Pirrie.*—You want to show that in carrying from New Zealand the carriers have to incur the cost of the refrigerating machinery for keeping the cold chamber down to a low temperature, whereas in an ordinary cross-Channel steamer they have none of that expense, and yet they charge you more?—Three times as much.

24734. For carrying the goods five or six hours as against forty or fifty days?—That is it.

The rate for poultry &c., from Greenore to Holyhead, and from Hamburg to Birmingham *via* Hull and *via* Harwich.

24735. *Mr. Aspinall.*—With regard to this rate, which you put down in your proof, of 36*s.* 8*d.* from Greenore to Holyhead for dead poultry, that cannot be right?—Yes, it is.

24736. From Greenore *via* Holyhead to Liverpool you must mean, do you not?—No, from Greenore to Holyhead; for the water passage only.

24737. You mean that the rate from Greenore to Holyhead is the same as the rate from Belfast, *via* Fleetwood, to Liverpool?—Exactly the same.

24738. You are sure of that?—Yes.

24739. *Mr. Acworth.*—Have you ever sent any from Greenore to Holyhead?—Yes, tons.

24740. To Holyhead?—Yes, every day in the week.

24741. But to Holyhead, not intending it to go farther?—No; we never send to Holyhead simply. I was asked to get the carriage from port to port, so that the rate on the water might be tested.

24742. Do you think anybody ever sends fowls from Greenore to Holyhead not intending them to go any further?—Possibly.

24743. But it would not be a large trade?—No, it would not be a large trade.

24744. *Lord Pirrie.*—You have spoken of New Zealand; is it the same rate for Australia?—It would be about the same.

24745. Have you any idea what the rate would be from Germany?—Yes, from Germany *viâ* Hull it is 60*s.* per ton for dead poultry.

24746. Is that from the seaport of Germany?—Yes, *viâ* Hull up to Birmingham.

24747. You mean from Hamburg or something of that kind?—Yes, Hamburg, *viâ* Harwich, the rate would be 50*s.* to Birmingham.

24748. *Mr. Aspinall.*—You say in your proof from 50*s.* to 60*s.* per ton. What does that mean?—One goes *viâ* Harwich, and the other *viâ* Hull.

24749. But it does not say so?—No, but I said it in evidence. Supposing an Englishman was sending a package from Hull up to Birmingham, he would be charged a few shillings more than if taking it from Hamburg. The Englishmen suffers in that respect.

24750. *Lord Pirrie.*—In regard to these figures, you know that that is the fact?—Yes.

24751. Have you a document giving them?—Yes. (*Document handed in.*)

24752. From that statement it certainly seems that the Colonies are doing their utmost to supply us with dead rabbits, and Ireland is being very severely handicapped by a rate of £5 a ton from Enniskillen to Birmingham, while from New Zealand to London the rate is only 30*s.* or 31*s.*?—Yes.

24753. I suppose you assume from that that is why we are getting such enormous quantities of food from New Zealand and Australia?—Yes.

24754. To the injury of Ireland?—Yes, and to the injury of England as well.

24755. But we are not dealing with England—we are dealing only with Irish questions. That is what you really mean to convey by the figures you give?—Yes.

24756. Your figures as regards the inland rates in Ireland from town to town are more than the rates in England?—No, that is not my contention. When you are taking it out from port to port you find that the English people are suffering quite as much as the Irish. It is not an English and Irish grievance; it is a British and foreign grievance.

24757. I thought so; I only wanted to get it on the minutes that that was your opinion. Your opinion is that this vitally affects the welfare and prosperity of Ireland?—Yes.

24758. Have you any view as to how all this difficulty about the Irish railways should be got over?—It is hard to answer that question.

24759. Do you believe in the State acquiring the railways or in the management remaining as it exists to-day?—I do not believe in the management as it exists to-day, for this reason. If a railway company has a monopoly, they can exercise their powers, and we have no redress. I could give one or two cases that might interest you. Supposing there is no other means of sending your goods than by a railway company at a certain point, you must pay the rates they charge. If you have some other means of conveyance, then they will attend to your grievance and redress it.

24760. Would State ownership really get over that?—I believe it would, because the duty of the State would be to regard the welfare of the country in the first place, and not so much what they could put into their own pockets. I have nothing to say about railway companies as far as depriving them of any of their rights; it would not be fair of me; but I say that the nation, having got hold of the railways, ought to be able to develop the country better than a private company, who would run the railway for the express purpose of getting profits. In many instances the strong have to pay for the weak, especially in connection with farm produce, which is a necessity for the upkeep of the country, and particularly of Ireland. I think it would be well to encourage the farmer to raise goods and bring them into the market as cheaply as the foreigner; we do not want any preference.

24761-2. You think the difficulty would be got over by the State owning the railways?—I think it would.

24763. If you had that, would you put the railways under any particular management; have you thought over that; have you any view of your own?—British railways, in the hands of the British nation, worked by the British.

24764. By a Minister responsible to Parliament?—Yes.

24765. In fact, you rather base your view on the good management of the Post Office?—Yes.

24766. You do not see why the railways should not be managed as well as the Post Office?—I do not see why it should not be. I think you have had evidence with regard to Australia. That seems to make a stronger impression upon my mind, that we ought to be as intelligent as the Australians, and to be able to work the railways as cheaply and as well as they can.

24767. Practically, you admit that we do gain a great deal by the frozen meat coming from our Colonies at these low rates; that has helped industries by giving cheap food to the people?—It is something cheaper, but it is not as good.

24768. Still, it is cheaper, and therefore people do get the benefit of it?—They do get it more cheaply, but it injures the British supply. For instance, the majority of the poultry sold by our firm in Birmingham at present for six months of the year is foreign. We have been selling foreign goods now for the last six months. Ten years ago we were not selling any foreign stuff.

24769. Because you can buy it cheaply from abroad, and the public buy it?—Yes. And Ireland is producing less because of the high freights and charges.

24770. You spoke about the railways becoming State purchased railways. Have you any view as to what the Government should pay for the railways? Do you want the shareholders to get exactly what the railways are worth, or something over and above what they are worth?—I would not confine it to what they are worth; I think the shareholders should have fair play.

24771. I think you rather deprecate the Government giving anything like an enhanced value for them?—I should deprecate that.

24772. If you were selling one of your stores by compulsory sale, would you not expect to get something more than if you sold it to a neighbour who was taking it off your hands for a convenience?—I would.

24773. Then would you expect a shareholder who is bound to sell to ask something more than the actual worth?—I do not think I should, and the reason would be this. As a rule a shareholder in connection with the railway company is not dependent on his shares for his revenue—not so much as a trader is dependent upon his trade. As a rule, it is surplus money invested.

Lord Pirrie.—They should buy their shares as low as possible.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

24774. You mentioned Australia. A gentleman who managed one of the Australian railways for a good many years, gave evidence before us a week or two ago, and he told us that the rates in that Colony were higher than the rates in Ireland, and that the service was worse. That is not what you want to get in Ireland, I suppose?—No, but we have double as many people as they have, and we should have lower rates and a better service.

24775. What is it you think is better in Australia than in Ireland? The rates are higher—that is not what you want?—No.

24776. The service is inferior—that is not what you want?—No.

24777. If they do not pay interest on the money that it has cost them, that is not what you want; you do not want to pay taxation in addition, do you?—What do you mean by paying taxation in addition?

24778. You do not want the British taxpayer taxed any more. The Australian Government have borrowed, say, £20,000,000 to build the railways, and they have got to pay the people who lent them that money, say, £800,000 a year for it. If the net earnings of the railway are only £600,000, the taxpayers have got to make up the other £200,000, besides paying the railway rates. You do not want that?—No.

24779. Then what is it you want which you think you would get from the Australian system?—I cannot point out particularly what we would get, because I have not gone into it sufficiently. I do not think I could answer that question.

24780. As you have not gone into it I will not press you on the point?—I should like to hand you one or two sales tickets for you to look at, to see how much the railway company gets, and how much the salesman gets. (*Documents handed to Mr. Acworth*).

24781. Here is one for 25 couples of rabbits. This is the salesman's ticket; have you any railway notes?—I could give you the receipts.

24782. I will tell you why I ask. We had a gentleman here yesterday who gave us a number of salesman's notes for fish, and when we came to look into them we found that what he had called carriage meant not only what the railway had got, but the toll for getting into the market and the payment to the market porters, and so on; it was not really railway charges at all?—You will find the commission and the carriage there.

24783. The commission no doubt is right. That is what the salesman gets for selling them?—Yes.

24784. Then, as to this carriage, probably the salesman pays a market toll?—No, that is exactly the carriage.

24785. Where is the toll charge?—There is no toll.

24786. There must be a market toll?—No cartage is charged.

24787. There must be a toll for using the Corporation market?—No; we have a market stall. We are not outside; we are in the market, and we pay no toll in the City of Birmingham. The percentage of the carriage to the cost price of poultry, &c.

24788. Surely you must pay a toll?—We pay our rent, but we pay no toll.

24789. *Lord Pirrie.*—You pay so much a year?—Yes, or so much a week.

24790. *Mr. Acworth.*—These are charges made by your firm in Birmingham?—You will see the railway carriage there. The 1*s.* 10*d.* is our commission, the next item is the carriage.

24791. These are returns?—Yes, and they show the carriage paid.

24792. Can you give me any railway notes on which this charge of 5*s.*, or whatever it is, is based?—I could supply them.

24793. You have not got them with you?—No.

24794. I am sorry for that?—I can substantiate every one of them.

24795. You say in your proof that the carriage is actually from 25 to 50 per cent. of the cost price. I cannot find anything like 50 per cent. here?—Look at the first bill you have in your hand.

24796. Yes. It is 37*s.* 6*d.*, and the carriage is 7*s.* 3*d.*?—How much does the salesman get?

24797. The cost price is £1 17*s.* 6*d.*?—What is the note?

24798. Your commission comes out?—Yes, and what does the railway company get?

24799. Take it another way. What is a chicken worth per pound?—About 9*d.* or 10*d.*, for best quality, other qualities 3*d.* to 6*d.* per lb.

24800. Call it 9*d.* a pound; that is 84*s.* a cwt. In your list, on page 2 of your proof, the highest price I can find from Irish towns to England is 7*s.* 7*d.* per cwt., from Enniskillen to Birmingham, at company's risk?—Yes. Particulars of sales, and freight charges.

24801. You have told me that poultry was worth 84*s.*, and the highest rate I can find for carriage is 7*s.* 7*d.*; that is about 9 per cent., not 25 to 50 per cent?—Excuse me, you are working it out wrong.

24802. No?—You have a note there of 25 couples of rabbits.

24803. But I do not want to take couples of rabbits. I am taking your own case. You say that 84*s.* is the value of a cwt. of poultry?—Yes.

24804. The highest rate you give for the carriage of poultry from Irish towns to England is 7*s.* 7*d.* per cwt.?—This poultry would be of the best quality.

24805. But that represents less than 10 per cent.?—Yes.

24806. Very well, now take rabbits. What are they worth a pound?—Oh, they are sold by the couple.

24807. What does a rabbit weigh—about 1¼ lbs.?—Some of them would go 2 lbs.

24808. Say 2½ lbs. for a couple. What would they be worth?—About 1*s.* 3*d.* or 1*s.*

24809. You have 1*s.* 6*d.* here. Take it at 1*s.* 6*d.*?—That would be a very good price.

24810. That is the price here on this ticket. If you take it at 1*s.* 3*d.*, that will be 6*d.* a pound; 6*d.* a pound is 56*s.* a cwt. The highest price here, if you send them at company's risk, is 7*s.* 7*d*?—You take 1*s.* 6*d.* for two rabbits, but if you take the carriage and the commission off you would not get that price.

24811. You told me the rabbits were worth 1*s.* 3*d.* a couple?—You must take the carriage and commission off. That is what they are worth in the market, but you cannot get them to England for nothing.

24812. The value is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and off that you have to take the carriage and commission and all expenses. I cannot see how you make it 50 per cent. Another thing that these returns seem to show is that Irish rates are very low as compared with English rates. Has that struck you?—Yes, English rates are a little higher. English poultry rates alleged to be higher than Irish.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. Robert Griffith, J.P. Representative of the Lisburn Urban District Council.

24813 Take as an instance the Enniskillen case. From Enniskillen to Dundalk is 56 miles, and the rate by goods train for dead poultry is 24*s.* 8*d.*, and for live poultry, 28*s.* 2*d.* On the next page I have taken the nearest distance I can find, and that is Craven Arms to Birmingham. The distance is 61½ miles, but the rate, instead of being 24*s.* 8*d.* is 33*s.* 4*d.* for dead poultry, and for live poultry, instead of being 28*s.* 2*d.* it is 40*s.* The distance is nearly the same?—Those are all passenger rates.

Comparison of English and Irish poultry rates.

24814. Live poultry cannot go by goods train in Ireland?—They are very seldom able to meet goods trains, because they run early.

24815. The 28*s.* live rate must be a passenger rate in Ireland?—Some of them are passenger and some of them are goods.

24816. *Mr. Aspinall.*—You do not distinguish them?—This would be for live poultry.

24817. *Mr. Acworth.*—Enniskillen to Dundalk is 56 miles, and the rate by passenger train is 28*s.* 2*d.* for live poultry. From Craven Arms to Birmingham is 61½ miles, which is very much the same distance, and the rate by passenger train is 40*s.* That is 40*s.* in England as against 28*s.* 2*d.* in Ireland. Did it ever strike you how good the Irish railways were until you compared them with the English?—Our grievance is not with the English rates; it is with the foreign rates.

Lord Pirrie.—The witness said that in answer to a question of mine.

Comparison of Colonial and Continental rates for poultry.

24818. *Mr. Acworth.*—Now compare the foreign rates. I suppose the New Zealand rabbits at 30*s.* a ton—the rate per ton is for a measurement ton?—Yes.

24819. How many measurement tons of rabbits would it take to make a ton?—I could give you the receipts.

24820. But can you tell me the weight?—It is 20*s.* per ton of 40 cubic feet.

24821. Oh, so 30*s.* a ton is for actual weight?—Yes. It is 20*s.* per ton of 40 cubic feet. I have worked it out in order to make the comparison.

24822. Why is the rate from Hamburg twice the rate from New Zealand?—I could not say, unless it is because of the very high charge from Hull to Birmingham, or from Harwich to Birmingham.

24823. *Mr. Aspinall.*—Do the perishable goods from Hamburg come from Hamburg itself; they come from inland surely?—They do, but they are booked only from Hamburg.

24824. *Mr. Acworth.*—Can you give me the rate from Hamburg to Hull direct, or from Hamburg to Newcastle?—No; I have not got that.

24825. What I want to get at is this. It looks to me as if the difference between frozen stuff from New Zealand and stuff that is not frozen from the Continent is a very great difference?—It makes no difference in the weight.

24826. It makes a difference in the difficulty of carriage, does it not; this New Zealand stuff is packed very close?—Yes.

24827. And the other has to be packed carefully?—It does not matter how close you pack it if it is dead.

Seasons for the large supplies of English, Irish, and Continental poultry

24828. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do you have much traffic from Germany?—In the winter.

24829. *Mr. Acworth.*—It is only in the summer, is it not?—Winter and summer.

24830. But you spoke of selling foreign stuff for six months?—Because it comes in the winter time. We have a good supply in the summer, as a rule, from July to Christmas.

24831. A good supply of what?—Of English.

24832. English and foreign?—English and Irish. We have foreign for the spring, especially from February on to June.

24833. Is there any Irish poultry available for sale in February?—Yes, but not enough for the demand.

24834. So that the foreign comes in when the home produce cannot fill the market?—Yes.

24835. These rates from Hamburg are for goods in casks or crates?—In casks or crates—yes.

24836. What about the stuff from Ireland—that is not frozen?—No. But dead poultry is packed in crates or baskets. Sometimes the railway companies supply the baskets, and these figures which I have given would have 10*s.* a ton added for the use of the baskets for carrying the goods if you did not supply your own.

24837. What is the ordinary size of a consignment; here is one, a box, of 108 lbs. and another of 68 lbs.; another is thirty geese. I suppose it would be 100 lbs. or something of that kind. Is that the sort of consignment you get?—Yes. The reason I had these small packages picked out was to show that the carriage on the small package is far too large.

24838. I quite agree?—And that the sender cannot afford to send, because the carriage will be about 20 or 25 per cent.

24839. That raises a question which I wanted to ask you. Would you agree that it is much more expensive to carry twenty separate boxes than to carry twenty boxes in one consignment? If you did twenty jobs and sold twenty couples of fowls separately it would give you more trouble in invoicing and everything else than if you sold the twenty couples all at once?—Yes.

24840. Do you not think the Irish people might do more than they do to send bigger consignments and so get cheaper rates?—No; they will not be able to send any more, but a great deal less, if you continue to have the rates as they are now. That is an evident fact; I have had practical experience. Poultry cannot be caught the same as fish. It has all to be fed and looked after properly, and there is no person can raise it and get 25 per cent. out of it. Women or children can feed it; it is not a very slavish job, and if they can get 5 per cent. out of it they are satisfied. But if the railway company take 20 or 25 per cent., and the producer can only lose 5 or 10 per cent., the poultry cannot be raised, as the people will not feed it.

24841. Is the feeding of poultry going off in Ireland?—It is.

24842. Surely Ireland is sending very many more eggs than before?—A great many more eggs.

24843. And they must have poultry to lay them; they cannot make them?—There is not the same quantity of Irish poultry on the market.

24844. Is that so?—Yes.

24845. But eggs, at any rate, are very much increasing?—I do not know that they are.

Mr. Aspinall.—The agricultural returns show that they are.

Lord Pirrie.—Eggs, not poultry.

24846. *Mr. Acworth.*—Was your attention ever called to the fact that the Board of Agriculture appointed a committee a year or two ago because the English farmers said the foreigner got an unfair advantage?—Probably it was, but I do not recollect.

24847. Do you know what happened—that the committee sat for a year or two, and they took a great deal of evidence, and that after they had got all the evidence they could, they reported that they did not find that the foreigner was treated any better than the English farmer?—I think the figures I have given are conclusive. 30*s.* a ton as against £7 a ton—it cannot be said there is no difference between those.

24848. Do you really suggest that carrying tons of frozen rabbits is the same sort of thing as carrying separate baskets of fresh fowls?—No, I do not; but we get a good deal of poultry from France, and you charge the French people for bringing goods *via* Hull to Birmingham 2*s.* 4*d.* per cwt., while you charge the Englishman 3*s.* 6*d.* from Hull to Birmingham.

24849. From where to where?—From Hull to Birmingham. You are bringing the Frenchman's goods *via* Hull to Birmingham, and you charge him 2*s.* 4*d.* from Paris; but if an Englishman is bringing goods from Hull you charge him 3*s.* 6*d.*

24850. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Are the conditions and the quantities the same?—The quantities are very small from France.

24851. *Mr. Acworth.*—Could you tell us anything of what the German or the French railways charge for carrying poultry to the ports?—No; I do not know.

24852. You spoke about the postal telegraphs and about the reduction of rates. Do you know that the Post Office complain every year that the rates are being cut so low that they have to carry on their business at a loss?—Yes; but it is worth it. We reap a great advantage from it.

24853. Would you like to see the rates on the Irish railways reduced and the balance made up by taxation if necessary?—I think I would, and for this reason. It would be better to have fresh food on the market and on the table in preference to frozen. There is a great deal of talk now about the health of the community. I think there is nothing better

calculated to make a man strong and healthy than good food, and I hold that frosted soup is not half as good as fresh-meat soup, and it would be much better to encourage your own country in the production of the stuff; because people are prepared to give more for English chickens.

24854. Do you think your fellow-countrymen would be willing to pay extra taxation in order to get lower rates on the railways?—I think my countrymen would like to pay no rates at all if they could avoid it. But I would be prepared, speaking for myself, to pay more rates for food rather than for information. If the country and the nation can afford to lose a lot of money in giving us information which perhaps we might very well do without.

24855. Do you mean education?—Postal telegraphs and technical instruction and other things. I think it would be much better to look after the health of the people.

24856. If you had to pay for the carriage of the poultry, you would rather pay for it in taxation than in the rate paid for the poultry itself?—Well, I think it would not be very popular.

24856A. That was what I was inclined to think.

Examined by Mr. ASPINALL.

24857. In connection with the quantities of fowls exported, taking Belfast alone, in the returns which are made by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, it gives the export of fowls as 2,451 tons in 1905 and 2,737 in 1906. With regard to the export of eggs from Belfast, it gives 12,925 tons in 1905 and 13,526 in 1906. So you see there is a considerable increase in that port alone?—I will tell you why. They take them down from Portadown to Belfast, and they used to send them by Greenore and Dundalk. Take out Greenore and Dundalk and Newry, and see whether they have increased.

24858. We have had some other evidence earlier in Dublin, and the figures which were got out by the Agricultural Department, if my recollection is correct, showed a considerable increase from all Irish ports when the figures were put in an aggregate form. I think there must be some mistake in your figures?—There may be some mistake, but we have so many routes from Belfast that you have more goods sent *viâ* Belfast in later years than before. Especially have the Heysham people been canvassing a great deal.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

24859. There is one instance which may have escaped Mr. Acworth. There is a consignment of eighty goslings of the value of £8, and the carriage is £2 4*s*. 11*d*. That is carriage without commission or anything else.

24859A. *Mr. Acworth.*—But Mr. Griffith said from 25 to 50 per cent.

Witness.—It is 50 per cent., if you take it from Tuam. The carriage from Tuam to the city of Birmingham would be 149*s*. a ton.

24860. This is an invoice for eighty very small goslings at 2*s*. each?—Yes.

24861. Is not the comment on that, that it was not business to send these very small goslings?—That was the market value.

24862. But was it not their business to keep them at home?—If a man wants the money he cannot dictate terms.

24863. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The actual cost of transit was 28 per cent. of the value of the consignment, which is rather a tall order. Did I understand you to say that the actual value of the volume of trade in poultry and rabbits has decreased in the last ten years from Ireland?—As far as we are concerned in Birmingham, it has decreased considerably.

24864. But I suppose that is due not so much to the increase of rates (because probably rates have decreased between Ireland and England) as to the great increase of traffic from the Continent?—It is in the carriage.

24865. Is it not a fact that where you send in cwts. the foreigner sends in tons and boatloads?—Yes.

24866. Naturally that must determine the rate which he is charged for conveyance. Until you can approach some of the conditions under which he sends his consignments, how can you possibly expect the railway companies to give you those low rates which he gets?—You can never do that; there is no possibility. Until you have a country the same as America you will never be able to compete with America.

24867. Then how do you propose to remedy it?—You admit that the railway company cannot give you the rate which you desire, and the lack of which naturally handicaps your industry?—I think I would propose a subsidy to the railway company.

No appreciable reduction in rates considered possible without a subsidy to the companies.

24868. Who is to give that subsidy?—I suppose it would be the ratepayers.

24869. Do you think it would be a good policy for the State to give it, and let the burden fall on the general taxpayer in the interest of your industry and other industries?—Yes, in comparison with other things. They can spend a lot of money on South Africa and other places which are further away from home. It is a necessity for the good of the country, and Ireland has a claim.

24870. You admit that the difference in carriage on foreigners' consignments as compared with your own is so marked in the figures you have given us that it would require a reduction of the rates to one-third or one-fourth of what they are at present?—Yes.

24871. And that would involve a very heavy loss upon somebody which you can hardly expect the Railway Company to bear?—I have given the figures, and I suppose you are better able to consider the matter. But that is the difficulty we are contending with in Ireland.

Complaint as to excessive through rates from inland Irish towns to English compared with the sum of the local rates.

24872. You said that the rate for dead poultry from Enniskillen to Dundalk, a distance of 56 miles, was 24*s*. 8*d*. by goods train. I do not think that can be by goods train, because that would work out to actually more than the maximum rates which the company are entitled to charge. That is carriage under class 4, and if you deduct the maximum terminal charges it leaves the conveyance rate at £1 4*s*. 8*d*., less 6*s*. 4*d*. That is 18*s*. 4*d*. I think that must be a mistake?—Possibly it is. One thing I would like to point out is that we have a grievance in this way. Suppose you are sending a package of goods from an inland town in Ireland through to an English city. You can get it more cheaply by booking it locally to Belfast, and then having it rebooked. The reason is, I suppose, that there is a monopoly in the country, but there is no monopoly in Belfast.

24873. *Mr. Aspinall.*—What class of goods is that for?—Poultry. Here is an instance. The weight is 2 cwt. 1 qr. 12 lbs., and the carriage is 14*s*. 11*d*. If that was booked locally to Lisburn or Belfast, you could have it for sixpence a cwt., and have it rebooked from Belfast for £3 1*s*. 8*d*. a ton, and the charges for booking it through is 4*s*. 8*d*. a cwt.

Lord Pirrie.—We find a great many instances of the same sort of thing in Ireland.

The Secretary.—I have to inform the Commission that Mr. Barbour, who also was to represent the Lisburn Urban District Council and give evidence in connection with the linen industry, has been unavoidably prevented from attending the sittings in London, but he will probably attend at some later date to be arranged.

Mr. JAMES M'DONNELL examined by Lord PIRRIE (in the Chair).

24874. Whom do you represent?—I represent the Galway County Council, and the Tuam District Council, and the Tuam Town Commissioners.

24875. What particular industry do you represent?—The industries are very varied; I might say.

24876. I suppose we might say general merchandise?—Yes.

24877. Are you in the provision trade as well?—I am.

24878. What districts are you proposing to give evidence about?—Tuam and Galway—Tuam practically.

24879. Therefore, your evidence will be in connection with that district?—Yes.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. James M'Donnell, Representative of the Galway County Council and Tuam Town Commissioners.

24880. Have you any complaint to make—I suppose you would not be here if you had not?—I was asked to come, and, of course, I complied.

24881. By whom were you asked—by these two Councils?—Yes. First, I think an early passenger train should be given to connect with the Midland Company's 6.15 a.m. train from Galway to Athenry.

Improved passenger train service and better facilities generally required.

24882. What advantage would that be to the district?—It would enable passengers to catch the cross-Channel steamers, and also allow business people to get to Dublin and return the same day. That is, a passenger could leave Tuam at 6 o'clock in the morning, and if he wanted to go to England he could catch the North Wall boat, while if he only wanted to go to Dublin he could get back the same night, reaching Tuam at 9.15.

24883. Have you anything to say as regards excursions?—We think that monthly excursion tickets should be granted, say, on the first Monday of every month, at single fare for the return journey, available for three days, to Dublin, the same as are granted by the Midland Company *via* Athenry. We think also that sea bathing tickets available for one month should be granted at single fares to Galway.

24884. Have you no excursion tickets?—No. The difficulty is that there are two railway companies coming into Tuam. Athenry is barely 20 English miles from Tuam, and what we want the Southern and Western people to do is to fall in with the Midland Company, and when they are giving these excursions to allow us to have these terms from Tuam on that day. We think that is a reasonable thing to ask.

Ineffective representations to railway company.

24885. Have you asked the railway people to do it?—We have. As Chairman of the Town Commissioners I have sent up special resolutions to the Southern and Western Railway Company, and got the stereotyped reply that the letter was receiving attention.

24886. Are you Chairman of the Tuam Town Commissioners?—I am Chairman both of the District Council and of the Tuam Town Commissioners.

24887. You say that the railway company have not complied with your request?—They have not complied with it. We want them simply to allow us to use these tickets on that day.

24888. Have they given any reasons for refusing?—None that I am aware of; I have had no answer. We also say that Galway is a sea-bathing city, and as a great number of our people go to the seaside we say that the Southern ought to give us the same conditions that the Midland give, and let us have sea-bathing tickets.

Complaint as to inferior passenger rolling stock on the Tuam section.

24889. Have you anything to complain of in regard to delays on the line?—I have not come to that yet. Another thing we complain of is that the old carriages of the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company are such that I do not think you would put donkeys into them; they use the best of the rolling stock for their own portion of the line, and for the other portion down from Ennis to Tuam, and on to Sligo, they send all the old rolling stock.

24890. Is it not natural that a railway company should keep the best carriages for the portion where there is the greatest amount of traffic—say, out of Dublin?—I grant that; I am not objecting to that; but I do not think there is any reason why the best part of their line—the part that is paying them best is the line from Ennis to Tuam—should be treated in this way. Why should we not be served in the same way as other people?

Excessive passenger fares—Tuam and Galway.

24891. That is your complaint about the carriages; it is only that they keep the older carriages on your part of the line?—Yes. Then with regard to fares, a first-class return ticket, Tuam to Galway, at present costs 8*s*. 10*d*. We are now in the twentieth century, and it is an extraordinary thing that you can hire a horse-car that will take a couple of passengers at a cost of 10*s*.

24892. That is 1*s*. 2*d*. more?—But you have to double the 8*s*. 10*d*., which makes 17*s*. 8*d*. against 10*s*.

24893. But you say a return ticket costs 8*s*. 10*d*.?—But a car will carry two passengers at a cost of 10*s*., while a carriage to carry four can be obtained at a cost of 20*s*. By taking a post-car costing 10*s*. you save 7*s*. 8*d*.

24894. Even in the bad carriages on a damp, stormy, cold day would you not be more comfortable than on a car?—Personally the weather would not have any effect on me. It is an extraordinary thing that the railway company should be charging double the fare to get over the same journey. Then there is another instance. A first-class return ticket from Tuam to Dublin by the limited mail costs 44*s*., while you can book from Dublin to Bradford, in Yorkshire, *via* Holyhead, for 61*s*. From Holyhead alone to Bradford the distance is double that from Tuam to Dublin.

24895. Therefore, you think that they should increase the English rate?—No; I think they should reduce the Irish rate. You can do what you like with the English rates so long as you do what we want with regard to the Irish.

24896. You want your rate reduced?—I do.

24897. Have you any experience of the cost of goods?—I have given a tabulated list in my proof.

24898. Take one case, say from Dublin to Tuam?—Yes.

24899. What are the figures?—It is a most extraordinary thing—you would hardly credit it—but the freight on bacon from Dublin to Tuam is 25*s*. 2*d*. a ton, but the freight, *via* Westport to Ballyglunin, six miles on the Athenry side of Tuam, is 15*s*. 10*d*., while the rate from Dublin to Tuam is 25*s*. 2*d*.

24900. The Ballyglunin rate is *via* Westport?—Yes; but in order to get to Ballyglunin you have to go through Tuam, and the Tuam rate, *via* Westport, is 17*s*. 11*d*.

24901. Westport is a seaport?—Yes.

24902. Is not that rate to compete with the steamboat?—No. To get to Ballyglunin you have to go through Tuam, and the rate they charge to Tuam is 17*s*. 11*d*. over the same system, but to take the bacon on to Ballyglunin, which is six miles further on, they charge 15*s*. 10*d*.

24903. The 25*s*. 2*d*. per ton from Dublin to Tuam does not affect you?—From Dublin it would.

24904. You are speaking of buying bacon in Liverpool?—No; I am comparing the through rates from Liverpool to Tuam, and from Dublin to Tuam. If we had a bacon industry in Dublin, would it not be an extraordinary thing to pay 10*s*. a ton more for bacon from Dublin than from Liverpool.

24905. Am I right that the rates that you have to pay to the railway company from Dublin to Tuam is 25*s*. 2*d*., but that if that bacon comes from Liverpool to Tuam *via* Dublin you pay 20*s*. only, which is 5*s*. 2*d*. less, and yet it is brought all the way from Liverpool?—Yes.

24906. But if you bring it round by Westport, it is 17*s*. 11*d*., and you can get a cheaper rate by sending it to Westport?—Yes; that is right. It seems peculiar, to say the least.

24907. Take the instance of sugar; you have given us bacon?—I have given sugar, too, in that table.

24908. Is it the same?—From Glasgow to Tuam, *via* Dublin, Sligo, Ballina, or Westport, it is 25*s*. From Glasgow to Ballyglunin, *via* Dublin, Sligo, or Westport, it is 20*s*. The same point comes in here. From Glasgow to Castlegrove, *via* Sligo, Dublin, Ballina, or Westport, it is 22*s*. 6*d*.

24909. I want to get another example. Have you got the drapery rate, say, from Manchester to Tuam?—Yes; from Manchester to Tuam it is 50*s*.; from Dublin to Tuam it is 32*s*. You might think that a fair rate to charge, but if the 50*s*. rate from Manchester to Tuam is fair, the charge of 32*s*. from Dublin to Tuam is too high.

24910. You mean it is only 18*s*. to get it all the way from Dublin to Manchester?—Yes; it is 32*s*. from Dublin to Tuam for half the distance. There is a still more peculiar thing if you take wool.

24911. What is the wool rate?—From Tuam to Dublin it is 25*s*., and from Tuam to Bradford it is 52*s*. 6*d*.

24912. That seems more reasonable?—It is not too reasonable; you get it to Bradford from Dublin for 27*s*. 6*d*.

24913. What do you complain of in respect to the rate between Tuam and Galway?—Recently they took up wool in Galway. It seems to me a preposterous rate. For the short distance they charge 9*s*. It is only sixteen Irish miles by road; it would be about thirty miles by train.

24914. You would not advocate that the railway should make their rates as the crow flies?—No; I would give them whatever was reasonable.

24915. Have you any complaint as regards the delay of goods?—I have. But there is another point I want to bring out, and that is the charges on porter.

24916. I do not think we need go into that. Have you any complaint as regards the delay of goods?—I do not think I can better explain that than in the words in my proof. The Great Southern and Western Company have refused to take goods from Dublin to Galway by the Midland system by their 2.30 a.m. goods train arriving at Tuam at 9.30. Dublin goods arrive at Athenry Junction at 3 a.m., and from Galway at 7 p.m., and have to remain until 12 noon for the slow goods train to bring it to Tuam.

24917. Is not that natural?—No. They take the goods which come from Dublin by their own system by an earlier train and leave the others.

24918. That is your complaint?—Yes. I have a tabulated list of how these trains run. They leave the Galway goods, and I have known instances where goods have taken three days to come from Galway to Tuam.

24919. What happens on fair days about cattle?—On fair days cattle are considerably detained on the approach road to the station owing to the existing arrangements. There are two companies competing for Meath, Kildare, and cross-Channel traffic. At present the Midland Company lend the Great Southern and Western Company wagons to work off stock offering for the Midland route. The wagons in those cases cause endless trouble to senders of stock, as it very often happens that when cattle are at the entrance gate for loading the Midland wagons are not in a position for loading, and senders are compelled to send their stock by the Great Southern and Western route. To prevent such occurrences the Great Southern and Western Company, who are the contracting carriers, should provide sufficient wagons to carry the traffic over all routes, and by so doing they would prevent the blocking of traffic at the station, and senders would load in all the wagons and send by any route they chose.

24920. Have your Council as a body brought that before the railway company?—We have. At the October fair about 9,000 cattle are sold and from 20,000 to 25,000 sheep. That is a pretty large number, and when the Great Southern and Western came first after the Waterford and Limerick Company they were not prepared for the crush; they had not made provision for it, and there was a great deal of confusion, but afterwards they did their best. But the same thing exists still. What I say is that the two companies are anxious to get the stock, and the stock comes up to the railway station. I may want to send it by the Midland system, but the Midland wagons may not be there.

24921. Have you brought this matter before the railway company up to the present time?—We are not satisfied with the result of the negotiations.

24922. Have you applied to the Board of Agriculture to help you?—No; I did not know they could help us.

24923. Possibly, now that you know they can help you, you will take it up to them?—I hope somebody will help us.

24924. Have you any feeling about the fares generally being high?—I think if the fares were lower it would lead to an increase of traffic. Speaking for myself, if I had to pay £2 4*s*. 0*d*. for a first class return ticket to Dublin I would think twice before I went. The same thing applies to a great many other people. People would travel more if the fares were reduced.

24925. You think that if the company carried 25 per cent. more passengers at a reduced rate it would be of advantage to the country generally without any loss to the railway company?—I do.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë

24926. In reference to the rate which you gave, you say that bacon in boxes from Dublin to Tuam is 25*s*. 2*d*. per ton, that is for 120 miles?—Yes.

24927. If that is correct—and the railway company will verify my figures—if they charge full maximum terminals and full maximum rates, their charge would be 21*s*. 1*d*., and the actual charge is £1 0*s*. 6*d*., so that they charge you within 7*d*. of the full maximum rates for conveyance and terminals, service, and station—which seems very high. With regard to wool, I think you said that from Tuam to Galway is nine miles?—No, thirty—sixteen Irish, thirty English.

24928. If it was twenty miles the same figure would apply, but if it is thirty miles it would put them within their powers. But the bacon rate seems an extremely high one. I gather from what you say that the people who formerly were served by the Waterford and Limerick Railway do not think they are getting much attention paid to their complaints at the hands of the Great Southern and Western?—No.

24929. Do you wish to convey the impression that that is due to any feeling on the part of the railway companies towards each other?—I do attribute it a great deal to that. I do not make any secret of it at all—I attribute the whole of it to that.

Unification of the Irish railways recommended

24930. You think it is due to the feeling between the railway companies?—Yes.

24931. A feeling of antagonism, so to speak?—Yes.

24932. The result of which is to place the people in your district at a disadvantage?—Yes.

24933. I suppose that is one of the reasons why you think amalgamation would be desirable?—Yes.

24934. I suppose that is one of the reasons that has forced you to the conclusion that in order to get over such a state of feeling the management should be concentrated—that if the railways were put into one or two systems these differences would cease to exist?—I think they would cease to a great extent.

24935. Have you formed any opinion as to whether you would put the railway systems of the country into one hand or into two or three different systems?—I am of opinion that they would be better under one system. What that system should be I am hardly prepared to say, as I have not thought it out sufficiently.

24936. We have had evidence from a good many witnesses that they think three or four systems—one for the North, one for the South, and one for the centre of the country—would be advisable?—I would be inclined to have only one.

24937. For the whole of Ireland?—For the whole of Ireland.

24938. And that the other existing companies should be either persuaded or coerced into amalgamation?—Yes.

24939. On fair terms, of course?—Certainly.

State control preferred.

24940. Would you leave the management of that one unified centralised system in the hands of a company, or would you put it in the hands of the State?—I think I would put it in the hands of the State; but I have not thought the matter out sufficiently to give a decided opinion about it.

24941. At any rate, you would prefer some change from the existing order of things?—My idea is that we will never have the prosperity we ought to have until something of that sort is done. That is my idea. It may be a wrong one.

Examined by Mr. Aspinall.

24942. Is your suggestion with regard to the transport of cattle that the Great Southern and Western should supply wagons, and allow them to be transmitted over the Midland and Great Western line to Dublin?—Yes.

24943. That would involve a payment by the Midland and Great Western to the Great Southern and Western?—That would be a matter for them.

The faulty arrangements at Tuam station as regards wagon supply.

24944. It would involve payment by the Midland and Great Western to the Great Southern and Western for the use of the rolling stock?—But the difficulty could be got over by both supplying. Let them make no distinction as far as the use of the wagons goes. Supposing I want to send some stock off by the Southern system, and it happened that the Midland wagon was there, they might allow it to be used.

24945. I suppose you mean that if they worked together there would be no trouble. I see what your view is?—That is my view.

24946. But it involves a good many complications?—Yes; but it is worse as we are at present.

24947. As a matter of fact, the Great Southern and Western already supply wagons, and, therefore, that, to a certain extent, is evidence of co-operation?—Yes; to a certain extent.

24948. But if the railways were under one uniform management, your view is that this particular difficulty would disappear?—Yes; the difficulty would be done away with.

July 5, 1907.

Mr. James M'Donnell, Representative of Galway County Council and of Tuam Town Commissioners.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

24949. You said that you thought the line from Ennis to Tuam was the best paying portion of the Great Southern?—I thought it was as good as any portion.

24950. What makes you think so?—From what I have heard generally.

24951. You cannot give evidence?—No.

24952. Were you on the Tuam Town Commission in 1900, at the time of the amalgamation?—I was; and I supported the Great Southern.

Complaint as to treatment of competitive traffic by the G. S. & W. Co.

24953. You did?—I gave them all the support I could.

24954. Do you say you were right?—I am beginning to doubt it now.

24955. What you wanted was to get competition, was it not?—Yes.

24956. You are in business?—I am.

24957. Do you like handing jobs to your competitor or do you like doing them yourself?—I generally do all I can myself.

24958. Would you not expect the Great Southern to do the same?—I am not blaming them; but there is a certain way of doing it.

24959. Are you surprised that they do not encourage the exchange of traffic at Athenry for Dublin?—If they are allowed, I am not surprised at it.

24960. You wanted competition?—Yes.

24961. And now you have got it?—Yes.

24962. And you do not like it?—I do not object; but I want to get all I can out of it.

24963. You want to eat your cake and have it?—Yes.

24964. I do not blame you. Most of us want to, but we do not expect to get it. But you seem to expect to get it?—Yes.

Adjourned till Monday, the 8th July, in Dublin, at 11 *a.m.*

FORTY-THIRD PUBLIC SITTING.—MONDAY, JULY 8TH, 1907.

AT 11.0 O'CLOCK A.M.,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, BART. (Chairman); Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON; and Mr. W. M. ACWORTH;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

Mr. HANBURY CLEMENTS GEOGHEGAN, B.L., examined by the CHAIRMAN. *July* 8, 1907.

Mr. Hanbury C. Geoghegan, B.L., Dublin.

24965. Mr. Hanbury C. Geoghegan?—Yes.

24966. I think you are a barrister-at-law?—Yes, both of Victoria, Australia, and here.

24967. A K.C.?—No.

24968. *Lord Pirrie.*—Australia?—Yes.

24969. *Chairman.*—You have considered this question that we have to investigate in connection with the Irish railways?—I have endeavoured to consider it, sir.

24970. And you formed certain conclusions, I suppose?—I have.

24971. With reference to the advisability or otherwise of State purchase?—Yes, sir.

24972. Well, then, when you were in Melbourne did you make yourself acquainted with the working of the State railways in that part of the world?—I don't quite understand the question.

24973. You were in Melbourne?—Yes. If you mean did I specialise in figures and rates—no.

24974. No, no, you are generally acquainted with the railways in Australia?—Yes, Victoria.

24975. And you are aware that the railways there are owned by the State?—Almost every mile. There are 4,300 odd miles in Victoria.

24976. I suppose you are better acquainted with the Victorian railways than with the railways of the other States?—Yes. I have never been in Queensland or New Zealand.

24977. No?—I have travelled over the other railways.

24978. That is Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia?—In Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, and very frequently throughout the length and breadth of Victoria, very frequently. I had three offices at very different distances—Melbourne, Beechworth, and Ballarat—in the colony, and I was constantly going from one to another.

24979. Just one or two general questions. First of all, in 1890 there was a Commonwealth established?—1900.

24980. What?—1900.

24981. 1900?—Yes.

24982. Was New Zealand included in that?—No, it was not included, it has not come in.

24983. With that exception?—With that exception you have six States federated in the Commonwealth.

24984. Well, now, did the States keep their Legislatures?—Yes.

24985. Each State?—Each State.

24986. And the railways of these States, how are they owned?—They are still the property of the particular State.

24987. And managed separately and independently?—And managed separately by three Mining Commissioners in Victoria and a Minister of Railways. I may say that the late Mr. Spaight was brought out from a very important position in England by the Railway Commission—the late Mr. Spaight—a well-known railway man.

24988. Well, now, of course, you are acquainted with the railways in Ireland?—Yes.

24989. Now, comparing the two, do you consider that the State railways in Australia are efficiently worked?—They are efficiently worked.

24990. With regard to the fares and rates, are you in a position, if you are not you need not say, are you in a position to say whether the fares and rates charged are cheap compared with other countries?—It is my personal experience as a passenger, I had nothing to do with the sending of goods. I never had any quarrel with them about that, it seems to me that the rates, having regard to the higher value of money in Australia—everything costs more in Australia than here; the sovereign does not go so far as it does with us—it seems to me that the rate, comparing it with the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway, I would say was about two-fifths. It seems about two-fifths.

Australian passenger fares lower and train service more frequent than in Ireland.

24991. Passenger fares?—Yes, and the trains are about four times more frequent, but I would like to say that the Victorian railways, and, I think, all the Australian railways, that originally, before they escaped from political influences, they were enormously overmanned and are still overmanned, so that originally their management was extravagant. There was too much political patronage, but that has disappeared; there is no political patronage now, and the overplus of the staff is gradually diminishing.

Disappearance of political patronage and diminution of overplus staff.

24992. Well, confine your attention for a moment to Victoria, I think you know more about it?—Yes.

24993. Do you know how the railways are managed there?—Yes; by three Railway Commissioners; a Board consisting of three Railway Commissioners, a senior and two inferiors. They have to make a report every year through the Minister of Railways to Parliament. This is one—a report made by them, the last report they have issued. They will be issuing another in a few weeks.

Management of the Victorian railways by Commissioners.

24994. This is for 1906?—Yes. That shows a profit of something about £180,000 sterling after paying everything.

24995. After paying expenditure on the outlay?—Yes; but I should tell you that their capital account is debited with nearly £3,000,000, on which they have to pay no interest—£2,000,000 odd—the proceeds of certain Crown lands that were sold and given to them, about £3,000,000 of their capital expenditure. Their capital expenditure was altogether about £38,000,000 for their 4,300 miles.

Capital of the Victorian railways and the financial result of their working year 1906.

24996. And upon thirty-five of them they pay the full rate of interest?—Yes.

24997. And leave a profit?—And leave a profit. The profit for the last year was about £180,000. And every time they make a profit they reduce their rates.

24998. *Mr. Acworth.*—I think you made a slip; you gave the mileage as 4,300?—About that.

24999. About?—4,300 in Victoria. Victoria is the size of Great Britain.

25000. I thought your figure was wrong?—No, sir.

25001. I have no doubt you are correct?—I should say they have no canals and no rivers to speak of in Victoria, so that they have no cheap canal traffic.

Practically no canals or rivers in Victoria.

25002. *Chairman.*—The transit is by rail?—Exclusively by rail.

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25003. Now, have you any means of telling us what guides the Railway Commissioners in managing these railways—the policy that they adopt?—Yes. The policy that they adopt is purely the development of the country, whatever will make most for the well-being and comfort of the people.

The policy adopted by the Victorian Railway Commissioners in the management of the lines.

25004. Do you mean to say that if they think that a district could be developed whether a railway would pay *per se* or not, they would make a railway in that particular district so as to cause that development?—Certainly; of course there would be an inquiry; they would ascertain that. For instance, if it was suggested that there was great prospect of mineral development. They would put their mining plant and their boring plant on board the State railway and carry it there and put down the bore and see if the expectations of the local population were justified. They would put it down thousands of feet; their diamond boring plant, and the results of that boring would be registered in the Mining Department.

25005. *Lord Pirrie.*—Of the Government?—Yes. No person can mine there without sending at regular periods his plans of subterranean workings to the Mines Department, where they are accessible to the public, and your mistake might lead me to fortune. It is compulsory.

25006. *Chairman.*—Had they anything in Victoria corresponding to our Railway Commissioners Court?—No.

Method of settling railway disputes in Australia.

25007. How are disputes settled in Australia between parties?—They are heard.

25008. Complaints made by traders, for instance, to the Commissioners?—They will be heard before Commissioners.

25009. What?—The three Victorian Commissioners, who will hear counsel and solicitors, and hear evidence. The Victorian Railway Commissioners are a Court of Inquiry.

25010. But supposing, you see, they are the defendants?—Oh, if there was——

The Victorian Railway Commissioners liable to be sued in the ordinary County Courts.

25011. I might put you a case. For instance, supposing I was a trader in Melbourne and I complained of what I considered gross injustice on the part of the railway company: what is my remedy?—To sue them as you would any private individual in the County Court, not in the Superior Courts, in the County Court, and you will get fair play there.

25012. In individual cases who shall I have to sue, for example if I was the plaintiff?—I will answer you, sir. The Victorian Railway Commissioners are the defendants.

25013. The Commissioners?—Yes, not the State, but the Commissioners.

25014. I see?—And you will get perfectly fair play.

25015. And the action will be tried?—Only in the County Court.

25016. The minor court?—Only in the County Court: but the judges in the County Courts there are very learned and impartial.

25017. Similar to the County Courts here?—Yes. While I was out there they altered the law. These actions used to be tried in the Superior Court.

Maximum damages obtainable from the Victorian Commissioners by law.

25018. And they were very expensive, or they might be?—They were: they might be, and we got very heavy damages. I have got over £4,000 damages once against the Victorian Railway Commissioners for a client.

25019. In a Superior Court?—In the Superior Court.

25020. What is the limit in the County Court?—£1,000.

25021. There is a limit?—Yes: so any further risk you must cover by your own insurance.

25022. *Lord Pirrie.*—If a man is killed that is all you can get?—Yes, that is all you can get.

25023. *Chairman.*—The maximum liability for negligence?—In an action for negligence against the Commissioners you cannot recover more than £1,000. That is the law passed by the State not so very long ago. The public and the Press knew about it, and they all agreed to it. They can cover any additional risk by insurance. For, remark, the railway is theirs and there could not be a more effective or obliging staff anywhere than you meet.

25024. Than the State officials?—Than the State officials. I have known Mr. Spaight myself to do this once. Some person on a railway carriage——

25025. Stop a minute. Spaight has been dead a good many years. I knew him very well?—Not very many years.

25026. Well, he has been many years out of the railways?—Yes, I left in 1900, that is after we carried the Commonwealth Statute.

25027. Has this Act with reference to the liability been passed since then?—When I was out there some years. Before I left Melbourne.

25028. Do we understand it, on these State railways if a passenger is killed the maximum liability is £1,000?—In Victoria.

25029. Do you know whether that applies to the other States?—I do not.

25030. Do you know anything about the question which has been raised as to undue preference?—Indeed I do, something about it in this country; yes, and it is a very real grievance.

25031. First of all, tell us about Australia?—In Australia I have rarely or never heard of such a thing, because the State is not trying to make a profit for any section of the community. It is trying to do its best to give satisfaction to the public at large, and there are no sections of territory competing with other sections of territory. There is no canal company to be starved, or to kill a competing railway. Any reasonable complaint would incidentally be attended to. The Press is very active there. They are intelligent and ubiquitous.

25032. Well now, I don't want to stop you, but you said you were acquainted with cases of undue preference in this country; were you going to mention anything?—I was not going to mention anything, because what I heard came before me professionally, and I know it is a great, very great, grievance. It seems to be that different sections have different interests. It is just like paralysing a portion of the full circulation instead of having a very wholesome circulation.

25033. These State railways, say for military or naval purposes, does each State there act independently?—No, sir. Under the Commonwealth Statute there is an inter-State Commission appointed under a section in the Act of Parliament, which deals with any question between State and State respecting railways, and it can recommend, and the Commonwealth can pass enactments dealing with all the States for the purpose, offensive and defensive, naval and military purposes. The Commonwealth also has power, with the consent of any particular State, to lease or purchase any line there the property of that State; but, so far as I know, that never has been done yet.

25034. They still remain independent?—Independent.

25035. Yes?—And they act like the Railway Commission in respect of any dissatisfaction between the rates in one State and the rates in another.

25036. Then—is Sydney in Victoria?—No, South Wales, which is the oldest Colony of all. Victoria was carved out of New South Wales seventy years ago.

25037. There must be a great traffic between Melbourne and Sydney?—Yes.

25038. Large station traffic between Melbourne and Sydney?—Yes.

25039. To begin with, I believe the Victorian Railways are a different gauge from the other railways?—There is a different gauge, but I ran through without any change, in the same carriages.

25040. How did you do that?—I don't know. I was not disturbed. I ran through.

25041. Did they lift the carriage?—I don't know.

25042. Was it another wheel case?—I don't know. So far as I know, I got into the same train at Flinders-street Station, Melbourne, and got out at Sydney, and more than once.

25043-4. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—There may be a third rail?—No, I don't think so. So far as the normal railway passenger is concerned, you get into the train at Flinders-street, Melbourne, and you are carried through to Sydney without any disturbance.

Chairman.—I have only got in my mind that we had evidence that the gauge is different.

25045. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are you sure you did not change carriages at Albury?—I am not sure. All I say is I know I was not disturbed, and did not make a change, except this—On one occasion I was going back I was pulled up at Albury and bailed up. I had some grapes that were dutiable in one State, and I was stopped. They have no State duties there—they have been obliterated. They never had State duties in the United States.

25046. Supposing a man is sending 100 tons of traffic from Melbourne to Sydney—through rate—is there no difference between the two States. In case there is a

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claim for negligence, how do they manage it?—The law would very easily arrange that. It depends upon who was carrying at the time. Of course the Victorian Railway Commissioners cannot be responsible further than their own lines for an accident.

25047. The contracting company?—The contracting company.

25048. Would be the responsible party, just the same as in this country?—Yes.

25049. The sending company?—Yes; but it would not be responsible for an accident or a negligence of some official in New South Wales.

25050. No?—No. I may say the inter-State Commission would deal with that. Most of the traffic between Melbourne and Sydney would naturally go by water. The P. and O. steamers and the North German Lloyd steamers—all these steamers go there. It takes under three days to get by sea.

25051. What is this inter-State Commission you have referred to two or three times?—It is a creation of the Commonwealth of Australia.

25052. Created under that Act?—Created by that Act.

25053. And each State represented?—Each State.

25054. Represented?—Well, in the Commonwealth Parliament most assuredly.

25055. But in this inter-State Commission, what is that you are referring to?—They are appointed by the Governor-General in Council and they hold office for six years, and it is certain they would be the tribunal that would consider the different interests.

25056. That is what I want to get at. Would they consider an application made, say, for a reduction in rates?—No. They would consider this—An application to consider and decide whether rates charged to the inhabitants of New South Wales by Victoria was unfair to South Wales for traffic carried over the border. It would do that.

25057. I see, they would consider that?—And determine it.

25058. And determine it?—And determine it.

25059. And that is the law?—That is the law, with this caveat—that if the rate charged—if the grievance was supposed to be against the Victorian Railway Commissioners; if the rate charged by the Victorian Railway Commissioners upon a New South Wales man was only the same that we would charge under similar circumstances in Victoria, then the inter-State Commission would be powerless.

25060. They only act when there is a difference?—When they are differentiating—unfairly between the States.

25061. Yes?—They also are obliged to keep this canon before them, that they are to have regard in considering whether such a rate is fair, to the population of another State—they are obliged to bear in mind what was the cost to the particular State of its railways, what were the burdens imposed, and its need of development.

25062. They must keep these facts in view?—It is so expressed in the very Statute.

25063. What advantages do you think would accrue to Ireland if the railways and canals were State-owned?—The sweeping away of forty-six competing and conflicting boards, and to substitute one board of management, I think would be an enormous gain to start with. You would also have one staff of employees in place of a number. They would all be in the public service. They would be very much less likely to strike. All the time I was out in Victoria there never was a strike amongst the employés. There is no one else to go to. They must leave their course of employment altogether. There is no other railway employer in Victoria but the State.

25064. No?—Then they are all compulsorily insured, and they get fair promotion if they know their business, and it is really a competency for a decent respectable man. Then again, there is considerable economy as compared with Ireland. For instance, if a new railway was suggested here in Ireland, you have to go over to Westminster to try and get a Bill. You may not know what opposition you get there, and from competitors here. That is the unknown capital expenditure, much of it unremunerative, given to managers and London hotel-keepers. That is an unknown cost, and when you want some person to finance you the unknown is always dreaded. The development of the country only would be attended to if you had but one Board—three Commissioners dealing with the whole country. There would no longer be any rivalry between canal and railway.

25065. You are assuming that the State owned both?—Certainly; I think the State should own all its highways. I think the State is an extraordinary State that doesn't own all its highways. The legislature in an Act of Parliament passed some time ago, for instance—I have got the reference to the Act here—saw the danger of the rivalry between rail and canal, and passed an Act of Parliament that, unless specially authorised by its scheme, a canal company should never be allowed to take, or lease, or acquire portion of a railway, simply because of the obvious competition between water and rail. I have got the reference to that Statute here.

Acts preventing the control of railways by Canal Cos. and *vice versa* (Vic. 21 & 22, cap. 75, and Vic. 23 & 24, cap. 41).

25066. That a canal should not acquire a railway; but there is nothing to prevent a railway acquiring a canal?—There is the correlative—the railway influence was too powerful.

25067. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is that in existence still?—Yes. The 21st and 22nd Vic., cap. 75. I have it here. It is a very short one. It is called an Act to amend the law relating to cheap trains. The Act restrains the exercise of certain powers of canal companies being also railway companies—2nd August, 1888.

25068. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is an Act of the English Parliament?—Yes; more honoured in the breach than the observance, because several railway companies buy up canals on condition that they should be kept idle. As the Midland has the Royal Canal only for drowning dead puppies and kittens.

25068A. There is very stringent provision to prevent railway companies getting any control over canals.

25069. *Chairman.*—Yes, but of course they acquired most of them before that.

25069A. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Has that not been repealed?—No; it was put in force for one year, and then the next one, 23rd and 24th Vic., cap. 41, by which it was made perpetual. It is very short.

25070. *Chairman.*—We don't want it; the reference is quite sufficient?—Yes. You were asking me to tell you what advantages I thought would accrue to Ireland.

Advantages to be expected from State ownership of the Irish railways and canals.

25071. You mentioned one or two?—I mentioned one or two. I have said superior economy and efficiency; the one railway system, one board, one staff, and having but one instead of the numerous Irish boards, I think there are forty-six of them, whose conflicting, local interests too often injure the country as a whole. 2. The independent and more advantageous position of such a board to negotiate or contract with British or foreign railway or shipping companies, for every proposal must come to and be within the knowledge of the Irish Railway Commissioners, who could have no competition to outbid or underbid them. 3. It would much facilitate the development of Irish canals and canalisation of Irish rivers, for there could no longer be any conflict between canal and railway, and all future commodities would seek and flow through natural channels. 4. The construction of the future railway lines or canals would be determined only by the necessity of the case and the desire to develop Irish resources, mines, quarries, fisheries, forestry, etc., and would be obtained at less cost without Parliamentary opposition from jealous Irish competitors or British, while the dread of opposition or difficulty of raising money could no longer arrest railway or canal development. In illustration of the way such State railways would develop mining, for instance, I would give an instance of the Mining Department, which has a boring plant in Victoria. There never has been any geological survey of Ireland except a superficial one; you can't determine all its internal arrangements by walking across the surface. Our Geological Department here has been an offshoot of the United Kingdom Geological Department. The annual cost on the Irish maps has been under £4,000, and the staff, not enough for Ireland, were often employed in Scotland and England. For many years the Geological Department here, which the other day was put under our Agricultural Department here, and a good thing, too, have been—for years—vainly attempting to persuade their British confrères to allow them to put down a boring on the bank of Lough Neagh, as they said it was the Department's expert opinion that it would prove that the valuable Ballycastle coal field extended to the banks of Lough Neagh.

Economy, increased efficiency, improved arrangements with British and foreign railways, railway extensions, &c.

The connection between the Victorian Mining and State Railway Departments.

Extent of the Ballycastle (co. Antrim) coal field.

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25072. How far is the colliery from it?—Some miles. I don't know how many. But they said, no. That was for Irish enterprise, and I am told they refused the late Mr. Kirwan, who was a great expert; they refused, the British Government refused, to institute here a Mining Department such as he pointed out, and Sir Richard Griffith pointed out, had done so much for mining development in Germany. They said it was repugnant to the British Constitution, an interference with the right of private property. A pre-Union Act gave £23,000 to improve Ballycastle Harbour in the expectation of a large export of coal from the Irish coasts.

Ballycastle Harbour improved by a grant in pre-Union days.

25073. To England?—Yes. To Ballycastle, to improve the harbour and bar there.

25074. What date?—That must have been before 1800, £23,000.

25075. £23,000 was voted?—Voted to improve the harbour. This is the first coal mine that was ever worked in Great Britain and Ireland. It was worked in prehistoric times, most successfully and well—in prehistoric times. But we have no Department here to work mines or to find coal.

The necessity of a Mining Department and a boring plant to ascertain the mineral resources of Ireland.

25076. Is that colliery in existence?—In existence, and Mr. Brodie, I see by the paper, claims the credit of this discovery of coal in Ballycastle. In 1744 it is on record they broke into the old workings, about thirty-eight galleries, and found the coal most scientifically worked, the old baskets and tools all went to dust when they brought them to the surface.

25077. *Mr. Sexton.*—Worked by some pre-historic Brodie?—I think he was not a Scotchman that worked that.

Extent of the coal fields of Ireland.

25078. *Chairman.*—I think I understand your idea. A sum of money devoted to that purpose would tend to develop the coal industry?—The late Sir Richard Griffith, who made the valuation, said it is a great mistake to suppose there is any real scarcity of coal in Ireland. There is fully 200,000,000 in the Leinster coalfields, 200,000,000 of tons proved to exist in the Leinster coalfields, and 50,000,000 tons in the Ballycastle coalfield. Respecting how matters would be benefited by State railway; they always do that in Victoria, put the diamond-boring plant on board the State railways, and carry it to your ground for nothing, if you want to discover what is below, and they will put it down thousands of feet.

25079. Diamond-boring company?—It is not a company. It is a Mining Department, a State Department.

The Victorian Mining Department and its equipment.

25080. I remember the old diamond-boring company very many years ago in which I, unfortunately, was interested; but do you mean to say that the bores—the implements——?—Are owned by the State.

25081. By the State?—Yes.

25082. Of course it is a very expensive plant?—Yes, but it pays the State to get it, and it is carried chiefly by the State railways.

25083. For prospecting purposes?—For prospecting purposes. No ability could tell of itself what is five, six, seven, or eight thousand feet below.

25084. To do that the railways will carry the staff and plant free?—And plant free.

25085. Free?—Yes.

25086. And then the boring takes place?—Takes place.

25087. And if there is any mineral wealth found then the railway is extended to the place to develop that particular industry?—If it was justified, certainly; but they won't by a becking of the finger let you have that boring plant. You have to get up a little agitation in the district, and perhaps if they are doubtful they will make you contribute portion of the cost.

25058. It must be a *bona fide* application?—Yes.

25089. And a *bona fide* application is safe?—Yes, and every day you read in the morning Press the boring plants have gone down so many thousand of feet and what they have got in the "core"; you see it regularly. There never was a boring plant in this country at all until Mr. Prior Wandesforde, a relative of Lord Castlecomer, got one, it was only a steel-shod plant. He put it down on his own land, 906 feet. It has gone back again. The late Sir Richard Griffith pointed out how impossible it was to have any successful mining in this country, because having no Department of Mines, you never could have any accurate records of what was done; besides, a few months after, some excavating has been made or some fossicking has been done; the result has disappeared, there is no evidence preserved as to what they missed or what they got; and he pointed out that more money had been lost by acting upon ignorant advice and rough collier people of that sort than would have done permanent and general good. He said that every county in Ireland, that of Antrim especially, showed indications of mining treasures, amply justified and encouraged such borings. This is on record. He reports that in 1812, in a printed report here to this particular body, the Royal Dublin Society. Of course developed mining would be the best customer and largest consumer of any timber when it is fit to thin.

25090. Are there any other advantages, in your judgment, that would accrue if the State owned the railways?—There would be an immediate cheapening of all railway traffic and travelling in Ireland, and further cheapening from time to time to the actual cost, and you will free the country from the fetters imposed on these railways by the many injurious contracts for through rates effected with British railway companies. That is a matter of the greatest importance. One British railway company will be tied hand and foot, and if its customers show an advantage would accrue to it by improving the traffic and reducing—they say we can't do it; it would be a breach of the contract with some other company, and they won't agree because they say it won't help us.

25091. I think that is a fair argument?—Then I say again—that is a very small matter. I say also it would relieve certain Irish baronies from the burden of existing railway guarantees. I say that is a burden that ought never to have been imposed locally.

25092. The baronies agreed to it?—They did agree. They must take what they could get.

25093. But they agreed at any rate?—They agreed owing to very great compulsion. It was the only way to get the carriage.

25094. The railways?—The only way to get the railway. The whole thing to my mind is absolutely false and injurious. Then the local manufacturer or producer would no longer be undersold at his own door because of through rates, or of cheaper railway rates given by one or other competing Irish railway to his British or foreign competitor, unless the benefit to Ireland outweighed the local and private injury. We know that customers are dissatisfied. They can never ascertain the through rate.

25095. They know the through rate?—They never can ascertain its incidence and how it is arrived at.

25096. Exactly?—And they really can be dictated to by the wealthy railway companies. I don't see why, sir, if the existing state of things should be allowed to continue, that we should have such an expensive Railway Commission as we had here the other day under the Railway and Canal Act. The public, I observe, were not represented at that inquiry. I don't see why these matters should not go to the County Court Judge. That is part of the economy.

25097. That is another subject?—Then I am afraid this is a repetition. It would at once, or in the near future, save Ireland the money now squandered at Westminster.

25098. That is repetition?—Yes; and the other is also a repetition—likelihood of some of our scanty Irish capital going, as I hope, for other Irish purposes.

25099. You better explain that; I don't understand it?—I am sorry to say that our stockbrokers as a class always advise their customers not to put any money in Irish industries other than certain of the Irish railways.

25100. That is the point you make?—Yes. And if that money came out of the Irish railways I hope it would go into some other Irish industry.

25101. Now I see what you mean?—These advantages: there are the military, naval, postal. We had an action heard the other day between the Post Office as to whether they were entitled to hold back the despatch of a train to put their mail on board. That cost some money to me and yourself indirectly. I suppose advantages, from a military, naval, postal, telegraphs or customs, inland revenue point of view. There was some leakage at the Tullamore Whiskey Distillery, £50,000 or £60,000 duty not paid. Surely if the State always knew, and got

regular invoices of the way bills for certain stuff out of that distillery, and apparently it was working as much as ever, and their stuff greatly diminished, would not that have aroused their suspicions, and duty collected which would otherwise be missed.

25102. I am not so certain; it is a separate Department altogether?—It might. If you have only one State railway with all the returns checked and filed it would be a great check.

Lord Pirrie.—If the other Department looked after it.

Witness.—Certainly. It is a very usual thing, I am sorry to say, in Australia, to supply customers with double invoices, one upon which you make your remittance, and the other a fraudulent one, on which you are to pass their stuff through the Customs. It would not be possible with State ownership.

25103. You have given a great number of reasons, in your judgment, why you think that Ireland would be benefited with State-owned railways. Have you anything further to say on that particular subject?—Just this. In 1867, and 1871 and 1873, a petition was presented to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, signed by seventy-eight Irish Peers and ninety-three Irish members of Parliament. Seventy-six Irish Peers, headed by the Duke of Devonshire, urging the State to acquire all the Irish railways, and to reduce the rates 50 per cent.—1867, 1871, 1873—any loss to be borne by Ireland. I think Mr. Sexton gives prominence to it in his separate report on the Financial Relations between England and Ireland.

25104. Just mention that to Mr. Sexton?—Yes. Is Mr. Sexton here?

25105. This gentleman?—I am very pleased to meet him. I wish you would make more use of that wonderful organ, the *Freeman's Journal*. I have no axe to grind. I am only for the interests of Ireland and the public.

25106. We understood that when you came. When you say a petition was presented to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and it was rejected by a large majority of the Imperial Parliament, do you remember was it brought in as a resolution?—As a petition. I don't know exactly. Of course it must have been.

25107. There must have been a resolution moved?—Voted upon it.

25108. *Mr. Sexton.*—There was a memorial or representation, and on that there was a debate?—Yes.

25109. *Chairman.*—Were they the same petitions—the three?—Similar.

25110. They can't have been signed by the same people?—Only by most of the members. The Duke of Devonshire presented, I believe, the three.

25111. As Lord Pirrie points out, in 1867, 1871, 1873, the petition could not have been signed by the Duke of Devonshire, ninety-three members, and seventy-eight Irish Peers, in each of these periods. Which period?—I am open to correction about that—the fact——

25111A. Was it the last one, 1873, that was signed by these?—I am right about the fact, perhaps not about the three instances, or three dates. But I am right about the fact and about the numbers.

25112. Lord Pirrie would like to know which year.

25112A. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—I think I can clear up the point, Mr. Chairman. Here is the report of the Allport Commission. It gives dates and everything: "Proposals for State purchase of the Irish railways, to be followed by large reductions of rates, were brought forward in the House of Commons in 1871 and 1873, the representatives of Ireland in a memorial signed by 78 Irish peers and 90 members of the House of Commons having offered that the loss arising from the reductions of rates should be borne by Ireland alone (Hansard III., cc. vii., 1768). In 1873, on a motion in favour of State purchase in Ireland alone, the then Government, while strongly opposing such a measure, expressed its readiness to give financial assistance to the companies in consideration for amalgamation, with its attendant advantages to the public (Hansard III., ccxv., 1141). In 1874 a renewed proposal for State purchase was opposed by the new Government, which then took its stand upon the views expressed by the Duke of Devonshire's Commission, the Chief Secretary for Ireland referring particularly to the considerable progress which had been made in amalgamation and otherwise by the voluntary action of the companies, with the aid of private resources. On each occasion when a division took place on the subject a large majority of the House declared itself hostile to the principle of State purchase, even in the case of Ireland."

Lord Pirrie.—That was the petition.

25113. *Mr. Acworth.*—We might clear up an illusion on the part of Mr. Geoghegan. He is mistaken in crediting the Duke of Devonshire with a desire for State purchase. I have here his report of 1867: "We are of opinion that it is inexpedient at present to subvert the policy which has hitherto been adopted of leaving the construction and management of railways to the free enterprise of the people. We consider that there is not sufficient reason for excepting Ireland from this general conclusion"?—What is the date?

Quotation from the majority report of the Devonshire (1867) Royal Commission against State Purchase of the railways.

25114. That is the Royal Commission of 1867, of which the Duke of Devonshire was chairman, and it was signed by all the Commissioners except two?—Was he one of the two?

25115. He was the chairman, and he signed the majority report?—Yes.

25116. The minority consisted of Mr. Monson, afterwards Lord Emly—he was an Irishman, of course—and Sir Rowland Hill, and they recommended the purchase by the State of the Irish railways?—I am not certain about the Duke of Devonshire, 1867. May he not have changed by 1871 and 1873.

25116A. I am sure he was not.

25117. *Mr. Sexton.*—He may have presented the petition?—He did.

Mr. Acworth.—That is highly probable.

Witness.—Then he was not altogether unconverted.

Mr. Acworth.—I don't know.

25118. *Chairman.*—You don't say that the Duke signed it; you say the Duke presented it?—Yes. I would just like to remind you that by the Railway Regulation Act, 1844, the legislature had a pre-emption and provided, and their Bill there stipulated for the acquisition by the State of the railways. From Mr. Chamberlain's report, I could show you where a number of traders in England have been complaining of the railways in England, the railway rates in England.

Right of State Purchase reserved in the Railway Regulations Act, 1844.

25119. We know all about that?—Yes.

25120. But as long as the administration is not responsible to the people benefited, there is a difficulty in getting them to believe that it is necessary to make these exertions?—Yes. And they say that the time is specially apt now for such a Mining Department, because of the lands purchased and sold under the Irish Land Act, as the Commissioners acquire all the mines, and they are to account, if they make any profit to the extent of one-twenty-fifth part of the profit to the owners. But as matters stand now, there is no authority that can give a mining lease or authorise mining in any of that large area in Ireland. Mr. Justice Meredith deals with that in the Wandesforde estate, 4th new Irish Jureat, 229.

The necessity for a Mining Department in Ireland owing to the working of the Irish Land Act.

25121. For the last seven years any Australian State might have transferred its railways to the Commonwealth?—Yes.

25122. By mutual consent?—Yes.

25123. No State has transferred its railways?—Not that I have heard of, and I keep up a correspondence with friends there.

25124. Every State is of opinion that it manages its own railways better than ever they would be managed by the Commonwealth?—That is the opinion so far.

Australian opinion said to be continuing steadily in favour of State ownership.

25125. And *a priori* every State thinks the management of railways by public authority much better than by private owners?—Yes.

25126. That is strong practical evidence based on experience?—That is what Lord Cromer has done so advantageously in Egypt.

25127. It has been suggested that State management would not pay men of special competence as well as private owners would?—That they would not pay as well.

25128. Yes, pay men of special competence in their service as well?—I think Mr. Spaight got £5,000 a year.

25129. *Chairman.*—I know that he did not.

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25130. Perhaps he got as much as he was worth?—I think he got £5,000, and that the other Commissioners got smaller sums down to £2,000.

25131. *Chairman.*—He got £3,000.

Remuneration for management under State control.

25132. *Mr. Sexton.*—Is there any reason to believe that a State administration would pay a competent man less than a private employer?—On the contrary, I know that he got a salary that tempted him from a high position in England. He was traffic manager of one of the English railways.

25132A. *Chairman.*—He was not.

Witness.—He was tempted out of England. £3,000 a year is what we give a Puisne Judge in Victoria, and I think that he would be entitled to better remuneration, perhaps.

25133. *Mr. Sexton.*—It is sometimes said that where the public own the railways there is an undue infusion of politics?—There was originally in Victoria, but that has been absolutely swept away.

25134. The public interest successfully asserts itself through public ownership of the railways?—Most undoubtedly, but as I have said, political influence had a damaging effect originally, and it has overmanned the railways and caused extravagance, but all that is disappearing. There has been not the slightest suggestion of any mischief resulting from political interference, certainly for the last fifteen years.

25135. Of course, Mr. Geoghegan, every question concerning the community, and dealt with by law, is in a sense a political question?—Yes.

The administration of the Australian railways free from the interests of any political party.

25136. But is it true that in Australia no malice or cupidity of any political party is allowed to interfere with the public interest in the administration of the lines?—That would not be gainsaid by any person in Australia, I think, certainly not in Victoria.

25137. *Chairman.*—At the present time; lately?—For many years; and I may say that our Bench there will compare favourably with any judicial Bench in the world, and the Press I may say also.

25138. *Mr. Sexton.*—The effect of public or political control is to secure a greater benefit for the public, and greater impartiality in the treatment of different traders?—Yes; the public alone are regarded as the masters and all public officials are regarded as serving the public.

25139. I understand that the fares and rates in Australia (without going into figures), are as low as they can be, the lines being self-supporting?—Yes; and they reduce them periodically. The last report shows that they made a reduction the last year representing £180,000.

The policy of Australian railway management as regards rates and fares.

25140. The fares and rates are so measured as merely to bear the expenses and pay such interest as the State finds it necessary to contract to pay in order to raise the necessary capital?—Yes.

25141. Then that low rate causes a development of traffic, with new profit, and the new profit in its turn is applied to the public benefit?—Yes, always.

25142. So, by an automatic process, it is secured throughout the future that, as the country becomes populated, and becomes developed, the rates fall more and more?—Yes. An instance of that appears in the last report, which I have handed to you. It appears from that that they have reduced certain rates by 8 per cent.

The maximum of benefit to the public by State ownership.

25143. Does not that, on the face of it, secure at all times the maximum of benefit to the public on the transit question by means of State ownership?—Indubitably.

25144. In the case of private ownership, carried on of course upon a commercial principle, the aim is the converse—the aim is, of course, to secure as much as possible for private profit?—Necessarily; and the more efficient it is the more injurious to the public.

The converse by private ownership.

25145. Is there a necessary antagonism between private ownership and public interest?—That is so obvious that why the existing state of things is allowed to exist I cannot imagine.

25146. Ireland is an undeveloped country?—Yes.

25147. Of course the Australian countries, being new, are sparsely populated. Ireland is undeveloped for another reason; but what is good for the Australian Colonies in the matter of transit would also be good for Ireland?—Yes, allowing for the difference in conditions. We have no canals, and very few rivers in Australia. They are deficient in rivers

25148. Would you say that the obvious way to answer the question put to us as to the best means of developing Ireland would be by reform of the railways into an united system managed by the State?—I would have it managed as in Victoria, where it is done well by three Commissioners, and a Minister of Railways could be added if you like.

25149. Is it the tendency of State railways to promote efficient service?—We have found it so in so far as railways are concerned. There are some matters that, I think, the State should hold as a monopoly. There are other things in which, I think, the State, or a municipality, does injury if it interferes. But the control and management of the highways is essential to the well-being of the State and people.

25150. My point is, whether public pressure behind a State system of railways does not, of necessity, promote efficient service?—Experience shows that.

25151. Does it promote uniformity of service, a first class service on the main lines, and a less costly service on secondary lines, and an irreducible minimum even on the least important?—That is so; that is the result of experience.

25152. The form of railway government varies in the different States in Australia?—No, sir.

25153. One has a Minister, another a Commissioner, and another three Commissioners?—I can't say about that. I am only able to speak about Victoria.

25154. Does the substance of the matter prevail through all these forms?—Yes.

25155. Is there any appreciable difference in efficiency and practical benefit whether it is one Commissioner or three, or whether it is a Minister?—I think there is a decided advantage in having an unequal number, in having three Commissioners. One man may be biassed or partial or prejudiced. If you have three you are less likely to have partiality, and you have more knowledge.

25156. Each State chooses the form that pleases it best, and each form acts efficiently for the public benefit?—Yes.

25157. As I understand, the only reason for the inter-State Commission is the existence of a plurality of States?—Yes, and also probably the existence of the River Murray, which goes through three different States.

25158. If there was only one State there could be no inter-State Commission?—No.

25159. This inter-State Commission cannot adjudicate upon the rates fixed by a State over its own railways?—Not as long as that State makes no difference between the terms it gives its own population and the population of a neighbouring State.

25160. So long as the rate fixed by a State for its own railway can be justified by its own circumstances?—Yes, not distinguishing adversely to the inhabitants of any other State which cannot be interfered with except for military and naval purposes. They might require it to carry soldiers for nothing.

25161. The Commonwealth controls that?—Yes.

25162. But so long as the rates fixed by a State for its own people are defensible, it cannot be assailed successfully for any corresponding rates on its lines?—No.

25163. As to litigation, you cannot sue any Australian State in respect of its railway administration except in the County Court?—In Victoria, which I am most familiar with, you sue and make defendants the Victorian Railway Commissioners; it is not the State.

25164. Is that cheap litigation in the County Court?—Yes, cheap and quick.

25165. Are the County Courts found satisfactory?—Yes, very satisfactory, and their jurisdiction is very much larger than it is in this country, and the duties much more multifarious and important.

25166. The complaint in this country is that the fees paid to counsel make the Railway Commission expensive?—There are other things also that make it expensive, and necessarily so.

25167. That mainly?—Yes; it is a phenomenal court. We seldom see it here, and when we do see it here it is only because some wealthy railway company, or some company prepared to spend a great deal of money, are prepared to confront them. Ordinary individuals have no access to the court at all. They dare not face the expenses of that court; it hardly ever awards any costs, so that no matter how much your opponent may be blamable, they don't award costs to you.

25168. *Mr. Acworth.*—They cannot do it by law.

Witness.—I beg your pardon, they can.

25169. *Mr. Acworth.*—Not between the traders and the railway company, except where the case is considered frivolous and vexatious, and that change was brought about by the request of the traders.

Witness.—How did they make it?

Mr. Acworth.—It was represented before Parliament.

Witness.—By two or three people. Were any Chambers of Commerce represented? It is very easy to say that, and I am sure you think it, but it would be very hard to satisfy me that the traders of Ireland were represented.

Mr. Acworth.—Well, I don't want to enter into an argument on the subject, but you may take it from me that it was represented to Parliament by the traders' representatives.

Witness.—I beg your pardon, sir. I admit that upon your statement, but I say that it would be very hard to satisfy me that the evidence was sufficient.

25170. *Mr. Sexton.*—Some injudicious traders might have asked for it, but how has it worked out. Have traders ever got costs against the railway companies?—I have never known of it. Some time ago I advised an attack on them, but it was thought better to bear the losses already being suffered.

25171. If you have a sufficiently eminent counsel your case will never be found vexatious?—Yes, and if you know how to handle figures.

25172. As to economy, I apprehend you will agree with me that if a State system was established in Ireland, the State would raise the money more cheaply than any private individual?—Yes, surely the State credit is better than mine.

25173. Therefore we might assume that the sum to be paid for interest on capital under a State system in Ireland would be less than the amount of the present dividends?—Yes.

25174. And the difference would save a wide margin out of the existing net profit?—Yes.

25175. Which margin would be available for reduction?—Yes, to benefit every person equally.

25176. Moreover would there not be an immense economy in working expenses, under every head?—Necessarily.

25177. Would not these two funds together make a resource that would enable State management of Irish railways to institute large reductions in rates and fares?—Unless all human experience is to be falsified, yes.

25178. Therefore they could go forward without any risks?—Yes.

25179. They could make reductions up to the level of these resources, and ascertain whether these reductions caused a growth of traffic?—Yes.

25180. And in that way fully test the system of State purchase and reduction without any risk to the public?—Yes, and only one Railway Guide, and all the systems unified and working together, instead of working as now, one to damn the other.

25181. United single management, and the public interest solely, against plural management, contention, private interest and waste?—Yes, and the sweeping away of forty-six Boards. Of course the best men would be got, and would be highly paid. You would not have an engineer for each line. You would have the best for one system.

25182. It would be easier to pay a few good men well than a larger number of inferior men even badly?—Yes, much of the existing staff, of course, would be employed. Of course the private interests of the present railway systems could only be acquired at a rate that would amply compensate the present proprietors. It must be done some time, and in the future it will cost more, and be more difficult. There will be more dislocation in the future.

25183. With a diminishing population, undeveloped agricultural and mining interests, and growing foreign competition against our staple traders, do you think the prospects of Irish railways are bright?—They are very dull. I know that to my cost.

25184. Do you think they would do well to entertain any fair offer?—That is a matter entirely for themselves.

25185. What do you think?—Yes, I think so, unless the shareholders intend to leave this country It is obviously to the benefit of every person that the State should acquire all the railways and canals.

25186. Besides, under the present system, the railways will go from bad to worse, because they refuse to lower any rate or fare owing to the apprehension of a temporary loss. That is a system that will entail further reverses?—Necessarily so. Their shareholders are their partners, but they all have heavy creditors. There are the Debenture holders—they dare not risk the interest of their Debenture holders.

25187. But a public authority, by an intelligent reduction of rates and fares for which it would have resources denied to private companies, could make more of the Irish railway system in the future than the present proprietors can?—No one knows better than you that that is so.

Further expansion of the Irish railways under private ownership impossible.

25188. Is not it vital to Ireland that there should be branch lines and feeders constructed in the backward districts?—Vital.

25189. How are they to be made unless we have a State system?—How can they be made when they don't know the opposition they will have in Westminster?

25190. We have heard of cases where Irish railways have refused to take over lines as a present unless they were guaranteed working expenses. That seems to dispose of the idea that Irish railway companies are going to build more branch lines. The districts would have to guarantee?—If they read the report of the Financial Commissioners of 1896 I think they ought to refuse to pay one farthing.

25191. Does it not come to this—that Ireland is not going to have the branch lines and feeders she requires for the development of her agriculture and manufactures unless a public system of administration is established?—That I think, unless, perhaps, in a few exceptional cases.

Extension of railways in Ireland a necessity for the development of the country.

25192. I notice, with great interest, you say that a unified department of Irish railways would be in a better position to negotiate with British railways than the plurality of Irish railways now existing?—Yes.

25193. It has been suggested that you cannot well establish an Irish public system of railways unless you do the same with the railways of Great Britain. Do you see any point in that?—No, except this—that the prosperity that will ensue in Ireland will very soon teach the British public that they ought to do likewise. I am clear about that. That may alarm some small cliques here and there.

25194. At any rate a single railway authority in Ireland, acting under defined legal powers, would be in a far better position for dealing with British railways than the private owners of a number of lines in Ireland at present?—Clearly, I think.

A single railway authority in Ireland better able to deal with British railways than private companies.

25195. It has been said that the cross-Channel steamers would prove a difficulty. But surely an Irish Department could run a line of cross-Channel steamers if necessary?—Yes, or acquire these steamers. Harland and Wolff, before they leave Ireland, might build us a few good ships.

25196. You refer with regret to the rejection of the petition in the seventies?—Clearly. They took our own Parliament from us, and prevent us now from developing our country by outvoting the minority.

25197. Of course that is a question still about which many people have a strong opinion; that no secondary reform will ever avail until this country gets back that Parliament?—That is an opinion that is gaining strength amongst the Conservatives.

25198. We are testing that question all the time while debating these secondary questions?—Yes.

25199. You refer to the paramount interest of British railways in the Imperial Parliament?—I have heard that they could always count on at least 100 votes.

25200. Do you attribute the rejection of that reasonable request in the seventies to the influence of the British companies?—I have no reason to say so, except knowledge of human nature. It is only conjecture.

The rejection of the Irish petition for State purchase in 1873

25201. You think that in the ordinary course of the working of human nature, in that case that influence was exercised?—Yes, and especially seeing that British lines have since captured large portions of Ireland.

25202. You say that the railways in future in Ireland should be administered by one Board?—Yes.

25203. Do you think that that Board should be free

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from all such external influences as those of the British companies?—Yes.

25204. Subject to no external influence?—Yes.

25205. And so appointed and so constituted as to make the advantage of Ireland its only aim?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

25206. I won't attempt to go into this very broad question, but I have already got one or two facts. When you gave 4,300 miles as the length of the Victorian railways, you gave the total length of the lines including sidings?—Did I?

Mileage of the Victorian railways.

25207. I think you made a slip. The length of lines open for traffic in Victoria is 3,086 miles?—You have my authority there before you, sir, but I accept your correction.

25208. I only want to get it right on the notes. It is, roughly, 3,000 miles?—What you call the Victorian railways?

25209. Just over 3,000 miles?—May I look? (*Document handed to witness.*)

25210. By all means. You will see that it is "track."* There may be a line with two tracks on it, and that is two miles, with a mile of sidings which would make three miles?—I think there are only about forty miles of private railways in Victoria. But I am only a volunteer—an ignorant person.

The financial results of the Victorian State Railways.

25211. Another point I want to take you on is this. It is quite true that in the year 1905-6 there was a profit of something like £200,000—you gave it as £198,900—on the Victorian railways; but the profit of the previous year was £649; and the profit of the year before that, £519; and the deficit on the year before that was £365,000; so that the result of the four years was a loss of £265,000?—There was a very heavy drought—and indeed on that argument it would make for and against—but it doesn't touch the propriety of the acquisition of the railways by the State. They constantly reduce the rates in Australia; and sometimes in anticipation of the seasons being prosperous.

25212. I was not discussing that. I was trying to get the figures right. There is another point to be noticed. As will be seen from the existing statement, the extraordinary liabilities taken over by the Commissioners up to the 1st June, 1903, amounted to £795,000—practically £800,000. Look at what these extraordinary liabilities were:—Mileage, repairs, £181,000; estimated cost of making good a deficiency in rolling-stock—that means that the lines had not had their rolling-stock kept up—£400,000; deficiency on the value of stores, £60,000; loan funds advanced for the renewal of way and works and the replacing of railway stock—in other words, capital applied to revenue purposes—£149,000. Doesn't that make a difference in the financial results? If it went forward to last year there was a profit of £200,000, and that would lead to a different opinion from what comes out if you take it a little further back?—On the figures that you cite—yes. It would diminish undoubtedly the profit. Some would have to be carried to capital and some to revenue, of course, to have a sinking fund.

25213. This is from the Commissioners' own statement, £800,000 that ought to have been charged to revenue before 1903, and that the Commissioners failed to charge?—I suppose the public cried out for new carriages up-to-date; and they have been constructing refrigerating carriages.

25214. Were you in Australia when the new Commissioners came into office in 1903?—No.

25215. I daresay you know Mr. Tait, who came over from Canada; do you remember him?—No. I had left Melbourne in 1900.

25216. That was after the new Commissioners found that £800,000 ought to have been charged against revenue, and it had not been?

Chairman.—They reported it.

The question of political influence in connection with the Australian State Railways system.

25217. *Mr. Acworth.*—And the Minister accepted it. (*To Witness*).—You spoke of the time in the Victorian railways before they had escaped political influence. What date do you put it at?—I could not put an exact date to it.

25218. It was very recently, was not it?—I don't think it was very recently. I don't think there seemed to be any political jobbery recently.

25219. It must have been in your time surely, Mr. Geoghegan. I think it was in Mr. Matheson's administration that they took up the rails of several lines that were laid in the neighbourhood of Melbourne, because the traffic did not pay working expenses?—Not while I was there. I never heard of such a thing.

25220. We have had evidence of it before this Commission?—There may be one radius of a line that did not develop, but it would astound you to see the suburban trains tearing out and in of Melbourne. It was more like London traffic. That was the case of some little district where the population had developed in another direction.

25221. What happened was, that fifteen miles of a line were laid, and the rails were removed?—That was, perhaps, Mr. Ross's line, but it would be giving the most erroneous notion of the development of Melbourne. It seems as ridiculous to me to mention it of Melbourne as it would be to speak of such a thing about London.

25222. Tell me this; we had before us three or four weeks ago, Mr. Davies who was the manager for a good many years of the Western Australian lines, and this is what he said in answer to a question of mine:—"If I correctly understand your position it is this, that comparing Australia with Ireland, the goods rates are higher in Australia than in Ireland, the passenger rates are higher, and there are fewer concessions of special fares—is that right"?—"That is right"?—That is contrary to my experience. It may be that in Western Australia railway development is very expensive and slow.

25223. The Western Australia railways pay better than in any other colony?—That may be so. It is not connected with any other colony by rails.

25224. I was asking him not about Western Australia, but about Australia, and that was his answer. I suppose you would not agree with him?—Most certainly not. I paid for a subscription ticket two-fifths of what I pay here, and there are four times as many trains. Money is much dearer there than here. Everything is dearer there.

25225. I would be very much interested to see how you put that. Mr. Davies said that a shilling in Perth would go as far as one shilling and threepence! How would that strike you?—I would think that that proposition was decidedly wrong and that the disproportion was greater. People think nothing of a tram-fare of threepence in Melbourne. Most of the tram-fares in Melbourne are threepenny.

25226. Do you think, taking the country as a whole, that there is a fuller train service in Ireland than in Australia. That is what Mr. Davies thinks. A more full train service in Ireland?—Well, I would not think so. Certainly there is a much fuller service, as far as the suburban districts are concerned.

25227. Clearly so, for Melbourne is twice as big as Dublin?—It may be that, taking into consideration the whole. When I was in Australia, I had an office in Ballarat, and also had another office; I had to go to Beechworth, which is twenty miles from Albury.

25228. You spoke of the liberation of Irish capital. I gather that what you meant was that the British Government was to find the money, and to buy up the Irish railways?—Not British, sir; the United Kingdom.

25229. What I gather is that you meant them to find the money?—Yes.

25229A. But you would not leave them any share in the management?—Are we not an integral portion of your Empire, sir?

25230. I only want to understand what your point is?—My point is to remove the management of the railways from Westminster to Dublin, for I say that, without any ulterior reference, I object to the separation of the countries.

25231. We need not get into Home Rule. I just want to find out what your views are. You think that the Government of the United Kingdom ought to find the money?—Yes, I do.

25232. And that the management ought to be entirely in Dublin?—I do. I think it ought not to be in any way inspired by Westminster. I remember that on the occasion of a Railway Bill being promoted in England, some sapient legislator inquired how far Rathmines was from Skibbereen.

25233. Do you think you could answer that offhand?—It shows how ignorant he was of the place—of Rathmines and its neighbourhood. He thought that Rathmines was in the neighbourhood of the *Skibbereen Eagle.*

* The witness has since informed the Commission that the mileage is 4308·63, of which 3728·96 are main track, and 579·68 sidings.

25234. You know, of course, Mr. Geoghegan, we have had a great many witnesses here who have objected entirely to the railways being owned by the State?—Yes, but I should like to know what experience they have of State-owned railways, and what were their personal interests, and the interests of their immediate friends.

25235. That must stand on what they said for themselves, and also on their cross-examination. Take the question of the English railways. You know that four or five years ago, when the Midland Great Western Railway Company of England purchased the Northern Counties Railway, that was unopposed at Westminster?—Yes.

25236. You would not suggest that Belfast could not afford to fight them in Parliament?—I don't think that the interests or supposed advantages to Belfast are identical with those of Ireland, and, besides, Belfast and its very intelligent population were dealing with an existing state of things, and they might have been hopeless of State acquisition of the railways, and have said to themselves that, "as long as we are fighting like cat and dog here, and one does not kill the other, there is very little hope of development in the country."

25237. Would not that make some difficulty in the way of harmonious management of a State system?—I don't think so. When you have the whole thing unified, and the Railway Commissioners only interested in the country as a whole, I would say there would be no local battles, and no local interests would prevail. I would think there would be that much good sense among Irishmen.

25238. You think that Belfast would act harmoniously with the rest of Ireland?—I do. I have that hope.

25239. Just one other thing. Do you approve of the Australian system under which each State manages its own railways?—They are very effectively managed now. But remember that in Australia the five States are cheek by jowl with each other, and there is no channel between them.

25240. The frontier between them is only a line on the map?—That is all; and the River Murray.

25241. Do I gather that, under these circumstances, you think it desirable that there should be five separate systems?—I don't speak about five separate systems. Remember that you are dealing with an area three-quarters the size of Europe. Victoria is the size of Great Britain, and New South Wales is three times the size of France, and you must localise more there than here. The man who is thousands of miles away at Cape Darwin will not know what was being done at Port Jackson.

25242. You are dealing with a population equal to that of Ireland?—Yes.

25243. And you are quite clear there ought to be a unified railway system in Ireland?—I am.

25244. But you are not quite clear whether it would not be better for Australia if it had a unified system?—I did not say that at all.

25245. You have not decided views, either way?—The matter never presented itself to me for consideration until now, but, having given it consideration, my answer is that when we deal with three millions of square miles it is necessary for each of the States to look after and keep its own railways.

25246. But you don't see that in the case of Belfast or Cork there is anything to be said against a unified system?—I don't think there is anything to be said as between Belfast and Cork. I am clearly of opinion—and I am sure that every person who had the knowledge I have would clearly be of opinion—that it would be for the advantage of everyone in Ireland to have all the railways in Ireland acquired by the State.

25247. You spoke of the County Courts having jurisdiction to settle disputes?—Yes.

25248. Have you read the recent Dublin case?—I read it, and I read also Judge Madden's judgment.

25249. Do you think that a County Court could deal with a case of that sort?—I am certain that Judge Adams, for instance, could deal with a case of that sort, or Judge Overend, or Judge Wakely. They are men who would surprise you for their ability and impartiality. They are not personal friends of mine, though I know them professionally.

25250. I want to know if you think that the machinery of a County Court could deal adequately with questions of the kind?—Yes, sir. But one suggestion I would make is this, that all our tribunals should have a shorthand writer attached to the court. It cuts down counsel's expenses to one-fourth, and work is done in one day in place of four. We always have an accredited shorthand writer in Australia. You have it here, too, in the Irish Bankruptcy Courts. You have it also in the Probate Court, with the result that in place of the judge's supervision being withdrawn from the case, and concentrated on his defective notes you always get the right questions and answers.

25251. We must not attempt an economical battle here. You think that the County Courts would be able to deal with a complicated case like that one that was before Judge Madden?—I am very certain that a large proportion of them would be most competent.

The certainty of the County Courts being suitable substitutes for the present Railway and Canal Commission Court contended.

25252. Don't suppose that I am questioning the ability of Judge Adams or of Mr. "A" or Mr. "B" or any of the County Court Judges?—I quite understand that, sir.

25253. Have you had any experience of County Courts?—Yes.

25254. They are rough and ready; a case lasts three-quarters of an hour, and then the judge goes on to the next?—I do not know that they are that at all.

25255. Well, they are prompt?—That's no harm. It is brought to the poor man's door.

25256. Do you think that if you put a case like this Dublin case before them it would not upset the whole of the judges' circuit list and everything else?—Undoubtedly it would be a great dislocation; but how frequently would it occur? It would be a dislocation of the ordinary business, but he would be competent to get through it. The fact of a tribunal being so near would prevent infringements of the law, which no railway company observes.

25257. Don't you think it would make a great many more cases?—There might be a few test cases to feel the pulse of an individual judge.

25258. You would have to feel the pulse of each judge?—I don't think so.

25259. And different judges would decide in different ways?—They follow each other's decisions, and their decisions are reported when they are of any novelty.

25260. *Mr. Sexton.*—Such intricate complications could only arise under a system of private ownership?—Clearly.

25261. The legal questions that would arise under a State system would be comparatively simple?—There would be none except you were suing for injury to goods or body.

25262. *Mr. Acworth.*—The State could commit any undue preference that it liked, and the judiciary would be powerless?—You can sue the Commissioners.

The remedy available to the public in case of dissatisfaction with State-owned railway management.

25263. You could sue your Commissioners if you lost your portmanteau or if your finger was crushed by a door?—Yes, and your executors could.

25264. But you don't say that you could go into a law court and sue the Commissioners for putting on a rate?—No.

25265. The rate has a statutory force?—Your remedy would be this. If there was such a thing as irregularity, the whole rates having been made out for the purpose of getting an absolute equality and giving advantage to none, the remedy would be to level down—that is the principle they follow. If you find that by some inadvertence, any local people have an advantage, or have reason to complain of a preference—I have never known such a thing to occur in Victoria—but if you wanted to show that a district was not well served there would be an inquiry and the Press would be there.

25266. In other words, Mr. Geoghegan, we will assume that the Railway Commissioners are always right, and then no question would arise; but that if they do what is wrong and make rates that you do not like, you would have to lump it?—You could go before them and have a question asked in the House and you would have the Press.

Extreme improbability of irregularities in management under State control.

25267. You could no more sue them than you could the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he put the income-tax up to a figure that you did not like?—No; but what I want to impress on you is, that when the State owns all the railways, no influence would be exerted to tempt them from the rigid line of rectitude. They have no interest to serve but that of the public.

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25268. Let us assume the rectitude. You know where Newcastle is?—Yes.

25269. You reach Newcastle from Sydney by land and water?—Yes.

25270. The rates from Sydney to Newcastle are lower than the rates from Sydney to points short of Newcastle?—Yes.

25271. Do you think the people who are short of Newcastle like that?—No. I don't know so much about New South Wales, but there is an enormous traffic by water to Newcastle.

25272. And the competition by water brings down the railway rate to Newcastle?—You tell me so, sir, and I accept what you say as fact.

25273. That was given in evidence before us last week?—Well, that is in New South Wales. I know something about all the railways except those in Queensland and New Zealand; but of Victoria I can speak from experience, and I am entirely in favour of State management.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

25274. With regard to the question of rates. I understood you to say that according to your experience the rates in the several States of Australia are lower than those in this country?—That's my experience. I don't know anything about goods. Of course you know that in France they spend thirty millions on canals and rivers which carry stuff at a seventh of a penny a mile.

25275. You spoke with regard to the absence of canal and river communication in Australia?—Yes.

25276. You have experience of this country?—Yes.

The desirability and effect of canal competition with railways.

25277. Do you attach any great value to the existing system in this country, where you have canals and railways in many cases running parallel to each other, or close alongside each other—do you think that that is for the benefit of the country: canals, in many cases, where they are not in contact with railways, are important where the distance is great, and there is a large volume of traffic to be carried; but my point is, do you think that in a country like Ireland, where the distances are short, and the volume of traffic limited, and where you have, as a matter of fact, railways and canals running alongside each other, and entering into competition with each other; the effect of such competition being that an agreement or understanding is arrived at between the railway company and the canal company regulating the rates—do you think that a satisfactory state of things?—Well, though they should be in different hands, or even in the same private hands, I should think it a very great injury to the country.

25278. As at present administered?—As at present administered.

25279. It must be an injury?—As at present administered, I say it is an injury to the country.

25280. I don't know if you followed the evidence given before the Canal Commissioners?—I generally glanced through it.

The evidence of Sir Alexander Binney, on the subject before the Canals Commission.

25281. Did you see the evidence given by Sir Alexander Binney, the distinguished civil engineer speaking after forty years' experience?—I was very much surprised at his evidence.

25282. He went so far as to say that according to his experience, canals not only in this country, but in Continental countries, are of very little benefit unless they are the means of placing either a coal field or a manufacturing district, or a very large and important inland town in connection with a seaport?—That statement of his I dissent from. It is contrary to the experience of France, Germany, America, and elsewhere.

25283. I think he gave an instance of a canal in Brittany, a magnificent work, running alongside a railway—the only instance in France in which a railway and a canal run parallel—and he said that though the canal is a magnificent engineering work, it is practically of very little utility from a commercial point of view—that even in France, with its large mineral and agricultural produce, this particular canal was of very little practical benefit?—As I understand Sir Alexander Binney, he is a railway partizan.

Chairman.—Well, I think you may say that you don't agree wtih him.

Witness.—I don't agree with him. The late Sir Richard Griffith strongly recommended the development of the Irish canals.

25284. You would not be in favour of public money being spent on the canal system of Ireland unless the railways were taken over by the State and public money spent on them?—I would not like to say that, for Sir Richard Griffith strongly advised the improvement of the canal system down to Leitrim. I would not like to put my opinion against that of an expert as to the propriety of a particular canal.

25285. It is very unlikely that we shall see any further construction of canals in this country?—I am only talking of the improvement of the present system, which is very much wanted; the improvement of the waterways of the country, if they are to be utilised at all—but would it be fair for public money to be spent on bettering those waterways and putting them into an improved position for competing with the railways unless you gave the railways the same advantage?—I don't think it would be fair to the private proprietors of those railways now.

25286. You would not think it fair that the railways should be penalised by having competitors put in a more favourable position?—I don't think it would be just.

25287. And in a country like Ireland, where the staple, or as a matter of fact, the only industry is and must always be agriculture, do you consider that there is room for both railways and canals?—I don't agree with you at all in that, sir.

25288. Allow me to ask you a question—where agriculture is at present the staple industry, doesn't the cost of transit form a very important element in estimating the cost of production?—Yes—the cost of production and delivery.

25289. The cost of putting it on the market?—Yes.

25290. Under such circumstances, is it of any use giving the tenant proprietor or new occupier an economic rent, an improved agricultural education, and helping him in other directions if at the same time he is handicapped by heavy transit rates—would not these advantages be nullified if he is handicapped by heavy rates in putting his produce on the market?—It is absolutely inconsistent.

25291. You are aware that the Department of Agriculture has always had power to aid the carriage of agricultural produce?—Yes, to some extent.

25292. They have the power at any rate?—Yes.

25293. Are you aware that the late Vice-President of the Department, Sir H. Plunkett in giving evidence before the Canal Commission, stated that, in his opinion, had the funds of the Department permitted it, they could not have been spent in a better way than by giving direct pecuniary assistance in cheapening transit facilities?—I was not aware he said that.

25294. You agree that money might be profitably spent in that direction?—I don't see how it could be without injustice to the present proprietors of the railways.

25295. He meant that in certain cases, if funds permitted it, he would be prepared to help or to subsidize the railway companies so that they should not charge the individual producer a high rate. That, I think, was his idea?—I think that nothing would benefit the small farmer more.

25296. It would be a legitimate employment of public funds under such circumstances?—It would be legitimate if it did not affront justice. I think it might be unfair to the proprietors of the railways as at present constituted.

25297. Assuming that my contention is right, it would not be unfair, because the railway company's receipts would still be the same, the only difference being that whereas at present the whole cost of transit is borne by the producer, a certain proportion would then be borne by public funds?—They are in the receipt of money, and there might be a rival line.

25298. Oh dear, no. We have heard a good deal latterly about the spirit of industrial enterprise and the awakening of the country. Would it not be good policy on the part of the State to foster and encourage such a spirit, by the removal of all obstacles to it, and by giving every facility possible towards the re-creation of a spirit that has been so long extinct?—Every practical assistance.

25299. Would it not also be a further incumbent duty on the part of the State to do so, bearing in mind that in the past the industries of the country

and the industrial attitude of the people have been unfortunately, destroyed and killed by the hostile tariffs which in past years were levelled against the industries of this country?—Undoubtedly. It would only be an act of partial restitution.

25300. And when people say that you have no business to subsidize the industries of this country without doing the same to those of England isn't it a fact that up to the time of free trade the rising industries of England were assisted in every conceivable manner by State assistance, and by hostile tariffs directed against other countries?—That is so.

25301. That is a sufficient answer to any argument against such a policy as I have indicated?—It is; and I don't think they would publicly debate the question.

25302. You spoke of the absence of scientific mining research as against mere superficial investigation?—That is a fact. Before I came here I inquired at the Department as to whether the opinion was well founded.

25303. Isn't it a fact, with regard to the coalfield in the County of Antrim, that, a year or two ago, when inquiry was made by a geological commission, evidence was given by experts of the Department that they believed there was a very valuable and extensive coalfield in the County of Antrim?—They always have known it, and they always have said it, but they are not allowed to publish these things. There are fifty millions of tons of proved workable coal.

25304. Are you aware that that commission said that it was exhausted, and that inquiries satisfied them that there was no coal?—Before this Commission.

25305. No, not before this Commission—a commission that sat a couple of years ago?—I was surprised to hear of the things that were reported by Sir Richard Griffith. He made four reports on the coalfields of Ireland. He says it is quite wrong to suppose that there is any scarcity of coal in Ireland. He reported respecting Munster, Connaught, Leinster, and Ulster, and he says that there are 200 million tons of coal proved to be in existence in the Leitrim fields alone—the best anthracite coal in the United Kingdom.

25306. The reports made by Mr. Hull and others seemed to indicate that there was no coal at any great depth from the surface, and it was entirely owing to the knowledge and ability of one of the Department's mining experts that the truth was ascertained. He insisted on the matter being threshed out; and in consequence of his reports that coalfield is now being developed; and every credit should be given to the Department for the manner in which they brought the fact under notice. That fact, however, only emphasises still further your point as to the absolute necessity for a scientific examination of and research into the mineral deposits generally of the country?—Yes, and I may say about that that Mr. Alexander M'Henry, one of the officers of the Geological Survey of Ireland, says that for years they endeavoured to persuade the officials of England to lend them a boring plant to put down on the banks of Lough Neagh.

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25307. Are you aware that a neighbour of mine, Mr. Prior Wandesforde, incurred a very heavy expense in boring operations?—Yes, and Sir Richard Griffith years ago gave great attention to this matter.

25308. You say that in Australia, under such circumstances, the State would conduct such investigations?—Yes, and would carry them out for the benefit of the country at large.

Australian State methods of dealing with mining development

25309. I suppose if a valuable deposit of coal were found, the individual on whose property it was would be called on to make some return for the expense to which the Government was put in establishing the fact that there was coal?—Sometimes they will ask the proprietor of the land benefited to make a contribution towards the expense of the test.

25310. Would they be called on to make any contribution in the nature of a royalty if coal should be developed?—I have never known that; but a very large area of the country is public domain, and mining and other leases are issued, and if they are not worked, you or I may go in and say—"this man is shepherding the land, or is not working the mine. Give it to me and I will work it." The thing is not allowed to be neglected.

25311. As regards undue preference, such a thing would not be likely to occur if the railways were amalgamated and placed under State control?—I believe not. I think it would be impossible.

Equitable treatment of individuals and districts to follow from State-ownership of the railways.

25312. Another advantage of such a system would be that trade would not—as it is undoubtedly at present—be diverted from the smaller to the larger seaports?—I believe it would galvanise this country into life.

25313. You appreciate my point. At present you consider that the smaller ports and the smaller lines are unduly affected?—They are starved.

25314. And that such ports are justly entitled to the traffic in their immediate vicinity, and would get that traffic under a system of State ownership?—They would get equal treatment under State ownership.

Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, M.P., examined by the Chairman.

25315. We know, Mr. Jordan, that you are a member of Parliament, and you appear on behalf of the Fermanagh County Council?—Yes.

25316. Are you a member of the Council?—I am.

25317. And you appear also on behalf of the Urban District Council of Enniskillen?—Yes.

25318. Of course you are interested in the trade of the district?—I am, sir.

25319. And you are pretty well acquainted with the railways of the district?—Yes.

25320. And I suppose you are satisfied with the rates and charges in operation on these railways?—Indeed I am not.

25321. You are not?—Oh, not at all.

25322. Where do you conduct your particular business?—At Enniskillen—the county town.

25323. Have you been long in business there?—Upwards of fifty years.

25324. Then, you are pretty well acquainted with the railway charges?—I know all about the manœuvres of railway charges; but I didn't come here to give you particulars of them, for you have had three or four persons from Enniskillen who have given you details of the railway charges.

25325. Very well, I won't ask you any questions about the rates and charges; I understand you have come to speak chiefly about the system of management?—Yes.

25326. Tell us, in your own words, what your ground of complaint is. I suppose you deal with the Great Northern?—Yes, and the Sligo and Leitrim Company.

25327. Tell us what you have got to say of the management of these lines?—I think that, with the exception of having no railway whatever, I know of nothing more antagonistic to the progress and development of Ulster than the management of the Great Northern Railway. I disagree with the management of that railway for the last fifty years.

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25328. Of course, that is easily said, but can you tell us why you disagree with the management—can you give us any reason?—The management, in my opinion, since I knew anything about it, has been most arbitrary, and carried on in the most supercilious manner in relation to the imports and exports, and rates and fares.

25329. Without going into detail, you think that with regard to rates and facilities the public have not been as well served as they ought to have been?—I don't think they have. I remember before the railway was opened between Dundalk and Enniskillen. From Derry to Enniskillen was the first line opened, and from Dundalk to Enniskillen was made and opened afterwards. That was in 1852. They were separate undertakings; and afterwards there was the Ulster railway. After a time the Ulster and the other two short sections got amalgamated, and they were worked together. The first manager that I remember of the line from Enniskillen to Derry was a rather decent, mercurial sort of man, a Mr. Dawson. He got out, and we lost sight of him, and then we had Mr. Shaw.

The management of the G. N. (I.) Ry. condemned.

25330. I remember him well, he was manager of the Ulster Railway?—He got the management of the amalgamated lines; but whether Mr. Plews got it after that I don't remember.

Colonel Plews.—Mr. Shaw was never anything but

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district manager; he was manager of the Ulster line, and he left at the amalgamation.

25331. *Chairman.*—Then, you were secretary of the whole lot, and then you became General Manager?

Colonel Plews.—Yes.

25331A. *Chairman.*—You see, Mr. Jordan, I know something about Irish railways?—Evidently you do; but whether that is to the advantage of the Inquiry I cannot tell.

25332. Are you dealing with your personal and private opinion of the management, or have you reason to believe that there is a general complaint of the management?—There is a general complaint by all traders.

25333. Have the traders any difficulty in bringing their complaints before the railway management?—Nothing could be more difficult. I have been on several deputations to the managers, and I say that I would rather, to-morrow, approach Mr. Balfour, Mr. Gladstone, or Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, than Mr. Plews or Mr. Shaw. You would be received with more courtesy by them, whether Whig or Tory. These managers, in my opinion, acted as if they considered the people of Ireland, and Irish traders, were only fit subjects to be trampled on, and treated with the greatest possible discourtesy and disrespect.

Discourtesy in dealings with traders alleged against the management of the G. N. (I.) Ry. Co.

25334. Does that sort of thing continue down to the present?—It continues, in some cases, nearly to this day. I don't say that it is as bad as it was.

25335. That is, since the amalgamation?—Yes; since the amalgamation; that is what I am talking about.

25336. Have you carried your complaint any further, and made it to the Directors?—We carried it further than that. We carried it to the House of Commons; and I recollect I was compelled, unwillingly—I am not an active Parliamentarian—to oppose one of the Great Northern Company's Bills in order to get a look in; to have something to say, and I opposed the Bill on sanitary and other grounds, that is, want of accommodation all over the line. It was in the time that Mr. Peel was Speaker, and Lord Courtney Deputy Speaker. I appealed to them to give me assistance in order to bring this conduct of the Great Northern Railway Company before the House of Commons. They were very kind and courteous, and we got a fair hearing, and we got considerable concessions.

The assistance of the House of Commons invoked.

25337. Talking of sanitary arrangements, you allude to the stations I suppose?—Yes, to the stations and to lavatory compartments on the trains.

25338. And you say there has been considerable improvement of late years?—Yes, since that time; because immediately afterwards they set about reforms, and there was a good deal of improvement. The Bill went rather against them.

Improvements in the sanitary arrangements of the stations and carriages in recent years.

25339. Then, there has been considerable improvement since that time?—It was pressed upon them. You are leaving out that they were compelled.

25340. And the action you took brought about these improvements?—Yes; but not to the whole effect. I have seen deputations of merchants of Enniskillen go over to the railway station to wait upon Mr. Plews, and he and Mr. Shaw kept those large deputations of respectable men outside their office, on the platform, waiting. And they had to wait their pleasure. They did not attend to the people, who did large business with the railway, and gave it large funds.

25341. In fact, large customers of the railway?—Yes.

25342. That is years ago?—Yes, years ago; but I don't know whether there would be any improvement now.

25342A. There was an interregnum, I understand—the period when Mr. Robertson was General Manager?—I'll come to that. In striking contrast with the management, which I have indicated, we had had for a short time, I regret to say, another manager, Mr. Robertson, who combined the traits of a gentleman, a diplomat and a business expert—one who was not above his business, but who heard and investigated complaints, and tried to smooth matters between the paying public and the greedy railway company. He was taken from the Highland Railway, in Scotland; and he was afterwards taken from our company by the Board of Works to manage their very involved business, and then he was taken away to investigate the working of the railways of India.

Tribute to the late Mr. T. Robertson's ability and courtesy when General Manager of the G. N. (I.) Railway.

25343. He was sent out to make a special report on the Indian railways, and he was appointed a member of this Commission, but the poor fellow died?—I would have been delighted to see him here, because he could bear out everything I say. It was a pleasure to do business with him, while, at the same time, the railway lost no money. Civility pays well, and it is, at the same time, cheap.

25343A. It is. Those are maxims that we all agree with?—We have another grievance against the Ulster lines——

25344. *Chairman.*—You mean the Great Northern, I suppose; or do you mean the Lough Swilly and Leitrim as well?—Oh, no. I mean the Ulster line, the Great Northern.

25345. You have got something to say about claims?—Yes. They refuse all, or nearly all, claims for lost or damaged goods. *Non-possumus* is their motto. They write us—"We cannot allow anything; it is your own fault, or the fault of the stars; but never ours."

25346. That's the construction you put upon their reply to your demand?—Yes; and there is a continuous repetition of it.

25347. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is it a printed form?—Oh, no.

25347A. *Chairman.*—That is the interpretation Mr. Jordan puts upon their reply.

(*Witness*).—When we ask them to discharge these claims, small or great, and they refused, and we take them into court, they are prepared to litigate nearly every sixpence worth of claim against the public.

25348. They fight it out in the courts?—Yes, every sixpence, or nearly so; and when they are sued they bring a host of employees into court as witnesses in order to get a verdict by the very ponderousness of piling up evidence. That is what we find.

25349. Have you ever sued them?—I think it is a great hardship to be compelled to go into court when people are doing business with each other every day in the week. I have let scores of claims, great and small, slide rather than bother going to court for every trifle. My idea is that when a claim is sent in they ought to have some skilled official who would investigate it, and if the claim is a just and fair one, I think the company ought to pay, and if it is an unfair claim, then litigate it.

25350. But don't they take that course?—They don't.

25351. Do you mean to say that if a claim is made the railway company don't send to you to ascertain the extent and nature of the claim?—They might send occasionally. They repudiate the claim altogether.

25362. Are the goods carried at owner's risk?—On ordinary conditions. They are public carriers, and they ought to carry the goods and have no owner's risk.

25362A. So they do. I mean that there are Company's risk rates, and owner's risk rates, and you as trader can elect which you will have?—I would throw the onus upon them to deliver the goods.

25353. In other words, you would do away with the owner's risk rate?—Yes, I would do that. I think they have no right to have two classes of rates at all.

25354. What do you say about porterage?—I say that they have a deficiency of porters to handle goods at the goods stations—not enough of men to do the business. At Enniskillen they are far too short of goods platform porters.

25355. Is that a general thing, or merely a thing that happens on special occasions?—I am complaining generally.

25356. Is it only occasional?—It is sufficiently frequent to make it inconveinent. We send our carters and horses to the stations for our goods, and they come back to us very often saying that there are no men at the stations to help to load the carts.

25357. Your team is delayed?—Our team is delayed, and that is the complaint of the whole town. A very short time ago I was appointed by a meeting of business people to go over to the railway station and see the stationmaster to see if we could get some amendment, and I must say that there was but little improvement after I had been over.

25358. You saw the stationmaster?—Yes; I saw

him, and he is a civil, genial fellow, if he was not under control.

25359. What you say is that he has not sufficient men to do the work?—Yes. The worst of this supercilious management is that its tone and temper has percolated down through the different classes, even to the railway porters. When you speak to them about anything they say that Mr. Plews won't allow this to be done or that to be done. The station-masters generally are civil and respectably-conducted men; but I say that in the interest of the railway itself facilities should be given for the discharge of goods.

25359A. No doubt?—And it would leave them plenty of room, and there would not be so much friction. It is very unpleasant to have friction with public officials of that class.

25360. With regard to passenger accommodation, have you anything to say?—I have not much to say. You have already got almost everything that is to be said from witnesses from Enniskillen, and I don't want to trouble my head with details. I don't feel very much inconvenience myself; I am not able to travel in a very high class. I get into a third-class carriage and get on fairly well.

25361. We have it in evidence from your district that it would be a great convenience if third-class carriages were provided with lavatory accommodation?—Yes. I claim that third-class passengers ought to be taken proper care of, as they contribute most of the cash to the companies, and I say that they have not been properly cared for. There are no lavatories in the third-class carriages on our line, and not many in the other classes. Last year there was an excursion party of nearly a thousand people, members of a sodality in Enniskillen, up to Dublin, and there was no lavatory accommodation on the train from one end of it to the other.

25362. *Lord Pirrie.*—From Enniskillen to Dublin? Yes.

25363. *Chairman.*—Isn't that being gradually remedied?—It is a slow remedy.

25364. As they got new rolling stock the carriages are being provided with lavatory accommodation?—Oh, yes.

25365. And all the main line trains have got it, haven't they?—I'll give you some more evidence. Some time ago I was going from Enniskillen to Belfast, and when I got to Clones I had to change carriages. I examined every carriage at Belfast, first, second, and third, and on the whole train there was not a lavatory compartment.

25366. That was on a branch line?—It was from Belfast to Clones. There was no lavatory accommodation on the whole train.

25367. That was a stopping train?—Yes, it stopped.

25368. Then there were sufficient opportunities to get out at the stations?—Not so much. People don't like to risk losing their train. I consider that the third-class passengers don't get accommodation commensurate with the amount of money they pay. They are herded together in the carriages.

25369. But they pay considerably less than the other two classes?—But you should not kill a man because he has not money enough to pay a higher fare.

25370. But I suppose you know, after all is said and done, that lavatory accommodation in trains is a recent improvement on railways?—Why not keep abreast of the times—what's the use of injuring a man's health.

25371. You will find such accommodation in all the corridor carriages on the main line?—There are no corridor carriages on the side lines. Why not put it in all carriages? It would not take so much.

25372. Nobody will disagree with you when you say that it would be an immense convenience if every third-class carriage had lavatory accommodation. That is what you advocate?—Yes; I have done it in the House of Commons and at home. I do think that the public ought to get proper accommodation in every respect. I think it is intolerable that the Irish purchaser and consumer, the small farmer, and others should be taxed to the extent that they are, with paying high railway charges. In proof of the contentious and arbitrary attitude with which I have charged the management of this railway I cite the fact that before the amalgamation with the Ulster, the Dundalk and Derry lines, Mr. Plews refused to concede to an influential deputation of Enniskillen merchants that waited on him any modification of the rates for carriage of goods, of which we reasonably complained. We felt we were unreasonably and unfairly handicapped, and we resolved to start, and we did start, what was ironically named the cart railway. We bought goods in Belfast, and then the Ulster Company met us reasonably by carrying goods from Belfast to Omagh on the one hand, and to Clones on the other, and we hired horses and carts, and drew meal, flour, and other goods from Omagh and Clones to Enniskillen, a distance of twenty miles. You can see how this affected goods and trade. In the meantime this manager, Mr. Plews, drew similar goods at much lower rates on this line for two or three merchants in the town of Enniskillen in order to induce them not to join the combination, and to keep them fighting with us. Such was the treatment received by the men whose traffic helped to support the line. I don't think it should be in the power of any railway company to do that—to expose people's goods and commerce to the elements by such a mode of doing business as that. I don't think you could say that that is fair.

25373. The reason I don't ask you about it is that these incidents are somewhat ancient—probably thirty years ago?—I don't think so. It makes an indelible impression upon my mind that merchants should be treated in that way, and there is very little improvement.

25374. *Mr. Sexton.*—Is there any carriage of that kind done now, for a considerable distance, where there are railways?—I don't know. The managers of this railway seem to have no country and no people. If they had a country, and were interested in its success, they would concede terms that would be reasonable. These people come over here from England; they don't belong to this country, and they don't care how they treat the people—except the respectable people of Belfast and Dublin.

25375. *Chairman.*—You said yourself that you got every facility from Mr. Robertson, who was not an Irishman?—There were some reforms; but he was not long enough here.

25376. But he was an Englishman?—No, he was a Scotchman, which is a very different thing.

25377. To put it shortly, what remedy do you suggest for all these things—are you of opinion that if the railways belonged to the State all these matters of complaint would be remedied?—I don't know; but I think we would have better justice.

25378. Are you in favour of State railways?—Yes; nationalisation.

25379. Managed by an authority in Ireland?—I think it should be composed of people representing the country.

25379A. To put it broadly—an Irish authority in Dublin to manage the railways?—Yes; an Irish authority, composed of a certain number of men from the provinces and from the railways. I would give the railway men a look in upon the Board—I don't like to call it a Board, there are so many Boards already. I would call it a Commission. And I think the British Government, who do the financing, ought to be represented. I think that the country, railway experts, and the British Government associated—a combination of that sort would be a very effective committee.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

25380. But the whole committee should be amenable to Irish opinion?—Oh, certainly—yes. What other opinion would you have?

25381. Your mind is clear on that?—Yes. I would not exclude railway representatives from the management.

25382. You would have the several interests involved represented?—I would.

25383. But you would take care to secure that the acts of that authority would be in accordance with Irish opinion?—I would. I don't see what you want, unless it represents Irish opinion.

25384. And be subject to Irish opinion?—Quite so. And I think we would not have to wait outside very long, if we asked for an audience, if we had such a committee as that. I recollect that we sent a deputation from Enniskillen over to see the British Treasury about rates that we had overpaid on Government buildings. We had a pretty fair sum against them. We were respectfully received, and Sir John Hibbert was Secretary to the Treasury. He was a very civil old man. The only persons that were antagonistic were the members of the Treasury; but Sir John helped us, and we got the money.

25385. The distinction you draw is that the British Treasury is very hard, but sometimes civil, whereas

July 8, 1907.

Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, M.P. Representative of the Fermanagh County Council and Enniskillen Urban District Council.

Instance of goods carted twenty miles to Enniskillen to avoid the payment of excessive rates.

Nationalisation of the Irish railways and control by an Irish Central Authority advocated.

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the Great Northern Railway management is very hard and very uncivil?—Quite so. When we went to ask Mr. Plews for a concession on what we thought to be very high rates we were, metaphorically, pitched out. We were so chagrined that we held a meeting in the town, and it was then we started the "horse railway."

Examined by Mr. Acworth

25386. What you have been describing, Mr. Jordan—I take it from you—the carrying of goods for one man, say, at 10*s.*, while charging another man 12*s.*, is illegal, and that, you say, has been going on for a great number of years?—It was far more than that, sir. I never heard it was illegal. If we heard it was illegal we would try to remedy it. But the railway company had nothing to do but to withdraw the concession, and let the three men who had been getting it go into the one lot.

The illegality of preferential rates.

25387. But a different rate to one man is illegal?—I think there is a great deal of it done.

25388. How can it be stopped if people won't take steps to stop it?—I think there are preferences still.

25389. The difficulty is to see how it could be stopped?—I don't know of my own knowledge, because I never got any concession from the railway. I would take it if I got it; but I would not lower myself to go to them and ask for a concession; I would rather pay.

25390. I am sure. *Apropos* of what Mr. Sexton asked you, you spoke of having a Council, containing certain representatives of the Government, as finding the money, and certain representatives of Irish interests?—Yes.

The suggested Irish Railway Nationalisation Scheme.

25391. Supposing they don't agree?—Well, there ought to be an umpire—some person to settle the thing between them. But I don't think the Government would have to find any money. I think all that we would have to do is to guarantee so much per cent., and when that is agreed upon—say 3 or 4 per cent.—we can get the money; but not to pay 6½ or 5½ per cent., as this Great Northern line is paying. Why should they, in this poor country, exact such tariffs as to pay enormous salaries and expenses? Why should the shareholders of this line get 6½ per cent. on their capital, and, above all, why should thousands in the year be extracted from the hard earnings of the people to pile up a non-productive reserve fund? It is intolerable that the Irish producer and consumer should be so taxed by the whims and greed of the directors of this company. I am at a loss to know what it is for. Extensions and other new and heavy expenditure should be met by the shareholders—the owners—and not by an impoverished people and country. When they exact from us such excessive sums, the least they ought to do would be to make the passengers as comfortable as possible.

Financial proposals.

25392. You have mentioned a 4 per cent. guarantee, but, supposing Irish interests wanted reduced rates—supposing the people who represent Ireland on this committee should say that it would be for the benefit of Ireland to reduce the rate, what then?—If they reduced the interest to 2¾ per cent. it would lower the rate at once; but I don't see why they should get 6½ per cent. There is no such dividend for Consols and other stocks.

25393. But you would have to pay on the 6½ per cent. basis?—I think they would be glad to get 3½ per cent. stock guaranteed by the Government.

25394. What would happen supposing the financial representatives and the representatives of local interests disagreed?—You leave out the third party; and if there was any good in the third party, they would bring them together.

25395. Which party is that?—The railway people. They would have a bigger interest.

25396. I don't understand what you mean by railway people?—The representatives of the railway companies.

25397. You are not proposing to buy out the railways?—Oh, dear, no. We don't want that, we only want the Government guarantee on the proceeds of the amalgamated stock of all the railways.

25398. In order to make money for improvements?—Yes; and if there was any loss I think the country ought to bear it—if there was any loss.

25399. And your view is that a sum of money, £200,000 or £300,000, would be of great benefit to the country?—Yes.

25400. Supposing you had your own way in the matter, and that you had £200,000 or £300,000, would you spend it in reducing goods rates or passenger fares?—My dear sir, I could not consider what I would do, for I have not £200,000 or £300,000; but I think the goods would require it more than the passengers; but at the same time a little all round, and if we could have that much money it would be of great use to the country.

25401. You have no special views on that?—I have no special theories.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

25402. Are you aware that your evidence here is the first evidence that we have had against the civility and courtesy of the officials of the Great Northern Railway towards the public?—I don't think you had much information on the subject.

25403. We have had a great deal, but its trend has been to show that while many complained of high rates and fares, they had little or nothing to say against the treatment accorded them by the railway officials, from whom they always received the utmost sympathy?—We have no experience of that in our part of the world, and if they do not complain of Mr. Plews, then they must be expecting something from him.

25404. You have given a great many instances of a general character as to the disadvantage that you suffer from for want of facilities by the Great Northern Railway. You referred to the Sligo and Leitrim Railway, what do you say of them?—Only for them we could not do business in the town of Enniskillen.

25405. Are you speaking of all this with personal knowledge?—Oh, yes; with a knowledge of the business.

25406. What traffic do you get by the Ulster Canal?—I don't say much about the Ulster Canal.

25407. It is in your proof?—We get our Liverpool and Glasgow goods by Sligo.

25408. With regard to third class traffic, you think that as it constitutes five times that of the other classes, and five times the amount in value, that it should be given greater consideration than it now receives?—I think so.

25409. Do you think any good would accrue if you lowered the second class fares, and tried to divert passenger traffic to the upper classes?—I wouldn't have any objection, for I travel second class; you know that fares are high in this country.

25410. And you think it would be an advantage?—Yes.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

25411. You have given such extraordinary evidence that I haven't much to ask of you. Do you think it should be compulsory to have lavatory accommodation on the trains, as it is to have smoking compartments?—I am bad evidence of that, as I don't smoke.

25412. You prefer lavatory accommodation?—I do.

25413. I take it you would make lavatory accommodation compulsory?—I would make lavatory accommodation compulsory.

25414. I agree with you. Now, as regards the civility matter, had you written to Colonel Plews asking for an appointment at any certain hour, or did you call on him in the ordinary way without notice?—I don't know any such person as Colonel Plews. I know Mr. Plews.

25415. Had you made an appointment with him to see him, say, at 12 or 1 o'clock?—The appointment would lie with him.

25416. We all of us have to make appointments. You would hardly have to wait, for you are a respectable-looking man?—I don't recollect having asked him to meet us at a certain hour, for if we did that it would be called presumption.

25417. Don't you consider that the manager of a railway deserves great credit for giving to the shareholders a 6 per cent. dividend?—I think he has no right to do that.

25418. It is his duty to the shareholders, and he would be blamed if he didn't do his duty?—I don't care a two-penny ticket who is to blame. They have no right to get that much, and they have no right to take it. Mr. Plews will do nothing in the world except for the directors.

25419. *Mr. Sexton.*—The way to get rid of that is by public ownership?—Yes.

25420. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Do you think you will get that from the Government?—It is a long way off.

25421. *Chairman.*—And when you get that £200,000 you will be happy?—I am sure Mr. Acworth is only joking.

Colonel R. G. Cosby, v.l. Representative of the Queen's County Co. Council.

25422. You are a Deputy-Lieutenant for the Queen's County?—Deputy-Lieutenant and Vice-Lieutenant for the Queen's County.

25423. And you appear on behalf of the Queen's County County Council?—The Queen's County County Council and inhabitants and residents in the neighbourhood of Stradbally.

25424. You have only really one particular subject to bring under our notice, I think?—With reference to a railway.

25425. First of all, what is the population of Stradbally?—Well, it was at one time between 1,700 and 1,800, and now it is only 930 odd.

25426. Then it was a place of moderate importance?—Before the railways were run by Maryborough and Athy.

25427. Was it a stopping place for the coaches?—Yes; it was the main road from Dublin to Cork, and it had the largest fairs in any part of Ireland.

25428. Cattle fairs?—Cattle fairs. And now the fairs have disappeared altogether. It is a cattle-breeding county; and it is a great barley-growing county.

25429. How far are you from a railway station?—Five Irish miles from Maryborough and seven Irish miles, or nine English miles, from Athy. Everything has to be conveyed by road from Stradbally. Vicarstown, on the canal, is about four and a half or five miles from Stradbally; and everything has to be conveyed there by road from Stradbally.

25430. The barley and the malt is all carted?—And the stones from the quarries. Quarries have lately been opened on a very large scale.

25431. How many men are employed in these quarries?—From 90 to 100.

25432. Is it a good workable stone?—It is the very best stone. Mr. Kiernan, a Dublin contractor, has lately carried out a contract for £30,000; I think for building a memorial church at Myshall, in Carlow, twenty-three miles away from the quarries, and the stone has to be conveyed by a locomotive and trucks.

25433. *Mr. Sexton.*—By the road?—By the road. There are three large malthouses in the neighbourhood, which supply Messrs. Guinness, of Dublin, and, in addition to the barley that is malted there, Messrs. Norton buy a great deal of barley, and supply their other malthouses throughout the country from the neighbourhood of Stradbally.

25434. *Chairman.*—Is there any coal in the district?—It is within about nine miles—the Kilkenny coal. A few years ago we were in treaty to have a railway brought from Castlecomer, through Timahoe, by Stradbally, to Portarlington, where we hoped the coal would be put on the main line of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company for Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Dublin, and Athlone, when it would be on the Shannon. But now we are more concerned about having a railway direct ourselves, because if it was brought from the collieries to Stradbally it would be all the better still.

25435. The country is adapted for the making of a railway. Are there any great engineering difficulties in the way of making a railway?—From Stradbally to Portarlington it would be nearly level. Originally we had the line surveyed, and all the estimates taken; and in those days the proprietors—Major Close, who has since sold to the tenants, Lord Portarlington, who has since sold to his tenants, and myself—were willing to give the ground free on the condition that the tenants should be compensated. The line would now run from Stradbally to Portarlington through my property, a little of Mrs. Adair's, and what was lately the property of Lord Portarlington.

25436. Have you made any estimate of the cost?—£4,000 a mile.

25437. A single line?—A single line light railway, but a broad gauge. There should be no transfer of stock when we got to Portarlington to the main line. I went before Mr. Balfour, who was then Chief Secretary, and he said that, according to my showing, the line ought to pay. I said, "Yes, if once made. But the question is to make the line."

25438. And you think that this district would be considerably developed if a line were made?—Certainly. There are many signs which justify a sanguine belief that the experiment would prove a practical movement; but if there be any doubt about the policy of constructing railways, with the help of public money in poverty-stricken districts, where the elements of traffic are not on the surface, but have to be slowly developed, there can be none in the case of such a railway as that proposed from Stradbally to Portarlington.

25439. Would that take in the quarries?—It would be close to the quarries—within a mile of the quarries.

25440. The stone is now being carted?—Now being carted for Dublin, Carlow—all by road to the different stations.

25441. Carted to the nearest railway station?—It is carted now to the nearest railway station. We cannot cart it to the canal at present, because there is no crane there, and there is no means of putting the stone on the boat. The district which it takes in contains a vast and varied store of wealth, which, if facilities were afforded, might be drawn from with great benefit, not merely to the people within its ambit, but to those of Dublin, Cork, Galway, and other places, who would be able to carry on an active trade, and to interchange commodities on mutually advantageous terms. Coal is now carried by canal from Dublin to Vicarstown at 4*s.* 3*d.* per ton.

Reduction of railway rates, and the imposition of a tax on foreign goods producal le at home, recommended.

25442. You say 4*s.* 9*d.* in your proof?—4*s.* 3*d.* is the proper figure, while on the same canal it is carried to Athy, from four to five miles further on, at 4*s.*, because the Great Southern and Western Railway Company compete with them.

25443. And the railway charge is 4*s.*?—The railway charge to Athy is 4*s.* for a wagon of six tons. The rates are very high, indeed, both on the canal and on the railway. But I am quite aware that the railway directors are not able to lower their rates, if they wished to do so, in fairness to their shareholders. If rates were lowered, more agricultural produce could and would be sent by train and canal to the larger towns. Were the foreign competition to be reduced by a tax on what can be produced by the farmers, the extra production would be the means of profit to the various railways and canals, even if carried at a low rate. Were a central board of directors, with a representative or two on it from the various railway systems, to be formed, they could regulate everything now carried out by the numerous boards of directors.

25444. That points to the amalgamation of the railways under one system?—I am in favour of the State purchase of the railways, sir.

State Purchase and control by a central authority of the railways in Ireland advocated.

25445. You are in favour of the State purchase of the whole of the railways?—The whole of the railways.

25446. And you think that this particular district, and many others in Ireland of a similar character, might be developed to the advantage of the country if the State owned the railways?—I consider that the State should purchase the railways; that they should be managed by one central board, subject to Government control, which would give a uniform scale of rates and charges for the whole of Ireland, and that the railway should be worked in the interests of the general public.

Well now, really, there is no use in labouring the question. Your views are very explicit, and quite understood; and, therefore, I will leave it to Mr. Sexton, if he has anything to ask.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

25447. This is not the case of a poor district, Colonel Cosby; it is a populous and an active district?—You may call it so; but there is no enterprise, and there will be no capital to build a railway by the people.

The decline in the prosperity of Stradbally attributed to the absence of railway connections.

25448. It seems that Stradbally now is relatively worse off than it was before any of the railways was constructed?—Far and away worse. Its trade has gone—its people have gone. They have gone to the railways.

25449. You have now an empty street where the street used to be blocked by the fairs?—It used to be the best fair when I was a child. Now it is not even mentioned in the almanac.

25450. Before the railways were constructed Stradbally and other districts were upon an equal footing; but now other districts have got the advantage of the railways, and all that you have got is a disadvantage by reason of the railways?—By being inland a disadvantage from the railways.

25451. Your district is rich in natural resources. It has a great coal-field and good stone quarries?—And is a great barley-growing country.

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25452. Evidently the limestone is good if it can be used for churches and public buildings in the capital?—Some of the stone is being used in building churches in Dublin this minute.

25453. Then you have the cattle industry and barley growing, and you make lime?—And a great deal of timber, and, in addition to the cut-stone from the quarries, they burn lime also. And the rubble stone, which is put generally on one side now, might be utilised after being crushed in making roads in other parts of the country where there is no material at present.

25454. And the lime that you burn might be used as manure instead of some manures now imported?—Certainly.

Refusal of the G. S. &W. Rly. Company to construct a line from Stradbally to Portarlington although land offered free.

25455. Then your position is that all your products have to be carted before you can reach a railway, and all your supplies have to be carted before they can come to you, so that you are taxed both ways?—We are taxed both ways.

25456. I have been greatly struck by what you say, that you and other landed proprietors were willing to give the ground free. I have not heard of another case of that kind. But even that was not sufficient to obtain the line for the district—your offer of free land?—No; it seems not.

25457. You mentioned that the railway companies must be fair to the shareholders; but how is it that in the case of so thriving a district, and where observers so competent as yourself are satisfied that the line would be a practical success, that you cannot induce the Great Southern and Western Railway Company to take up the project?—They have not the means of doing it. They have not the capital.

25458. Oh, but if the line would pay, additional capital would involve no additional burden?—You would have to persuade the directors of that.

25459. I was assuming that the conviction of men like yourself would go far with the directors?—I am a shareholder in the railway now.

The case of the Portumna railway, now derelict owing to want of enterprise on the part of the G. S. & W. Rly.

25460. The Commission has heard of a case in that district where the Great Southern and Western Railway Company would not agree even to take over the line if it were made—a shorter line than this—unless they were guaranteed the working expenses?—At Portumna. I know the place well.

25461. That does not seem to indicate a very favourable attitude on their part?—The Great Southern and Western Company have got no money to lay out.

25462. The Great Southern and Western Company are well able to raise capital for any purpose they need. They can raise it every year—a great deal more than you want for this purpose. I understand from another proof here that one of the last Acts of the Irish Parliament was to authorise a grant of £40,000 for the construction of a canal to give this quarry water communication with the South of Ireland. Are you aware of that?—I have heard it. We at one time thought that we might be connected with the Grand Canal; but on taking the levels we found that we were ninety feet above it.

25463. The grant I mention was never applied?—No.

The present difficulty in getting further extensions of railways in Ireland urged as an argument for State purchase.

25464. It looks rather as, if the Irish Parliament continued, there would have been no need for this Commission at all?—We don't ask for £40,000; we only ask for about £32,000.

25465. If there is such difficulty in a district like Stradbally (so likely to make a line remunerative) in obtaining a line, what is the prospect, Colonel Cosby, in many other districts in Ireland, where the prospects are not so promising, of obtaining branch lines which are required for the development of the country?—I think it would be much wiser to make the lines where trade is evidently on the surface, you may say, than to try and develop a country where the resources have got to be found in the future.

25466. You are in favour of State purchase?—I am.

25467. Does it appear to you that if the railways were worked by a public agency—worked as a unit system—the question of transit, regarded as a question in which the whole country is concerned; that lines would then be made whether they were likely to pay or not, if they were likely to benefit the public and to perfect the whole system of railways?—There would have to be some guarantee that the lines would pay for the capital.

25468. If the question of transit is a question of national, and not merely of local interest, would it not be better that there should be a public agency with resources to provide lines, even though they might not be remunerative immediately, without laying a heavy burden upon the particular district through which the line might run—treating it as a national question?—As a national question I don't think you would be able to raise the money.

25469. I am assuming the existence of a public authority, with resources, which would treat the whole system as one, and which, if they had a profit upon one part of it, would apply that profit in providing other lines in districts where the profit might not exist. That would tend to the development of the country?—Where would the capital come from?

25470. I am assuming the existence, as in the case of Belgium or Australia, of resources drawn from the traffic receipts of the island as a whole?—And then expending the profit of one line for the benefit of another.

25471. Working the whole system upon the basis of paying the interest on the capital and then using the surplus for the benefit of the country as a whole, and for the provision of lines wherever they are required, without regard to the question whether a particular line would pay or not, and without laying a burden upon a particular district?—The surplus capital?

25472. The surplus receipts?—Where is the capital to come from to develop the country?

25473. We purchase, in the first instance, by the use of State credit and the issue of stock or by some authority in this country borrowing upon its own resources?—Then it would be under the State.

25474. In some form or another?—Yes; I would approve of the State. Were it not for the State the money would not be forthcoming at all.

25475. A State guarantee?—A State guarantee.

25476. In the event of a State guarantee and a unit system, would you see a better prospect of providing Stradbally and every other district with a line whether the line might pay immediately or not, provided the line was a public benefit and tended to perfect the railway system as a whole?—That would be taking advantage of the products of one part of the country for the benefit of another part.

25477. It would be treating the system as a unit, and the transit question as one of national importance?—If it was under State management, then the whole thing might be so done. And my argument would be that unless under State management you would not be able to find the capital.

25478. I contemplate State control in one form or another. But I suggest to you—and I think we agree—that whilst the provision of branch lines is a vital need of Ireland, that vital need is not at all likely to be satisfied except by administering the railways as a unit system, and working them under public control?—Under State management.

25479. That is what I mean by public control—an authority created by the State?—Yes.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

25480. You spoke, in answer to the Chairman, of State ownership being followed by low and uniform rates?—By lower uniform rates.

25481. What do you mean by uniform rates?—That the same rates should be struck according to the distance.

25482. I daresay you know that there has been a great suit before the Railway Commission lately in Dublin, in which the Great Southern and Western Railway and the English railways, and so on were concerned?—Yes.

25483. As you know, the Government, acting through the Railway Commission, has power, in certain cases, to fix the rates?—I believe so.

25484. And as you know in that case the Commissioners have decided that the rate from Clonmel through Dublin to London, for cattle, we will say, is to be lower than the rate from Dublin to London. That is not a uniform rate according to your view?—Carrying a further distance for the same money?

25485. Carrying a further distance for the same sum. That does not meet your views?—That is competition, I suppose.

25486. That is what the State says is the right thing to do, and you don't agree?—I would argue that if you carry goods 100 miles you ought to pay more than if you carry them 50.

25487. *Chairman.*—I think Colonel Cosby was dealing with the question of local rates in Ireland?—Yes. I am not an expert about the English railways.

25488. *Mr. Acworth.*—I only wanted to call your attention to the fact that there are difficulties and that the State does not always see its way to make a uniform rate?—A uniform rate according to the distance.

25489. Here is a case where the State very much departs from that principle?—I should say if they charge 5*s.* for carrying 100 miles they should charge 10*s.* for carrying 200 miles.

25490. I am putting it to you that here is the State represented by expert judges, who decide just the other way and make a charge of 5*s.* for 100 miles, and only 3*s.* 6*d.* for 150 miles. I don't wish to discuss it. I was only pointing out the difficulty?—I suppose it is rails *versus* steam boat.

25491. I think it is competition between the North Western and the Great Western. I won't discuss the reasons. But there is the difficulty. One may assume that the expert State officials were acting in what they thought the best interests of everybody?—Every man has a right to his own opinions. It is lucky we do not all agree.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POË.

25492. With regard to the limestone industry, have you any idea of the yearly output of the quarries?—No; Mr. Kieran, who is the contractor, will give evidence before you as to that. I could not tell you the output. There are from 90 to 100 men employed there every day, and it has all to be carted away by road.

25493. There is a great deal of machinery employed in working it up?—It is most beautiful limestone; it is all done with the chisel.

25494. Under the present conditions all that limestone has to be carted to Athy?—To Athy and Maryborough on cars.

25495. Does it not go to the canal?—No; there is no crane to put it into the boats.

25496. Does not the existing heavy traffic over the roads of the county entail a considerable extra cost for the upkeep?—Certainly. And the upkeep of the roads is put on the farmers. The malsters are only rated for the valuation of their places, and they pay nothing for the roads.

25497. The quarry industry has been there for the last two or three years?—Yes.

25498. Have you any idea whether the cost of the roads has gone up?—The contracts have been taken out for three or five years; and it would not be possible to say until fresh contracts are made.

25499. In connection with the Castlecomer mines, the county surveyor estimated some years ago that the upkeep of the roads in County Kilkenny cost 5*s.* 6*d.* a perch, and in the Queen's County 4*s.* 6*d.* a perch in consequence of the heavy coal traffic as against a normal expenditure of 2*s.* 6*d.* a perch. Would it be your opinion that the upkeep of the roads from the quarries to Athy, Maryborough, and Portarlington would also be proportionately increased, because of this heavy traffic?—Yes.

25500. And that the effect of constructing a railway would be to make a considerable saving in the road's upkeep?—In the county rates for making the roads.

25501. 40 to 50 per cent.?—I think so.

25502. That would be a very great boon to the farmers?—Yes; a very great boon to the farmers.

25503. Do I understand you to say that you would prefer a line from Castlecomer to Stradbally?—We should prefer a line from Castlecomer through Stradbally to Portarlington, but failing that we should like to have a line from Stradbally to Portarlington.

25504. One could hardly justify a line running from Stradbally and dividing the two existing railway lines. You would then have practically three lines?—There is a tremendous traffic between Castlecomer and Stradbally and Maryborough by road with coal.

25505. Have you any idea of the distance from Castlecomer to Portarlington?—About thirty statute miles.

25506. So that the cost of making the whole railway would come to £100,000. Of course that seems a pretty large grant to ask for. Would your district be prepared to give anything in the way of a baronial guarantee?—No; they would not.

25507. We had it in evidence that the Castlecomer people would be prepared to do what was reasonable?—The people in our district would not be willing to have a rate struck for a railway. They say they could not afford it.

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Colonel R. G Cosby, V.L. Representative of the Queen's County Co. Council.

25508. Do you think when there is a difficulty in finding money for the poor districts of the country that rich districts, such as yours, should claim to get a grant of public money without making some effort to contribute in some little degree?—Well, I cannot consider it a rich district at present. If the industries were more developed the country would be getting richer and richer.

25509. It is a rich district compared with the West?—Certainly, compared with many parts of Ireland.

25510. In the West they are not prepared to give further guarantees at present; but they have given considerable guarantees for railway extension, and penalised themselves, to a very large extent in the past?—They, at any rate, have shown that they were anxious to contribute where the State was willing to come to their assistance.

25511. You have given us the information that your particular district would not be prepared?—I have asked the question, and I was answered in the negative.

25512. You farm pretty extensively yourself?—Yes.

25513. And you know the capabilities of the district?—Yes.

The possibility of development of the Agricultural industries in Stradbally district.

25514. As a practical agriculturist do you consider that under any circumstances there is any great possibility of any material, any great development of the agricultural industry?—Around us immediately there is not very much grass. It is all tillage. Most of the farmers grow barley very largely because there is such a demand for it in the malthouses in the immediate neighbourhood.

25515. Is there any possibility of their materially increasing the production; they cannot get a great deal more out of the land than they do at present?—No; there is no grass land available to be ploughed.

25516. That would rather negative the prospect of any great growth of the agricultural industry in your district beyond what it is at present?—There are malthouses at Mountmellick, Athy, and Maryborough. There have been meetings of the farmers lately as regards the prices of their barley; and they approached Messrs. Guinness to know whether they could sell direct to them instead of selling through the malthouses. The price for barley is very small. I remember it 20*s.* a barrel, and lately it is only 13*s.* 9*d.* or 14*s.*

The production of barley a special industry in the district.

25517. We all know that the price of barley has very considerably decreased, and that anything that would cheapen the cost of putting the barley on the market would enable the farmer to get a better price and to do better business. The point is: knowing the amount of land available in your particular neighbourhood, and what is got out of it at present, do you think that the giving of low rates, which would undoubtedly benefit the producer, would lead to any very great increase of production of the barley and other cereal crops of the country?—They would have a larger market to supply, and they would have their choice of sending barley and other produce elsewhere—to Dublin or the local malthouses. The cost at present of sending goods to Dublin is almost prohibitive.

The prospect of traffic for the proposed railway from Stradbally to Portarlington.

25518. If there is no prospect of an increase of the agricultural industry I don't see how you can expect this railway to pay?—We have the malthouses, and quarries, and timber, and we have a brick yard within three and a half miles of Athy; it is a very good county indeed for cattle, sheep, barley, and all these; and of course if they had the means of sending away their produce it would be very much better for the people.

25519. Even assuming that there was a considerable increase in the traffic, would not the larger portion of it be likely to go to the canal?—Things have to be drawn four and a half or five miles to the canal.

25520. You get the full benefits of water and railway competition. From the evidence we have had before us the rates are very much on a par, and you get so far as it is possible to get it, every benefit from competition?—No, indeed we don't, because in Vicarstown there is no competition.

25521. How about Athy?—With Athy there is competition; but it is seven Irish miles from Stradbally; it is nine English miles.

25522. You gave the rate for coal, 4*s.*?—4*s.* 3*d.* to Vicarstown, and 4*s.* to Athy, four or five miles further on.

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25523. Do you know that that is a very cheap rate; it works out at less than a penny a mile when you deduct terminals?—When you have to draw that to Athy seven Irish miles you bring it to 4*s.* a ton extra.

25524. The railway company have power under their Acts to charge you practically a halfpenny a mile more than they do at present?—I don't wish to complain of the rates so much as the inconvenience of putting our goods on the railway and canal.

Suggested provision of a road motor service as an alternative scheme to a railway between Stradbally and Portarlington.

25525. Naturally we should all like a railway at our front door, but we cannot expect it?—Failing a railway, if we could have a motor service to carry not only passengers but goods.

25526. The Queen's County roads are adapted for the purpose?—The roads are very good compared with most parts of Ireland.

25527. The roads are very much better than in most parts of Ireland?—Certainly.

25528. And would afford a favourable opportunity for experiment in the direction which you indicate?—For a motor service, certainly.

25529. Do you think that such a service would encounter opposition on the part of the local carters and people of that kind?—A great many carters are at present employed carrying away produce. They would be some opposition, because they must live.

25530. Do you think that that opposition could be overcome?—Yes; I think so; there would be other means found of getting these men a livelihood.

Irish lines if acquired by State to be worked by a Central Board under State management.

25531. As regards the State acquiring control of the railways, would your idea be an amalgamated system under State control or administered directly by the State?—A Central Board under State management.

25532. What would the Central Board consist of?—It might consist of one or two directors from the various companies.

25533. The existing companies?—The existing companies.

25534. And the State management would then be confined to regulating, so to speak, the rates and fares to such a figure as the State might consider desirable in the interests of the public and the development of the country?—I should say so.

Failing State purchase of the Irish railways amalgamation under State control recommended.

25535. Then any such system where the State's duties were confined to those functions, I suppose, would involve some subsidy or guarantee being given to the shareholders under the amalgamated system, protecting them against any loss which might accrue from the reductions that were considered desirable by the State?—I should, first of all, consider that the State should purchase the railways, and failing that, that they should be under one management under the State.

25536. When you spoke of a Railway Board being constituted from the existing railway directors I don't suppose if the State purchased the railways they would be prepared to hand them over to such a Board?—A Central Board under State management.

25537. That is not quite the point on which I wished your opinion, but assuming the State would not take the railways over would you think a Central Board, such as you speak of, subject to State control as to rates and fares and guaranteed against any loss which may occur for a limited number of years, four or five, so that the shareholders would be in no worse position than at present, would you think that an improvement on the present position?—As an alternative scheme.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

25538. I have just two questions to ask you. You speak of the landlords agreeing to give the lands, provided the tenants were compensated—to whom did you make that offer—to the Government or to the railway companies running through the district?—Major Close and the late Lord Portarlington both personally agreed to give their lands for nothing, I having told them I would do so, and I stated that before Mr. Balfour.

25539. Then the offer was to the Government, not to the railway company?—We went on deputations to the railway companies; they must have known that.

25540. Did you make the same offer to the railway company?—I presume we did; I cannot recollect that point.

25541. I don't want such a favourable attitude on the part of the landlords of Ireland to be overlooked?—We were willing to give up our interests as long as the tenants were compensated.

25542. You spoke about the price of barley having so terribly fallen that practically the farmers now don't wish to grow it to any extent; is it that there is not any competitive buying, as in the case of the flax industry in the North of Ireland; it is supposed that the flax spinners say the price will be so much in certain districts, and they do not compete in those, do you think the same thing has taken place in barley?—It is presumed that people that buy barley arrange the prices between themselves, and the farmers after threshing send their barley in, and, without a price being named, the price is named afterwards. All these people, I believe, have banded together to say—"We will give no more than fourteen shillings"; there is no competition.

25543. Then it is owing to there being no competition that there is a decrease in the cultivation of barley, as it is also so in the case of flax?—I am sure if one man gave seventeen shillings the others would have to give it, but they combine to give a certain price and won't exceed it.

25544. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—You say that the prices are fixed by the Dublin brewers or malsters?—I heard so.

25545. Is it not largely determined by the fact that they can get the barley from abroad at a good deal less than the price asked for it here?—I think so.

25546. I have always understood that really Guinness's—to speak of no other firm—gave a considerable portion of their trade to the Irish growers in order to keep them going. They could get the barley much cheaper abroad?—I am sure if fair trade were only the law of the land we should be very much better off in this country.

THOMAS F. HIGGINS, F.R.C.S.I., examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Thomas F. Higgins, F.R.C.S.I. Representative of the Queen's County Co. Council.

25537. Mr. Higgins, You are the Coroner for the Queen's County?—Yes, sir.

25548. And you are a member of the deputation appointed by the Queen's County County Council?—Yes, sir.

25549. Have you heard the evidence of Colonel Cosby?—Yes.

25550. Is your proof somewhat on the same lines as the Colonel's?—Very much the same, sir.

The construction of a new railway from Castlecomer to Portarlington via Clough, Timahoe, and Stradbally suggested.

25551. The Colonel suggested a line up to Stradbally?—I suggest a line from Castlecomer *via* Clough, Timahoe, and Stradbally.

25552. In other words, you want an extension of the railway further south?—I want it to come through the coal-field.

25553. You want to tap the coal-field?—Yes, as well as the Stradbally quarries.

25554. Now, we have heard all about the quarries; you don't wish to add anything to what the Colonel has said on that subject?—No.

25555. The Colonel did not refer at any great length to the question of the collieries—merely stating where they were. What have you got to say about the coal-fields of that district?—I say that they lie principally between Stradbally and Castlecomer. There are several collieries in this area that have yielded a large output in the past, but nothing to what they could have yielded if there was a railway in existence to develop them and carry away the coal to the central towns in Ireland, where it would find a market.

25556. We have heard evidence direct from those districts with reference to the coal from Mr. Prior Wandesforde; he is working some of these collieries?—Yes, sir; they are on his property—some of them are.

25557. But there are others?—Oh, there are several others.

25558. What is the extent of this coal-field?—I think it was estimated by Mr. Griffith, who made the valuation of Ireland, to be 12,000 acres.

25559. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Much larger than that—65,000 English acres—something like that?—I have not got the figures.

25560. Sixty-four thousand statute acres, as a matter of fact?—I am only speaking of this particular

one between Stradbally and Castlecomer—not of the Leinster coal-field generally, which is, of course, much larger.

25561. *Chairman.*—Is the coal of good quality?—Very good quality, indeed. The coal of this district between Stradbally and Castlecomer contains less sulphur and is of better quality than the coal of the rest of the Leinster coal-fields; it is a good house coal as well as being good for manufacturing purposes—the best anthracite coal.

25562. According to your proof there are eight distinct beds of coal in the district to which you refer?—Yes, sir.

25563. Do you know personally anything about that subject?—Well, nothing except conversation with the miners and my reading on the subject.

25564. I see you particularise the eight different beds?—I took that from Sir Robert Kane's book.

25565. Are they all being worked, the eight beds?—They have been worked from time to time, the beds on the surface. That is the seventh and eighth in number; they are near to the surface and have been worked out in most places, but others have not been touched, that is in the mines that have been opened; they have worked that much and abandoned the mines; they simply worked the ones near the surface; the others have not been tapped.

25566. Then the coal measures when you get a little lower down—well, what depth of coal have they there?—They have a four-foot bed further lower down, which has never been reached in any of the mines except perhaps those of Mr. Wandesforde.

25567. What are the seams they work now?—The first, three feet coal.

25568. Well, I think we had that from Mr. Wandesforde. Are his collieries better or of the same category as the others?—I think they are the very same; it is all the same quality of anthracite coal.

25569. You think if a railway were extended——?—Right through the colliery district?

25570. Right through the colliery district; that there would be an enormous development of the coal traffic passing over the railway and being distributed throughout Ireland?—That is my opinion. I know one firm of millers in Portarlington and Maryboro', Messrs. Odlum, who informed me that they saved £1,000 a year by the use of the ordinary culm from this coal, but now they have given up using it, Castlecomer is too far away to bring it by cart and the colliery in the Queen's County, at the Rush colliery, from which they were getting it by carts previously has closed up. But during the time they were getting it from Rush's colliery, the ordinary culm, they saved £1,000 in their coal account. They constructed their furnaces and engines to suit it and tubular boilers in order to make it suit the anthracite coal.

25571. They adapted their furnaces to it?—Yes, sir.

25572. What is the length of your proposed line?—It would be 22 statute miles.

25573. Has there been any estimate made of the probable cost?—At the outside £100,000.

25574. Your opinion is, I suppose, that that £100,000 cannot be found by private enterprise?—No, sir.

25575. Now what do you suggest should be done?—I think if we got the half of it as a Government grant we would be able to raise the rest of it either by baronial guarantee, or shareholders applying for the stock, private enterprise; the Great Southern and Western Railway might perhaps give some assistance.

25576. Is it a fact that many years ago a grant was offered for this railway?—No, sir; there was a grant many years ago, by the Irish Parliament, which was never carried out.

25577. Do you mean to say that so far back as 107 years ago a grant was made by the Irish Parliament for the purpose of constructing——?—A canal, there were no railways in those days—a canal from the colliery to the River Nore.

25578. To form something to convey this particular coal and distribute it in Ireland, is that what you say?—That is my evidence.

25579. Do you remember the amount?—£40,000.

25580. £40,000 was absolutely voted as far back as 107 years ago?—Yes.

25581. And the collieries more or less have been worked ever since?—Oh, yes; the collieries have been worked for the local demand merely.

25582. And there is an unlimited supply of coal?—Practically unlimited; there are millions of tons of coal there still untapped.

25583. And there is practically an unlimited demand if there was cheap transit for it?—Yes.

25584. You suggest that some new body should advance half the cost of this railway and you think the district would find the other half?—I think so, somebody; a good deal of the stock would be taken up in the district and by the public generally.

25585. Do you think if the State owned the railways they would be induced to make a line to get this coal?—Yes.

25586. Are you in favour of the State purchase of Irish railways, you heard Colonel Cosby's evidence on that subject?—Yes.

The purchase of the Irish railways by the State recommended.

25587. Do you agree with it?—I have not given much consideration to it.

25588. Do you disagree with it?—Oh, certainly not; I think the people should be guaranteed their income in some way.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

25589. You say an Act authorising a free grant of £40,000 was passed, was there any investigation afterwards whether they should grant that money, or was it definitely offered to the country?—It was definitely offered.

The grant of £40,000 by the Irish Parliament to afford transit facilities to the Castlecomer district.

25590. It was not merely an Act authorising it to be done provided they were satisfied it was required?—The Act granted the money after investigation.

25591. The investigation took place and the Act came forward, why was it not carried out?—The whole thing fell through, the Parliament was dissolved.

25592. Excuse me; the Act was passed and the Act of Union did not prevent that £40,000 from being carried out?—I cannot answer you, sir, on that point, all I know is that it passed through the Irish Parliament.

25593. Many an Act is passed authorising so much money provided it may be considered desirable by the Lord Lieutenant in Council or on some further investigation, but you rather put it that the county was offered £40,000, and that somebody did not carry it out, who was to blame for not carrying it out?—I don't know, sir.

Mr. Acworth.—Did not Colonel Cosby say the reason was they found the levels impossible.

25594. *Lord Pirrie.*—No, he said they required nine locks. The distance was ninety feet, and, therefore, I did not think your evidence was complete?—That is a different thing—you refer to a different thing.

Colonel Cosby.—I referred to a canal from Stradbally to Vicarstown, not the canal proposed by the Irish Parliament.

Witness.—This is a canal from the coalfields to the River Nore, before the present Grand Canal was constructed at all.

Chairman.—I think it is a different canal altogether to what the Colonel said.

25595. *Mr. Sexton.*—There would be no physical difficulty between Castlecomer and the Nore?—No, sir.

Money never used and alleged to be still due.

25596. *Lord Pirrie.*—The way you leave the matter in your evidence is that there is £40,000, I take it, due to the Queen's County?—Yes.

25597. Have you ever asked for it?—We are asking for it now. Colonel Cosby and a deputation asked Mr. Gerald Balfour for it, but I am not sure that they made use of the historical argument.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

25598. I think you said the cost of this line would be about £100,000?—Yes.

25599. If it were made a light railway like a tramway, it would cost considerably less—£3,500 a mile?—Oh, yes.

25600. That would work out at about £80,000, but even putting it at 4,000 a mile, that would only involve a guarantee of about £4,000 a year, and what I understood you to say was that if the Treasury would be willing to pay half that guarantee that the baronies interested would, in your opinion, be prepared to pay the other half?—I have reason to believe that they would.

The Baronies willing to bear half the cost of the proposed line.

25601. Have you any idea of the value of the probable traffic that would pass over such a railway?—We estimate the amount of coal that would be sold in the different towns in Leinster would come to a great many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Estimated value of the traffic.

25602. Do you know that at the time when there was a proposition made to make a line from Castle-

July 8, 1907.

Thomas F. Higgins, F.R.C.S.I. Representative of the Queen's County Co. Council.

comer to Folksrath, in the County Kilkenny, it was estimated that the traffic passing over that line would be about £13,600 a year. Assuming that estimate was anywhere within the mark, and supposing that by this line you would also develop the limestone industry in Stradbally, such an estimate would be well within bounds?—Certainly.

25603. Assuming the working expenses of the line were within 75 per cent. of the receipts [the light railways of Ireland are not worked much under that, but I think 75 per cent. would be a fair working estimate], that would mean that the expenses would be about £10,000; that would leave, if the figure I gave you of £13,000 represented the traffic passing over the line, £3,000 to meet this guarantee. In other words, the liability of the baronies and the Treasury would be £1,000 between them—£500 on behalf of the Treasury and £500 on behalf of the baronies—and you think that that might not be an unreasonable contribution to ask from people who are to derive so much benefit from this railway?—I do not think it would be unreasonable. I think they would be willing to do that if it was explained to them that they would not be liable for more.

The saving in maintenance of the public roads estimated to balance the baronial contributions to proposed line.

25604. And, in addition to that, there would be a saving of £400 or £500 a year on the upkeep of the public roads, which would practically indemnify them against the contribution they are making in respect of the railway—that is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

Examined by Mr. ACWORTH.

25605. Why did this coal mine that was supplying the Messrs. Odlum shut up?—Because the cartage was too costly. The wonder is why all the coal mines there are not shut up for the same reason. They can only supply certain distances by the carts, and they cannot compete with Welsh coal where the railway goes.

25606. But here was this one place—it was saving £1,000 a year?—That is so.

25607. One would suppose they must have been using at least 10,000 tons of coal?—That is so.

25608. Was not that big enough to keep the thing going?—They were getting the culm from Rush's colliery at five shillings a ton, instead of which they have to pay twelve shillings for the Welsh coal, but the cartage from the colliery all the way made up the difference.

25609. What I don't understand it this—they went on doing it for some years?—Yes.

25610. Why did they cease doing it—the Welsh coal got dearer, not cheaper?—Because the colliery in that particular region within the cartage area ceased to operate.

The closing of one of the pits owing to lack of capital and enterprise.

25611. Why did the colliery cease to operate—that is what I don't understand. If the colliery had got a good customer who had been able to pay for some years, why did they shut up?—They wanted more than that; that was not big enough to keep them going.

25612. Do you know why it is, assuming your case to be correct, that there is coal here in sufficient quantities to be worked at a profit; why is it that no capitalist has ever come along; it is not a big sum of money, £100,000; have you any explanation, because as long ago as Sir John Allport's Commission he asked the Great Southern and Western Railway why they did not take it up, so they must have had their attention called to it and the attention of capitalists generally?—Yes, Sir James Allport's Commission in 1888 reported adversely to the Great Southern and Western Railway in this matter.

The opinion expressed by the Allport Commission on the subject

25613. Yes, they said the Great Southern and Western Railway ought to have done it. Can you explain why nobody else has ever taken it up all these years?—I have not the slightest idea. I think the capitalists, who have plenty of money to spare, made a great mistake in not putting it into this project long ago.

25614. As a rule, if there is a coalfield, it is not a question of hunting for a capitalist, but it is a question of the capitalists tumbling over each other to get in. There was a new coalfield to be developed in England recently, and five railway companies competed to get into it. Why does that not happen here?—I cannot tell you that

The coal supply alleged to be abundant.

25615. You are sure it has nothing to do with the fact that the coal is poor or difficult to work?—No; the coal is there in abundance; it is anthracite coal, it is a different class from the Welsh coal.

25616. You have satisfied yourself that it can be worked profitably?—We have, certainly.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

25617. It was just before the Legislative Union that this grant was enacted?—That is so.

25618. The meaning of that would appear to be that an Act was passed, and if the work were proceeded with, then in a future session the Irish Parliament would have appropriated the money?—I believe so.

25619. But before the future session arrived the Irish Parliament itself was legislated out of existence?—Yes.

25620. And the Imperial Parliament did not honour the bond?—That is so.

25621. When you remember that they charged Ireland a million and a quarter to pay the gentlemen who voted away the Irish Parliament, you would hardly expect them to pay £40,000 for the benefit of the country?—There was none to spare afterwards.

25622. The state of this railway case in Ireland appears to be that bodies of capitalists have constructed railways wherever they thought railways would pay, and now there is no private capital forthcoming to accommodate the remainder of the country—is that the position?—I believe so.

25623. Every district is left to shift for itself?—Precisely.

25624. No one views the question as a national question. There is no authority entitled to view the question as a national question?—No.

25625. Here you are in this comparatively thriving district endeavouring for the last sixty years to get a railway, and you have failed, although the principal company in the country traverses that district?—Yes, sir. In 1895 that principal company, the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, promised, in answer to a deputation that waited on them in connection with this project, that they would do all they could about it, and sent inspectors to examine the line, but did not do anything. One of the inspectors told me personally that there was enough coal raised on the banks of the collieries to keep the railway going, carrying it away, for five years. He was referring to this culm, that there is not any demand for for household purposes, for it can only be consumed in furnaces and mills.

25626. The railway companies have now fallen into the habit of having lines made for them free?—Yes.

25627. And they have become so fastidious or sceptical about profit that, even when the line is made free, they want the working expenses guaranteed?—Yes.

25628. Can you look with any confidence to existing companies providing any additional lines?—I think it is impossible to develop the country while that system prevails.

25629. If you substitute for private owners a united system under public authority, I submit to you that one of the effects would be that owing to the credit of the State rendering it possible to raise capital more cheaply than private enterprise, the interest to be paid upon the capital of the united system would be so much less than the money now paid away in dividends, that there would be a wide margin of profit available, do you agree with that?—I do, provided the people who have settled incomes out of the railway companies at present are not injured.

25630. That would be a condition precedent that they should be paid off at what would be agreed upon as fair terms?—Yes.

25631. The second result would be that, of course, the administration of one system under one authority would be vastly more economical than the administration of the various systems now existing?—Yes.

25632. These two heads of saving would create a large fund, and would not that fund be available, not only for the reduction of rates and fares, but also for providing a capital for the construction of the branch lines still required?—Yes.

25633. Is not that the royal road to what you want?—I believe so.

Colonel Cosby.—I hope you understand the canal talked about in 1800 was a totally different canal to what you talked about.

Mr. Sexton.—Oh, yes; it was a canal from Castlecomer to the Nore that was contemplated in 1800.

The Commission adjourned till the following morning at 11 *a.m.*

FORTY-FOURTH PUBLIC SITTING.—TUESDAY, JULY 9TH, 1907,

AT 11 O'CLOCK, A.M.,

At the Reception Room, Royal Dublin Society, Leinster House, Dublin.

Commissioners present:—Sir CHARLES SCOTTER, BART. (Chairman); Right Hon. LORD PIRRIE, P.C.; Sir HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G.; Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM HUTCHESON POË, C.B.; Mr. THOMAS SEXTON; and Mr. W. M. ACWORTH;

Mr. GEORGE E. SHANAHAN (Secretary).

July 9, 1907.

The question of costs in the Railway and Canal Commission Court.

Mr. Hanbury C. Geoghegan, B.L.—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, if I may, with your permission, before you get into your business for the day, the question of costs was mooted yesterday, I would like to give you the references in two Acts of Parliament dealing with that. The 19th section of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888, which left it absolutely to the discretion of the Railway and Canal Commissioners; then comes the section 2 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1894, which is very short, and to this effect: "In proceedings before the Railway and Canal Commissioners, other than disputes between two or more companies, the Commissioners shall not have power to award costs to either side unless they are of opinion that either the claim of the defendants has been frivolous or vexatious." So it is an indemnity to the company, and wrongly.

Chairman.—I think that is what Mr. Acworth told us yesterday.

Mr Geoghegan.—There is something else. I was asked if I were a K.C. No leader of the Victorian Bar wears silk as a K.C. They have recently raised to the Bench two of its most learned men—Mr. Higgins and Mr. Isaac. They were stuff gownsmen.

Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR examined by the CHAIRMAN.

Mr. Joseph O'Connor, Naas, Representative of the Irish Cattle Traders and Stockowners' Association.

25634. Mr. O'Connor, you live in the County Kildare?—Yes; Mylerstown, Naas, County Kildare.

25635. What particular industry are you engaged in?—In the cattle trade principally. Farming and the cattle trade.

25636. Now what are the principal points in connection with the cattle trade which you wish to bring before our notice?—You have it there in the précis.

25637. But I want it on the notes?—On the general principles of the cattle trade.

25638. First of all, is the transit of cattle traffic satisfactory in this country on the railways?—No, not in some instances.

25639. What do you object to?—The speed of cattle trains. They are very uncertain, and give great dissatisfaction at a great many times and a great many places. We respectfully say that there should be a speed limit for cattle trains.

25640. What do you mean—a maximum speed?—A minimum speed of not less—to make it on a low scale—than fifteen miles an hour, including stops; that for any delay beyond that the companies should be liable for injury to the cattle or to the stock; fifteen miles an hour for, say, a distance of 100 miles. If a cattle train took longer than 6½ hours to cover that journey that the company should be liable.

25641. Liable for delay?—Liable for delay.

25642. To compensate you for delay?—Yes.

25643. That is what you mean?—Yes.

25644. Because you consider that the cattle are injured by being delayed?—Quite so.

25645. Regardless altogether of any circumstance of single-line working or anything else—is that your point?—Yes; it is taken on a low scale—fifteen miles an hour.

25646. Very well. What other points do you wish to raise in connection with the transit of cattle?—That there should be a compulsory day service on all lines that cattle are carried over—a compulsory day service, so that cattle would be carried in the daylight, the train to run and be advertised in their time tables timed from each station, so that the people would know that they could avail themselves of that train.

25647. Do you mean to say that every railway company should be bound to run a day train for cattle traffic whether there is any cattle or not?—Well, if the railway people arranged to make other traffic come in, if they have not sufficient cattle trade, let them run a day goods train. I say a goods train, if you wish to change it for a cattle train.

25648. Let me put it another way. What you suggest is that there should be a train of some sort whereby cattle could be carried once a day by daylight?—And by daylight every day of the week except Sundays.

25649. Daylight in winter for 200 miles! It must get into the night somewhere?—200 miles is hardly a fair distance in Ireland.

25650. Well, 100?—Well we find in Ireland that the principal cattle traffic comes not much more than fifty or sixty—or perhaps eighty to 100 miles at the outside. Of course, I don't allude to fair days. Sometimes fairs are a long distance, where the cattle trains will run into the night in going the long distance. I speak of cattle trains principally for shipping purposes. The trains should be timed to reach North Wall about 3.30, not later, so as to enable people to ship their cattle in time for the evening boat.

25651. That day?—That day.

25652. Do you object to live stock being carried during the night?—I do.

Estimated value of a train load of stock.

25653. Anywhere?—Yes, if it can possibly be avoided. The value of a train load of forty-five wagons of stock is about £6,000.

25654. Is not your objection confined to the loading and unloading at night?—Well, cattle are more susceptible of being injured by being carried in the night.

25655. By the drovers?—By the guards or people in charge—principally the guards, not being able to inspect the cattle in the night-time. They stand up much better in the daylight. Their instinct and everything are more on the alert in the daylight.

Proposal to run a train from Kingsbridge station at 6 a.m. for the convenience of cattle buyers.

25656. Well, now, what is your principal grievance in your particular County of Kildare with reference to the passenger traffic?—We complain that the old 6 o'clock train, that used to leave the Kingsbridge at 6 o'clock in the morning, and used to carry all the customers to our fairs as far as Maryborough, and take on any passengers for the early fast trains connecting at Kildare or Portarlington. It ran to Cork; but it used to be availed of for all the fairs, like, to Maryborough, as far as Maryborough. This old train was taken away for some reason or another. The explanation was that there was a mail train started at 6.40, and this train was taken away out of its course.

25657. How long is it since it was taken away?—About ten or fifteen years, I should think.

25658. For the last ten or fifteen years you have not that particular train that you consider was an advan-

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Mr. Joseph O'Connor. Naas, Representative of the Irish Cattle Traders and Stockowners Association.

tage to the cattle dealers?—And not only the cattle dealers, but the public generally.

25659. Yes. Of course, when it was taken off you represented the matter to the railway company?—Yes. It has been represented over and over again by a good many of the public bodies.

25660. What was the answer?—They never did anything. They never re-established it.

25661. Did they give any reasons?—Well, they gave reasons.

25662. That the traffic did not justify the train?—Not so much that as that there was some arrangement with the Post Office people that they wanted to have a clear line for the 6.40 mail.

25663. It is a double line there?—Yes, it is; it is the main line to Cork. One of our other complaints, too, is that anyone living in the districts between Kingsbridge and Maryborough has either to come into Dublin or go on to Maryborough the night before to get the 6.40 connection—this train that I am speaking of—there is no connection.

25664. Nothing to the intermediate stations?—Nothing to the intermediate stations.

25665. It runs from Dublin to Maryborough?—Without stopping. There is no connection. It "slips" carriages at Kildare.

Improved train service Dublin and Maryboro' suggested.

25666. That is a mail train?—Yes. If the old 6 o'clock train was put on it would give everybody an opportunity of getting on in front of the 6.40, and getting the connection at Maryborough or Kildare, if they stopped it there.

25667. I think you said public bodies and individual traders have made representations to the railway companies upon that point?—They have—the County Council of Kildare. We say the public convenience and live stock interests are far more important than a mail train for Ireland's benefit.

25668. Are you a member?—Yes, of the County Council of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

Complaint as to excessive half wagon rates for cattle.

25669. What about the rates? I suppose you have no particular grievance about the rates?—We have. We complain that the companies don't act fair in regard to the half wagon rates.

25670. Why not fair?—Well, for instance, they charge two-thirds. They call it a half-wagon rate, but, as a matter of fact, they charge two-thirds. If you have four beasts they charge two-thirds of the whole wagon. We say that is not a fair arrangement to the trade.

25671. Still the wagon is used?—Yes, it is used.

25672. Just the same as if it was a full wagon?—Quite so.

Suggested re-adjustment of wagon and head rates for cattle.

25673. What do you suggest they ought to do?—I suggest that they ought to charge—there is a little bit of a misprint in the arrangement that I respectfully suggest—that the company ought to charge, say, if the rate for a full wagon was £2, that the half wagon, if it was to be charged as a half wagon, would be £1 5*s*. What I consider would be fair is, that there should be one-eighth charge for the half wagon more, and that with this arrangement with the half wagon that there should be allowed two beasts in addition—up to two beasts—at a head rate of one-eighth of the full wagon, so as that anyone in the trade could always be certain in a fair that when he would stop or leave off purchasing he could always arrange for his lot as a broken wagon, and we, as representing the trade, would be only too pleased to guarantee that no owner would ask for more than one broken wagon for his lot, because it has been an answer of the railway people to say that if they allowed a cheap rate for half wagon a great many traders would avail themselves of it, and fill the whole train with half wagons. We wish to be fair. We don't wish that.

25674. That seems fair. Except as regards the division, your point is that the half wagon for beasts should be charged five-eighths instead of two-thirds?—Yes.

25675. Five-eighths?—Quite so.

25676. That is what you say?—Yes.

25677. Instead, the company charge two-thirds?—Yes.

25678. And that if there should be one or two more beasts put in—not a full wagon—that the rate per beast should be added to that rate?—Quite so.

25679. That is the suggestion?—Yes. That is the point.

25680. Well, the single head rate—two more beasts would bring it up to the full wagon rate?—35*s*. The figures would be 25*s*., 30*s*., and 35*s*., on the basis of £2 being the full rate. We also have to complain on fair days that there is not sufficient help sent by the railway companies for loading cattle.

25681. What are the conditions of the cattle traffic? Are they not to be loaded and unloaded by the owners?—No. They are principally done by the owners. We believe that it is the railway people should do that, if it was properly carried out in the spirit of the law between the carriers and the public. In England the practice is that the canvassers belonging to each railway station attend in the markets, and canvass for the cattle, and take them away out of the market, and load them for the customers and send them to any particular place you ask them. In Ireland the practice is totally different.

25682. Are you speaking from your own knowledge with regard to the English practice?—I am.

25683. Of course, you know the Irish practice?—Yes.

25684. And the English practice as well?—I do. I have been all over the markets in England.

25685. Just illustrate that by some instance in England. What do you mean?—At Liverpool cattle market, when a purchaser of cattle from Nottingham or Derby or Sheffield, Wakefield or Leeds, or any customers from these particular places purchase cattle in the market, there are, I think, three representative railways, three competing lines, to these different places, and they have their canvassers in the market. One of these canvassers simply asks the customer, "I hope you will give me your traffic to-day," or "Will you let me have your cattle going to Leeds"? He will say "Yes." "How many"? He will tell the number, and then the railway people will just take charge of them—take them to the railway from the market.

25686. That is what I want. Do the railway people take charge of them in the fair grounds?—On the market ground—take them right from the cattle pens and the markets, and you need not trouble any more about them. The cattle will be left at their destination on the responsibility of the railway people, and the railway people alone do everything.

25687. Do railways have loading docks at Liverpool in the market?—The London and North-Western is the only one; the others have not.

25688. Do you mean to say the canvassers or representatives of the railway company drive the cattle from the market to the railway station?—Yes; they do.

25689. Their servants?—Yes. The Midland to Edgehill—all the lines that have termini. The Lancashire and Yorkshire have fully two miles to go, and also the Great Northern. The London and North-Western runs along the end of the market, but the railway people—the company's men—take the cattle out of the market in their charge and land them at any particular place you may want.

25690. In contradistinction to that, in this country you say the owner does it?—The owner.

25691. The owner or the men?—The owner or the men, assisted by the buyer and drovers.

25692. The buyer?—Yes.

25693. The buyer—whoever buys, the agent for the cattle—it is who takes them to the railway station and loads them?—Yes, assisted by the seller's men.

25694. And the railway companies don't afford any assistance in loading?—Very little; they simply have a man to open the door and take the numbers of the wagon. They give little assistance in addition to that. We pay loading men.

25695. At fairs?—At fairs. The cost rate is about 1*s*. 6*d*. a wagon.

25696. Men there for the purpose?—Yes.

25697. Not railwaymen?—Outside men—skilful men that attend the fairs, and that are known to be loading men. They load the cattle. We pay these on an average 1*s*. 6*d*. a wagon for loading the cattle. They are the only people that we can put under responsibility, but the railway people won't take charge of them, only simply when inside the wagons.

25698. Whereas in England the practice is quite the reverse?—Yes.

25699. That is what you say; I don't know?—It is quite true, sir.

25700. *Lord Pirrie.*—Do the English companies send men over to Ireland to look after shipment. Do you mean they drive them to the fairs in Ireland?—No, sir; I am speaking of England.

25701. *Chairman.*—Do you know any other market?—Yes.

25702. What other?—Manchester.

25703. Same practice?—Yes. Newcastle-on-Tyne, Leeds, Wakefield.

25704. All these places?—Yes. I have attended all these.

25705. I was not aware of that. You found this the practice in England, wherever the fairs are held that you have attended?—Yes.

25706. That from the market where the cattle are sold, the railway company took charge of the beasts by their own servants, and load the wagons themselves?—Yes.

25707. And make no charge to you, as it were?—Quite so.

25708. Except the rate?—That is all.

25709. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is that not anywhere in Ireland?—No, the reason, or the explanation, is, I daresay the want of competition. In England there is competition.

25710. *Chairman.*—I suppose the rates, probably, in Ireland are less than in England for the transit? The rates charged by the Irish railway companies are probably less than the rates are in England?—Well, there is no great difference; there is, of course, a difference; you could hardly form a correct opinion by stating any particular charges. Where there is competition, of course, the rates are lower.

25711. I understand as far as the rates are concerned, your principal objection is to the half-wagon rate being two-thirds, instead of a graduated scale—that is your principal objection?—It is one of the objections, and the other point I have passed over.

25712. I see you do complain of the high rates charged, and you give instances. You may mention one?—I may mention before you leave that paragraph that we contend that the railway companies in Ireland do not give us value for terminal charges, which were arranged by the Railway Rates Commission.

25713. On cattle?—On cattle. There were terminal charges arranged a good many years ago now, terminal charges for services rendered at each end, that is, loading and unloading, and disinfecting, I think to the extent of about 4*s.* 6*d.* per wagon were put on by the railway companies or on their representations, which was called terminal charges. We complain that the railway people in Ireland do not give us any equivalent at all for these terminal charges as explained by services rendered at each end; that the people, that the owners of the cattle, or the buyers, or paid men have to do all this work for them, and that they don't give sufficient help at all on a fair day as representing railway people.

25714. I understand you. You mentioned that before?—Yes, sir.

25715. Well?—But there are charges included in the rates that specify for these services, that we pay for these services, I think at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a wagon; every man that sends a wagon of stock has to pay that also for services that he gets no equivalent for.

25716. Do you remember the allocation of the terminal charge; how it was divided?—As well as I remember it is 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*; I am not certain; it is allocated here——

25717. There is so much for station accommodation?—Yes.

25718. And services rendered?—Yes. Disinfecting is one.

25719. You don't know the division?

Colonel Hutcheson Poë.—Here it is—1*s.* station, 1*s.* loading, 5*s.* a truck.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—I think the regulation is that a service terminal is charged, and these rates are based on the condition that the owners assist in loading and unloading, and the company only charge half the service terminal. The following additional charges are made if the owners do not assist. Therefore, the witness seems to be under the impression that the full service terminal is charged. It is not. We can give you the regulation afterwards.

25720. *Chairman.*—You understand that?—There is too much all the same. We say there is no service given for this charge.

25721. *Mr. Acworth.*—Mr. Barrington, how do you account for this, how is it possible you distinguish these two cases. These are company's regulations, not statutory, remember?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—No. The company's regulation, instead of charging the full statutory service terminal—the rates per truck and so on are conditional on owners assisting in loading and unloading; otherwise the following additional charges to be made—and these additional charges cover the full.

Mr Acworth.—What I wanted to ask is. Do you put in your rate-book at Killaloe, I will say a rate of 35*s.* if the owner loads, and 37*s.* 6*d.* if he does not.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—That is the effect.

Mr. Acworth.—Is there any such double charge put in any rate-book?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—No, not in the rate-book.

Mr. Acworth.—Where do the general public know of these two different charges, then?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The public have access to the rate-book. As a matter of fact I believe that the company charge half the service terminal in Ireland, and the owners assist. In England, where there is very considerable competition, what the witness says does occur.

Mr. Acworth.—Do let us understand. The company does not charge to the public any terminal at all—it charges but one rate, which includes terminal and the conveyance.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—That is so.

Mr. Acworth.—How do you give effect to that regulation in the rate-book at the particular station?

Chairman.—They are not obliged; all you are obliged to do is that if an application is made to you for an analysis you have to give it?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Yes.

Mr. Acworth.—If the ordinary man in the street comes, and offers cattle, do you charge him the rate in the rate-book.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—I should say so.

Mr. Acworth.—Suppose that particular man doesn't assist do you charge him 2*s.* 6*d.* beyond the rate-book?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—In practice they always assist the drovers who bring the cattle.

Mr. Acworth.—It seemed an extraordinary arrangement to have two rates and only one in the rate-book.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Well, the effect—perhaps it would be better when the Traffic Manager comes to give evidence. I wanted to clear it up.

Mr. Sexton.—I understand the full terminal charge is included in the rate which appears in the rate-book.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—No, that is not so. There is a regulation that an additional——

Mr. Sexton.—Do you mean that there is no terminal in the rate-book?

Mr. Neale (Manager, G. S. & W. R.).—There is a half-service terminal.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The terminal includes more things than merely loading and unloading; where the owner assists you loading the rate is as it is in the rate-book, where the owner doesn't assist you make an addition of a further half. They say they will, but as a matter of fact they don't.

Mr. Sexton.—I want to know what the arrangement contemplates. Where the owner assists the rate is charged as in the rate-book. Where he does not, half the statutory terminal is added.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—They say they will add, but such an arrangement doesn't exist.

Mr. Sexton.—That is what it contemplates?

Mr. Croker Barirngton, Solicitor.—That is what it contemplates.

Mr. Acworth.—You could not have any possible right to add on 2*s.* 6*d.* to the rate of the rate-book.

Mr. Sexton.—What do you mean by saying that it is part of your regulations.

Mr. Acworth.—You could not have the right under the Act of Parliament binding you to charge the rates in the rate book, you could not have the right to charge a rate not in that rate book.

Mr. Neale (Manager, G. S. & W. R.).—It is in the rate-book to add so much to——

Chairman.—I think we are in a discussion. It can be cleared up afterwards.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The rate is for service rendered. Our legal right is to charge the rate in the rate-book; the rate in the rate-book if the owner does not assist is subject to this additional sum.

July 9, 1907.

Mr. Joseph O'Connor Naas, Representative of the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association.

The railway companies' explanation as regards the loading and unloading service terminal included in the Irish cattle rates.

July 9, 1907.

Mr. Joseph O'Connor, Naas, Representative of the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association.

Mr. Sexton.—Each individual rate is subject to increase where the owner does not assist?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Yes.

Chairman.—That is not the point our friend there is raising. The point there is——

Witness.—We don't get any equivalent.

25722. *Chairman.*—You don't get any sufficient equivalent on this side in Ireland, as you do in England?—Quite so.

25723. And you have practically to do all the loading and unloading yourselves?—Yes.

25724. Tell me, if it goes to Dublin who does the unloading there?—The people who meet the cattle.

25725. If it is going to England to be shipped?—The owner, or somebody on his behalf, takes charge of the cattle. The railway people will open the doors.

Arrangements made by the dealers for loading and disloading cattle in Ireland.

25726. You send the men for them?—As a rule, we have men in Dublin to meet the cattle—men that don't travel with them—men to meet the cattle on arrival, and men at the fairs for loading. It would not pay to send people with them, because the railway people charge full fares. It would not pay to have a drover sent with them from the fairs on account of the expense.

25727. I think you have made that perfectly clear. What about the cost of cattle per head for transit in Ireland?—Well, I am speaking of some places, no particular individual place, but I have mentioned Clare and Limerick. I have experience of knowing that cattle from Limerick sent to Scotland, to Edinburgh or Glasgow, that the rate comes very high on the railway journey, and in the absence of having a day service of cattle trains we have to employ or use, or ask the company to provide us with special wagons. They are called passenger wagons—that is, wagons that travel with the passenger trains.

Excessive passenger train rates for cattle.

25728. P. wagons?—P. wagons they are called. These P. wagon rates are, I think, 33 per cent.—I am subject to correction—over the ordinary rate—25 to 33. I am not certain. I think it is 33. Take, for instance, three wagons of stock—24 beasts—I sent from Limerick going to Scotland. They cost £11 14*s.* 8*d.* at this P. wagon rate from Limerick to Dublin. That represents practically 10*s.* a head, leaving eight beasts for the wagon. When these cattle were sold in Scotland there was 22*s.* a head additional expense. That is 32*s.* a head these cattle—the expense from where they started till they arrived in Scotland, where they were sold. We had to get 32*s.* a head more than they cost before we got our own money or profit. We consider that in the present competitive times that this rate is very dear and very prohibitive for trade. Now, another case in point is to London. The year after the line to Tullow—the branch line to Tullow opened.

25729. Where?—Tullow; the branch line to Tullow on the Great Southern and Western system; we sent sixty cattle from Dunlavin station to London. They were bought at Rathsallagh fair. These sixty cattle were loaded at Dunlavin and sent to London.

25730. Which way?—*Via* Dublin.

25731. Yes?—They made £90 over what they cost.

25732. *Lord Pirrie.*—Sold?—Sold at £90 over what they cost, that is on the lot—that is £1 10*s.* a head. There was £2 10*s.* of a loss on the whole transaction.

25733. The freight cost £2 10*s.* more than your gross profit?—Yes—the total freight.

25734. *Chairman.*—Transit charges cost £2 10*s.* more than——?—The full transit charges from Dunlavin to London for the sale of these 60 cattle was £92 10*s.*

25735. *Mr. Acworth.*—How much of that was a railway rate?—The rate is, I think—I have always understood from Dublin to London is entirely too high. It is about 19*s.* per head.

Profits of a large consignment of cattle for London swallowed up by the excessive freight.

25736. On that particular transaction you say the total expense was £92 10*s.* How much of railway expense?—To commence with a rate from Dublin to London, £60, roughly. Dunlavin to Dublin 30*s.* a wagon, about 4*s.* a head.

25737. *Mr. Acworth.*—That is 24*s.* a head; there is another 6*s.* a head to account for?—There is 3*s.* a head for two nights keep in London, and the commission in London. They were sold on Mr. Birrell's stand in London. Our man went with them and sold them in London. His expense, the salesmaster's expense in London, and the charges in London amounted to the difference of the 6*s.* a head. It would be about three-fourths railway and one-fourth other charges.

25738. *Chairman.*—That is roughly right?—A little more than three-fourths, about 25 to 30. The practical or general opinion of the people in the trade is that there has been——

25739. *Lord Pirrie.*—The freight cost £92 10*s.*?—Yes, on the whole lot. The general opinion of the people in the trade is that there has been an arrangement come to by the three competing lines from Dublin to London. We will take that as a case in point where there has been an arrangement or standing in, or whatever you wish to call it, by the London North-Western, Great Northern, and Midland that they arranged not to lower the freight. That this is to be a special rate to London.

25740. How long has that been in operation?—For a very long time.

25741. Many years?—As long as I remember; thirty years perhaps. As long as I know it has been the arrangement, and it has crippled and injured that there is not, I am sure, the tenth of the cattle going to London now that used to go. At this particular time I am speaking about—about twenty-three years ago—with regard to Dunlavin case, American cattle was landed from Boston to London at the same rate, 32*s.* per head, that we were giving from Dunlavin to London.

25742. From America?—From America. There was a little keener competition at that particular time than there has been since—what is called competitive rates between the different carrying companies.

25743. What you venture to suggest, I suppose, is that if the rates were more reasonable a larger trade would be done in Irish cattle in London?—Yes.

25744. To the advantage of Ireland?—Yes.

25745. That is your point?—Yes.

25746. Have you formed any opinion as to what you think the rate ought to be; you have given us what the rate is; what do you say?—I think the rate is entirely too much from Dublin to London, and I think the explanation is that by the arrangement or combination of these three competing companies not allowing competition to take place; that they have simply arranged one rate, and one cannot go below the other. A reasonable rate from Dublin to London would be about 12*s.*, instead of 18*s.* 6*d.* or 19*s.* 6*d.*; it is about 19*s.*; it is at least one-third too much.

25747. That is your idea?—Yes.

25747A. Well, now, have you any complaint to make with reference to the care that the railway companies take of the cattle after they are loaded?—We consider it is all covered by the suggestion of their being carried in the daylight. In the night it is not possible——

25748. You lay great stress upon the fact that cattle should be carried by daylight where possible?—I go so far as to say that it should be compulsory.

25749. What?—Go further. It should be compulsory that they should be carried in daylight.

25750. *Sir Herbert Jekyll.*—Even in winter?—I mean for shipping purposes. Of course, as I explained to the Chairman, no one could contend that cattle going a long distance from fairs that it could be possible to do 200 miles in a short day without going into the night—that is where journeying at a distance from fairs; but for shipping purposes there should be a day service so as people wishing to avail themselves of that train can go by that train.

25751. *Chairman.*—But are not there many fairs in Ireland that don't commence till two or three o'clock in the afternoon?—They are all over, as a rule, by 10 o'clock in the forenoon. Some of the fairs are over at four or five in the morning in Clare County.

25752. In the morning?—All in the morning; about nine o'clock they are all over.

25753. Ballinasloe?—It depends on the times. Sometimes it hangs fire in the morning; but generally over about ten o'clock in the day; the principal part is over earlier.

25754. From a fair like that there must be an enormous quantity of cattle to load?—Yes.

25755. It would take the whole day nearly?—They prepared accommodation for a large supply. They have four or five different cattle banks, and they adapt these to the different stations; it is so arranged that cattle go to the different places.

25756. Are you giving us your own individual opinion, or have you some cattle association?—Yes.

25757. And these are the views; your views, and their views?—I am representing the Cattle Traders' Association, as well as a farmer and rearer of cattle myself and living in the County Kildare.

25758. We have had it in evidence here there has been a vast improvement in recent years in the transit of cattle by rail in Ireland?—There has.

25759. You agree with that?—I do; it bears considerable improvement still.

25760. Better still?—Yes.

25761. Further improved?—Yes. Before you kindly leave the other page of my proof, I wish to bring under your notice with regard to it—I am very strongly of opinion that there would be only one insured rate.

25762. One rate—you mean the owner's risk should be abolished?—Yes.

25763. You don't care about owner's risk rate?—We don't.

25764. Then isn't it a saving you make in transit charges—you would rather pay a higher rate and leave the company responsible?—Yes.

25765. Are you sure that is your view?—I am certain that there should be only one insured rate, and on the principle that if there was one compulsorily insured rate it could be done at such a cheap rate by having it universal that it would be only a very small matter compared with the present insured and uninsured rates; it is vexatious, and these insured rates and the insurance companies are, as a rule, very troublesome parties to deal with; they hedge round their insurance rates by so many clauses that you don't know where you are as regards insurance. We have had experience of having to threaten law proceedings with the ship companies for recovery of damages for cattle we had insured.

25766. Insured for what; with the railway company?—With the Glasgow Shipping Company. A case arose that——

25767. You are speaking of sea transit?—Yes.

Lord Pirrie.—Were they insured?

25767A. *Chairman.*—An outside insurance company?—The company gave us a form of insurance, the companies which acted as agents for the insurance, but it was the company that insured them.

25768. One minute. Do you mean that the steamship companies gave you rates at your risk and at their risk?—Yes.

25769. That is what you mean?—Yes.

25770. And you selected which rate?—The insured, their insured rate.

25771. And then when some damage took place they repudiated the claim?—Yes.

25772. And you threatened law proceedings, and they paid, I suppose?—They used to pay a small loss without any question in case of a beast or two being killed, but this was a case where a storm came on and when there was a loss—we were interested to the extent of £1,400. They declined, and stated they were not liable.

25773. That is on the ground that it was the Act of God?—They said they insured against negligence but not against damages by sea. We believed otherwise: that if they paid in the small matter we thought it an unaccountable thing to refuse in the large amount. The case was never tried. They settled it at the last moment.

25774. They settled?—They settled.

Lord Pirrie.—Was that not a Lloyd's policy?

Chairman.—No, there is no policy at all; it is a consignment note which he fills up to carry and he selects the rate at which to carry.

Lord Pirrie.—I understand; and before that he insured it with the insurance company.

Chairman.—No, he doesn't mean that.

Witness.—The present way we are managing we insure in the Ocean Marine Insurance.

25775. That is not the case you have mentioned?—No.

25776. You have changed?—We have changed.

25777. *Mr. Sexton.*—In the case you mentioned, the rate paid to the carrying company included the insurance?—Yes.

25778. In the case you stated?—Yes.

25779. That is your point?—Yes.

25780. *Chairman.*—Since then you insure in the Ocean Marine Company?—Yes. We take out a policy, say, for thirty or forty thousand pounds. They give you a form like a cheque book, you write off, and the moment you write this the insurance takes place when filled up. Their rate would be a halfpenny in the pound. 4*s.* 2*d.* per cent.

25781. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—The railway company?—The previous rate was 8*s.* 4*d.* by the Boat Company's insurance, say for £20 beast, 1*s.* 8*d.* for each beast—at the rate of £18 each 1*s.* 6*d.* a head. The Ocean Insurance Company do it for us, or for anybody for half that amount, 4*s.* 2*d.*

25782. *Chairman.*—Can you assure on rail by the Ocean Marine?—Our policy is from any place in Ireland to any place in England or Scotland.

Lord Pirrie.—For the railways and all.

25783. *Chairman.*—Having arrangements with a responsible insurance company to take the risks you pay the premium. All your cattle in this country is sent away at owner's risk rate?—Nearly so.

25784. It is considerably less than company's risk rate?—Yes, on the average of a season's trade.

25785. What have you got to complain of now?—What we complain of is that we want to have this made compulsory all round that everybody would insure, and that the company would be responsible. Put the responsibility on the company, not on us or any insurance company.

25786. *Lord Pirrie.*—You say the company should insure at the same rate as the Ocean?—Yes, and take the responsibility, and do it even less than the Ocean Marine Company's terms.

25787. *Mr. Sexton.*—Including the insurance charge in the rate?—Yes, and put the responsibility on them. I respectfully say that if the responsibilty were put on the shipping and railway companies they would be far more careful in the handling of goods and cattle.

25788. What you want is, not so much compensation as that damage should be avoided?—Quite so, and put the responsibility on the carrying companies, because up to very lately we had no one to be responsible to us at all. We were at the mercy of everybody until the Board of Agriculture and some agitation from our Cattle Trade Association and the efforts of Mr. William Field, the attention of Parliament has been brought to the matter. I remember the time when cattle used to be packed like herrings in a barrel at the North Wall in the boats, and no satisfaction to be got from anybody.

25789. *Chairman.*—That has been all done away with?—To an extent greatly improved, but if this compulsory insurance was established it would mean that everyone in trade were on level terms, and that no trader or owner or anybody would have any advantage over another. It would always be one rate. It used not to be fair to the insurance company. Sometimes traders on a fine night would not insure where it was optional, and only in the bad weather they would insure. It was not fair. I am in favour of having it compulsory all the year round on every shipping and railway company in Ireland, and if it was so made compulsory it could be done at such a small rate it would not be felt by the public at large, and this insurance would make the companies much more efficient and careful, and that everything should be known—what their losses would amount to if anything happened. If the public could say there is cattle or some goods I sent forward insured and handed into you, in good order, and you will have to look after them and give them up in good condition, or be responsible.

25790. I think we clearly understand now. What you mean is this, I think, that the owner's risk rate at present charged by the railway companies being considerably less than the companies' risk rate, that should be the standard rate plus the same percentage, 8*s.* 4*d.* per cent.?—4*s.* 2*d.*, 4*s.* 2*d.* or 5*s.* Plus 5*s.* per cent. for any lot of cattle or goods great or small.

25791. Insurance?—Well, but I consider that if there was a compulsory rate of insurance all round upon all goods and traffic and cattle included, that it could be considerably less than 5*s.* and at a great profit to the insurance people.

25792. I don't know; 5*s.* per £100 value?—Well, if it was applied to all traffic it should be less.

25793. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And at all season's of the year?—Yes, all the year round.

25794. *Chairman.*—Well, you made that clear. The cattle trucks used in this country are generally of a very good condition?—Yes, they are.

25795. You suggest that there should be spring couplings. What do you mean—spring buffers?—Yes.

Suggestion that the rates for cattle should be the present owners' risk rates with a small percentage to cover insurance.

Improvements in transit conditions secured through action by the Association the Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Field, M.P.

Compulsory insurance for goods and cattle on all Irish railway and shipping companies urged.

Improved cattle wagons suggested.

July 9, 1907.

Mr. Joseph O'Connor, Naas, Representative of the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association.

25796. That is what you mean?—Yes.

25797. They are all spring buffers now, aren't they?—No.

25798. Are they dead?—There is a certain spring, but not sufficient to prevent them having considerable friction in shunting.

25799. There are no dead cattle buffer wagons now?

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—No. They say not.

25800. *Chairman.*—For there can't be. I mean the Board of Agriculture stopped all that long ago.

Improved cattle wagons suggested.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Perhaps he meant screw couplings?

Witness.—Screw couplings I do mean.

25801. *Chairman.*—Same as passenger carriages?—Yes. That they have in use on the Caledonian Railway.

25802. There are spring buffers, and what you suggest is that, for instance, in the links of the chains, there should be screw couplings, so as to keep the wagons the same as the passenger trains?—Yes.

25803. Have they not got that when they run passenger trains?—Oh, yes, in passenger trains, but not in the cattle trains.

25804. With the P. wagons?—Yes.

25805. You say they ought to be on all wagons?—Yes.

25806. On goods trains?—Yes.

25807. Why?—In cattle trains especially, to prevent jolting.

25808. The bulk of the cattle in this country is carried in mixed trains?—No. Principally specials and cattle trains.

25809. I think you have dealt with everything up to the point as to where you come upon the general question of the railways?—I would wish, with your kind permission, to speak with regard to cattle banks. We have to complain——

25810. Loading banks?—Loading banks.

Complaints as to defective cattle loading banks in Ireland.

25811. What?—In Ireland—speaking of the practice which you have in the two countries—we have to complain very much of having the cattle banks exposed or not protected from the railway line, as they are in England.

25812. By rails?—By fences, or a series of gates. They are open to the line. There have been cases where accidents have occurred and where the railway people have declined to compensate the owner. I may mention a case at Sallins, on the Great Southern and Western. A beast during the unloading time got out on the cattle bank and there was nothing to prevent him getting on the line. There was no fence between the cattle bank and line, and a passing train killed him, and the railway people declined liability.

25813. There was no cattle pen?—No cattle fence.

25814. *Lord Pirrie.*—It is open at the end; you drive them up to the trains, but only at the side at the trains?—It is only while the cattle train is alongside the cattle bank there is any fence from the line. When the train pulls out for going away there is none. The bank is open, absolutely open. If the cattle get a fright they jump on to the line, and there is no protection, and if a train comes on and kills them we consider it a great hardship that the owner is not liable to be compensated, but in England and Scotland these banks are protected.

25815. *Chairman.*—Are you not comparing large stations in England with small stations in Ireland?—Of various degrees. In England and Scotland they are all protected.

25816. I mean what stations?—Cite Ballinasloe for instance.

25817. That is a big fair?—There are no fences there; there is no fence at all in Ireland.

25818. *Mr. Sexton.*—You mean to refer to the most important cattle stations in Ireland?—Sallins. That is a very important station.

25819. *Chairman.*—Is it?—Yes, a very important unloading station, particularly, and a loading station

The railway companies' indifference to the complaints of the cattle trade, due to want of competition.

25820. Well, now, that particular station. Have you ever represented to the railway companies that it would be a convenience for the cattle dealers if they had this bank enclosed?—Repeatedly.

25821. What did they state?—They said some of the well-disposed members would be only too pleased to give us all the things we asked, but they say the directors or shareholders won't allow them to go to the expense. I may mention that we——

25822. *Mr. Sexton.*—The shareholders would be very glad if this tended to increase the traffic?—I daresay they would. They imagine because we can go no other route they may look over the complaint. If we could go by road or canal, or by another competing railway these things would soon be remedied.

25823. All these improvements would develop the cattle trade?—It would improve the cattle trade; I don't say they would increase the numbers, but a good many graziers walk their cattle from the fairs to avoid the hardship of having them loaded.

25824. Eventually?—They would improve it very much. We have to complain of a very great grievance from the South of Ireland as regards the cattle trains service from the South of Ireland. There is no service of trains now north of Limerick Junction, except the night train that leaves about seven or eight o'clock from Limerick Junction it only arrives in Dublin sometime in the morning. Cattle that have to be loaded at Thurles, Templemore, Ballybrophy, have to be loaded four to six hours in advance of this train that night.

25825. *Chairman.*—Why?—Because there is no other train to fetch them, and when it comes to later on in the season it is down-right cruelty that owners of cattle, or even the railway people's servants, porters, that we have to ask to stop later five or six o'clock in the winter evenings, snowing, or sometimes raining, and the cattle have to stand five to six hours in a cattle wagon before this train will come along.

25826. Why do you load them five or six hours before the train comes?—The train only comes at ten o'clock at night.

25827. Limerick Junction?—By Thurles, seven or eight, Limerick. By the time it gets to Templemore and Thurles it is practically eleven or twelve o'clock at night. You can't stop out to load them in the winter time.

25828. The owners load them for their convenience?—It is compulsory; no owner would load the cattle until the train would be ready to start, or half an hour before if he could avoid it.

25829. Won't they allow you to load your cattle at nine o'clock at night when they know the train won't come in till eleven?—There is, as a rule, no one after six o'clock to attend to you; the servants go away. They are not supposed to stop there out at night in the winter time. You could not possibly load them carefully in the night. You are subject to every storm and no light. You would do them harm if you were compelled to wait until nine o'clock. That only goes to show, as I mentioned, the necessity of a day service with the trains.

25830. The cattle trains?—Yes. That is to illustrate the cruelty that it is at present that I mention this matter and I trespass so much on your time to bring under your attention.

25831. You are not complaining of the officials?—No, sir.

25832. Of the system?—Of the system. Quite so. We have always experienced the greatest courtesy and sympathy and kindness from all the officials, from the highest to the lowest, especially on the Great Southern and Western Railway.

25833. *Mr. Sexton.*—Officers have to work a system according to directions?—Yes, quite so.

25834. *Chairman.*—Have you any complaint to make with regard to preferential rates—do you know of any preferential in existence—preferential rates given to your competitors anywhere?—No, sir.

25835. You mean preferential through rates?—There are cases where there are preferentials given. It is a question I don't wish to go into. I would be pleased if through rates would be made more inviting to the traders generally.

25836. *Mr. Sexton.*—The export rates on cattle should be lighter?—Yes.

25837. *Chairman.*—Are you in favour of the State purchasing the Irish railways?—I am, sir.

25838. And the members of your association generally?—Yes.

25839. I don't think I will go into the way in which you consider it ought to be done. But you think that the railways in this country, being in the hands of the State, would tend to promote the interests of the country generally?—I do.

Examined by Mr. SEXTON.

25840. A good many years, you say, have passed since the six o'clock morning train from Kingsbridge was stopped?—Yes, sir.

25841. But the inconvenience is as great now as at the beginning?—Yes, it becomes more aggravated as time goes on. First, we say our fairs are decreasing in popularity, and some of them are going out altogether. A very important fair is the fair of Naas, and it is going completely out by reason of the want of the six o'clock train. It is too near to Dublin for people to go there the night before, and this old arrangement of the buyers coming up was so convenient that its being taken away upset the arrangements completely, and has done great damage. All the fairs right up to Maryborough were served by this train.

25842. We hear of fairs dying or dead in various parts of Ireland: do you account for it by suggesting that the company fail to accommodate their services to the convenience of those attending at the fairs?—Yes, to some extent; in fact, to a great extent in this particular locality. They used to send out a special train to some of our fairs, such as those on the branch lines—for instance, to Baltinglass, Tullow, and Dunlavin. They used to start a special, as the equivalent of this old arrangement, and there were some complaints as to its not keeping line, and they abolished it altogether.

25843. They met a complaint as to bad time by abolishing the train?—Yes.

25844. Did the train convey a good many passengers?—Yes.

25845. Was it a paying train?—Not as a passenger train, but it brought back a lot of stock. The men who were served by it would be customers of the railway.

25846. It was lucrative as promoting goods traffic?—Certainly.

25847. Did the company assign no reason for giving up that train?—No, it was a mixed train, and they were not bound to time; and in order that it might be complained of no more, I suppose, they abolished the train altogether.

25848. You think if the half-wagon rates for cattle and sheep were cased somewhat it would tend to encourage small consignments and small purchases?—It would; and it is a certain amount of trouble and annoyance to the people to have to pay these rates. We call it an unfair rate, as compared with the full wagon rates.

25849. Whatever assists consignments and removes irksome restrictions will tend to promote traffic?—Yes.

25850. You complain of insufficient help on fair days, and say that there should be a number of loading porters and booking clerks to facilitate transit?—I do.

25851. If the railways were worked as a united system it would be easier for them to provide special staffs on special occasions than for individual companies to do it?—Yes.

25852. As to the terminal charges, we are informed that the rate in the rate-book does not include the charge for the statutory terminals for services in the case of the Great Southern Railway Company?—Half charges is stated for the loading and unloading services.

25853. The rate in the rate-book includes half the statutory charge; when you assist in loading or unloading only half the charge is made?—That is the explanation.

25854. But, as I understand, you do not merely assist; you do all the work?—We usually do all the loading, and practically all the unloading.

25855. And you hold that there should be no charge?—No charge when no service is rendered.

25856. No terminal for services?—Yes.

25857. No services being rendered?—No, except what concerns themselves, taking down the number of the wagons, which we don't consider labour, and the shutting of the doors. That involves a certain amount of labour, but it is only a small proportion of the labour of handling the cattle. In the absence of V guides at a good many of the cattle banks there is a great deal of force and pressure necessary to get the cattle into the wagons. Some of them have to be forced into the wagons. There are no V guides to where the door is. The great difficulty is to get some to go in first, so that the others may follow. It takes a good deal of attention on the part of skilful drovers to do this, otherwise there is often a great amount of cruelty.

25858. You contend that there is no service rendered corresponding to the extra charge?—I do; when you compare it with England especially.

25859. You have given a remarkable case of the purchase of sixty cattle at Dunlavin. The man who had the trouble of purchasing and consigning them and bringing them to London and re-selling them there was involved by the process in a loss of £2 10*s.* on the lot?—Yes.

25860. He paid £92 10*s.* for conveyance and charges?—Yes.

25861. Would that be a frequent experience?—It would be the experience to-morrow if you did it again, except the markets in England were dearer or cheaper.

25862. Then, whenever you buy cattle at Limerick and send them to Scotland for sale—Oh, this is Dunlavin to London?—Yes.

25863. If you buy cattle at Dunlavin, in Wicklow, and send them to London, you are liable to have a loss?—Yes, if you don't get more than the difference in cost price and the net return.

25864. Buying and selling at the same or similar prices, the charges incidental to conveyance would involve you in this loss?—Yes; it is a distance of about 400 miles altogether.

25865. Would the same be the case in regard to cattle bought in Limerick and sent to Scotland?—Yes, the expenses per head are about the same, if you use the P wagons. It would be a certain percentage less if you got ordinary wagon rate—33 per cent. off the railway journey—but these cannot be availed of, as they are not available in Limerick for a day service.

25866. When cattle are sent at night you have to use ordinary wagons?—Yes; if you send them at night to Dublin by the time they reach there they are greatly injured. If you have to send them as fat cattle to Scotland they are damaged—the buyers are prejudiced against buying them, and the prices are lowered. They take a certain amount off by reason of the prejudice they have against such cattle, and by reason of their being bruised. In the case of store cattle it is not so visible, as they have time to recuperate and recover.

25867. Your dealings are in fat cattle?—Yes; and we have to use these P wagons to ensure that the cattle will be landed in good condition, and that they will give satisfaction to the customers.

25868. The P wagons are a necessity in such case?—Yes; a necessity of the case to carry the cattle safely and humanely, and free from bruises.

25869. Do you represent that in the ordinary case of transit of cattle from Ireland to England or Scotland for sale for journeys corresponding in length to these you have mentioned the commercial result would be what you have stated here?—Yes, sir.

25870. Did I understand you to say that not one-tenth of the cattle go now to England that used to go?—To London, yes.

25871. You say that this system of charge has reduced the cattle traffic from Ireland to London by 90 per cent.?—Yes, *via* Dublin.

25872. That is most destructive to the Irish cattle trade?—Yes, as far as Dublin route is concerned.

25873. We are asked to report as to what is retarding progress in the country, but this state of affairs makes it surprising that there is any cattle industry left under such conditions?—Of course, when I am speaking of the Dunlavin rate or the rate from the East of the country to London our great complaint is that the journey from Dublin to London is so expensive. That is one of the chief causes that detracts from the trade being carried on. There is a lower and cheaper rate from Waterford. They are the only people who get any trade to London—the Dublin cattle trade has gone completely out.

25874. If you buy cattle in the South or West and send them to Scotland, or buy them in the East and send them to London, you incur a loss that you must make up out of your other transactions?—It is not exactly that way. That only refers to the rate itself. It does not follow that you are to lose.

25875. Not unless the prices were such as in the case stated?—Yes; you would have to get 32*s.* a head over your own money before you made anything. Anything less would mean a loss.

25876. The margin being, as stated in a specific actual case, the profit disappeared?—Yes.

25877. When you despatch cattle bought at Dunlavin to Great Britain—how do you get to Waterford

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The difficulty in making the fat cattle export trade pay owing to high rates.

Transit of cattle by night trains injurious to the stock.

Large reduction in the trade in fat cattle to London *via* Dublin owing to high rates.

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to despatch them?—There is no available route that way. You could go *via* Kildare and Kilkenny; but it would be a long way, and out of the direct line of trade, unless you walked them, say, to Athy Station.

25878. *Mr. Acworth.*—I thought you said they did go by Waterford?—Yes, from the places that Waterford serves. The rates from Waterford to London are much less.

25879. *Mr. Sexton.*—It is a serious thing if the cattle in such splendid counties as Meath and Wicklow, despatched from the Irish capital to the English capital, has decreased by 90 per cent.?—Yes.

The advantage of one rate only (covering carriers' ordinary liability) for cattle urged.

25880. I understand your objection to the present system of through rates, owners' risk and company's risk, to be that it causes inequality, and causes you the trouble of going to the insurance company and arranging the matter. Your main purpose is to avoid contention, and bring about a state of affairs in which care would be taken that there would be very little damage?—Yes, and traders would know where they were as regards an easy and cheap tribunal to pay them for any injury or damage done to goods or cattle.

25881. That would be in the interests of all parties, both railway companies and customers?—Yes.

25882. You are strongly in favour of making the railways of Ireland public property?—Yes.

25883. And working them in the interests of the public?—Yes.

25884. You say you believe there is plenty of talent in Ireland to work all the lines under one system?—Yes.

25885. Plenty of talent for instance among the officials of the existing lines?—Yes.

25886. You would be willing that the several Irish interests concerned should be represented on the managing body?—Yes.

Nationalisation of the Irish railways and management by a representative Irish body strongly recommended.

25887. If the control of the Irish railways were committed to an Irish body, you would be quite willing that Ireland, through whatever body might be appointed, should enter into a binding contract with the Treasury to make good the interest on the loan, and to redeem the loan, and give such collateral security as the Treasury might think expedient?—Yes.

25888. You do not mean that the acquiring of these lines would involve the Treasury in one penny of loss?—Certainly not. I think the State should take over the railways on the same principle as the landlords were bought out. If the State owned the railways and the land the two interests would be identical, and they would serve one another and keep in line.

25889. The Treasury is now in the course of lending a sum of a hundred millions to half a million Irish farmers, and nobody suggests that the Treasury should work the farms?—No; it would be very unlikely.

A Treasury loan through an Irish authority responsible for its repayment advocated.

25890. And the analogy would be that though the Treasury might lend the money they should not work the Irish railways?—No. The general opinion is that nothing would be more to the advantage of Ireland than that the State should own the railways, that they should be worked under one system, and that this country should be represented by an Advisory Board, someone to represent land, someone to represent manufactures, and labour and livestock interests, and I think that such representation would be sufficient to guarantee the popularity and the success of the railway system.

25891. If the Treasury simply lent the money to an Irish authority as it has lent the money to the Irish tenants, and an Irish authority came under a contract to redeem that loan and pay the interest the control should rest with Ireland?—Yes.

25892. It would not be reasonable to say, as some persons have said, that the Treasury, because it finds the money, should control the lines. The Treasury simply lends the money. You never heard of a lender of money entering into the premises so long as the borrower fulfils his obligations?—No.

25893. The borrower is the person who would work the concern?—Yes, and pay the interest on the money. The Irish farmers have always kept their obligations and paid up their statutory obligations under the land purchase, and in the same way, if the State owned the railways in Ireland the interests would be so identical with one another that the State, or the people who would be in charge of the railways would not do anything to injure the interests of the country by reason of their being parallel cases.

25894. If the Imperial Government bought out the lines directly and accepted responsibility for the permanent results, which they would be perhaps slow to do, of course they would own and might work the lines in that case?—Yes.

25895. But if they lent the money, amply secured, as they did for the purposes of land purchase, there is no reason why the Irish people should not be as free to manage and work the railways as the Irish farmers are to manage and work the farms on which loans have been advanced?—Yes.

25896. I see you are afraid that the present position of the public stocks, which is certainly rather depressed, may delay the use of State credit for the purposes of the Irish railways?—That is the prevailing opinion, and it is my opinion. They have been so slow to find the money for the purchase of the land that I am afraid we would have to wait a long time for the money to purchase the railways. I say that, in the event of the purchase not being made very soon that this Commission should ask the Government to so alter the law as regards railway matters as would put an end to those grievances affecting the cattle trade and others, as they believe to be well founded, pending the purchase of the railways.

25897. But purchase is the ideal settlement?—Yes.

25898. I am sure the Commission will give every attention to your forcible and reasonable recommendations. But there would be a considerable number of things to remedy?—Yes.

25899. You would be in favour of reducing the local and through rates?—Yes.

25900. That would mean reducing the profits of the railways, and the value of their stocks?—Yes.

25901. The whole income of the Irish railways is about four millions, and I suppose it would take half a million of that to reform the rates and fares on any effectual basis?—Yes.

25902. That would take about as much as they pay on ordinary dividends, and would disastrously affect the value of their ordinary stock. We have to recommend something practical, and that would be a highly contentious settlement?—Yes; I suppose it would.

25903. The railway companies have great resisting powers, great tenacity, and plenty of money at any rate for the purposes of resistance. Don't you think, although there might be some delay because of the state of stocks, it might be better to buy out the railways, with their own consent, than try to carry reforms in opposition to them?—Yes; if we had any chance of knowing when that would take place. But I would like to see the present state of affairs improved, if it was only to bring the railway people to a better sense of the justice of the claim that Ireland is making at present. It would make them more amenable to sell on better terms to the purchaser on the same principle that foreign competition made the landlords more ready to sell than they would if things had kept on at high prices.

25904. The depression of the public stocks is due to a temporary cause which we hope may pass away?—I hope so.

25905. You would agree with me that a settlement accomplished by mutual consent would be better, sweeter, and more profitable to the country than one forced at the bayonet's point?—Yes, and that is what other Irishmen believe. I would like to see that done to-morrow.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

25906. You think you could improve the transit of cattle from Limerick to Dublin by starting the train early in the morning?—Yes, quite early; you see there is the fifteen-mile speed limit.

25907. You would have to start very early in the morning to get your cattle into Limerick if you have to drive them ten miles?—Yes. But it is the starting of the train early that is required. As a rule, the fat and store cattle do not come very much from Limerick to Dublin. The store cattle come principally from Thurles and Templemore districts, and the fat cattle from Kildare.

25908. You say that the trade from Dunlavin to London is nearly gone?—I say that the cattle trade from Dublin to London is gone.

25909. I think you said that compared with some time ago that the beasts shipped now from Dublin to London were only about one-tenth?—Yes.

25910. Have you figures for that?—I know my own case, and I can speak for a number of my friends, and of the number that they ship to London now *via* Dublin as compared with thirty years ago.

25911. You have not got any figures to show it; you are merely giving us your impression?—That is my impression. The trade of live cattle and dead meat from abroad has knocked the Irish cattle trade out.

25912. Are not as many cattle still shipped from Dublin to England as before? I mean to other places than London?—Yes, they are shipped to other places.

25913. So that the cross-Channel cattle traffic is still somewhere about what it was at the time you speak of?—That may be. The trade is now developed to other ports—to Heysham, and Morcambe, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

25914. But you say that it has gone down in regard to London?—Yes.

25915. Would you say that 12*s.* would be a reasonable rate to London?—Yes. I consider the present rate from Dublin to London is prohibitive. If the rate now charged, 18*s.* or 19*s.*, was a fair rate thirty years ago, I say it is unfair now; and I say that the railway companies should shape their rates to the varying prices of produce.

25916. *Lord Pirrie.*—You say the rates of thirty years ago should not be the rates now?—I do.

25917. *Mr. Acworth.*—Have cattle fallen off some one-third in value in thirty years?—Yes; about one-third.

25918. A beast that used to fetch £12 would now only fetch £8?—Yes. I have seen yearlings sell at £14 a piece, and now they would be about £9; that is more than one-third of a falling-off.

25919. Wasn't that an exceptional year, when yearlings were sellings at £14 a head?—I have seen sixty head of them bought at that price at Emly Fair.

25920. How long ago is that?—About thirty-five years ago, but these were an exceptionally good lot.

25921. Was that the ordinary price in those days?—Prices were high in those good days.

25922. And your contention is that as the value of cattle has dropped one-third in that time the rate ought to go down something in the same proportion?—Yes.

25923. That is a reasonable way of putting it; but let us take it this way. Supposing the railway companies offered you a rate of 12*s.*, and you were satisfied with it, and that that rate would cover the insurance of the beasts——?—My contention is that every rate should be an insured rate.

25924. You say you would be satisfied with a rate of 12*s.*, that would cover the insurance?—Yes.

25925. Supposing the railway company says, "We offer you another rate—11*s.*—and let the dealer take the risk"—you would not allow the railway company to offer that second rate?—I would not. I would not put temptation of that sort in the way of the trader. Having the two rates—the insured rate and the other—would place the insured trader at a disadvantage as compared with the other, if the animals were carried all right, for he would have paid the higher rate. If every rate was an insured rate it would ensure better carrying arrangements. I am satisfied that it is the proper thing to put the carrying companies under all obligations, if it could be done at a rate that would be profitable.

25926. If it suits the railway company to offer a lower rate, and it suits another trader to take it, why shouldn't he be allowed to manage his own business in his own way?—I think it would require a strict law to make people do what is good for themselves in this country as everywhere else. I don't think the traders should take the risks, and the value of the insured rate is that it would prevent recourse to law. If a dealer goes to law he generally gets beaten. In the case at Sallins, that I have mentioned, where a beast was killed, the case was dismissed through a technicality, and the owner of the beast brought it no further. It is clearly a question where the railway companies should be liable—the traders don't demand anything but strict justice.

25927. I don't think you would get rid of litigation in the way you say?—I believe a good deal of it would be got rid of. There could be a small Board of Arbitration to settle all claims, with no expense.

Examined by Lieut.-Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

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25928. You think that the insurance could be effected at a very cheap rate with, say, the Marine Insurance Company?—Yes.

25929. And that the low premium, which, under such circumstances, the railway company could afford to charge, for insurance, would be gladly paid by the cattle traders?—Yes. I am sure the people would avail of it.

25930. And if it were not compulsory, that it would not be availed of largely?—I believe so.

25931. With regard to this particular rate between Dunlavin and London, and the sixty cattle that you speak of; even if a reduction of the rate were made by one-third, it would have only left you a profit of 5*s.* or 6*s.* a head?—Yes.

25932. And that is the lowest that one would expect to make?—Yes.

25933. The profit would work out at about 5*s.* per head?—It would be about that.

25934. As regards the cross-Channel traffic, you say that the trade in cattle from Dublin to London has decreased by nine-tenths?—I do.

The decrease in the cattle traffic from Dublin to London and the extent of the trade from Ireland with Great Britain.

25935. Have you any figures to show that the cattle trade of the whole country has decreased?—I cannot show that it has decreased all over the country.

25936. The Board of Trade returns for 1905 show that three and a half millions were carried over the Irish railways, and that of that about 50 per cent. were exported to Great Britain?—Yes.

25937. Does that still obtain?—It is much changed, as more land has gone into grass for the past forty years.

25938. And it was also stated that the greater part of the cattle traffic went through other ports than Dublin?—Yes.

25939. But the cattle still go to England?—Yes; there is no other market. Of course I mean Scotland and Wales also.

25940. Now in such a case would not the reduction of the rate from Dublin to London cause traffic to be diverted from Cork and Waterford, and come to Dublin?—It does not apply that way so much; because Dublin is at a disadvantage as compared with Waterford for the trade to London—south of Ballybrophy.

25941. But the traffic must go across Channel from somewhere?—Yes.

25942. And the only effect would be that some traffic might go *via* Dublin that now goes *via* Cork and Limerick?—Yes.

25943. Have you anything to say about trucks or wagons for lambs?—I have to say that the present wagons on the Great Southern and Western Railway are very good wagons. There are some complaints about the ventilation for lambs, but I don't make any complaint.

25944. How many lambs go to a truck now?—About forty.

25945. And for a half truck?—Twenty lambs and fifteen sheep.

Complaint as to the practice of charging full wagon rates for live stock when the number allowed for a half wagon is slightly exceeded.

25946. Doesn't it often happen that a man may have twenty or less, and that he is charged nearly the full truck rate?—If you had one over the number you would have to pay the full rate—for twenty-one lambs or sixteen sheep you would have to pay the full truck rate.

25947. If you were sending only six or eight, what is the rate?—If you have only three lambs or sheep you have to pay two-thirds, and for two or three beasts it is the same.

25948. If you have only five or six lambs, or three beasts, as the case may be, you have to pay the two-thirds?—Yes.

25949. Don't you think something might be done to reduce these rates?—I do.

25950. Now, in the event of injury occurring to your cattle on the Irish lines, are the claims generally met fairly and reasonably by the Irish companies?—I can say that I have been for forty years a trader, and, personally, I never made a claim on the Great Southern and Western Railway Company on the principle of their courtesy to me as a trader.

25951. Have you ever had cause to make a claim against them?—Yes, but I have never lodged a complaint against an official, or made a claim against them, in my life, on the principle I stated.

25952. Are you satisfied that, if a case arose involving a complaint or a claim, it would be reasonably met?—I have been always treated fairly. But in say-

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ing this I do not refer to the beast being killed on a friend of mine at Sallins, or of the many claims and complaints made by other traders.

25953. With regard to State purchase, you say you admit that, in the present depressed state of the money market, the Treasury is not likely to engage in such a large financial transaction as the purchase of all the Irish railway lines would involve?—That is my opinion.

Suggested recommendation by the Commission pending State purchase.

25954. Failing State purchase, do you consider that the amalgamation of the smaller lines would be an advantage?—It might; but the great drawback is the want of finality about the way things are done with regard to this country. Pending State purchase of the railways, I would submit to the Commission that in the meantime they should recommend some of the grievances under which traders suffer in the matter of rates should be remedied.

25955. The principal grievance is about the rates?—It is.

25956. And unless the State buys out the lines, it is very hard to see how you will obtain these reductions as long as the present condition of things remains?—It is very hard to see it, I suppose.

25957. As Mr. Sexton has said, any reduction of the rates, involving loss to the shareholders, is not a scheme that they would be likely to agree to?—No. Reward sweetens labour in every way, and I would not like to see any particular interest suffer loss; but the interests of the country are more important than those of any particular class, and what would serve the country is what should be taken into account by the State.

Immediate legislation to secure a reduction in cattle rates pending the working out of a full scheme of State purchase urged.

25958. Do you consider it would be good policy on the part of the Government, having regard to the interests of the country that would be served, to say, "We will insist that the railway companies make a reduction in fares, and we are willing (for a limited period) to subsidise them, say, for four or five years, until we see what the result of the experiment would be"—do you think that would be a good policy to adopt?—It might be; but the Government is very slow to do what ought to be done.

25959. I don't say whether they are quick or slow, but don't you think it would be a good thing to do?—It would; but the Government should, long ago, have given legislative effect to the wants and wishes of Ireland.

25960. Don't you think it would benefit the country?—If we don't get State purchase, it would be a sensible thing for the Government to do something in the direction suggested.

25961. So far as I can see it, it is the only way that this reform can be effected, pending the final settlement of the whole question?—Anything that would benefit the country would be most acceptable, and very much needed.

Examined by Lord Pirrie.

25962. Now, you have spoken very strongly against cattle being carried at night on railways?—Yes.

25963. And you don't object to them being carried on steamers at night—as a rule, isn't it at night they are carried on the steamers?—It is.

Why the conveyance of cattle by steamers at night is less injurious than by railway explained.

25964. How is it that the steamer carries them more comfortably and why shouldn't they go along to Cork, or to Dublin or Waterford at night as well as they do in the steamer?—The circumstances and conditions of travelling are quite different. The difference between a railway track and a steamer is great. The oscillation of the ship doesn't injure the cattle, while the travelling in the train is a hard motion. Then, there are bullock-men on the steamer who are supposed to see the cattle every ten minutes, and we (the shippers) have generally a bullock-man of our own who goes with the cattle, while the companies are bound to provide bullock-men of their own.

25965. Therefore, they are carried more carefully on the steamer than on the railways?—The difference between sending cattle on a train and on a steamer is such that anyone can see it. On the steamer it can be seen what the cattle are doing—how they are placed; but in the railway wagons it is different. Then, at the various stations on the railway lines the wagons are shunted about, and it is in these shunting operations that the damage to the cattle is done.

25966. *Chairman.*—In the steamer at night it can be seen whether the cattle are down or not?—Yes.

25967. *Lord Pirrie.*—You say that cattle are kept for hours in the wagons at Ballybrophy and Thurles?—Yes.

25968. Isn't there some rule, or by-law, of the Agricultural Board that cattle must be watered half an hour before they leave on their journey?—I think that only applies to ports of shipment.

25969. Do you say that the Board of Agriculture will allow cattle to be in a railway wagon from nine o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night without any person to look after them?—I said from four to six hours, unless on a journey.

25970. Do you mean to say they are from four to six hours without being looked after?—I do.

25971. Doesn't that involve cruelty?—I say it does involve cruelty when standing in the wagon, and waiting for a train.

25972. Haven't the Board of Agriculture issued a by-law on the subject?—I think it refers to twelve hours, or for delay at shipment.

25973. I thought there was a law compelling carriers to have suitable arrangements for the transit of live stock?—There are water-troughs. But I might say that these cattle are fresh from their homes, and they travel better fasting.

25974. It seems to me to be very great cruelty to have cattle treated in this way from, say, ten o'clock in the morning to perhaps twelve o'clock at night?—It is cruelty. They might be left six hours at a station, and no party in the train to feed them or see them.

25975. I certainly think that is cruelty?—I believe it is cruelty.

25976. If you send cattle from Kildare to Dublin, do you have your men to drive them to the steamer?—Yes. We feed them in the steamship company's yard.

25977. And at Holyhead what is done?—The railway people assist our men. There is plenty of help there on account of the largeness of the traffic.

25978. Why do you send your cattle from Kildare to London—to the furthest off port from Ireland—instead of taking the cheaper rate to Liverpool or Manchester, or Bristol?—It depends on the class of beasts.

25979. Was the price in London dearer thirty years ago than in other places?—No, sir, but the rates seem to press more heavily now.

25980. Your object is to make money out of your cattle?—Certainly. As I said, different classes of cattle are suited for the different English towns. Manchester market wants small cattle; London wants the best cattle; different classes sell better in different places.

25981. Was the rate 19*s.* 6*d.* thirty years ago?—Yes.

25982. And it is the same to-day?—Yes.

25983. You think the rates charged by the carrying companies have the effect of assisting the foreign producer against the Irish?—That is the whole question in a nutshell.

25984. As I understand you, you want the cattle and other traffic to be conducted on the same lines as the passenger traffic is carried on?—Yes.

25985. That is, that the companies must pay for any injury done?—Yes, and I would strongly impress this on the Commission—that nothing would be more conducive to a better carrying trade than to have one compulsory insured rate.

25986. The railway company cannot divest itself of the responsibility of carrying a passenger safely?—It cannot.

Mr. Acworth.—The railway companies don't insure their passengers.

Lord Pirrie.—Never mind that. They cannot relieve themselves of the responsibility for the safety of the passengers.

(*Witness*).—They make us sign a "delay note" to relieve them of responsibility.

25987. I think it is illegal; do you?—I do consider it most illegal for them to make us sign them out of the responsibility. When the note is signed you have no redress if they kept the cattle a week on their hands in transit. I consider that is very wrong.

Chairman.—I never heard of this "delay note."

Witness.—It applies to the Midland line also.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—We will have to give evidence on this matter later on, Sir Charles.

25988. *Chairman.*—At any rate, it is a grievance as far as you are concerned and your Association?—It is.

Rev. J. Meehan, c.c., called.

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Rev. J. Meehan, c.c., Representative of the Leitrim County Council.

The Chairman, addressing Rev. J. Meehan, c.c., of Dromahaire, said:—Father Meehan, we have been looking through your proof, and it is rather important evidence. I have come to the conclusion that we could not do it justice to-day, because we shall have to adjourn, and if it is not inconvenient to you we would rather take your evidence in October. Would that be to your convenience?

Rev. Father Meehan.—I don't mind very much; but I would rather get rid of it as soon as I can, and not have it like a millstone round my neck.

Chairman.—Don't let that trouble you. But it is no use commencing and not finishing, and we could not finish it to-day. The Secretary will communicate with you, and you can come in the morning and we will finish it on the same day.

Mr. Sexton.—If you allow the members of the Commission time to read your full and important evidence, they will be able to do more justice to your examination when the time for it arrives.

Rev. Father Meehan.—Very well, thank you.

Mr. Robert Gibson examined by the Chairman.

Mr. Robert Gibson, Representative of the South of Ireland Butter Merchants Association.

25989. What are you, Mr. Gibson?—I am a butter merchant in Limerick, and I represent one of the biggest firms in England. I am Irish representative since 1873 of one of the largest butter merchants in England; and I am salesmaster in the public creamery market.

25990. And do you represent the views of the South of Ireland Butter Merchants' Association?—Yes.

25991. And have you been requested by them to come before us and give your views?—Yes, very much against my will.

25992. What district do you represent?—I represent Limerick and Clare, Kerry and North Tipperary.

25993. In what particular trade?—In butter and eggs. The members of that Association are nearly all butter and egg men.

25994. Are you satisfied with the railway rates for butter and eggs in this country?—We are not. We consider that the rates, if they were made even, would be fair enough, but when we find, for instance, the rates from Knocklong, which is a shorter distance from London than Limerick is, are 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton more than from Limerick it interferes considerably with business. If we, Limerick men, go to Knocklong, and wish to ship eggs or butter from Knocklong, instead of from Limerick, we think it is a very unfair charge.

25995. It is a question of water competition, is it not?—It is not. It is the same thing, except that they have less mileage from Knocklong. Our men travel up to Knocklong and Emly to the markets—they are large markets. The mileage from Knocklong to Rosslare is less than the mileage from Limerick to Rosslare, and still the freight is 7*s.* 6*d.* a ton more than from Limerick. We think that unfair.

25996. Of course, you represented that to the railway company?—Oh, yes, over and over again. They have done so, but I have not.

25997. You mean the members of the Association?—Yes.

25998. And they have not got any remedy?—No.

25999. And the rate you are quoting is the rate to-day?—The rate to-day. It was certainly in force last year. It is the rate given to me by the men who are using the two places.

26000. Are the railway companies willing at all times to grant through rates where you want them?—They are not; that is one of the great objections that we have. I don't say that it is the Irish railway companies that object to give through rates. So far as I am concerned the Irish railways do their work splendidly. There are no better men than those who handle the traffic at the Limerick station—the superintendent, the manager, and the stationmaster—they are all splendid men, they attend to everything, but they cannot do what they wish to.

26001. Your complaint is as to want of through rates out of the country into England?—Yes, and partly in Ireland. We were fighting for a year and a half for through rates. We had through rates from Ennis to towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire, but we hadn't got the through rate from Miltown Malbay and Ennistymon, where there are extensive markets. We have been asking for a through rate from these stations *via* Ennis, and we could not get it, although we were perfectly willing to pay the two local rates, because our customers at the other side were greatly annoyed when they bought butter from us, f.o.b., and found that they had to pay afterwards for this rate. We were in constant hot water with them; and it was a year and a half before we could get the railway rates fixed, and we would not have got it but for Lord Ikerin's influence.

26002. *Lord Pirrie.*—You have said that the railway had splendid men at Limerick?—Yes, but they couldn't do it.

26003. Who prevented them?—I daresay the London and North-Western Railway Company.

26004. Is it not to Ennis that you wanted this rate?—I wanted it right through from Miltown Malbay into Yorkshire.

26005. There was only a short distance of twelve miles over which you wanted it?—Yes.

The difficulty in obtaining cross channel through rates from many Irish towns to English stations.

26006. *Mr. Acworth.*—Are there any through rates from the West Clare Railway?—Oh, yes. We have got them now.

26007. When you first applied were there any through rates?—Not that I know of; there were, for butter, but it was stopped.

26008. Who stopped it?—I don't know, but I am sure that it was not the Limerick men.

26009. There was no through rate from the West Clare line at all, so that it was a big question that you were raising?—Yes. In the same way we wanted a through rate to Carnarvon, and for two years we waited before we could get a through rate to Carnarvon. There is no competition between Holyhead and Carnarvon. We had a tremendous long fight before I could get the through rate from Limerick to Carnarvon. And, again, it was Lord Ikerrin who got it for us.

26010. Who is he?—He is the Irish Commissioner in England.

Lord Pirrie.—He is the Irish Commissioner representing the Department of Irish Agriculture in England.

26011. *Chairman.*—Mr. Gibson is only speaking of butter and eggs. What you say is this—that although you didn't object to pay the two rates you wanted the two to be combined in one through rate, and could not get it?—Yes; for a year and a half. Our Irish Commissioner was always kicking up rows about it, and representing our customers' complaints.

Complaint of the G. S. & W. Railway Co's. action in increasing the price of Traders' Season Tickets from Limerick.

26012. What about passenger fares?—We consider that we are badly treated with regard to them. That is one fault that we have against the Great Southern and Western. Since the amalgamation with the Waterford and Limerick they treated us absolutely dishonestly. They agreed to give tickets at the same price that we were paying the Waterford and Limerick Company, for places all over their system, where our markets were—trader's season tickets; and afterwards they absolutely refused to give us tickets at the old rates.

26013. *Mr. Sexton.*—From where to where?—From Limerick to the towns where our markets were along their line.

26014. *Chairman.*—You had traders' season tickets, at reduced rates, over the Waterford and Limerick System?—Yes, to where our markets were.

26015. And these tickets were discontinued after the amalgamation?—Yes; absolutely refused to us unless we paid four times the former price.

26016. For the same places?—Yes. It saved me a lot of money, for I ceased to travel.

26017. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—Perhaps, sir, you would ask Mr. Gibson to give us an example of this.

26018. *Chairman.*—Do you remember where your ticket was available for, that you had from the Waterford and Limerick?—My ticket was available from Limerick to Ennis, as far as Listowel, and down to Waterford.

26019. Was it a free ticket?—It was not. It was a ticket for which I paid £12 a year.

26020. What class was it?—Third.

26021. Do you remember what you paid?—£12 a

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year. Mr. Robert Hickey tried to get it, and could not.

26022. That is quite sufficient. You think that traders' season tickets, as far as you are concerned and others like you, would tend to develop the industries of the district?—I am perfectly certain of it. I am perfectly certain that it saved me a great many pounds in travelling, simply because I didn't travel. I bought in the goods by letter.

26023. But that is not as satisfactory as travelling and meeting the customers?—Well, of course, that is the question. We had been in the habit of going to markets, and meeting the customers. I have not gone to markets since I was refused the season ticket, and now I do business by letter.

26024. *Lieut-Col. Poë.*—Does it affect your business much?—I don't think it does. It was annoying at the time.

The facilities for outwards goods traffic at Limerick satisfactory.

26025. *Chairman.*—What about the outward facilities afforded by the railway companies for goods traffic?—At the beginning, after the amalgamation, they wanted to curtail our facilities, but now they give us fair facilities, indeed.

26026. Then you have no complaint to make now?—Not much. They first refused to take goods out by the mid-day train, but since the Rosslare line was opened that has been done away with, and they treat us well for mid-day traffic out—as well as we could ask for.

26027. What about the goods that come into Limerick?—That is entirely unsatisfactory still. The goods coming in from certain parts of the country are never delivered in time.

26028. *Mr. Sexton.*—From the surrounding districts?—Yes, from the surrounding districts.

26029. *Chairman.*—Do the railway company deliver?—No; we cart all.

Complaint as to serious inconvenience arising from constant delays to traffic caused by the late arrival of Goods trains at Limerick.

26030. What is your complaint?—The trains don't arrive in time. Before the amalgamation—when the Waterford and Limerick was separate from the Great Southern and Western—each had goods trains coming into Limerick before eight o'clock in the morning. My market opens at half-past nine o'clock, and my buyers are gone at a quarter to ten. Now there are parts of our county from which we cannot get the butter in before twelve or one o'clock. Last Saturday, for instance, there was half a ton of butter coming in from New Pallas, in the County of Limerick. It was sent on on Friday night, and although my carter was at the station to take it away, I could not get it until two o'clock on the following afternoon. That is a very serious thing for the saltless butter trade, which is developing enormously in the County Limerick.

26031. Was there a train passing the station by which it could have been sent on, and by which it could have reached you at eight or nine o'clock in the morning?—I should say there were at least three.

26032. For some reason or another it was not put into any of these trains?—I could not tell you the reason, only that I could not get it; and it is constantly happening.

26033. Perhaps it was at Limerick, and that you could not get it in the warehouse?—Oh, no. My man knows all about it; and if it is only pointed out to the man at the station that it is my traffic it is handed out to him. But they cannot hand it out if it is not there. The man comes back to me, and the answer is almost constantly that the Cork goods are not in.

26034. Take the Saturday consignment, is that exceptional?—It is not exceptional. Sometimes we get the Cork goods in right time, but sometimes we don't.

26035. You give the railway company credit for facilities for goods going out, but condemn their practices for goods coming in?—That's it. I say there is some hitch that is not the fault of the people at Limerick. I know that Mr. Wilson is always anxious, and that he does his best to find out where the hitch is. They give it the best attention at the goods store when the goods are in.

26036. Then the fault must be beyond that station?—Yes.

26037. The railway company hear what you say, and, no doubt, we shall hear something further about it. Do you know anything about the cattle trade?—I have been a good deal in it myself, but not lately.

26038. You don't represent the people in that trade?—No; I am only here to represent the butter and egg trade.

26039. Is there a large traffic sent by you to England from Limerick?—Oh, yes. Limerick is one of the heaviest centres for butter distribution. We went into the creamery movement from the very beginning, when other parties in the country set their heads against it.

26040. Where does the butter come from?—We would get creamery butter from distant places—from the Midlands and the North—if the local railway rates would allow, but they are too heavy. In the winter we used to get butter from the North, but we had to give it up because the rates were prohibitive. I get butter from the country every day except Sunday, and it is double the rate from Carrick-on-Shannon to Limerick that it is from Cork to Limerick.

26041. Do you export it as Limerick butter?—Oh, no; but as creamery butter. I get a lot in from Carrick and Sligo, and away round by Belfast, but the rates are too heavy.

26042. *Mr. Sexton.*—You find the area of supply limited by the rate?—Yes, limited by the heavy rate. For instance, within the last fortnight I got three tons of butter up from Cork that a man wanted to sell. I got him two shillings a cwt. more for it in Limerick than he could get anywhere else, because Limerick is a known centre for creamery butter. It cost eightpence a cwt. to bring it up to Limerick. We could constantly get large quantities to sell in Limerick if the rates were reasonable.

26043. How much of the country is open to you?—I would draw my supplies from immense distances if there was anything like a fair rate; but we cannot do so on account of the rates.

26044. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Does this butter go through any process after you get it?—Oh, no. If it is bad it would be put aside and dealt with, but if it is choice butter it would not go through any process.

26045. Why, then, does it not go direct to the customer from the place where it is made?—Because we have got the trade. All the County of Limerick, North Kerry, and Tipperary are studded with creameries.

26046. You don't get uniform butter?—Oh, no.

26047. Your customers think that your butter is manufactured in Limerick?—No, they know I don't manufacture it. I get it from all parts of the country—from Kerry, Tipperary, and Waterford, as well as Limerick.

26048. *Chairman.*—You think that that trade, which is the most important trade in the district, would be considerably increased if more favourable rates were put into operation for butter?—Yes. We ask a uniformity of rate for mileage. We don't want to pay double as much from Carrick-on-Suir to Limerick as we do from Clonmel to Limerick.

26049. You don't mean equal mileage rates, do you?—Yes, reasonable equal mileage rates, which is all we ask. We don't want to be made to pay double for carrying it ten miles more.

26050. There are anomalies of that sort which you want to see rectified?—Quite so.

26051. And you say that if low rates were put into operation you think this industry would largely increase?—I think the railways would be paid a great deal more, for a great deal more butter would come in to what is a known centre.

26052. You think the trade would increase?—I do. A great deal of butter goes direct to England, and is sold at a lower price in the English market than we could get for it if we got it into our hands.

26053. You think it would be a means of developing the industry, which is far-reaching in its effects on the country, if lower rates were put into operation?—There is no doubt about it.

26054. And the trade has been increasing, for all that?—Yes, with all the handicap against it.

26055. Even now it is increasing, and it could be more largely increased by——?—Better facilities.

26056. If better facilities were given—that's your point?—That's my point.

26056A. Now, I think you have covered the whole ground?

Witness.—There is one other thing—about through rates. We very much object to a preference being given to Cork—a dishonest preference. There are two routes to places where we do business with.

26057. Mention them?—Butter from Cork, by the Great Southern and Western Railway, *via* Rosslare and Fishguard, to Cardiff and Newport, in casks, firkins, baskets, or boxes, is charged at the rate of 25*s.* 8*d.* a ton. From Limerick to Cardiff and Newport by the very same route the rate is 30*s.* a ton

The mileage, as you see, is rather in our favour, as compared with Cork, and still we have to pay 4*s.* 4*d.* a ton more, or rather our customers on the other side have to pay. The rate from Cork for eggs—the same route—is 27*s.* 6*d.* per ton, owner's risk, or 31*s.* 2*d.*, Company's risk.

26058. *Mr. Sexton.*—To Newport and Cardiff?—Yes, to Newport and Cardiff, while from Limerick it is 35*s.*, owner's risk, or 32*s.* 6*d.*, carrier's risk. In one case it is 7*s.* 6*d.* extra a ton from Limerick, and in the other case it is 10*s.* 4*d.* a ton extra, which seems to us preposterous. Why should we have to pay 10*s.* 4*d.* more than the Corkmen have to pay for sending goods at the company's risk by the same route?

26059. *Chairman.*—You know the obvious answer of the railway companies?—I do not.

26060. It is water competition?—Water competition is absolutely useless for these things—for such things as fresh butter and eggs will not do by a weekly service to Cardiff and Newport.

26061. But there are steamers from Cork?—Oh, yes

26062. That regulates the rates?—I don't think it should. It is a less distance from Limerick to Rosslare than from Cork to Rosslare, as far as I can see.

26063. There is not much difference?—I think it would be rather in our favour, and why should owner's risk in Limerick be 42*s.* 6*d.*, while it is only 31*s.* 2*d.* in Cork; while in the other they handicap us 4*s.* 4*d.* a ton if we want to make the company responsible.

26064. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Isn't Limerick one of those ports entitled to a differential treatment *via* Cork, under the amalgamation. Aren't they entitled to a differential rate?

26065. *Chairman.*—He speaks of from Cork to Rosslare. You are comparing like with like. What you say is that by railway from Limerick to Rosslare is a shorter route than from Cork to Rosslare, and you consider that you ought to have, at any rate, the same rate as Cork, and if the distance is a little less you should have a little less rate?—We ought not to be handicapped, particularly when we want goods to be carried at owner's risk. It is a monstrous thing that we should be charged these high rates in Limerick, as compared with Cork.

26066. It is one of those anomalies that crop up. Have you represented that to the railway company?—Oh, yes, over and over again; and my Cardiff and Newport friends have represented it. They want to deal with us in Limerick, but they cannot do it. They say that the freight is so much cheaper from Cork.

26067. The railway people of Limerick seem to be possessed of every virtue; cannot you arrange that with them?—No, sir. They have no power over through rates. I think the through rates are made in England. I don't know; but I am told so.

26068. As far as you are concerned, these figures are correct?—They are, sir. They were given to me by the railway company themselves.

26069. *Mr. Acworth.*—Isn't there some obligations on the railway company to charge on less than the actual mileage from Cork to Fermoy and on to Waterford?

Mr. Neale (*Manager, Great Southern and Western Railway*).—Yes.

26070. From Rosslare to Cork, do you reckon the rate by an imaginary route that is not made?—Yes.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—It was first an obligation, and then an Act.

26071. Is it an Act of Parliament?—(*Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor*).—It is.

26071A. *Chairman.*—Even with that obligation there is not much difference in distance.

Mr. Neale.—The difference is only six miles.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—The difference in the rate is made by the steamer competition. We did not make it.

26072. *Chairman* (*to Witness*).—Tell us your views on the subject of the State purchase of the railways—was the subject before your association?—It was; and there has been a great deal of difference of opinion on the subject.

26073. What is the preponderance of opinion?—I should say it is evenly divided. I am strongly in favour of State purchase. I am personally in favour of it, but as the representative here of the association, I could not advocate it, because I was told not to do so by the secretary. The subject was thoroughly discussed at a large meeting. A great many things were brought up, and they wished me to put forward many things, but they did not wish me to advocate State purchase.

26074. What was the opinion, on the average?—The majority was of opinion, as I have heard Colonel Poë express it, that there should be something in the shape of a subsidy.

26075. So far as the Association is concerned, they have not expressed an opinion before us, but your personal opinion is——?—My personal opinion is that if the railways were nationalised, as the Post Office is, it would be a great blessing.

Nationalization of the Irish railways advocated.

26076. Have you anything to say about the Railway Commissioners' Court?—Yes. There was a case brought before us at the meeting at which I was asked to come here as their representative. I forget the names. But the person brought his case before the Railway Commissioners. He won his case hands down. The Railway Company had to charge the rate that he said was right. It cost him £200, and they refunded him the over charge. They charged him the right rate for two or three months afterwards, and they went back and charged him the wrong rate, and he would not go to law any more. He said he hadn't £200 to spare. That is one of the things that we object to. Going before the Commissioners costs a lot of money.

26077. *Mr. Acworth.*—What is the name of the case?—I don't know it.

26078. *Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.*—Can you tell us the railway?—I cannot. We know that going before the Commissioners is too expensive for private persons.

The Railway and Canal Commissioners too expensive for private persons.

26078A. *Chairman.*—We know that.

Witness.—That is why I didn't take the trouble to get particulars.

26079. Your Association is unanimously of opinion that some cheap, easy tribunal should be established in Ireland for dealing with the differences between traders and the railway companies?—That is their unanimous opinion. There is no doubt about it.

The creation of a cheap Irish tribunal for the settlement of disputes between traders and railways recommended.

26080. But as to whether it should be the County Court Judge or a separate tribunal you have not considered?—They prefer it should be a separate tribunal, because, although they have great faith in our own County Court Judge—Judge Adams—there are others in whom they have no faith.

26081. It should be a tribunal in Ireland?—Yes. That is absolutely necessary if the country is to prosper.

Examined by Lord PIRRIE.

26082. Mr. Gibson, you have given us, at least to me, very useful information, and your evidence has been extremely interesting. But I should like to know how much butter do you deal with per year. How much do you send out of Ireland?—Well, it would be impossible on account of want of statistics to tell you how much is sent out of Ireland. But I can tell you how much is made in Ireland.

26083. I am referring to what you deal with. You said you were the agent, the representative of this enormous district. I want to know what you yourself deal with, or rather the Association which you represent here?—The Association which I represent here deals with about one-third of the whole produce of Ireland, that is, about 20,000 tons of butter last year.

Tonnage of Butter dealt with by the Butter Merchants' Association for year 1906.

26084. Is that what you actually sell to the English or other markets?—That is about what the Association that I represent would have handled. There were about 60,000 tons of butter made in Ireland last year to the best calculation that we can make.

Estimated tonnage of butter made in Ireland year 1906.

26085. It is very important that the Commission should get the evidence of one who has handled such an enormous amount?—One of our principal members manages eighty-five creameries himself. He has the control of them.

26086. Have you got in your mind about how much it has increased—is it five or eight years since you started?—No; it is twelve. 1895 was the first time I was appointed salesmaster of a public creamery market. It was at a public meeting of the trade.

26087. Have you any idea what it has increased in those years?—I could not say, because it has varied so much with the climate. It is one-sixth short this year as compared with last season, owing to the temperature.

26088. During the last three or four years, has your

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Association increased the export of butter?—Over the four or five years previously?

26089. Yes?—It has, certainly.

26090. Is it one-third more than five years ago?—Last year it was more than one-third. There was an increase last year of fully 10,000 tons over the previous year owing to temperature.

26091. You have practically doubled it during the last two years?—No; I said there was an increase of 10,000 tons in Ireland. In our district it would be about one-third of that, say about 3,000 tons.

Large increase in the Irish butter trade.

26092. Then I think I may assume that during the last five years you have more than doubled the amount of the export of Irish butter?—I would not say that, because we were doing a very large thing five years ago. If you went back to 1891, then I would say so—to 1891, when the creamery movement was started. I have been in the butter trade since I was a child.

The necessity for encouraging dairy farming so as to develop the Irish export butter trade.

26093. Has your Association during the last three or four years increased their turn-over?—Yes, certainly; there is no doubt about it.

26094. Would you have increased that turn-over a great deal more if you had the young cattle not shipped abroad but worked up for the supply of milk and cream rather than for the supply of beef?—Yes; we could have increased the produce of butter under such circumstances three-fold within five or six years, because there are an enormous number of heifers sold and sent out of the country as beef or stores.

26095. Has your Association done anything to try to prevent that?—Except in trying to point out to the farmers and the country generally the great loss at present arising from the supply of beef to England at the ridiculous prices got for it.

The assistance afforded by the Department of Agriculture in encouraging the rearing of milch cattle.

26096. Has such an important Association as yours, supplying 20,000 tons of butter per annum, ever put before the Agricultural Board the great importance of their trying to develop the cattle trade amongst the farmers for the production of milk, cream, and butter?—We fought that very strongly with the Department of Agriculture, and after a great deal of trouble we succeeded in getting them to establish a dairy herd-book.

26097. Did you get that done?—We have got that done, and we have got a very first-class gentleman from the County Clare appointed now as inspector. He is a man who is a thorough expert in everything connected with milch cattle.

26098. Then I am right in assuming that it was through your Association that the Agricultural Board was forced to consider this question?—I give more credit to the Kilkenny men than to those of any other part of Ireland for doing that. It was the Kilkenny gentlemen did that for us. They backed us up splendidly and worked out the whole thing.

26099. I want to focus your evidence on the question as to the advantages that in your opinion would be derived, particularly by Ireland, by getting a class of cattle that will produce this milk and cream and butter?—I believe that if we got fair facilities all round for putting our butter upon the market, we could treble the produce within, certainly, seven years, that it would largely increase the profits of the farming classes of the country, and largely increase the profits of everyone that touched it.

26100. Am I right in assuming that this 20,000 tons of butter is sent out of Ireland from the beginning of May to the end of September?—The greater part of it is—much the greater part of it.

26101. Am I right in assuming that that is the cheapest period for butter if you are selling it in England?—You are, indeed, quite right.

The desirability of teaching the farmers how to have supplies of milk in winter for butter making.

26102. Would it not be a wiser policy for such an important Association as yours, and for a Board like the Agricultural Board, to teach the people how to get milk in winter?—Indeed it would.

26103. Have you ever put that before the Department?—Yes; we have been ding-dong at it inside and outside the Department.

26104. I don't know whether you look upon getting butter from Belfast as importing it. Do you import any butter into the Limerick district?—During the winter months, from the 1st of December to the 1st of February, we import large quantities of New Zealand butter into Limerick.

The importation of New Zealand butter into Limerick in the winter owing to scarcity of Irish butter.

26105. Am I right in assuming that you import practically from the 1st of November to the end of March?—The 1st December. We don't begin importing butter until about the 1st of December.

26106. From the 1st of December to the end of March you actually import?—To the beginning of March.

26107. To the beginning of March you import far more than you export?—Oh, yes. We could not supply the local traders around at all. Scores of them come with carts to take away this New Zealand butter in the winter. We serve up to Tuam from Limerick, and down to Waterford.

26108. You make large contracts with English, Scottish, and other customers. How do you supply them during the winter?—We don't supply them during the winter.

26109. You lose that custom for a part of the year?—We lose the very heaviest part of our trade during these three months. We are able to keep a few weekly customers who use nothing but saltless Irish butter. We keep all the creameries that are making butter during the winter on to these, and we absolutely refuse to sell a pound of Irish butter to anybody in Ireland during these months. We say "We are keeping this for an English customer. If you want butter to eat at home here is New Zealand butter."

26110. Am I right in assuming that the Agricultural Board, with such enormous grants, have no way of teaching you and the farmers how to meet foreign competition in the way of supplying butter in the winter, when it is very dear, rather than in the summer, when it is very cheap?—We have begged of them to put up experimental dairy farms here and there in the country and run them the whole year round.

26111. And they won't do it?—They won't do it.

26112. Would you not consider that very much wiser than giving large grants to these wealthy great firms who make linen and yarn and all that sort of thing? Is not the other more useful to the country at large?—The other is the staple industry of the country.

26113. You spoke about not being able to get any through rates from Ennis to Limerick?—No, no—from Milltown to Ennistymon.

26114. Through the Limerick Junction?—Yes, through the Limerick Junction.

26115. To England?—To England.

26116. Would not a big Association like yours have got over that by paying a certain sum of money to the railway company to your credit; and then on the occasion of every shipment that you send forward they could debit it to you without requiring an actual payment to the station-master?—I don't understand you. We don't pay these freights. They are paid in England.

26117. *Lord Pirrie.*—You told the Chairman—at least I understood your evidence to be that you paid forward from Milltown to Limerick——

26117A. *Chairman.*—What he said was that the consignee got an account, and when he saw that account there was a rate from Ennis to the destination, and then a "paid on" which represented the rate for the local town.

Witness.—You have put it exactly.

26118. *Lord Pirrie.*—Supposing you paid a sum of money down?—We don't pay at all. They pay at the other end.

26119. *Lord Pirrie.*—If a sum of money had been paid would not that have prevented the difficulty?

Chairman.—No; because they don't pay.

26119A. *Witness.*—We don't pay. It is our customer pays. A man buys fifty firkins and he buys it "free on the rail"; and he is charged two rates. And he was always saying that we were robbing him. It was the "paid on" that misled him.

26120. *Lord Pirrie.*—If they had gone to the railway company and said, "There is £50 towards the cost of these small shipments going on," they would have given one forwarding docket?—They would not give it on any terms until they got a through rate.

26120A. *Chairman.*—It is the "paid on" that is.

26121. *Lord Pirrie.*—I have a good deal of trade in certain things to the Continent, and rather than allow my customers being in any way inconvenienced I have frequently paid money with them so that no charges could come forward to irritate the customer. Now I still think that if you had gone to your friends that you have spoken so very highly of and that are so obliging, the Great Southern and Western Railway Company—and yet after all the praise you give them, I don't know that anyone has given stronger information as to mismanagement—I still think there would be some way of getting over the

difficulty, though I bow to the Chairman's decision?—We found that difficulty even where we actually paid freight in a great many cases. I have two books here if you want to see them. We pay carriage here on a lot of small consignments, and nearly all the big things go "carriage forward." We pay the freight at this end; and within a fortnight after I have paid freight at this end my customers have been made to pay freight at the other end.

Examined by Colonel HUTCHESON POE.

26122. Did I understand you to say that you exported about one-third of the total?—The Association that I represent does—the South of Ireland Butter Merchants' Association.

26123. They represent about 20,000 tons, the total export being 60,000 tons?—Last year.

26124. Exported?—I don't know about exported. I say made.

26125. I have been looking at the Department's returns?—They don't get anything like the quantity exported.

26126. Their return for 1904 for the whole of Ireland is 34,000 tons?—It ought to have been at least 50,000 tons for 1904.

26127. This is a very serious statement—that the returns are not correct?—They acknowledge themselves that they have not been able to get the full returns. They call it an estimate.

26128. *Mr. Sexton.*—It is only an estimate?—Yes; and of course ours is only an estimate. But what we estimate it on is the produce that we have returned from the creameries, returned from our private hand separators, and the produce that a number of farmers who keep accounts give us. And then we estimate it over the number of dairy cows, making a low estimate for the produce of the whole number of dairy cows.

26129 *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—They say that of 14,000 tons coming from certain parts the whole of it goes through Waterford?—All our stuff passes through Waterford.

26130. You dispute the accuracy of these figures?—Entirely.

26131. Assuming that your figures are correct, what proportion of that 20,000 tons represents the produce of your own immediate district—within I would say thirty or forty miles of Limerick. That is a fairly wide district?—It would be very hard to make an estimate of that.

26132. I want to get from you how much of that 20,000 tons is drawn from Belfast and other places?—I could not tell you that at all.

26133. Is half of it drawn from outside?—No, about one-fourth, or maybe one-third. The major thing would be made in Castleisland and Killarney and Headford. We take in all the district there. We have factories at Castleisland, Miltownmalbay, and Limerick. We work right up to Cashel and Clonmel, and right down to Carrick-on-Suir. We call that our district.

26134. I want to know what you consider the legitimate district of the Limerick Creameries. You could hardly contend that it is in the interests of the man who buys butter on the other side of the Channel to be getting Belfast butter drawn all the way down to Limerick Junction and shipped for him to England?—It is in his interest, and in this way. We do not ship it as "Limerick Creamery," we ship it as our own brand of creamery butter. We have several brands—"Shannon," "Limerick Treaty," and others; and we divide all the butter, no matter where it comes from; whether it comes from this district, or Sligo, or Belfast, into different brands, and they are all branded "Choicest Centrifugal Irish Creamery Butter."

26135. You pride yourself upon the reputation which your Limerick butter has. The great objection that the English butter merchant has with regard to Irish butter, as compared with Continental butter, is that, while the Continental butter comes over uniform in quality, and absolutely undistinguishable one part from another, in nine cases out of ten when they get an Irish consignment of butter there may be half a dozen different qualities in it. If you draw butter from Belfast and Dundalk and any other stations you like, probably the Belfast butter is not of the same uniform quality as the Dundalk butter, and these different butters coming to Limerick, it is impossible to have uniform quality, and this must to a certain extent, prejudice the reputation which you deservedly have on the other side with the man who buys butter?—I will explain that the Colonial or foreign butter is not uniform. Now the firm that I represent, and have represented since 1873, never had less, winter nor summer, than 400 casks of Scandinavian butter, and such a thing as to talk of uniformity in regard to that butter is absolutely untrue. I have seen it for five years come good, and for five years I have seen it as vile butter as ever I saw.

The allegation that Irish butter is less uniform in quality than Continental denied.

26136. What do you mean by Scandanavian butter?—Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish. It has been said by people in London, and most falsely, that the Normandy butter and other butters are uniform. It is impossible to get uniform butter out of any country unless you keep the feeding of the cattle uniform, and get a uniform period of laxation and keep the cows for the bull. Butter alters all through the seasons of every year in every country. The nearest to uniformity that we get is the New Zealand butter, because the New Zealanders have the biggest factories, and there is an enormous mixture of milk there; and where there are thousands of cows coming in it does not make so much difference. But to say that Danish butter is uniform in quality is ridiculous. Danish butter is so poor this week that half of it could not sell.

Uniformity of New Zealand butter.

26137. The quotations for Danish butter are higher than for Irish butter?—They are.

The higher price commanded by Danish butter not due to superior quality but to the presence of a representative of Denmark in the English markets.

26138. How do you account for that if the butter is not of better quality?—Because for years Danish butter was beautifully boomed by the best man that Denmark could produce—Harold Faber. We have got a man equal to him now in Lord Ikerrin, and he is pushing along our butter in grand style. But for over thirty years the Danes have been thoroughly well represented on the market, and have done everything they could to boom their butter.

26139. But don't you think that it would be more to the interests of the individual trader of the North of Ireland, and to the interests of the man at the other side of the Channel who buys butter, that that butter should go direct from the North of Ireland rather than by way of Limerick?—It would all depend on the state of the market. A man may have a good opening in Belfast to-day and beat us perhaps, while we may have a good opening next week and he may not. I was particularly asked to bring before your notice the immense difficulty that all traders at present suffer from in trying to make any railway company responsible for any serious loss. Here is a case that went on for over twelve months. A case of the Irish Co-operative Agency, damage to four boxes, which came to £7 on the four boxes. They were absolutely smashed to pieces between London and a place called Haslemere, and there was no redress unless they went over to London and prosecuted the South-Eastern Company. We have hundreds of cases of that sort. And that is one of the reasons that I was so strong about having a legal tribunal to which we could appeal. We have cases hanging over for years. There is a bagful of cases against the railway companies. This is my railway claim book (indicates); and here is a report I have just received from the Department of Agriculture referring to mine of March 30th, 1901, and the case is absolutely unsettled yet. It is a case of absolute criminal damage.

The difficulty of getting claims settled by railway companies.

Instances of unsettled claims.

26140. *Chairman.*—What was the stuff?—Butter. They smash it to pieces or send it away a hundred miles beyond the station you consign it to, and then they turn round and say, "You sent it at owner's risk, and you have no claim upon us." So far as I am concerned, I have made them pay for every case that I claim on, because I never make a claim that I cannot substantiate. But scores of other cases are constantly arising where they entirely repudiate any responsibility, either for not delivering the stuff at all or for sending it a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles beyond the destination you sent it to. The Great Southern and Western Company prove that they delivered it fit to the next company, that company prove that they delivered it in perfect order in London, and then between that and Haslemere four boxes are smashed, so that there was as much butter outside the box as inside the box; and still they say that is not culpable negligence.

26140A. *Chairman.*—I know a little about Haslemere.

26141. *Lord Pirrie.*—Is not that largely due to the

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faulty manner in which the butter is sent?—A great deal of the damage was due to the faulty boxes.

26142. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—And has there not been a marked improvement since the Department has taken up that question?—There has been a very manifest improvement.

Damage to Butter in transit diminishing owing to the improvement in the packages, but delays in transit frequent.

26143. We have had evidence from the inspectors that whereas firkins of butter and boxes of eggs were frequently and in the majority of cases very much damaged, it is rare now to find an instance of serious neglect and avoidable damage?—It is rarer a good deal to find cases of breakage; but every day almost you will find some complaint of gross delays entered here. Even butter that ought to arrive by passenger train does not arrive in time.

26144. It has to go over two or three systems, and you have to trace it to the particular system on which the loss occurs?—We have to pay up to £5 a ton for the freight on the passenger service, and yet we cannot get it delivered in time.

26145. With regard to the difficulties which you say you experience in getting goods delivered, do you attribute any of that to the result of the amalgamation? Do you think that the amalgamation of the Waterford and Limerick Line with the Great Southern and Western Railway has been beneficial or otherwise?—For outward goods it has been decidedly beneficial; for inward goods I don't think it has. It has made them independent about bringing in goods in time.

26146. You think that these delays are avoidable and can be improved upon?—They were avoidable formerly.

Amalgamation objected to as likely to remove competition.

26147. Then I take it from your notes of evidence here that you are altogether opposed to the amalgamation of the lines?—Oh, no. So far as we are concerned, we don't believe that doing away with competition altogether would be at all good for the trade. Amalgamation would be doing away with competition altogether.

26148. Is not competition very often rather more nominal than real. We have heard of agreements and understandings. The railway companies are obliged, where the traffic is comparatively small, to enter into agreements and understandings as to rates, so that you do not really gain all the benefits which two or three competing lines in this country might give you?—There is a good deal in that; but still, speaking on that, I am speaking according to the wishes of the Association. They didn't believe in amalgamation; and they were very much divided on the advantage of State purchase; but they were unanimous in the demand for some legal remedy which could be enforced quickly and promptly. They believe that while waiting for State purchase or anything else, if we got that we would get an immense gain, and that it could be done without any great cost to the Government.

A State subsidy for immediate reduction in rates, also the appointment of a cheap legal tribunal asked for pending a scheme of State purchase.

26149. So far as your own individual opinion is concerned, you are in favour of some such suggestion as Mr. O'Connor, the last witness, made in reference to the State giving a subsidy for a limited period?—That was strongly expressed at the meeting that I represent.

26150. So that you favour some such suggestion?—Some such suggestion as a subsidy, very strongly.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

Suggested exclusion of lawyers from proposed new railway tribunal.

26151. You are very strong to Colonel Poë about a legal remedy for these abuses. I am rather surprised to see in your proof that you want to have a tribunal and no lawyers on it to deal with legal matters?—Not to deal with legal matters, but to deal with business matters on business lines. We don't want legal quibbles in business matters. Lawyers are paid to differ upon the reading of Acts of Parliament; and what we want are men who are there to try and make people carry out their responsibilities.

26152. You don't think that lawyers are good people to interpret Acts of Parliament?—We find them very bad indeed. One tells us one thing, and another another thing. One set of lawyers told us that we had no remedy against the company that contracted, and that we would have to go to London to prosecute.

26153. You don't think, in other words, that lawyers are the best to carry out law business?—They are the best people for taking money out of their clients' pockets One gives them one opinion, and another gives them another.

26154. If you got people who were not lawyers they would be always on your side?—No, indeed, they would act straight. They would not be paid for acting differently.

26155. Do you think that butter people understand the butter business?—I do.

26156. But you don't think the lawyer people understand the law business?—They are paid for differing. If they all agreed about the law there would be nothing for the lawyers to do.

26157. You have just been telling Colonel Poë that we outsiders do not understand all there is to know about the butter business; that when we think Danish butter is all alike we don't understand it; we are not experts. Don't you think if you knew as much about law as about butter you might agree that it is not as easy as outsiders think?—I quite agree with you, sir. I am perfectly sure that the present Butter Bill before Parliament is made on purpose that people might differ upon it. It is a lawyer's endowment bill, not a bill to suppress fraud.

26158. I must not ask you about that. I don't know. You mentioned that people send their butter to Limerick because they got a better price if it came through Limerick?—Oh, no. They make a better price because we have a better hold of the markets very often. At times Cork and Belfast make better prices. But, as a rule, the weight of the creamery business has been from the very beginning done through Limerick; because when the other people went against the creamery movement we in Limerick saw that it was coming, and we said that there was no use in resisting it; and we went with it, and helped it every way that we could, with the result that the whole County of Limerick is studded with creameries.

26159. I thought I understood you to say that the reason for the better prices is because the butter came from Limerick?—No.

26160. Because you have got better organisation?—Because we hold our markets better as a rule.

26161. Do you think it reasonable that butter should go from Belfast to Limerick in order to be sold afterwards in England?—It would be a great advantage to have Belfast butter given over to those who know how to deal with it.

26162. Do you think it is to the advantage of its purchasers to send it to Limerick?—You might get it fresh and very bad indeed. Good Irish butter ought to keep well for a fortnight. Absolutely saltless Irish butter properly made will be as good at the end of a fortnight as on the day it was made.

26163. Do you really think that it is reasonable that butter—I do not mean a special consignment—is it reasonable that butter manufactured near Belfast should go to Limerick before it is distributed in England?—It would not be reasonable if the butter was properly graded as we want it to be graded by Government graders. It is very useful for it to go from Belfast or anywhere else into the hands of men who try their very best to uphold the character of Irish butter, by never sending out second quality as first, or third quality as second.

26164. And that can only be done where there is a good stock of stuff to be dealt with. But don't you agree that for butter produced in Ulster there ought to be a grading station nearer than Limerick?—Yes; one in Belfast another in Dublin, another in Waterford, and another in Cork; and we have pressed that very hard upon the Department.

26165. I want to see if you and I both can agree a little further. It is not reasonable to ask the railway companies to make such a rate as that you can afford to send butter round and round?—No, it is not; and we would not think of asking them any such thing. But we would ask them to give us reasonable mileage rate, and not to charge us double for carrying things six miles further. We only ask for a reasonable mileage rate anywhere.

26166. That is a special question; we will leave them to answer that. You speak about 20,000 tons a year. Does that mean from Limerick alone; does it all come from Limerick?—Not at all.

26167. It is the shipments that you control?—No, it is the shipments that the Association which I represent controls.

26168. That is what I mean?—The South of Ireland Butter Merchants' Association. It deals with the Counties of Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary; and a great deal of Kilkenny and Waterford butter comes in.

26169. We may say a straight line from Waterford to Limerick and south-west of that?—It is the heavy butter producing part of the country.

26170. If you send 20,000 tons in the summer, that means about 1,000 tons a week in the summer?—It is not the summer; it is the spring, summer, and autumn; it is nine months of the year.

26171. We will call it 600 tons a week or something of that kind?—Yes.

26172. What is the usual size of your consignments?—They vary from single boxes of 24 lbs. each to hundreds of casks of a hundred weight each in a single consignment. One man, a member of our Association, consulted me the other day as to whether he would take an order for 1,500 boxes from one person.

26173. What is a box?—56 lbs. I told him to accept it, and I said, "I will guarantee you will have it in the course of ten days." That was to one buyer alone.

26174. 24 lbs. is the lowest unit you deal with?—24 lbs.

26175. You have nothing to do with the parcels post?—Every one does a little, very much against his will—creameries and everywhere else.

26176. You say very much against their will?—Yes; it is a very stupid trade.

26177. That is what I wanted to see if you would say?—Because it makes the English person pay twopence a pound more than if he bought it from the grocer; and though it pleases him to get Irish butter, that makes it look very dear.

26178. Though they pay twopence more, the trouble to the producer is very much more; he has to collect his money, and so on?—It is a stupid trade.

26179. Do you agree with me that it is not in the public interest to give any facilities for this trade at all?—Except locally.

26180. That is to say not to encourage the individual producer to deal with the individual consumer 100 miles off?—That is my opinion. I think it is a foolish thing to try to drive trade out of trade channels. The trade channel will give it better and cheaper, and will be able to pay the producer more.

26181. And give it to the consumer for less?—For less. People who have been doing a parcel post trade are getting sick of it, although they get twopence a pound more for their trouble. A person may be getting five or six or seven pounds of butter this week, and he goes off to the seaside next week, and where is the producer going to send it then?

26182. Do you in that represent your Association?—Yes; my Association were very strongly of opinion that the parcel post trade is a foolish trade. It is only lately done by any of us in places where the trade of the district is set very heavy against buying Irish butter. Then a person comes and says:—"I cannot get Irish butter. I have seen it in such a place. Will you send it to us by parcel post?"

26183. You yourself are a middleman?—Yes.

26184. Therefore it is your interest clearly to oppose the parcel post. That is clear?—Yes.

26185. I am not suggesting that you will do it for that reason. But anybody may say that of you?—They may if they like; but that would not be the reason.

26186. I am not suggesting it. Your Association is composed of producers?—No; my Association is composed only of the traders.

26187. Then, I suppose, we must admit that their opinion might be biased by their interests?—You may, but I don't think they care a button about the parcel post trade.

26188. It could not do more than touch the fringe of it?—Yes. I would say that the parcel post trade does us some good, because it is an advertisement, and gets the Irish butter talked of.

26189. Do you think that the producers have any great love for the parcel post—it is a petty business?—I tell you that I have experience of several of them; and they all tell me they do not like it. Though it pays them more money, it gives them a lot of trouble.

26190. Do they make bad debts?—I don't know. They won't tell me if they do.

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26191. The disparity between those two sets of rates that you have quoted is rather remarkable. The difference in the case of butter is only about one-sixth—the disadvantage at which Limerick stands?—Yes.

26192. In the case of the egg trade, it appears to be one-fourth to one-third?—Yes; the egg people are very much more aggrieved about the rates than we are.

26193. There is no further explanation, is there?—I don't know. I suppose they consider the eggs are more risky. I don't know enough about the egg trade to do anything more than quote the rates that I have got.

The preferential treatment of Cork over Limerick in the matter of cross channel butter and egg rates.

26194. There is an explanation given to account for the fact of the difference, namely, that there was at one time an undertaking to make a certain line from Cork to Fermoy, and that line not having been made, it was agreed that consignments from Cork *via* Rosslare should be carried at a mileage rate six miles less than the actual mileage?—I said it was about twenty.

26195. *Mr. Sexton.*—How many miles are deducted off the actual mileage?

Mr. Neale (G. S. & W. Rly.)—About fourteen.

Witness.—I thought it would be about twenty.

Reduced mileage from Cork *via* Fishguard a reason for disparity in rates.

26196. *Mr. Sexton (to Witness).*—The deduction of fourteen miles would not go very far to account for the difference upon eggs to Newport and Cardiff at owner's risk, 7*s.* 6*d.*"?—And at the company's risk, 11*s.*

26197. There must be something more than fourteen miles to account for the difference. Do you know what it is?—No; I am not up enough in the egg trade.

26198. You have given very strong evidence as to the pressure of the rates. You say that the local rates upon your traffic are apparently made to hamper trade?—In some instances, yes.

The trouble and loss occasioned to the butter trade by the absence of a system of through bookings to all English stations.

26199. And that there is a difficulty in getting through rates even at an excessive rate?—That there was. We have altered that lately since we got this good Commissioner.

26200. But even getting through rates at an excessive rate was not easy?—No, it was not easy; it was impossible.

26201. Where you have got no through rates the rates are still more excessive?—Some of the rates are ridiculous the way they put them on. We pay a reasonable rate over to some point like London or something like that, and then a "paid on" freight comes back a fortnight afterwards.

26202. You find the rates burdensome?—Very burdensome and annoying on that account. For instance, I pay here 4*s.* 4*d.* to London, and there is a 2*s.* 2*d.* extra charge to a place called Milltown, about forty miles from London, just half as much again as from Limerick to London. Then to a place called Erith the freight we pay the Great Southern and Western is 10*s.* 1*d.*, and there are extra charges of 2*s.* 4*d.* Here again is a place called Chesholt——

Excessive rates from Limerick to Creshunt, Maldon, London, &c.

26203. *Mr. Acworth.*—Where from?—These are rates from Limerick to London, and then from London to these small places. Here is a place called Creshunt. The freight is 10*s.* 1*d.*, and then the extra charge is 2*s.* 11*d.* To Maldon the freight is 5*s.* 7*d.*, and the extra charge is 2*s.* 6*d.* And the worst of these extra charges is that where I have sold to a man "carriage paid," they go and they demand this freight from him; and he kicks up a row and he writes to me, and he says:—"I have none of this trouble with foreign butter, all of which comes carriage paid. Why cannot you pay your carriage through?" I send him the receipt, showing that it is sent to him carriage paid, and show that it is not my fault. The Great Southern and Western Company say:—"It is not our fault. We can show you that we consigned it to him carriage paid." But the Englishman will go and stick it on to him. Here is a case where the freight paid to the Great Southern and Western Company from Limerick to London is 2*s.* 9*d.*, and there is an extra charge of 2*s.* 3*d.* from London to Pulham-street, Maryl, thirty or forty miles from London, nearly as much again as the charge all the way from Limerick to London.

26204. Is that systematically done?—It is systematically done. You can see the books yourself. (*Witness hands Mr. Sexton a book.*) The entries in the outer column indicate all the freights over. If

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we could pay the whole freight our customers would not be annoyed if they could get them delivered. But the company to whom we hand them can only charge freight to certain places.

26205. Do you think you would get all this set right by a Court if you could manage to get the lawyers kept outside?—I think if we had half-a-dozen business men to go around and take up these cases, and if there was no appeal from their decision, the railway companies would soon settle.

The cattle service good but expensive.

26206. You have also observed that the cattle service is very expensive?—I must say that I always found the cattle service well done.

26207. But very expensive?—Oh, it was expensive. I have sent again and again cattle to Wickham and places around there, where the people fatten them for London. I would not call it a badly done service at all. And I have sent a good deal of cattle from Lurgan, and I found it well done.

26208. We have heard of cases where men bought cattle in Ireland, sent them to Scotland, and sold them at a loss by reason of the railway rates?—He ought not to have sent them by rail. When I send cattle to Scotland, I send them by the Clyde Shipping Company.

Proposed reduction in passenger fares and more liberal terms as to the issue of Traders' Tickets.

26209. He was an expert, and he thought he was sending them the best way to the best market. Then you speak about the passenger fares and traders' tickets?—I think the passenger fares are very excessive; and I am perfectly satisfied that if the passenger fares were reduced, it would pay the railway companies more, because the people would travel. Take my own case. Since they refused to give me season tickets, I have not spent £5 a year in railway travelling myself personally. I kept an account of it for the first two or three years to see how much I saved.

26210. It seems to be a penny wise policy?—I think it is a very penny wise policy; and I think it is a very foolish policy to charge full fares to grooms and cattle people who are sent along with the cattle. It is a policy that was not adopted before.

26211. Then a general system of concession applied to those who can attract and develop traffic would be wiser than exaction?—Undoubtedly.

The 1*d*. per mile rate for 3rd class passengers considered too high for Ireland.

26212. Do you consider that in a country such as Ireland, having regard to what we know of the wages or income of the working people—the labourer, and the small farmer, who is a labourer in the country; and the labourer and the artisan in the town—do you not think that a rate of one penny a mile for third-class tends to restrict travelling?—I am sure it restricts travelling very much; and the accommodation that we get is very different, indeed, from what we get on the Swedish lines, where they are run for the people by the people. We do not travel as fast in Switzerland, but we travel a great deal more comfortably, and at half the price.

26213. If there are only seven journeys per annum per head of the population in Ireland, as against thirty in England, does not that indicate that Ireland is too poor for the penny a mile?—I should think so. Irishmen would be as much inclined to travel, or more so, than Englishmen.

26214. The Irishman is fond of recreation and of change?—Very fond of going about.

A reduction in passenger fares, the best means of filling railway carriages in Ireland.

26215. Do you think that a halfpenny a mile would give you four times the travelling?—I should not be surprised if it did a great deal more than that.

26216. The second class rate exceeds the third class rate more in this country than in any other country that has come under my notice. The excess of the second class rate over the third class rate appears to be greater in Ireland than in any other country?—I believe so. I never travel second. I always travel first or third. When I want to sleep I travel first.

26217. There are a great many people who do not care for the third, and who do not aspire to the first, who would travel second class if the fares were brought nearer to the third class fares?—Certainly.

26218. And, as to the first class, all that we have to do is to look at the empty carriages?—And the second also. I came up yesterday by train. I saw terrible crowds in the third class, and there were very few in the first, and none in the second.

26219. Would it not be better to have a lower rate and the carriage occupied?—Indeed it would.

26220. The whole system of passenger fares in Ireland is unsuitable to the country?—I am sure it is.

26221. If the whole system of rates were altered in Ireland it would be very satisfactory?—I am sure it would. The present system retards business; because movement means business, in spite of the fact that some people might only go on pleasure.

26222. You have spoken strongly of the difficulties in administration which you say permeate the whole system, of the difficulty of getting compensation for damage, however serious, of the futility of reference to the Board of Trade, and of the uselessness of the Court of the Railway Commission. You insist very strongly on these points?—Very strongly. I will give you one instance of how impossible it is to get any redress. I sent to Charleville, only twenty miles from Limerick, five bags of salt a half a ton weight, a thing that could not be hidden away. My client sent to Charleville every day for a week a horse and cart, three or three and a half miles, and he could not get it. The manager in Limerick was doing all he could to get it for him. He telegraphed and sent a messenger, and at last they found it in one of the wagons lying on their own line all the time; and we could get no redress for that, no payment for the man who had to be sending in his cart; and the same thing happened in Listowel Station a few months afterwards.

26223. Then it was not a rare occurrence?—It happened to me three times. If it had been a small parcel I would not have wondered; but it consisted of five bags of salt.

26224. Were these three cases within a limited period?—They all happened in or about the same year, but that would be about four or five years ago.

26225. Do you agree generally with the evidence of many witnesses that the inland rates in Ireland hinder the movement of food products in Ireland from the points of production to the centres of consumption or distribution?—I know they do; and what is more, they restrict greatly the movement of fuel in Ireland. Friends of mine have magnificent bogs, and they are idle and useless to them, simply because the freights would be too high.

26226. I think I have heard of one or two peat industries which failed because of the conveyance rates?—I, unfortunately, have shares in one of them. I don't know where they have gone; I don't know what became of the company.

26227. I should have expected you, as you had shares, to have looked after the company. This question of hindering the movement and sale of Irish food products in Ireland is a very serious one, in view of the great and growing food imports into Ireland?—Certainly.

26228. I observe by the report of the Board of Agriculture for 1904 that the import of food products in that year which were actually produced in the country amounted to no less than nine millions sterling?—I would not doubt it.

26229. Is it not a matter of importance to arrest that growing movement of imported food into a great food-producing country?—Indeed it is.

26230. And to give the home producer a chance of selling his products in the home markets?—Yes; and the English have done that in their own country by carrying agricultural produce at cheap rates into the large towns.

26231. It is certainly a very strange thing that a country like Ireland, depending so much upon the development of its food production, should be under-sold in its own food markets by reason of the low import rates as compared with the high local rates. Do you agree that these high inland rates, as compared with the relatively low import rates, prevent the development of manufactures in Ireland?—I am sure they do.

26232. Is it not vital to the interests of this country that the rates should be so amended as to give the Irish manufacturer and merchant at least an equal chance, so far as transit can do it, with the importer?—Certainly.

26233. Do you consider that the export rates out of Ireland upon our staple productions require to be revised, and with a heavy hand, in order to give the Irish producer equal access to his principal markets with the Continental competitor?—I think that our rates to the large centres in England are reasonable. Our rates to anything else except the large centres are almost prohibitive. If you send to Manchester, to London, to Liverpool, to Bristol, to Cardiff, the rates are reasonable; but if you come to want to

send a few miles anywhere away from these large centres, you are at once frightfully handicapped by the rates.

26234. We have heard that even in the English centres, and even in those nearest to the western coast of England, Irish products have been supplanted steadily and in a vast degree by food products from the Continent?—I can give you an instance. A gentleman in Birmingham informed me that the butter I sent him was the finest he ever saw; but after trying it for six months he had to give it up; and he said to me:—"I can bring butter 2,000 miles away across the Continent, and I can know within a few hours when it will arrive, but with your butter we never know to within three or four days." And he had to stop it at last.

26235. We hear sometimes of Protection and of Free Trade. But is it not protection to the foreigner against the Irishman if the foreigner has more favourable conditions for the transport of his goods to the British markets. And is it not protection to the importer into Ireland against the Irish manufacturer when the system of through rates in is lower?—Of course, it is. We have not Free Trade at all, but foul trade.

26236. Would it not be Free Trade if we got an equal chance?—Yes. And as I told Sir Edward Strachey, we in Ireland are not afraid of competition. But we cannot compete with one hand tied behind our backs. If we get fair play we will meet competition all the world over.

26237. The present system of railway rates appears to ourselves now. And the demand made in evidence Irishman both in England and in Ireland?—It is, and always has been. The English Government have always been the friends of the foreigner.

26238. I think they ought to allow us to be friends to ourselves now. And the demand made in evidence is that we should have real Free Trade instead of this Protection against us?—With Free Trade we are not afraid of anything. It cost me £1 to send a small quantity of Irish butter to Lisbon—they are very fond of it in Portugal—while the same quantity of Norman butter or Danish butter can be placed on the grocer's counter in any part of England at a cost of 2*s.* 6*d.*

26239. And really whether it went by water or by land, or whether we have to send more by land than the others, if we are handicapped and driven out of the markets, we have a right to complain, and we have a right to demand that the rates that we pay shall be made as near as possible to those charged to those who compete against us?—Exactly.

26240. What is to be the character of this new travelling permanent Court. Is the Court to inquire into the working of the railways?—Yes; I should like to see a Court before which we could bring our cases on freights and everything else in a reasonably cheap manner, and not cost us a couple of hundred pounds for the sake of a thing only worth £5.

26241. Do you intend that the Court should administer the existing law?—I would give them power to administer the law and to make these people act up to their responsibilities, which they are not doing at present.

26242. Do you mean to reduce the rates as circumstances require?—To put the rates on a proper level so that they should not give preference to any one town over another or to any one country over another.

26243. You would allow them to control the rates in the sense of the answer that you have just given?—Indeed, I would, if I could.

26244. But could you?—That is another thing.

26245. You propose that the House of Commons should appoint a Committee to act as a Court of Appeal from this judicial body. Do you think that the House of Commons would appoint a Committee for that purpose?—I don't think the House of Commons, if you ask me my own opinion, will do anything which is of any good for Ireland. I think their last Council Bill shows what the House of Commons will do. It was throwing a bone to hungry dogs to make them fight. They thought that we—the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland—were getting too friendly, and they wanted to put up a lot of jobs before our eyes to try and make us quarrel.

26246. This Court, if it had power to reduce the rates, would cut away the income of the railway companies to a great degree?—Then subsidise them. They subsidised every industry in England. Why should they not subsidise our traffic?

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The feasibility of a scheme of subsidies for the reductions in rates.

26247. Considering the complexity of the railway business and the fact that the public cannot know much about it, do you think that if you got a subsidy you would obtain the desired result. Do you think you could ascertain whether there had been a loss or not?—I think we could. It would be very easy to see whether the companies lost money by the working of the lines. The mileage expenses are well known on every railway, and they have their mileage returns; and if their returns were increased by reducing the rates, then they could not demand the subsidy. If the returns were not increased, it would be perfectly right that they should be paid.

26248. There is no use in pressing a solution unless it is likely to be satisfactory. Do you consider that at this stage of development our people would be satisfied to take a large sum out of Irish taxation and give it to the railway companies as a subsidy, and allow the companies to retain the control and management of the lines?—Well, I don't know.

26249. If you are going to spend public money at all, why not go to the root of the matter and take over the control of the business?—I should like to see that done. I am speaking on that for myself and not for the Association which sent me. They distinctly told me that I was not to put forward State purchase as their view.

26250. I don't want to consider their opinion. I want your opinion?—I should like to see the railways nationalised to-morrow, and worked by the nation for the nation.

26251. I mean on this question of the subsidy?—That is not my idea; that is the idea I was told to put forward for my Association.

26252. If you have recourse to a subsidy you have to give away money. You have to provide money out of the public funds and to give it away for this purpose?—Yes.

The immediate creation of a fund for this purpose urged.

26253. But if you acquire the lines, both by the application of public credit to the case and also by the great economy resulting from single working, you would immediately create a fund by means of which you could initiate a great reduction of fares and rates, and this would be lost in the case of a public subsidy?—Yes, I agree with that. But at the meeting they looked at the matter from different points of view, and the majority of them thought that a subsidy would be the thing that we would be most likely to get.

26254. But you agree that these are reasons conclusively against it?—Decidedly.

Nationalisation and control by an Irish authority of the railways advocated.

26255. The subject is a new one. It has not been fully considered. And, so far from its being surprising that men should differ upon it, it would be more surprising if there were not a great many opinions in reference to it. Now, Mr. Gibson, supposing an authority was created in Ireland, either generally or *ad hoc*, and that this authority could contract with the Treasury either to obtain a loan, or could itself raise a loan, or could agree with the railway companies for the conversion of the present holdings into public Stock, do you see any objection in such a case to allowing an Irish authority to administer the railways?—I would see every objection to allowing anybody else but an Irish authority to administer them.

26256. We have had a great many British Departments in Ireland operating for a long time. Do you think that the results have been satisfactory to Ireland or Great Britain?—I am sure they have been satisfactory neither to one nor the other.

26257. And if the question is put to you, whether you would prefer to have our railways managed by people knowing us, in touch with us, in sympathy with us—whether you would prefer an Irish authority to any Imperial authority, I have no doubt what your answer would be?—Not the slightest personally.

26258. You would have the Irish authority?—Certainly.

26259. *Mr. Acworth.*—You mentioned somebody who wanted to get Irish butter in London, but was prevented?—No, he was talking of Siberian butter.

The question of delays in transit to Irish butter sent to England.

26260. In that case I suppose the butter goes into the warehouse in London and is distributed thence?—He said he could get it with more regularity from Siberia, because he knew to within a few hours when it would arrive, whereas, in the case of the Irish

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butter, when we sent it away it sometimes arrived in one or two days, and sometimes not for six.

26261. It is clear that he cannot send an order to a man in Siberia and know when it will arrive in three hours?—I know that he can send it anywhere in Scandinavia and know within five or six hours when it will arrve.

26262. That is, if he is in London?—If he is in any small town in England, fourteen or fifteen miles out of London he could send to Copenhagen or any of the Swedish ports, and know that the butter would arrive to him on a certain day of the week. He could not tell by what train, but it would be within a few hours. They arrive like clockwork, unless they are frozen up.

Alleged better handling and more regular deliveries of the Continental butter by the English railway companies than of Irish butter.

26263. And you say that that would not happen in Limerick?—I would get the butter sent away on a Monday, and it would be delivered on Wednesday; the next time perhaps he would not get it until the following Saturday, and the next time that I sent it away on Monday the consignee would not get it until the following Monday.

26264. Can you explain that?—I cannot, except by saying that it is pure villany on the part of the English handlers, who are friends to the foreigners all round.

26265. Oh, but you don't think that?—I can really think that it is nothing else; I know the way our goods are treated, and I know the way in which foreigners are treated. I have seen our goods from Limerick delivered in England in a villanous and disgraceful condition.

26266. *Lord Pirrie.*—Does that arise from the fact that the order was only given in one week?—Not at all; this man's orders are weekly; each week he orders so much. I have a man in South Wales who has been getting butter for over twelve months regularly every week, and he has been perpetually kept out of his butter for several days.

26267. And this was continuous?—It was continuous. I lost a man in a town in Wiltshire because he could not, even with a passenger train, get his butter delivered in time. He would get it the next day.

26268. *Lord Pirrie.*—I think I can explain. The people don't want it to be carried by a quick steamer in one week and by a slow steamer in another. They want it to arrive every Tuesday morning all round, to get a better trade than if they got it on Monday, I think what Mr. Gibson is trying to put forward is that they expect it each morning.

Witness.—They get it in time from the foreigners, and they don't get it from the Irish sender.

26269. *Mr. Acworth.*—The point is, that the trains run regularly to Rosslare, and the steamers regularly to Fishguard, and the trains run regularly to London?—Yes; exactly.

26270. And you don't see why, if you can get a regular service from, say, Denmark, you can't get a regular service from Ireland?—You ought to get it a great deal more regularly.

26271. Mr. Gibson's answer is that he thinks the English deliberately put obstacles in the way of the delivery of his goods out of pure spite?—I believe that the London people particularly do so, and now I will give you one instance:—I sent a lot of butter to Sandown. There is only one "Sandown" in Bradshaw. They got the butter in London and then they sent back to Limerick a letter by a goods train to the goods store to know where Sandown was; and it took nine days for them to find out in London where Sandown was for the consignment of my butter. Again, there is a place called Milltown, a short distance from London, to which I was sending to a man regularly; and one day they telegraphed that they could not find any "Milltown," although the place was on their own own line down from London. The man was, of course, kept twenty-four hours late for his butter. That is the sort of thing that upsets Irish trading.

26272. You think the delay is deliberately caused?—I think it is deliberate, and I think that the Danes and the Swedes have been protected by having had, for the last thirty years, a good man representing them all over England—Mr. Fabre. If we got a dirty cask he would go to the railway about it, or if we got a broken cask he could see all about it. If anything was wrong with Australian goods we went to Sir S. Samuel. These people took matters up with their Governments behind them, whereas in the case of Irish butter it was simply Mr. Gibson who was complaining. But now we have Lord Ikerrin doing the work of the men because he has a Department behind him, and he would not be afraid to spend two or three hundred pounds of public money about the matter. I am not going to do that; I could not afford it; I would rather grin and bear it.

Mr. P. J. Kettle examined by the Chairman.

Mr. P. J. Kettle Representative of the Balrothery Rural District Council.

26273. Mr. Kettle, you are a member of the County Council of Dublin?—Yes.

26274. And you are also a member of the Balrothery Rural District Council?—Yes.

26275. And it is in that capacity that you come before us?—In that capacity, and as the representative of the district in the County Council.

26276. You have been nominated by the Rural Council to give evidence?—Yes.

26277. What have you got to complain about?—Well, first of all, as you will understand by this map of the County of Dublin, that there is a railway extension that was long since intended by the people of the district into this part of the county.

Railway extension in the north of the county Dublin sought.

26278. North, South, East, or West?—North from the city.

26279. What were you going to say?—The part of the country between the Great Northern Railway and the Midland is not served sufficiently. We have not railway accommodation.

Decline in tillage and in population owing to want of railway facilities.

26280. Have not you tramways?—There is no tramway except from the City of Dublin to the Hill of Howth. There is a distance of over thirty miles along which we have got neither railway nor any other conveyance, and that portion of the county is one of the most fertile districts in the County of Dublin. I believe it is from the want of that accommodation that the country has gone down from what it was to what it is. The population has decreased from over 6,000 to 2,000; and I attribute that solely to the want of accommodation for that part of the county.

26281. Railway accommodation?—Railway accommodation.

26282. Had anybody ever projected a railway there?—On one or two occasions there was a proposition made, and this was the proposed line of railway. (*Refers to map.*)

26283. From where?—From the City of Dublin.

26284. To where?—To Garristown.

26285. What became of that proposal—did it ever get to Parliament?—No, it never got that far; but I am prepared to leave that matter to a gentleman who will also give evidence as to the necessity of the line, and who represented the views of the people, and was more in touch with the matter than I was.

26286. You think that, as far as Garristown is concerned, the agricultural district would be considerably developed and you would retain your population if there were railway communication?—I have not the slightest doubt of it. You would have the country developed in every sense of the word if there were railway accommodation.

26286A. Have you anything to say about agricul ture?—This country has gone solely into grass, except the portion of it bordering on the seacoast that extends about ten miles from the city. After you pass that radius from the city the country has gone completely into grass, with the exception of down by the Great Northern Railway which traverses the whole country on to Meath, and it is owing to the existence of the railway that the country ad joining it is kept in agriculture.

26287. Is there any idea of a scheme like that which you mention being arrived at by private enterprise?—Well, there was a line which was discussed and the opinion of the people was taken on it some years ago, but the great objection which the public bodies had to it was, that they believed it would not pay, and it was hard to get individuals to back it up and start it for themselves. It is principally for a subsidy that we come here and to show the necessity for a railway.

26288. Has there been any formal application by

your Council to any of the governing bodies of Ireland in reference to it—to the Board of Works, for instance?—The only proposition ever made was to the Grand Jury.

26289. For assistance?—No; it was about a motor service; but I did not believe that a motor service would be of any use, or would be desired by the people, because it would be only, to my mind, a passenger service. It would not accommodate people to the extent that they wish to be accommodated.

26290. What is your idea?—Our idea is, a railway from the City of Dublin down to Garristown, to serve that portion of the county.

26291. What is your idea as to the raising of capital to make it?—My idea is that the State should subsidize the railway to a certain extent. Unless we get a substantial subsidy from the Government we would never succeed in having the support of the public bodies of the county—the Balrothery District Council, and the Dublin County Council—to give any guarantee towards the financing of it.

26292. In other words, what you want is a free grant, or a subsidy?—That is so.

26293. So as to relieve the district?—So as to relieve the district.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

26294. I think we have heard, Mr. Kettle, that this project was defeated at the instance of the Great Northern Company, is that so?—To the best of my belief it was.

26295. Why did they oppose it?—Well, really I can't say what their actual reasons for opposing it were. I presume they thought it would tap some of their revenue.

26296. They thought it would be a competing line?—A competing line against them.

26297. But if all the products that you send have to be drawn by carts to Dublin and if any supplies that you get from Dublin have to be carted inwards, where does the competition come in; they have not that traffic now; how would the line compete with them?—I will give you an instance.

26298. If it is all carted now how would the proposed line withdraw traffic from the Great Northern?—First, to my mind if you had a line into the district the country would be more developed and the people would recognise the utility of it, and I cannot believe that it would withdraw traffic from the Great Northern to any extent.

26299. If it is all carted now it would not?—Yes.

26300. Even the people at Julianstown cart to Dublin though they could send by railway?—I think they have a reason. The rate on the Great Northern, to my mind, is more or less prohibitive against their sending fruit or crops on from Julianstown by rail.

26301. If the rates operate so as to be prohibitive you would say that the Great Northern would lose no traffic if they do not get it now?—That is so.

26302. It was at their instance that the Grand Jury refused to give the guarantee?—They did.

26303. They favoured another project to start from Garristown and join their line at Malahide?—They did not support it when they saw that they had succeeded in their opposition to the first. I don't know that they seriously considered the carrying out of their project at all.

26304. Anyhow the project that they did favour came to nothing?

Colonel Plews.—I don't remember any opposition on the part of the Great Northern Company.

Mr Rooney (the succeeding witness).—I beg your pardon, I know all about it.

Mr. Sexton.—Was there any such opposition?

Mr. Rooney (the succeeding witness).—There was.

26305. *Mr. Sexton (to Witness).*—There is a very extensive district in want of railway accommodation?—A hundred and fifty square miles of country to be provided for.

26306. And that but a few miles from the capital city?—From the capital city. Except where it is near the sea the district is totally gone into grass simply from the want of accommodation.

26307. You haven't a railway—you haven't a tramway—you have not even a motor?—We have no service, practically speaking, except by horse.

26308. It is something like what they had in the time of Brian Boru?—Something like it. There is not much improvement.

26309. You suppose that a fertile district so close to the capital might be profitably used for market gardening?—That is so.

26310. And yet you are driven into pasture?—We are driven into pasture.

26311. That is a pretty result of having been under the wisest and richest of Governments for so many hundred years?

Chairman.—Perhaps milk pays better than tillage?

Witness.—No it is not, cattle are fattened on the land.

26312. *Mr. Sexton.*—You hope to have the cost of making the line provided?—We hope to have the cost provided. We place the views of the people of the district before you, and ask you to further their ideas and help them to subsidise it by a grant from the Government.

26313. Would you be inclined to agree with me that the best prospect for such a district as yours would be that transit should be dealt with as a natural question and by means of paternal resources instead of leaving each district to find transit for itself or do without it.

26314. And that schemes might so be adopted, though not remunerative at first, would yet be for the public benefit?—I do.

Examined by Mr. Acworth.

26315. Is it good land?—Some of the very best in the country.

26316. And the people in it are fairly prosperous?—I cannot say.

26317. Fairly prosperous?—It is hardly right to put it in that position owing to the fact of competition.

26318. There is a good deal of grass country in England?—There is. It is not better.

26319. Do you know how they get their railways in England in the grazing country, where they want them?—The majority of them are all private companies.

26320. They make them themselves?—They make them themselves.

26321. Does it ever occur to you to make your own railways?—Well, from the want of capital we cannot do it.

26322. You have no capital for a line within twenty miles to Dublin?—Well, first of all, if there was a possibility of people in the country seeing that this district would succeed they should have taken it up long since; but the whole thing has gone from bad to worse, and the want of accommodation in this respect is the great reason for it.

26323. And there is no hope of you doing it now?—Well, I hardly think so at the moment.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

26324. You say that the Grand Jury threw out the resolution in favour of the line?—They did.

26325. Was it ever brought before the attention of the County Council?—No, not during the time I have had the honour of being a member. It never came before the County Council.

26326. That should have been the first thing to do when you had got rid of the Grand Juries. Have you ever tried in the County Council to get assistance in the matter?—Well, owing to the fact that there was strong opposition to the previous project the people were rather doubtful as to whether they should proceed.

26327. That was under a very different system, when the county was administered by the Grand Jury. At any rate, do you suppose that the baronies would be prepared to give some contribution in the event of the Treasury making a grant?—I am quite certain that they would.

26328. In the same way as in other parts of the country?—As they have done in other parts.

Mr. John J. Rooney examined by the Chairman.

26329. Are you a member of the same Council as the last Witness?—No, sir, I am not a member of any Council. I have been asked to appear by a resolution from the Dunshaughlin Rural Council in the County of Meath, and by the Balrothery Council that Mr. Kettle is a member of.

26330. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Kettle?—I have, sir.

Mr. P. J. Kettle. Representative of the Balrothery Rural District Council.

The Garristown District practically all grass lands owing to want of railway accommodation, although suitable for tillage.

The improbability of the line asked for being constructed by private enterprise.

The baronies concerned willing to contribute towards the cost of the line.

Mr. John J. Rooney, Representative of the Dunshaughlin and Balrothery Rural District Councils.

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26331. Do you agree with the evidence that he has given?—Yes, principally.

26332. Mr. Kettle mentioned something about a project of a railway in this district that came to naught, can you tell us anything about it?—I can.

26333. It has been stated that the Great Northern Railway Company opposed it, and that has been denied; tell us very shortly what you know in the matter?—In 1894 it was proposed to raise capital to construct a line of railway on the baronial guarantee system and again in 1896.

26334. From where?—From Dublin to Garristown. We failed to succeed.

The history of former proposals to construct a line from Dublin to Garristown.

26335. This is within your own knowledge?—Certainly. I was secretary to the movement, and that is why I have been asked to give evidence. It was owing principally to the influence of the Great Northern Company with the Grand Jury at the time. They opposed us in 1894. We proposed to connect the districts of Garristown, Ashbourne, Oldtown, Ballybool, Swords, Cloghra, and Santry with the Great Southern and Western line at Drumcondra.

26336. By the city?—By a link line at the city.

26337. Forming a junction with the Great Southern and Western?—Its entire length would have been twenty miles, and the estimated cost would have been £6,000 a mile.

26338. Did the Board of Works approve of it?—The Board of Works approved of it, and also the surveyors of the counties of both Dublin and Meath.

26339. They all approved of the scheme?—Yes.

Estimated receipts and expenditure.

26340. Did you make any estimate of the traffic?—£10,000 per annum.

26341. *Mr. Sexton.*—Did you try to estimate the working expenses?—We took it at about sixty per cent.

26342. *Chairman.*—Was the scheme generally supported by your district?—By our district it was—the lower part. I live near Garristown. (*Witness referred to a map.*) The idea was to get our cattle from the South and West. It is one of the best cattle-feeding countries in Ireland.

26343. You went before the Grand Jury and represented your case, supported by the two County Surveyors, and with the approval of the Board of Works and some part of the ratepayers?—Of the greater part of them.

The scheme opposed by the Gt. N. (I.) Ry. and thrown out by the Grand Jury although approved of by the Board of Works.

26344. How is it that you did not succeed?—We believe that the influence of the Great Northern Company was very much greater with the Grand Jury than ours. We put a body of evidence before them as to our prospect of success, but it seemed to have no effect on the Grand Jury.

26345. Did the Great Northern Company call any evidence?—They did—they got some of the ratepayers in 1894.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Ask him if the Great Northern Company gave evidence themselves.

26346. *Chairman.*—Did the Great Northern Company give evidence themselves?—Not of themselves. They got some of the ratepayers of the district.

Colonel Plews.—It is supposed that we influenced the Grand Jury.

26347. *Chairman (to Witness).*—How do you know that they got the ratepayers to give evidence?

26348. *Mr. Sexton.*—You say that they appeared before the Grand Jury by counsel?—Certainly.

26349. *Chairman.*—What about the evidence given by the ratepayers?—I remember the thing. The last time, in 1896, we would not give them standing to oppose us because we did not include them in the area of taxation. When the Grand Jury refused to give us a guarantee to raise capital we asked them for powers under the Act to make it without a guarantee (simply to test the attitude of the Great Northern). Their counsel opposed us bitterly and defeated us in this also.

26350. At any rate they succeeded?—They did.

A former alternative proposal for a line from Malahide to Garristown.

26351. And you did not get the power?—We did not. I wish to point out another thing. In 1897 Mr. Ward, an engineer, started a project to get straight across from Malahide to Garristown, which is in the centre of our district. He told me that he had the support of the Great Northern. He went before the Grand Jury of his own conception, and got a guarantee on our country for 4*d.* in the pound without a ratepayer in our district supporting him. He died in the following year, and the capital was never raised, and then the Great Northern let it drop. His success was proof that the Great Northern had more influence with the Grand Jury than we had, as they backed him up.

26352. You came to that conclusion?—Certainly, as it can be proved.

26353. *Colonel Hutcheson Poë.*—Since the Grand Jury have disappeared have you ever taken the matter up?—We went at that time before Mr. Morley, who was Chief Secretary, and asked him could he give us support, and he said he could not—that there was no money available for such a purpose in such a country—that it was too good a country, and the matter was then let drop. Several times since it has been mooted. Another line was proposed on the Ashbourne road down to Slane, and that went a certain distance. They had not money to bring it forward, but I would not believe in it. It is a line that I don't think would be of any use to the country, because it would not get into touch with the Great Southern and Western. We buy cattle down in the South and West of Ireland, and we want to bring them to the finest fattening district in Ireland.

26354. Is there anything like minerals in the district?—There is supposed to be coal near Garristown, but it has never been opened up. There is a very good limestone quarry, and in old time malting was going on there, but it is a long time ago. The country has practically died out. The old barony of Balrothery West had a population of 6,400 in 1845. It has now about 2,100, principally on account of the want of railways, for it is a good country to maintain a population. But the capital cannot be raised.

26355. Do you still think that even with that decreased population a railway might galvanise the district into new life?—I believe it would. By going in farther we could reach Duleek, and get a chance of reviving the district and keeping the people in it. People won't stay in it. It takes me over two hours to come to the city. I cannot carry on business properly.

26356. What station do you adjoin?—No station at all. I always have to drive fifteen miles to Dublin.

26357. Have you a private conveyance?—I have one of my own.

26358. As to the people who have not?—It costs them ten shillings, and the majority hardly ever get there owing to the cost.

Examined by Mr. Sexton.

26359. This district is run down by neglect and want of communication and cannot hope to develop unless it receives assistance?—Not the slightest hope.

26360. But you think that such assistance on account of the fertility of the land and of the vicinity of the capital would secure you a good return?—I believe it would, and I believe that the local people would contribute if we got assistance.

26361. *Mr. Acworth.*—Why would not the Malahide line assist you?—Because we would not get to the Great Southern line in order to carry cattle from the South of Ireland. We want to get to Dublin, not to Malahide.

26362. But you can run through on the Great Northern to the Great Southern?—You can, but they did not give those facilities until very lately.

26363. Now you can get a through run through Mallow and right away to the South?—Yes; but a direct connection would be a great deal better.

26364. Do you think that you could get as far into the County of Dublin as Drumcondra at an average price of £6,000 a mile?—On an average I say that we would.

26365. Who is responsible for the estimate?—Mr. Frazer.

26366. The well known Irish Engineer?—The Board of Works approved of it.

26367. It seems to me that it is a very low estimate?—The lower part of the line would be very easy to make.

26368. But you don't cross public roads for nothing. Once you got near Dublin you would have much heavier work than in the country?—Of course I believe you have.

26369. It was Mr. Frazer's estimate; and as far as you know the Board of Works and the County Surveyor did agree with it?—They did. The Board of Works' Inspector said it was the worst part of Ireland he had ever gone into for accommodation.

26370. *Lord Pirrie.*—But not for land?—No; one of the best.

Examined by Colonel Hutcheson Poë.

26371. When you brought the project before the Grand Jury ten years ago you proposed to raise the whole of the guarantee yourselves?—We did not.

26372. You don't say in your proof that it was contingent on Treasury assistance being given?—We went to Mr. Morley expecting that he would give us half.

26373. At that time it was opposed, according to you, by the Great Northern Company and thrown out?—It was.

26374. And subsequently a few years afterwards you imply that one gentleman, a Mr. Ward, unsupported by evidence for or against, was able to get a guarantee from the Grand Jury?—He was.

26375. I think there must be some mistake. No Grand Jury would entertain a proposal from one individual?—It must be in the records of the Grand Jury. I will bring forward proof of the correctness of my statement as regards Mr. Ward's success.

26376. It must have been a very susceptible Grand Jury?—I believe it was.

26377. At any rate, you have not gone before the County Council?—We are trying to get some assistance, because to have to raise the whole capital would be a serious thing,

26378. Have you brought the matter before the County Council?—We have not. It would cost £300 or £400.

26379. You could gauge the opinion of the County Council without incurring any expense?—Most of our County Councillors are in favour of it. Mr. Kettle is a County Councillor.

26380. In your opinion the County Council would be prepared to give a guarantee?—To give a guarantee if it was limited in amount.

26381. The line that you propose would be a light railway?—No; of the ordinary gauge. There is a tramway on the south side which is not of much use, but which is paying fairly—the Blessington Tramway. It earns a couple of thousand a year over its expenses.

A broad-gauge railway recommended.

26382. At any rate your district would be prepared to pay something for a railway?—Quite prepared. I believe it would develop traffic and without some such line the population must continue to decrease.

Chairman.—We propose now to adjourn until the 11th of October, and, as at present arranged, but of course subect to alteration, the Commission will sit on Friday and Saturday, the 11th and 12th, and on the following Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, ending the 19th, and it is hoped that by the 19th we shall finish practically all the evidence that we intend to take on behalf of the general public. As I say, this is subject to alteration; but we suggest that the railway companies might be prepared to follow on if they should be called on to do so.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—You don't mean to follow on at once?

Chairman.—No, at our next sitting afterwards; I said up to the 21st or the 22nd. The object of the Commission is that we shall try to finish all the evidence, and have a longer sitting to do it. But you ought to be prepared after that with the railway evidence.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—But you will give us an interval after that?

Chairman.—Certainly; you will have an interval of at least a fortnight.

Mr. Acworth.—To November, anyway.

Chairman.—To November. I thought that we should give you the intimation now. In the beginning of November you ought to be prepared.

Mr. Croker Barrington, Solicitor.—Yes; thank you very much. Did you say that the sitting will be in Dublin?

Chairman.—In Dublin. We shall take the railway evidence in Dublin.

The Commission then adjourned.

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Inspection of Construction Work—*continued.*
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Promotion Expenses, etc.—*continued.*
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Receipts—*continued.*
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Company wanted the shed at Londonderry, and Board of Works were not prepared to erect it anywhere except on Burtonport Line (T. M. Batchen), 14947, 15042-4, 15411-16; (J. M'Farland), 19240-5, 19365.
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Separate Board meetings to deal with the Burtonport undertaking—
Contemplated under Order in Council (A. Spence), 19213.
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Terms on which line was taken over by Lough Swilly Company (T. M. Batchen), 15426.
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Terms on which Line was taken over—*con.*
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Arranged with Engineer of Lough Swilly Company and regulated according to requirements of traffic (G. E. Shanahan), 18130-2, 18135-6.
No watering station for 21 miles from Letterkenny when the line was opened (Vesey Knox), 18129; (G. E. Shanahan) 18133.
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Agreement securing the Company against loss up to an expenditure of £3 10*s.* per mile per week (T. M. Batchen), 15249-56.
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LINDSAY, Mr. W. A.—*Representing Belfast Chamber of Commerce and Royal Ulster Agricultural Society.*
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APPENDIX No. 1.

COPY of LETTER from the NETHERLAND CONSULATE-GENERAL, London, to the CONSUL for the NETHERLANDS, Dublin, transmitted by the latter to the VICE-REGAL COMMISSION for their information on 12th November, 1906.

COPY.

Consul General—
H. S. J. Maas.
No. 6228.

CONSULAAT GENERAAL DER NEDERLANDEN,
(Netherland Consulate General for Great Britain and Ireland),
Finsbury Circus House,
12 Blomfield Street,
LONDON, E.C., *5th November*, 1906.

DEAR SIR,

Referring to your enquiry of 25th October, regarding the request of the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, I may say that I could supply some information as to the Railways in the Netherlands, but not all that is asked.

An annual report on Railways is published, but it is only available in the Netherland language. Under the circumstances I would suggest to the Commission to prepare a list of questions, and to apply for answers to them through the British Legation at the Hague.

I should explain that the State made quite a system of railways in the Netherlands, but all the State Railways are worked by a private company, which in this way had, in 1904, the working of 1,586 kilometres. The Dutch Iron Railway Company works 997 kilometres, the Netherlands Central Railway Company 148 kilometres, and the North Brabant German Railway Company 52 kilometres. In addition to the above some foreign companies run their lines into the Kingdom, such as the Malnes Jer Neuren Company (23 kilometres), the Ghent-Jerneuren Company (10 kilometres), the Left Rhine Company (11 kilometres), the Oldenberg Railway Company (1 kilometre), and a few others. The total mileage worked in 1904 was 2,924 kilometres. The total number of locomotives was, in 1904, 1,047; there were 2,602 passenger carriages and 17,341 goods vans. In the same year 38174,000 passengers were carried (who each travelled on the average 28·9 kilometres), and 13,707,000 tons of goods. The company working the State Railways gave a balance of receipts over expenditure in 1904 of £3,585,000, that of the Dutch Iron Company £3,537,000, that of the Netherlands Central Company £740,000, and that of the North Brabant German Company £269,000.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) H. S. J. MAAS.

John Mooney, Esq., J.P.,
Consul for the Netherlands,
7 Leinster Street, Dublin.

APPENDIX No. 2.

REPORT on the WORKING of STATE RAILWAYS in NORWAY, furnished by the BRITISH MINISTER at CHRISTIANIA, through the Foreign Office, for the information of the VICE-REGAL COMMISSION, November, 1906.

Enclosure in Mr. Leech's No. 50 *Commercial of* 19*th November*, 1906.

The total length of the Norwegian Railways on the 1st of April, 1905, was 2,490.0 kilometres, of which 463.3. kilometres are absolute State property; 1,675.1 kilometres joint property of the State, corporations, and private shareholders ("Stats canein teres sents kaber"); while 351.6 kilometres are owned by private companies.

During the year from 1st of April, 1905—31st of March, 1906, the Hell-Sunnan Railway, distance 41.1 kilometres, has been opened; and last month the remaining section, 30.1 kilometres, of the Valdres Railway was also opened for traffic. These two lines, for which statistics are not yet available, are not included in the present particulars, but, adding them to the length of railways existing on the 1st of April, 1905, it will be seen that the total length of the Norwegian Railways is 2,561.2 kilometres.

There are at present under construction (1) the Vass-Roa line, 385 kilometres, a large section of which it is supposed will be opened next autumn, and which, when completed, will place Christiania in direct rail communication with Bergen; (2) the Arendal-Aamlic line, 58 kilometres; (3) the Grunstad-Mesel line, 20 kilometres; and (4) the Orkedalsjiord-Loorkmo line, 17 kilometres; while the building of several other important lines is under consideration.

To the absolute State Railways, of which there are five, the corporations concerned have, although not receiving any shares in the same, contributed sums of money and undertaken all expenses connected with purchase of land and maintenance of fencing.

The "State Canein teres sents kaber," of which there are thirteen, are, as mentioned above, joint property of the State, corporations, and private individuals, and these receive shares for their contributions. All shares are equally entitled to dividend. Redemption of corporation and private shares is not reserved to the State, except on the Stavanger Egersund Railway, the shares of which may be redeemed at their face value. On the Bergen-Voss, Eidsvold-Hamar, and Drammen-Skien Railway the corporations and private shareholders have, without any compensation whatever, pledged themselves to agree to the following:—(1) That the railway is put under joint control with a larger or a smaller line or group of lines, on condition of such mutual settlement of receipts and expenditure of the different lines as may be arranged; (2) or is placed entirely in economical partnership with a larger or smaller line or group of lines, or with the entire Norwegian "Stats canein teres sents kaber."

There are nine railways owned by private companies, all of which, with the exception of one—the Sulitjelma Railway—have received loans from the State, generally arranged in such a manner that the State receives shares for one-half of the loan, and the remaining half is given as an unredeemable loan, free of interest and repayments.

These loans on the 1st of April, 1905, amounted to Kr.15,021,629.27, equal to £825,364.

The number of persons employed in the working of the railways on the 1st of April, 1905, was 5.158.

The fares differ slightly in some of the traffic districts, but as a general rule the following fares for single tickets are charged in ore per kilometre (one English mile equals 1,609 kilometres; £1 equals Kr.18.20).

Distance.	Ordinary Trains.			Express Trains.		
	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.
	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.
Up to 50 Km.,	6·5	5·0	3·25	8·5	6·0	4·0
From 50 to 150 Km.,	6·5	5·0	3·00	8·5	6·0	4·0
150 to 300 „	6·5	4·4	2·75	8·5	5·6	3·5
Exceeding 300 „	6·5	4·0	2·50	7·8	4·8	3·0

Return tickets are issued on paying 50 per cent. in addition to the single fare, and are valid for one month. Travellers purchasing single tickets for a distance of at least 25 kilometres may break the journey once at a station where the train stops, and continue the journey either the same or the following day, on condition that the ticket is shown to the station-master for endorsement.

On the same conditions travellers purchasing return tickets for a distance of at least 25 kilometres each way may break the journey once on the outward and once on the return journey.

Sleeping cars are provided on certain lines for the accommodation of first and second-class passengers, and special sleeping-car tickets—in addition to the ordinary fares—are issued at the following rates:—

—	First Class.	Second Class.
	Kr.	Kr.
Christiania—Stockholm, 575 Km. ..	10·00	5·00
Do. Göteberg, 357 „ ...	10·00	5·00
Do. Brevik, 201 „ ...	—	2·00
Trondhjem—Stockholm, 854 „ ...	—	5·00
Hamar—Trondhjem, 436 „ ...	3·00	3·00
Narvik—Stockholm, 1,581 „ ...	10·00	5·00
	(per night).	(per night).

Special ladies' compartments are not provided except on night trains. On applying to the station-master or guard ladies provided with first or second-class tickets may, however, secure a special compartment, to be marked "Women's Compartment," and to which men are not admitted. On the through trains running into Sweden ladies' compartments are provided for all classes.

Conveyance of Invalids.

Before invalids can be received for conveyance a doctor's certificate is required. and from which it must appear whether the patient is suffering from any infectious disease. Persons suffering from oriental plague are not received for conveyance. Sufferers from any other infectious disease may be received for conveyance by invalid carriage or closed goods wagon but the manager's permission must be obtained in all cases. Should the patient be suffering from Asiatic cholera, yellow fever, smallpox, dysentery, or exanthematic typhus, a declaration from the Chairman of the Health Committee concerned must be produced to the effect that it is desirable the conveyance should take place, as well as whether special steps during the journey or the subsequent disinfection should be taken.

Sufferers from non-infectious diseases are conveyed by special cars, and no special formalities are required except that a car must be ordered half an hour before the train leaves the station, and if at intermediate stations, in time to order a car from the chief station.

The fares charged for conveyance of invalids are:—

(1) By express trains—

For the first 100 kilometres ..... 24 ore per km.
Exceeding 100 do ... . 14 ore per km.

(2) By ordinary trains—

For the first 50 kilometres ..... 20 ore per km.
For the following 100 do. ..... 18 ore per km.
Exceeding 150 do. ..... 9 ore per km.

Minimum charge whether by express or by ordinary train, is Kr.10.00.

Monthly Contract Tickets

are issued. The fares up to 15 km. are Kr.1.80, Kr.1.20, and Kr. 0.72 per km. for, respectively, first, second, and third class. For distances exceeding 15 km. the following fares are charged per month:—

Kilometres, ...	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	96-100
	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.	Kr.
1st Class, ...	30·30	33·50	36·50	39·30	41·90	44·40	46·60	48·80	50·90	53·10	55·20	57·40	59·40	61·00	62·70	64·20	65·90
2nd Class, ...	20·20	22·40	24·40	26 20	28·00	29·70	31·10	32·60	34·00	35·40	36 90	38·30	39·60	40·70	41·80	42·90	44·00
3rd Class, ...	12·20	13·50	14·70	15·80	16·80	17·80	18·60	19·60	20·40	21·30	22·10	23·00	23·80	24·40	25·10	25·70	26·40

etc., etc., always adding, respectively, Kr.1.60, Kr.1.10, and Kr.0.60 for each five kilometres or part thereof.

The fares are considerably reduced for contract tickets for 2-12 months, and the charge for a monthly contract ticket is multiplied by:—

1.8 for 2 months.
2.5 „ 3 months.
3.0 „ 4 months.
3.5 „ 5 months.
4.0 „ 6 months.
4.4 „ 7 months.
4.8 „ 8 months.
5.2 „ 9 months.
5.6 „ 10 months.
6.0 „ 11 months.
6.25 „ 12 months.

School children's (under the age of 18 years) contracts are issued at sixth-tenth of above fares.

Contracts are not transferable.

Family tickets are issued on local lines only for distances not exceeding 25 kilometres.

Workmen's tickets are issued at Christiania, Porsgründ, Moss, Sköien, and Skien for short distances, and at a trifle less than half the ordinary fare.

Passengers' Luggage.

25 kilogram allowed. If the luggage exceeds this weight the excess has to be paid for at the following rates:—

For a distance from—

1-100 km. 3 ore per kg, or 6 dm³.
101-200 „ 4 „ „ 6 „
201-300 „ 5 „ „ 6 „
301-400 „ 6 „ „ 6 „

etc., adding one ore per 100 kg. or part thereof. Bulky luggage weighing less than one kg. per 6 dm³ is to be taken by measurement at 1 kg. per 6 dm³.

Cycles as passengers' luggage are charged the following rates:—

Distance.	One Seat.	Two Seats.	Three or more Seats.
	Ore.	Ore.	Kr.
Up to 50 km., ...	30	50	1·00
	Kr.	Kr.	
From 51-200 km., ...	50	1·00	2·00
„ 201-400 „ ...	75	1·50	3·00
	Kr.		
Exceeding 400 km., ...	1·00	2·00	4·00

Dogs are charged 30 ore booking fee and 1-2 ore per km. up to 150 km., and 0·7 ore for each exceeding km.

Goods Traffic Rates.

The goods traffic rates are not equal on all the railways. The State has, for instance, entered into a contract with the Kürünavaara-Luossavaara Iron Mines Co., whose extensive mines are situated in the north of Sweden, to carry the said company's iron ores to the port of Narvik, on the Ofoten Fjord, and this traffic, which is exceptionally heavy, amounting to about one and a quarter million of tons per year, is taken at special rates in accordance with stipulations in above contract; other mines or large factories, whose traffic is heavy, have made similar arrangements with the State to obtain lower rates on the carriage of their goods.

As a general rule, however, the different descriptions of goods are classified under nine different heading or classes, and three exceptional classes. The rates for carriage of goods are, with regard to the classification, charged in accordance with the following formulas, which give the amount of freight in ore per ton:—

Class.	Booking Fee.	Rate per Ton in Ore for that part of the Transport Distance which is situated between							
		0-50 Km.	51-100 Km.	101-150 Km.	151-200 Km.	201-300 Km.	301-400 Km.	401-500 Km.	501-600 Km.	Over 600 Km.
	Ore.									
1st Class, ...	100	15·0 ×	13·0 ×	11·0 ×	11·0 ×	9·0 ×	4·0 ×	2·5 ×	2·5 ×	2·0 ×
2nd „	100	11·0 ×	9·0 ×	8·0 ×	8·0 ×	6·0 ×	2·5 ×	2·5 ×	2·5 ×	2·0 ×
3rd „	100	8·0 ×	7·0 ×	6·0 ×	6·0 ×	5·0 ×	2·5 ×	2·5 ×	2·5 ×	2·0 ×
4th „	100	6·0 ×	5·5 ×	4·5 ×	4·5 ×	4·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×
5th „	50	5·5 ×	4·5 ×	4·0 ×	3·5 ×	3·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×
6th „	50	4·3 ×	3·5 ×	3·5 ×	3·0 ×	2·5 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×
7th „	50	3·6 ×	3·0 ×	2·7 ×	2·5 ×	2·2 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×
8th „	50	3·0 ×	2·5 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	2·0 ×	1·7 ×	1·7 ×	1·7 ×	1·7 ×
9th „	50	2·6 ×	2·2 ×	1·9 ×	1·8 ×	1·8 ×	1·6 ×	1·6 ×	1·6 ×	1·6 ×
A (Exceptional Classes),	50	2·2 ×	2·0 ×	1·8 ×	1·7 ×	1·6 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×
B „ „	50	2·0 ×	1·8 ×	1·6 ×	1·6 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·4 ×
C „ „	50	1·7 ×	1·6 ×	1·5 ×	1·5 ×	1·4 ×	1·4 ×	1·4 ×	1·4 ×	1·4 ×

(The × in the table means distance in Kilometres.)

Subject to the quantity sent, the same description of goods is put under different headings, and consequently charged different rates. The quantities specified in the "rules and charges" are "below 2,500 kg.", "at least 2,500 kg.," and "at least 5,000 kg." Taking moist mechanical wood pulp as an example, this description of goods is in quantities below 2,500 kg. classified in 3rd; in quantities of at least 2,500 kg., in 4th; and in quantities of at least 5,000 kg., in 6th class.

The gauge of the Norwegian railways is different, ranging from 0.750 to 1.435 metres. During the last few years several of the narrow gauge railways have been rebuilt and widened, and the following table gives the lengths in kilometres of the various widths on the 1st of April, 1905:—

1.435 metres	1,493.5 kilometres
1.067 „	1,276.9 „
0.750 „	101.3 „

In these figures are included branch lines and double lines at the different stations.

The number of locomotive engines on all the lines is 291, of which 155 are for 1.435, 126 for 1.067, and 10 for 0.75 metres. There are thus 8.7 kilometres of line to each engine.

The number of stations and stopping platforms is 388, giving an average distance between each station of 6.6 kilometres.

The number of passengers carried during the year, 1st of April, 1904—31st of March, 1905, was 9,805,000, and the goods traffic during the same period amounted to 3,720,000 tons. In 1855, when the length of the railways was 68 kilometres, the number of passengers carried was 1,882 per kilometre, and had increased to 3,938 during the year ending 31st March, 1905. The goods traffic during the same period had increased from 1,220 to 1,494 tons per kilometre.

The length of railway telegraph wires on the State lines per 1st of April, 1905, was 4,289, and of the telephone wires, 1,330 kilometres.

Number of passengers' cars and goods wagons (per 31st of March, 1906):—

(1) Car or wagon with two axles; (2) car or wagon with three axles; and (3) car or wagon with four axles.

Description.	State Railways.	Private Railways.	Total.
Passenger Cars.	246 (1)	60 (1)	306 (1)
	2 (2)	-	2 (2)
	268 (3)	37 (3)	305 (3)
	516	97	613
Combined Passenger and Mail Cars.	3 (1)	-	3 (1)
	6 (3)	1 (3)	7 (3)
	9	1	10
Combined Passenger, Mail, and Brake Cars.	21 (3)	-	21 (3)
	21	-	21
Mail Cars, ...	7 (1)	-	7 (1)
	4 (3)	-	4 (3)
	11	-	11
Mail and Brake Cars.	3 (1)	-	3 (1)
	27 (3)	1 (3)	28 (3)
	30	1	31
Combined Passenger and Brake Cars.	42 (1)	10 (1)	52 (1)
	21 (3)	2 (3)	23 (3)
	63	12	75

Number of passenger cars and goods wagons—*continued.*

Description.	State Railways.	Private Railways.	Total.
Combined Goods and Brake Cars.	137 (1)	26 (1)	163 (1)
	-	2 (3)	2 (3)
	137	28	165
Goods Wagons,	5,119 (1)	1,301 (1)	6,420 (1)
	69 (3)	31 (3)	100 (3)
	5,188	1,332	6,520
TOTAL, ...	5,975	1,471	7,446

Capital expenditure, all lines, length 2,490 km:—

Permanent Way, Telegraphs, Stations, and Other Property.	Rolling Stock.	Canals, Lake Steamers, and Purchase of Property.	Total.
Kr. 182,784,000 = £10,043,077	Kr. 30,288,000·03 = £1,660,879	Kr. 282,834 £15,540	Kr. 213,294,834·03 = £11,719,496

The capital expenditure, per 1st of April, 1905, thus amounted to Kr. 213,294,834.03, or £11,719,496, which is divided on the various railways as follows:—

		Kr. 189,695,612·72 =	£10,422,837
State Railways, namely absolute State lines,	463·3 Km.	45,323,113·69 =	2,490,555
"Stats Canein sents kbr." (State corporations, and private shareholders), ..	16,751·1 Km.	144,367,529·03 =	7,932,282
Private Companies lines,	351·6 Km.	23,599,191·31 =	1,296,659
		Kr. 213,294,834·03 =	£11,719,496

APPENDIX No. 3.

REPORT on the WORKING of STATE and PRIVATE RAILWAYS in SWEDEN, furnished by the BRITISH MINISTER at STOCKHOLM, through the Foreign Office, for the information of the VICE-REGAL COMMISSION.

STOCKHOLM,

November 20th, 1906.

No. 86.
Commercial.

SIR,

With reference to the instructions contained in your commercial despatch No. 21, of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith some notes by Mr. Dering, with their annexes of tariffs and statistics, on the State and private railways in Sweden.

I should be grateful if you would cause copies of the enclosures to this despatch to be communicated to the Secretary of the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, 13, St. Stephen's-green, Dublin, who wrote to me on the subject on October 24th.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

(Signed), S. RENNELL RODD.

The Right Hon. Sir Edward Grey, Bart.,
&c., &c., &c.

— —

NOTES ON SWEDISH RAILWAYS.

The Swedish State Railways celebrate their fifty years' jubilee on December 1st of this year (1906).

On December 1st, 1856, two lines, each one and a half Swedish miles long (15¼ kilometres) between Gothenburg-Jonsered and Malmo-Lund were opened.

From 1857 to 1861 about thirty-one Swedish miles (325½ kilometres) were constructed, and from this period the railways began to pay.

In 1862 another 31½ Swedish miles (330¾ kilometres) were built, and Stockholm's communication with Gothenburg was completed.

In 1864 railway communication between Stockholm and Malmo was opened.

1876-78 was a period of stagnation, when only the line, Arvik to Norwegian frontier, was built.

In 1868 there was a diminution of receipts, which hindered construction. Conditions improved later, and from 1871 up to the present day the mileage has been annually augmented.

In 1860 State lines were,	303	kilos.
,, 1860 Private lines,	204	,,
,, 1870 State lines were,	1,112	,,
,, 1870 Private lines,	590	,,
,, 1880 State lines were,	1,956	,,
,, 1880 Private lines,	3,923	,,
,, 1890 State lines were,	2,613	,,
,, 1890 Private lines,	5,405	,,
,, 1900 State lines were,	3,849	,,
,, 1900 Private lines,	7,453	,,
,, 1905 State lines were,	4,195	,,
,, 1905 Private lines,	8,665	,,

The Central Administration of the Swedish State Railways is in the hands of the Board of Railway Directors, who are nominated by the Government. These will be referred to later, under the head of Administration. Under this Board there are five District Administrations, who deal with the traffic.

It is stated that Sweden has more railways in proportion to its population than any other country in Europe, namely, 23·7 kilometres per ten thousand inhabitants. These figures, of course, embrace both State and private railways, which latter, if their narrow gauge lines are included, have to-day about double the mileage of the State lines.

The principal State lines are:—

Stockholm-Malmo.—618 kilometres.
This is the principal route to the Continent. There is a private railway from Malmo to Trelleborg, which takes much of the direct passenger traffic to Germany.

Stockholm-Gothenburg.—458 kilos.
This branches from the above line at Katrinsholm.

Stockholm-Charlottenberg, etc.—439 kilos.
This is the line to Christiania; the remaining 136 kilometres are in Norwegian territory.

Stockholm—Uppsala, Cellivara, etc.—1,542 kilos.
Continues 39 kilos. in Norway to Narvik, as far as Norwegian frontier, after which there are 102 km. of Norwegian line.

Sundsvall—Trondhjem.—363 kilos.

Mjolby—Crebo—Krylbo, 253 kilos.

Notes on Swedish Railways, Tariff & Statistics Volume.

Trelleborg—Malmo—Gothenburg—Christiania.
300 kilos. of this line is Swedish State line, 239 km. belong to private Swedish companies, and the rest is State line in Norway.

The Bohus Province line.
This was not finished in 1903, but much of it is now open, including the stretch between Uddevalla and Stromstad (West coast near Norwegian border).

Private railways constitute more than 100 separate properties. Of late years attempts have been successfully made to combine some of them for mutual profit.

The principal private lines are:—

Stockholm—Frovi,	192 km.
Uppsala—Ockelbo,	152 ,,
Cefle—Orsa,	194 ,,
Kristinehamn—Elfdalen,	262 ,,
Gothenburg—Fahlun,	478 ,,
Halmstad—Nassjo,	196 ,,
Nassjo—Oskarshamn,	148 ,,
Karlskrona—Gothenbury,	353 ,,
Helsingborg—Jonkoping,	246 ,,
Crebo—Bultsfred,	300 ,,

The State has contributed about £300,000 in subventions to private railways, chiefly in the shape of loans on favourable conditions, in addition to which the State has not imposed onerous restrictions on construction. In course of time, some 800 kilometres of private railways have been acquired by the State.

Construction.

Almost all Swedish railways are single tracked. The only exceptions are about ten kilos. in Scania and at Stockholm. It is hoped in time that double tracks may be laid on all the principal lines belonging to the State.

The gauge for all State lines is the standard (1·435 metres).

On the private railways 5,663 km. have standard gauge, while 3,002 km. are narrow gauge lines. The narrow gauges vary in width.

The heaviest rails are used in the north of Sweden, where iron and other ore has to be transported. These, and the remainder of the rails on the State lines, vary in weight between 40·5 and 27·5 kilograms to the metre.

Rails on the ordinary gauged private lines vary from the same maximum weight to 17·2 kgms. to the metre. The rails used in this country are of British, German, and Belgian manufacture. The sleepers are now dipped, whereas formerly it was considered cheaper, owing to the low price of wood, to renew constantly than to take steps for preservation.

Personnel.

There are 10,500 persons regularly employed on the State railways, and 11,074 extra employés.

Rolling Stock.

In 1905 there were about 750 locomotives on the State railways, and about 800 on the private roads. The Government engines are built, when possible, in Sweden at Trollhattan and Motala, both of which factories can turn out about fifty per year. Carriages and cars are made at a variety of places in Sweden, amongst which may be mentioned Falhun and Arlof. Composite engines are used, but there are on the northern lines, where ore has to be drawn, a number of specially constructed, powerful eight linked tank engines, which weigh about seventy-five tons a-piece. English coal is principally used as fuel, but the Government encourage the use of Scanian coal on the State lines. Experiments are being, and have been made, with Swedish manufactured briquettes.

The waterfalls in Sweden could probably supply the power necessary to run the whole of the railways by electricity, it is said. But there is little indication of any steps being taken in that direction.

In 1905 there were, roughly, 12,000 passenger carriages, and 18,000 freight cars on the State lines. On the private railways there were about 1,500 passenger carriages and 17,000 freight cars. The passenger carriages on the State lines and some of the private lines are very good, built on the Continental model, with bogies, side corridors, and through communication. They are lighted on the Pintsch system and steam heated. Restaurant cars are a recent innovation on most of the principal day trains. These are built on the German model, but there is more room. The sleeping cars are excellent, clean and up-to-date, with separate washing accommodation in each compartment. The fact that all travellers state their ability to sleep in them with comfort may be due to the slow rate of progression, which rarely exceeds, it is said, forty-five to fifty miles an hour (at times), with day expresses, while night trains undoubtedly travel more leisurely. As regards the Continental traffic, the distance of Stockholm from the various ports makes it necessary to fill in the night hours on the road, or else land the passengers at their end station at an unearthly hour in the morning, a measure which it is said would be unpopular among the easy-going, comfort-loving people of the class able to afford the luxury of a sleeping compartment.

There is a central repairing station for State railways at Crebo, and there are ten other branch establishments in various parts of the country, also belonging to the State.

The number of freight cars has already been stated. Peculiar are those used in the North for the transport of ore. These are built of iron with three axles, and can carry from thirty-five to forty-five tons each. Then there are special refrigerating cars for the transport of dairy produce, provided with treble roofs and sides. The remainder of the cars resemble those commonly in use on the Continent, rather than the heavier ones used in America.

Staff.

There are 10,500 persons regularly employed on the State railways, and 11,074 extra employés. Perhaps not quite so many again are employed on the private roads. The State railways employés are controlled by the superintending staff. Their appointment or dismissal is effected by the respective District Administrations, except in the case of the higher officials, who are appointed by the Swedish Government. On private lines the Government do not interfere with the rules of employment, except that they require a colour blindness test. No general rules are laid down as to the length of the working day. In regard to Sunday labour, a number of goods trains are discontinued on Sundays, and goods are neither received or delivered on that day. On State lines arrangements are made so that the staff obtain, so far as possible, leave on every third Sunday to enable them to attend Divine Service. Wages are rising on the railways, and owing to the increased cost of living in Sweden, there is at the present time an agitation amongst the employés on the State railways for increased remuneration. It is thought not unlikely that a strike may break out. According to the latest figures available, those of 1903, on the State railways the wages of a signalman, or porter, were £46, up to a maximum of £62 10*s.* This includes the value of a furnished house with free fuel, valued at £14 a year, and £5 6*s.* 8*d.* for clothes.) A platelayer and similar workmen would get from £46 to £52 per annum. There is, however, a reduction from all these wages for pensions. The Treasury have a pension fund for the staff of the State railways, while the private lines have inaugurated similar funds for their own use.

Administration.

Since 1902 there has existed, besides the Board of Railway Directors referred to at the beginning of this report, a Railway Council, appointed by the Government and consisting of six representatives of different social interests. To this Council are submitted the more important economic questions on behalf of both the Government and the Board of Directors, whose chairman is also *ex-officio* chairman of the Railway Council.

Concessions to build private lines are generally granted by the Swedish Government, who reserve the right to fix the tariff on the private lines in accordance with the State tariff.

Tariff.

Formerly the passenger tariff in Sweden was 8·5, 6, and 4 ore (1·8, 1·3, and 0·85 of a penny per mile, respectively), per kilometre, for the three different classes in express trains, and 5·25 and 3·3 ore (1·1 and ·75 of a penny per mile) per kilometre for the second and third classes of ordinary trains, in which there are never first-class carriages. A new scheme was elaborated in 1903 on the principle of a zone tariff with a diminishing scale. The zone tariff was introduced in Sweden on January 1st, 1906, and has, with one or two alterations, continued in force. In Annex No. 11 of the Railway tariff herewith enclosed it will be seen that the zones (taking Stockholm as a starting point) are of the following extent. The first twelve zones are of eight kilometres, and every successive group of twelve zones is one kilometre longer than the preceding group.

Admission to express trains requires a supplement of 2½ kroner, 1½ kroner, and 1 kroner for first, second, and third class passengers, respectively. Sleeping accommodation costs 10 kroner for first, and 5 kroner for second class, per night. The first class fare includes the right to an entire small compartment of upper and lower berth.

Annex No. 12 introduces a few modifications. On page 6 will be found the over-weight baggage tariff, and on pages 7 and 8 the special trains tariff.

Revenue and Expenditure.

At the beginning of 1905 it is stated that there were approximately £24,400,000 of capital invested in State railways. The figures for 1896 were £17,243,000.

Comparing statistics from 1896 onwards, the capital invested in private railways has been about equal in amount to that invested in the State railways.

The receipts of the State railways for 1905 were £3,041,000. The figures for 1896 were £1,765,000.

The receipts of the private railways from 1896 onwards have annually averaged about the same as the State lines.

The expenditure of the State railways for 1905 was £2,167,000. The figures for 1896 were £1,077,000. The expenditure of the private railways was, roughly speaking, about £111,000 in 1896, and £556,000 in 1905 less than that of the State lines.

In estimating the equivalent of Swedish currency, 18 kroner have been taken to equal £1.

Further statistics can be found on pages 70-79 of the annexed Volume I. (1906) issued by the Central Statistics Bureau.

Most of the above information has been derived from Swedish Government publications or direct from the Bureau of State Railways. Unfortunately no later statistics than those for 1905 are available.

HERBERT C. DERING.

British Legation, Stockholm,
November 19th, 1906.

APPENDIX No. 4.

Extracts from a Memorandum relative to Railway organisation, prepared at the request of the Railway Commissioners of the Cape Government Railways, by T. R. PRICE, formerly General Manager of those Railways, and now General Manager of the Central South African (*i.e.* Transvaal and Orange River) Railways, dated, Johannesburgh, 22nd February, 1907.

POLITICAL INFLUENCES—DISTURBING EFFECT OF.

5. The drawbacks in the management of the railways in the Cape that call for removal arise from the extent to which and the manner in which the authority of Parliament is exercised. They are twofold in their character, viz.:—

(1). The practice of public authorities, influential persons and others bent on securing concessions or other advantages which the General Manager has either refused in the conscientious exercise of his functions, or is not likely to grant, making representation to the Commissioner (as the Ministerial head of the Government) supplemented by such pressure, political influence, or other means as are considered perfectly legitimate in their way, and are best calculated to attain the end applicants have in view.

(Many members of Parliament act similarly in the interests of the districts, constituents, or railway employees in whom they happen to be interested. It is by no means unknown for the requests in both classes of cases to coincide somewhat with a critical division in Parliament—present or in prospect—or otherwise something has occurred which is regarded as irritating to the public or embarrassing to the Government, and the desire to minimise the effect by some conciliatory act is not unnatural.)

(2). The extent to which the fictitious and often transitory importance which a community or district managers to acquire obscures (under the guise of the Colony's welfare) the consideration of the railway and general interests of the Colony as a whole.

(During the earlier period of my railway service in the Cape Colony, few things impressed me more, coming, as I had, from a railway conducted on strictly business lines, than the extent to which the conduct of railway affairs was influenced by certain conditions; nor was this impression lessened afterwards when in the course of a conversation on the matter Sir Charles Elliott mentioned to me that he had more than once told a late Railway Commissioner, "The Government is powerful, but (mentioning the town and authority) is more powerful still.")

6. I do not regard it as open to doubt that the Colony as a whole has suffered severely in consequence, the inland portions of the Colony particularly so, and that the need for a remedy is pressing if the railways are to be conducted as a business concern for the benefit of the Colony.

MEANS OF SECURING FREEDOM FROM POLITICAL INFLUENCES.

7. The necessity for the railways and their administration being removed from such an atmosphere and treated as a most valuable means of benefiting the Colony as a whole, whilst not neglecting the interests of a district (but not subordinating the welfare of the whole Colony thereto) is pressing. That there should be an authority to refer to in case of real necessity, where the decision or action of the General Manager is not regarded as being in the public interest, is also clear. But it is equally manifest that the Commissioner or the Government of the day, with political or party consideration always in view, is not the proper court of reference.

POLITICAL INFLUENCES AS AFFECTING CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINES.

11. There can be little doubt that in the Cape Colony political considerations have influenced the adoption of new lines and their construction—many, if not most of them, of an unprofitable character—without sufficient enquiry or information; often with scanty particulars; and possibly contrary to the advice of the officer afterwards entrusted with the construction and working of the line.

PROPOSALS FOR NEW LINES—PROCEDURE RECOMMENDED.

12. A material change is imperatively necessary in this respect if only to ensure the solvency of the Colony.

APPENDIX No. 5.

LIGHT RAILWAYS (IRELAND), 3-Ft. GAUGE.

STATEMENT prepared from the Half-Yearly Accounts of the Companies for the Three Years ending 30th June, 1907.

RAILWAY.	Length in Miles.	NUMBER OF TRAINS EACH WAY PER DAY DURING:				REVENUE.		EXPENDITURE.		REMARKS.
		Summer.		Winter.		Receipts per mile per week.	Receipts per train mile.	Cost of working per mile per week.	Cost of working per train mile.	
		Week-days.	Sundays.	Week-days.	Sundays.	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	
*Schull and Skibbereen,	14½	Two.	One.	Two.	One.	4 1 2	2 3	5 3 2	2 10½	Worked by Committee of Management (County Council).
*Tralee and Dingle,	37½	Three.	One.	Three.	One.	4 7 3	2 4½	5 3 6	2 9½	Worked by Committee of Management. Calculations in this case are based on the four half-years ending 30th June, 1907.
*West Clare,	27	Five.	One.	Four.	One.	9 7 6	3 3¾	7 2 3	2 6¼	Worked by owning Company.
*South Clare,	26	Five.	One.	Four.	One.	5 13 9	2 0½	5 19 1	2 1¾	Worked by West Clare Company.
Cavan and Leitrim,	18½	Three.	—	Three.	—	4 11 11	2 3¾	4 4 10	2 1½	Worked by owning Company.
Castlederg and Victoria Bridge,	7¼	Four.	—	Four.	—	6 16 10	2 5	5 17 8	2 1	Worked by owning Company.
Londonderry and Lough Swilly, and Letterkenny.	31	Eight. Five.	Three. One.	Seven. Five.	Two. One.	10 13 9	2 2¼	9 9 0	1 11¼	The Letterkenny Railway is worked by Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company.
Ballycastle,	16¼	Five.	One.	Four.	One.	7 3 0	2 7½	4 19 5	1 9½	Worked by owning Company.
Killybegs,	19	Three.	—	Three.	—	4 6 0	1 10	4 4 3	1 9½	Calculations based on the three half-years ending 30th November, 1905, when these lines were worked by the Donegal Railway Co. The lines were taken over by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) and the Midland Railway (England) on 1st May, 1906.
Glenties,	24½	Three.	—	Three.	—	3 18 11½	1 11¾	3 10 3	1 9	
Clogher Valley,	37	Four.	—	Four.	—	4 9 1	1 8¾	4 10 1	1 9	Worked by owning Company.
Letterkenny to Burtonport,	49½	Three.	One.	Three.	One.	3 19 3	1 11	3 5 2	1 7	Worked by Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company.
*Cork and Muskerry,	18	Eight.	Eleven.	Eight.	Five.	10 4 7	2 1¾	7 8 7	1 6¼	Worked by owning Company.
Donegal,	46½	Five.	One.	Five.	—	12 0 1	2 8¼	6 16 6	1 6¼	Calculations based on the three half-years ending 30th November, 1905, when line was worked by owning Company. Line was taken over by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland), and the Midland (England) on 1st May, 1906.
*Cork, Blackrock, and Passage,	16	Eleven.	Fourteen.	Eleven	Six.	19 13 6	2 8½	11 0 7	1 6	Worked by owning Company.
Buncrana to Carndonagh,	18½	Three.	One.	Three.	One.	4 0 8	1 9½	3 6 2	1 5¾	Worked by Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company.
Donoughmore Extension,	8½	Three.	Two.	Three	Two.	3 0 11	1 0¼	3 18 8	1 4	Worked by Cork and Muskerry Company.

* These lines have no Capital Account, and consequently, items have to be charged against Revenue which would be properly charged against Capital if such an Account existed. To obtain the net cost of working the lines the items so charged have been deducted in these calculations.

7th January, 1908.

(Signed), THOMAS M. BATCHEN, M. INST. C.E.,
Engineer, Board of Works.

APPENDIX No. 6.

ABSTRACT of EVIDENCE on behalf of WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL furnished on the 4th JANUARY, 1907, by Mr. ALEXANDER KINSELLA, TRADER, GOREY, who was unable to attend for examination.

I reside in Gorey, where I carry on an extensive trade as manure and provision merchant and dealer in practically all kinds of agricultural machinery. I am also County Councillor for the division of Gorey.

With regard to the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway (or Dublin and South-Eastern Railway), I am of opinion that the amount of its rolling stock is quite insufficient for its requirements.

To give an instance of this, I may mention that a quantity of manure consigned to me about twelve months ago was thrown out on one of the banks at Gorey, where it remained for one whole day under a downpour of rain, and, needless to say, was greatly damaged. The supply of covered wagons on this system is, in my opinion, entirely insufficient.

The storage accommodation for the reception of merchandise should be adequately increased, and so reduce to a minimum the risk of loss to goods by exposure to the weather.

With reference to the rates on this line for manures and agricultural produce generally, the question is, to my mind, one of great importance to the public. The following are the rates charged from Dublin for manures to the principal towns in County Wexford, and this rate applies, I believe, to all classes of goods, such as are usually sent by sea as well as rail:—

New Ross, which is 92 miles from Dublin, the rate is 2*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

Wexford town, which is 94 miles from Dublin, the rate is 2*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

Enniscorthy, which is 73 miles from Dublin, the rate is 3*s.* 9*d.* per ton.

Gorey, which is only 59 miles from Dublin, the rate is 6*s.* per ton.

And again, the rate for oats from New Ross to Dublin, 92 miles, is 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton; while the rate from Gorey to Dublin, 59 miles, is 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton.

You will therefore see how unfairly we are treated by the railway company above referred to. The rate to Gorey, which is very little more than half the distance, is more than double the price charged to either Wexford or New Ross. The explanation lies in the fact that there is a rival sea route from Dublin to Wexford and New Ross. There is, of course, no sea route to Gorey.

There should be, in my opinion, a uniform rate per mile on all railways for the conveyance of agricultural merchandise. To carry out this effectually, I think the Irish railway system should be controlled by and under one management; or, as an alternative, should be taken over by the State, and if necessary subsidised in such parts of the country as it might be found from time to time its working was attended by a loss.

The railway system, particularly in Ireland, should, in my opinion, be run on lines similar to the postal and telegraphic service, that is, for the convenience of the public and for the general well-being of the country.

I think all railway companies should be forced by law to have one or more of their passenger cars on each train fitted with lavatories. I might also add that their season tickets are entirely too high in price.

APPENDIX No. 7.

DOCUMENTS sent in by Mr. R. H. TODD, LL.D., Representative of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, after his examination on 14th March, 1907.

I put in extracts from a printed copy of a scheme for the amalgamation of the Letterkenny and other railways with the Lough Swilly Railway and the extinction of the baronial guarantees. This scheme was prepared by me in May, 1900, and a copy of it was sent to Mr. Hanbury, and a copy was handed to each of the members of the deputation that waited on Mr. Hanbury in the year 1900 to advocate the adoption of the scheme. What was suggested by the deputation was that the Treasury should accept £60,000 for the Letterkenny line, or such other sum as an expert appointed by the Board of Trade or Treasury should fix as the actual value, and that the Lough Swilly Company to carry out the arrangement should obtain an Act giving that Company the powers mentioned in the extracts (*attached*).

It was thought better to include the Carndonagh and Burtonport Railways in the scheme, but it was explained that this was not looked on as essential and would not be pressed if the Treasury had any objection.

In connection with the dispute as to the completion and equipment of the Burtonport Railway, I hand in copy of letter of H. Williams, Secretary Board of Works, dated 27th March, 1903; copy letters of G. E. Shanahan, Assistant Secretary Board of Works, dated respectively 14th September, 1904, and 17th September, 1904; copy letter of W. M. Lane, Solicitor of Board of Works, dated 21st January, 1905. I draw the attention of the Commissioners to the portions of these letters marked A B, showing, as I submit they do, that an arbitration as to the disputes was, in the first instance, proposed by the Board of Works, though the Board subsequently objected to such arbitration, and that the Board of Works, in effect, offered to the Railway Company to supply the rolling stock necessary for the line, on condition that the Company waived its claim as to the defective works on the line or any arbitration with regard thereto.

Extracts from Scheme for the Amalgamation of the Letterkenny and other Railways with the Lough Swilly Railway, and extinction of Baronial Guarantees by the City of Derry and parts of the County of Donegal.

Londonderry, 15th May, 1900.

"The actual value or cost price of a narrow gauge railway such as this, with proper permanent way, sidings, stations, etc., and equipped with a proper and sufficient amount of rolling stock, would be about £5,500 per mile, or for the 16 miles of this

line, £88,000. The relaying of the permanent way, new sidings and additional station accommodation, and the strengthening of the bridges will cost about £24,000. The Act of Parliament to carry out the necessary amalgamation will cost about £4,000. When all is completed, therefore, the sum of about £28,000 would have been expended, and the actual value of the line, as it now stands, is therefore about £60,000. If the Treasury is of opinion that the line is worth more than this sum there can be no objection to having the actual value fixed by an expert appointed with the consent of everyone interested."

"As matters now stand the Lough Swilly Railway Company works the Letterkenny line for a proportion of the receipts under a lease or agreement, of which there are about nineteen years to run. Meantime it has undertaken to work in perpetuity the two extensions to be made to Burtonport and Carndonagh, but under separate agreements, and working each on different terms from the other of them. The Lough Swilly Company will, therefore, have to keep four separate sets of books and time-tables, and keep separate four different sets of rolling stock, and it seems impossible that the whole of the lines could under this system be worked in the most economical and satisfactory way, especially as the Letterkenny line is not so substantially built as the other lines, and there are no funds available to put it in proper condition to carry fast trains and rolling stock similar to what will be used on the other lines."

The Lough Swilly Company is willing to promote a Bill to take "The Letterkenny Railway" over, at its actual value, and also to take over the Burtonport and Carndonagh Extensions, and to relieve the baronies of all guarantees and payments in respect of the three lines.

What is suggested, therefore, is that the Lough Swilly Company should take powers:—

1. To raise the necessary capital and pay to the Treasury the actual value of the Letterkenny Railway.
2. By the same Act to effect the amalgamation of the four railways.
3. To extinguish the existing guarantees.
4. To extinguish the rights of the baronies to repayment of all monies paid in respect of such guarantees prior to the passing of the Act; and,
5. Take power to raise sufficient capital to relay the permanent way of the Letterkenny line, provide additional rolling stock, and put the line into thoroughly good condition.

The only question seems to be whether the Treasury is prepared to accept the actual value of the Letterkenny Railway in discharge of its debt, and thereby enable a scheme highly beneficial to the districts to be carried out. As to this, it is to be observed that the Treasury will not be the only loser. Assuming that the actual value of the line is only £60,000 the ordinary shares are absolutely worthless, and the balance due the Treasury, with the interest that has accrued on the three mortgages, cannot possibly be repaid out of the proceeds of the line.

1. The shareholders of the Letterkenny Railway have lost £56,172 and all interest thereon since 1863.
2. The baronies, by the proposed arrangement, will have lost the yearly payment of £1,767 10*s.* since 1883, or, in all, £31,813, in the year 1901.
3. The loss to the Treasury under the proposed arrangement could not amount to more than £30,000; the actual loss (if any) can be ascertained when the actual value of the Letterkenny line is fixed, and the actual sums due on foot of the three mortgages definitely ascertained.

(Copy.)

Office of Public Works,
Dublin,
27*th March*, 1903.

SIR,

I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to refer to your letters of the 7th and 18th instant relative to alleged discrepancies between the specification, etc., and the works as actually carried out on the Burtonport line. In reply I am to state that Mr. Batchen will be prepared to discuss the whole matter with the company's engineer at any date after the 1st April next. At the same time I am to point out that the Board consider a great many of the items are of much too trival and unimportant a nature to have been brought forward for discussion. (*A.*) In order to save unnecessary delay in having the matters complained of completely adjusted the Board are of opinion that the points upon which the engineers disagree should be referred immediately to arbitrators under Clause 21 of the Treasury Agreement (*B.*).

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) H. WILLIAMS,
Secretary.

The Secretary,
Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway
Londonderry.

(Copy.)

Office of Public Works,
Dublin,
14*th September*, 1904.

SIR,

Referring to your letter of the 6th instant. and telegrams exchanged on the 8th idem, on the subject of the Burtonport line engines, I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to state that they are unable to take any such action as has been suggested by your company with regard to the four locomotives supplied for the equipment of the line, as such action would imply responsibility on the part of the Board for the present condition of those engines, a responsibility which they repudiate for reasons given by Mr. Batchen to the Chairman of your Company in the presence of Mr. Spence at Londonderry on the 10th instant. The Board presume that your Company having undertaken the responsibility of working the line, considered themselves fully capable of dealing with all technical questions connected with its management.

As regards the future, the Board have already, so far back as the 22nd July, invited your Company to a conference on certain terms as to the powers of the representatives of this Board and your Company, and Mr. Batchen, at the interview referred to above, gave your Chairman information to the effect (*A.*) That the Board, with the sanction of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, were prepared to allocate a sum of money out of the funds available under the Railways (Ireland) Act of 1896 for the purpose of providing additional engines on condition that a general settlement of all outstanding questions was arrived at (*B.*) The Board regret that no intimation of the acceptance by your Company of the suggestion for a conference was received either by the Commissioners or by their solicitor until the 5th instant (your letter of the 3rd idem), and they will now be glad to receive a formal acceptance of the proposal and of the conditions, with the names of your Company's representatives. The Board will then forward a list of the subjects which they propose to discuss.

I am to add that the resolution conferring on the Company's representatives full plenary powers to deal with all questions included in the scope of the reference should be under the seal of the Company, and a copy thereof should be forwarded to the Board.

I am, sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) GEO. E. SHANAHAN,
Asst.-Secretary.

(Copy.)

Office of Public Works,
Dublin,
17*th September*, 1904.

SIR,

I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to state in reply to your letter dated "September, 1904," and received by the Chairman on the 15th instant, that there appears to be some misapprehension on your part as to what actually took place at the interview between you and Mr. Batchen. The latter on his return to Dublin wrote a full report on what transpired, and it is clear he made no promise to recommend the course suggested by you, but undertook, in deference to your wishes, to mention the matter to the Board. This is borne out by his letter to you on the 14th instant, and I am to say that Mr. Batchen correctly judged that the Board would not issue a letter which implied a responsibility for the ill condition of the engines, which the Board have already repudiated. In this connection I am to point out that the Board have no power to give your Company an order such as that suggested.

The Board have received a copy of the letter which Messrs. Barclay and Sons addressed to your Company subsequent to Mr. Allan's visit to Burtonport, and his examination of the engines, and it is observed that it contains no mention of an opinion that the engines are not powerful enough or that they are too few in number, although all the other points referred to by you are included therein. It is suggested, however, that those two statements probably refer to some conversation he had with your Mr. Fisher. The Board have no desire to trouble Mr. Allan by asking if he really did express an opinion, as his concern was merely to see into the condition of the present engines. The specifications for the engines were approved on behalf of your Company by Mr. Malcolm.

(*A.*) The Treasury have agreed to supply a sum of money for additional engines on condition that all outstanding questions are settled in a manner in all respects satisfactory to the Board on representations made by the Commissioners that the existing stock was inadequate to meet the requirements of a three-train service daily in each direction (*B.*).

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) GEO. E. SHANAHAN,
Asst.-Secretary.

(Copy.)

Law Department,
Office of Public Works,
Dublin, 21*st January*, 1905.

Burtonport Railway.

DEAR SIR,

In reference and in reply to your letter of 22nd ult., the suggestion you now make with reference to the proposed conference, I am directed to state, the Board cannot entertain. It would turn it into an arbitration by principals, which is wholly irregular, as the essential of an arbitration is that the arbitrators must be impartial. The conference is for the purpose of enabling the parties to meet and discuss the differences, and if they cannot agree, then, of course, resort must be had to the proper tribunal.

With regard to the arbitration offered your Company so far back as March, 1903, I think you have not been supplied with all the facts in connection therewith (*A.*) The Board offered by their letter of 27th March, 1903, to submit to immediate arbitration under Clause 21 of the Treasury Agreement certain items contained in a list previously furnished by your Company (*B.*). Out of this list, as the result of a conference in April of that year between the engineers a number of items were to be expunged, being put forward under a misapprehension, and a corrected list furnished. On 15th May, 1903, your Company were asked to submit such corrected list, and as they had not done so the Board's letter of 27th May, 1903, was merely a reminder, and on this point I would also refer you to the Board's letter of 31st July, 1903, again stating specifically what the subject of the proposed arbitration was, and that your Company would not be allowed to delay indefinitely.

As they had practically done nothing to enable the arbitration to be proceeded with, and I was ordered to take action in reference to obligations of the Company they had neglected or refused to perform, I suggested a conference, with a view to close matters, and which included the matters previously agreed to be referred to arbitration, but towards which no progess had been made, and at which conference the question as to whether any and what sum might be given for extra engines would be discussed.

As it would appear that there is little or no prospect of the proposed conference coming to anything, although I am satisfied your Company had not, even when the offer was made, power to demand arbitration under the Treasury Agreement, and that that offer is in no way binding, yet if the Company desire, and now will forthwith furnish the list required by Board's letter of 15th May, 1903, the Board are willing to revive their offer to the extent that they will be prepared to submit to the Treasury a proposal to agree to these matters being dealt with as if they came under Clause 21 of the Treasury Agreement, provided this proposal is at once accepted, and the list required by the letter of 15th May, 1903, furnished within three weeks from this date.

If, on the other hand, the Company prefer to have the conference to discuss and settle not only the foregoing but the other matters, including additional engines, etc., they must distinctly understand that the claims, we now learn from the recent visit of their secretary, they propose to put forward, cannot even be entertained. Their claims must be confined to works in the corrected list of 1903, provided for by the contract and plans, and alleged to be omitted to be done, or done not in accordance with the contract.

Yours truly,

(Signed) W. M. LANE.

APPENDIX No. 8.

COPY of an AGREEMENT relative to the Burtonport Railway, handed in by Mr. T. M. BATCHEN, M.Inst., C.E., Engineer, Board of Works, during his examination on the 22nd April, 1907.

AN AGREEMENT—made the Sixteenth day of February 1900 One thousand nine hundred BETWEEN PAULING & COMPANY (Limited) of Victoria-street Westminster, in the City of London, Railway Contractors, of the one part And the LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY COMPANY of the other part WHEREAS the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company are the Promoters of a Light Railway from Letterkenny to Burtonport in the County of Donegal in Ireland which the Company are under a Contract with Her Majesty's Treasury to work in perpetuity And WHEREAS the said Pauling and Com-

pany Limited are the Contractors for the construction of such Light Railway and as such Contractors have requested the said Railway Company to promote and apply to the Lord Lieutenant in Council for an Order authorising certain deviations from the Contract plans of said railway and the abandonment of corresponding portions of such Contract plans and Railway And WHEREAS Her Majesty's Treasury and the Board of Works have approved of such deviations being made and have requested the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company to apply for an Order in Council authorising same without prejudice however to their existing rights, powers and privileges of the said Railway Company And WHEREAS the said Railway Company were opposed to any deviations of said line, but without prejudice to their existing rights, powers and privileges the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company have agreed on the terms and conditions hereinafter set out to withdraw their opposition to the said deviations of the Railway proposed and to promote and apply to the Lord Lieutenant for an Order authorising the said deviations and the abandonment of corresponding portions of the Contract plans and works of the said line NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between the parties hereto as follows:—

1. The Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company shall apply to the Lord Lieutenant in Council for an Order in Council authorising the said deviations and abandonment as aforesaid.

2. The said Pauling and Company Limited shall in consideration of the promises pay to the said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company to a separate credit the sum of Five thousand nine hundred pounds.

3. The sum of One thousand six hundred pounds part of such sum of Five thousand nine hundred pounds shall be lodged by the said Pauling and Company Limited in the Northern Bank Londonderry to a separate credit to the credit of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company forthwith but One thousand pounds thereof shall be repaid to the said Pauling and Company in the event of the Donegal County Council or the Lord Lieutenant in Council failing to pass and approve of the Order sanctioning such deviations: Two hundred and fifty pounds part of such sum of Five thousand nine hundred pounds shall be lodged by the said Pauling and Company Limited to the credit of the said Railway Company on the approval and presentment of the Donegal County Council being obtained and passed, and on such Order sanctioning and approving of the said deviations being passed by the Lord Lieutenant in Council the said Pauling and Company shall lodge Three thousand three hundred and fifty pounds thereof to the separate credit account to the credit of the said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company and shall lodge to such separate credit as aforesaid the sum of Two hundred and fifty pounds on the publication of the draft award or on settlement with the owners or occupiers of the lands required for the undertaking; the sum of Two hundred and fifty pounds on the conevyances for such lands being executed and the sum of Two hundred pounds the balance of said sum of Five thousand nine hundred pounds on the completion of the works.

4. The said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company shall pay the cost of promotion and the legal and engineering costs and charges incurred or to be incurred in connection with and incidental to such promotion application and orders and the carrying out of same except such as have been or shall be incurred by the said Pauling and Company themselves or by their Solicitor, Engineer, employees or servants, and except such as are hereinafter excepted.

5. The said Pauling and Company Limited shall before the commencement of the works at their own cost prepare and submit to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company for their approval the working plans and sections showing thereon all works proposed to be carried out by the said Pauling and Company Limited on such deviations. The grades shown on such working plans and sections shall not be steeper or worse nor shall the curves be sharper or longer than those shown on the Parliamentary plans of such deviations. All subsidiary works rendered necessary by such deviations shall be carried out by the said Pauling and Company Limited as part and parcel of the Contract to the satisfaction of the said Railway Company.

6. The works on such deviations shall be executed and carried out by the said Pauling and Company Limited in accordance with the provisions of the specifications of the original line and works so far as same are applicable to the works on such deviations to the reasonable satisfaction of the said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company and their Engineer.

7. The time for completion of the Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway shall not be extended in consequence of such deviations being applied for or sanctioned or executed.

8. Separate agreements to the satisfaction of the said Railway Company shall be entered into without delay between the Board of Works and the said Pauling and Company Limited and between the Treasury and Board of Works and the said Railway Company making the Free Grant provided for the construction of the said Railway applicable to the said deviations and fixing the amount thereof and in case such agreements shall not be executed by the necessary parties on or before the Twenty-first day of February inst. the said Railway Company may refuse to proceed with such application and in such case the said Pauling and Company shall pay all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the said Railway Company up to the date of such refusal and the said Railway Company shall repay to the said Pauling and Company the sum of One thousand pounds part of the One thousand six hundred pounds theretofore paid to the Railway Company by the said Pauling and Company in full discharge of all claims by the said Pauling and Company Limited against the said Railway Company.

9. The said Railway Company shall pay all costs and expenses of advertisements of such applications; of printing and serving notices to owners and occupiers and of printing documents for lodgment and of lodging same and also the fees payable to the Board of Works for the Investigator reporting on such deviations and fees payable to the County Surveyors; the Secretary of the County Council the Solicitor of the County Council and the Clerk of the Crown of the County Donegal; the fees to Counsel employed by them in connection with such application the fees payable to the Privy Council and the travelling and other expenses in connection therewith of their officers or employees and scrivenery charges and also all legal costs charges and expenses payable to their Solicitor or Engineer for attendance at the Court of Arbitration for acquiring the necessary lands for such deviations but not the costs or charges of the Arbitrator nor shall they pay the fees or expenses of the Solicitors, Engineers or Valuers of the lands of owners or occupiers whose lands shall be acquired or abandoned herein which costs and expenses shall be paid and borne by the said Pauling and Company Limited nor shall they pay the costs or expenses of any other Solicitor, Engineer, Person or Body which may be claimed or payable in connection with such applications unless employed or engaged by the said Railway Company on their own responsibility without having obtained the consent in writing of the said Pauling and Company Limited to the employment of any such Solicitor, Engineer, Person or Body which costs and expenses so far as the said Pauling and Company are or shall be liable to same shall be paid and borne by the said Pauling and Company Limited.

10. The said Pauling and Company Limited shall pay all stamp duties and fees on conveyances and assignments and the registration of same IN WITNESS whereof the said Pauling and Company Limited have hereunto affixed their seal and the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company have affixed their Corporate seal the day and year first herein written.

Sealed by the said Pauling and Company in the presence of (the words "The Solicitor of the County Council" line 2, and words "in writing" on line 17, all page 4 having been first interlined). (Seal)

(Sgd.) GEORGE PAULING, Director.
,, JOHN SCOTT, Secretary.

Sealed by the said Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company in presence of

APPENDIX No. 9.

COPIES of CORRESPONDENCE between the COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS, IRELAND, and the LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY COMPANY relative to the construction, equipment, and working of the Letterkenny to Burtonport Extension Railway, transmitted by the Lough Swilly Company, on 8th June, 1907.

I.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS,

DUBLIN, 21*st September*, 1903.

SIR,

I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to refer to certain statements as to the construction, equipment, and working of the Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension Railway, made by the chairman of your company at the half-yearly meeting of the shareholders, on 31st ultimo, as reported in the *Londonderry Standard*, of 2nd instant. The Board, after careful consideration of the facts, as recorded in the official correspondence, on the various matters referred to by Mr. M'Farland, are forced to the conclusion that the remarks made on the several points on the occasion referred to were inaccurate and misleading. As they consider it essential that any particulars which your company may think it desirable to communicate to the public on this subject—which necessarily affects the administration of this Department—should be corrected, if not found to be absolutely accurate, the Board desire me to draw your company's attention to the following points dealt with in Mr. M'Farland's speech, which they consider should be rectified in detail:—

1. "The rolling stock was to be supplied by the Board of Works, and not only the rolling stock—their undertaking was to fully equip the line. When the Lough Swilly Company became aware of the type of engine they were about to be supplied with they considered it unsuitable for the traffic. Unfortunately, the advice they got from their professional advisers, their own locomotive superintendent, and Mr. Malcolm, of the Northern Counties Railway, a gentleman he (the chairman) would say was at the head of his profession in Ireland, and which was placed at the disposal of the Board of Works, was not followed, and their prognostications have turned out too true. It would have been much pleasanter for the officers of that company and the directors, as well as of great advantage to the shareholders, if they had been wrong, but, unfortunately, they were right, and the engines supplied have turned out most unsatisfactory. Not only were they unsuitable, but they were not of sufficient power for the heavy gradients of the line. The number, also, was just the half necessary to work the mileage they ran."

As regards the advice received by your company from the locomotive superintendent of the Northern Counties Railway, it should be noted that, while Mr. Malcolm reported in favour of tender engines for running the whole distance from Derry to Burtonport and *vice versa*, he stated at the same time, in writing to the Board, that he was quite prepared to admit that the Burtonport extension line—*i.e.*, from Letterkenny to Burtonport—could be worked with tank engines, similar to those on the Glenties Railway. That statement was also made at a conference which the Board arranged between their expert and Mr. Malcolm in order to discuss the question. As a matter of fact, the engines supplied are similar to those on the Glenties Railway (which is of the same general character as the Burtonport Extension Railway), and, in addition to greater water capacity and larger coal space, they embrace all the improvements suggested by the working of that line. As frequently pointed out in previous correspondence, the Board, before deciding as to the design and number of the locomotives, consulted experts, including some who had exceptional experience of narrow-gauge engines, and acted on their advice.

I am further to remind you that, acting on a suggestion of your late general manager, in order, if possible, to meet your wishes, the Board offered to supply tender engines, provided your company would pay the extra cost, which would only be necessary for the purpose of rendering the engines suitable for running the trains over your own system connecting Letterkenny with Londonderry, a purpose outside the obligations of the Board. This offer was, notwithstanding its origin, declined.

As to the allegation that the engines supplied had turned out most unsatisfactory, as your company are aware, the Board have recently had inspections of the locomotives made by the assistant locomotive engineer of the Midland Great Western Railway, and the inspector employed by the Commissioners to supervise the construction of the engines, and the reports obtained from these experts show that the locomotives, even in the short time during which they have worked, had been badly misused, and brought into a deplorable condition. At present the engines, having undergone extensive repairs, which would not have been necessary but for this misuse, are working quite satisfactorily. It should be stated that the inspector recently went on the foot-plate of one of the engines from Letterkenny to Creeslough with a full train, consisting of three carriages and six loaded wagons, and from Creeslough to Burtonport with a train of three carriages and five loaded wagons, and made the return journey to Letterkenny on the foot-plate of another engine. Although the boilers were not enabled to develop steam of the designed working pressure, because your company had altered the blow-off point of the safety valves, the engines performed their work in the most satisfactory manner possible, and with the greatest ease, while the supply of water and of fuel was at all times abundant.

2. "He found, also, that they had just about half the average rolling stock supplied to the other three-feet gauge railways in Ireland, and, when he mentioned that, the shareholders and the public could form their own opinion whether the statement that the line had not been sufficiently equipped and that the engines were unsuitable, was true or not."

This matter has been the subject of correspondence between the Board and your company, and, in their letter to you of 1st July last (which has not been acknowledged) the Board pointed out that the carrying capacity of the carriages provided for the Burtonport line is, per carriage, about double that of the carriages on the majority of the Irish narrow-gauge lines, and that the wagon accommodation provided per station on the Burtonport line compares favourably with the accommodation per station on the other lines. The supply of engines and rolling stock was based on the assumption that the needs and development of the district would be satisfied by two trains per day in each direction. This service would require two engines in steam, and would leave one engine and train in reserve for seasons of special pressure. The fourth engine would occasionally be undergoing overhaul. Up to the present time the Board have received no detailed report from you on the traffic of the line, and have, therefore, no means of judging either of the sufficiency of the time-table or of the rolling stock other than their own observation and the reports of their representatives.

3. "Again, the crossing places on the Burtonport Extension were too far apart. The mode of watering was wholly inadequate, and it took on an average fifteen minutes to water the engines owing to the small bore of the pipes fitted to the watering stands. They could understand that when three or

four minutes was the average time for watering an engine how serious the delay was when they had only two watering places, and that fifteen minutes was spent in watering each engine. All this the company had to find out after taking over the line, and find out from practical experience, inasmuch as they had no official to represent them during its construction, to see that the equipment was properly carried out, or that the line was being properly constructed. They were entirely left in the hands of the Board of Works and the contractor. The arrangements at Letterkenny Station were simply absurd, and twenty minutes or half-an-hour was the quickest time in which a train could be despatched under existing circumstances. The roadside stations also had not loop lines or shunt lines, and the result was that shunting took an indefinite period. Such a state of affairs would not be tolerated or allowed to exist on any well-regulated lines. He regretted it was necessary to refer to these things, but he thought, in justice to themselves, who were responsible for the working of the line, he could not do less. He was really afraid to express his opinions, as he did not wish to press unduly on any public Department."

The responsibility for the design of the line in all its details belongs exclusively to the promoters—*i.e.*, the directors of the Lough Swilly Company—and not only was the line designed by your company, but you are in possession of copies of the plans, and it is obvious, therefore, that the statement that the company had to find out all this information after the line was opened is inconsistent with fact. It may be pointed out, however, that even if your company had not the plans they had full opportunity of finding out everything connected with the line before it was opened for traffic; for your engineer (Mr. Hall) visited it when he thought fit, without even going through the formality of asking the permission of the Board. The crossing places, as you must be aware, and as the correspondence indicates, were fixed by your own company in the same way that the positions of the stations were located. Further, all the works, including the number and position of the watering places and the size of the pipes for supplying the engines, were designed and specified for by Mr. Radcliff, your company's engineer, under the direction of, and in the closest possible consultation with, your chairman and general manager, and the plans were subsequently signed by Mr. Dawson on behalf of your Board.

I am to remind you that in their agreement with the Treasury and this Board your company undertook to construct, work, and maintain the Burtonport line, and that they had full opportunity of becoming parties to the contract for the construction, but that on 11th March, 1899, they declined to be represented at the opening of the tenders, on the allegation that a sufficient advance on account of the preliminary expenses had not been made to them, and that this fact justified them in declining to incur the further expense involved by such representation. Subsequently (12th April, 1899) the Board served notice on your company to execute the contract deeds, but your company made no response, and the Board were consequently obliged to obtain the sanction of the Treasury to construct and equip the railway themselves under the powers vested in them by Clause 11 of the agreement, so as to prevent the scheme being entirely abandoned. I am further to remind you that your company have been fourteen times called on by the Board during the last eighteen months under Clause 4 (2) of the agreement to vouch certain items included in the accounts forwarded by your company for promotion expenses, but, up to the present, the required information has not been received. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of your company, the Commissioners, in order to secure the carrying out of the work in exact accordance with the original designs, took over into their service Mr. Radcliff, the engineer, whom your company had employed to prepare the plans, and, as you are aware, the entire line has been constructed under his supervision, supplemented by the constant and close personal attention of their railway engineer.

4. "The directors were pressing, as far as was in their power, on the Board of Works the necessity of remedying these matters, and when they compared the state of affairs on the Burtonport Railway with the state of affairs on the Carndonagh line, where they had been represented during the construction by Mr. Hall, their engineer, and where the responsibility for equipment fell on the shoulders of the company, they found how different things were. There were no such complaints in connection with the Carndonagh line. Everything on the other parts of the line—Burtonport was the only exception—was working like clockwork."

Regarding the alterations which the company are now pressing on the attention of the Board, it is to be observed that, no matter who had represented your company on the line during construction, it would not have been possible to make the suggested alterations after the contracts had been let on the basis of the plans finally approved by the company unless your company had undertaken to pay the extra cost involved, in accordance with Clause 11 of the agreement, which provides that, if the free grant shall prove insufficient, your company will raise and expend all such further sums of money as may be necessary.

With respect to the alleged superiority in the working of the other portions of your company's system, the Board have several times pointed out in their letters to you that most of the delays occurring on the Burtonport line originate in irregularities in the train working on your company's own system, including the Letterkenny Railway. The daily reports which the Board receive from their agent at Letterkenny confirm these communications. The statement, therefore, that everything on other portions of the system works like clockwork is absolutely at variance with the facts.

The enforcement of your company's obligations under the Treasury agreement as to efficient working of the Burtonport Railway is a matter of urgent public importance, and I am to refer you to the Board's letter of 14th July, intimating that they are advised that, if necessary, and in order to attain this object, they can take an action for a mandamus to compel your company to fulfil their obligations, or they can proceed under the Railways (Ireland) Act, 1896, section 7.

Further, it is open to the County Council, or to twenty ratepayers of the district, to report instances of default in working the line to the Board of Trade, whereupon that Department can hold an inquiry, and if they are satisfied the complaints are well founded they can issue a certificate requiring your company to make good the default. The procedure in this case provides that, if at any time there is failure on the part of the company to carry out the conditions of the certificate, the Board of Trade can report to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, who may direct the County Council to appoint a Committee to manage, work, and maintain the undertaking.

As the speech made by the chairman of your company on the occasion referred to has been given publicity, the Board consider it desirable that this letter should be given similar prominence, and they have, therefore, forwarded copies to the Press.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed), H. Williams,
Secretary.

The Secretary,
Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, Londonderry.

II.

Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Office,
Londonderry, 26*th September*, 1903.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 21st instant, in which you state that the remarks by the Chairman of this Company to the shareholders at the half-yearly meeting on 31st ult., so far as they applied to the construction and equipment of the Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway, were "inaccurate and misleading," and draw attention to four points in his speech which your Board think should be rectified. In reply, I am to say that Mr. MacFarland is not given to speaking lightly or unadvisedly, and, as stated at the meeting, reluctantly expressed an opinion on the points

referred to. The working of this railway in consequence of these matters has become almost a public scandal; the character of the directors as business men was affected; and the shareholders and public were entitled to an authoritative statement of the facts.

I will now take up and deal with the points objected to by your Commissioners:—

A.—Rolling Stock Equipment.—With reference to the engines my directors maintain

(1.) That they were supplied contrary to the best expert advice.

(2.) That their performance has fully shown the accuracy of this advice, and the folly of disregarding it.

On the first point I am to state that in 1901 my company consulted their own Locomotive Superintendent and Mr. B. Malcolm, Locomotive Superintendent of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, on the subject. Both recommended tender engines on the basis of the run of fifty miles between Letterkenny and Burtonport, not the seventy-five miles between Londonderry and Burtonport, as it had been expressly stated that your Board had power in their agreement to prevent the engines coming through to Derry except for repairs, and might exercise it. These recommendations were put fully before you in a letter dated 28th January, 1901. Notwithstanding this, my company had to write on 17th April, 1901, expressing disappointment that a specification had been issued and tenders invited for engines, carriages, and wagons without reference to us. On 19th April specifications were sent, but we were given to understand that only minor alterations in details would be agreed to. This did not prevent my Board making the most strenuous efforts to induce your Commissioners to adopt a better type of stock. They wrote you on the subject seventeen times between January and August, 1901. Our former General Manager personally waited upon your Chairman in Dublin on 16th May, 1901, and we secured an interview between our experts and representatives of your Board on 24th July, 1901. We succeeded in prevailing upon your Board to abandon some of the more antiquated features in the specification for carriages and wagons, although, as already reported, some of these changes have been imperfectly carried out; but on the question of engines no consideration was shown, no alteration made. The engines were, as a matter of fact, ordered prior to 25th July, 1901, so that the subsequent correspondence and the interview with Mr. Malcolm and others on 24th July, 1901, were apparently of an academic nature, intended, perhaps, for use in case a subsequent correspondence like the present should take place. You now write that Mr. Malcolm stated in writing to your Board that he was quite prepared "to admit that the Burtonport extension line"—*i.e.*, from Letterkenny to Burtonport—could be worked with tank engines similar to those on the Glenties Railway." A copy of Mr. Malcolm's report is before me, and as it is most desirable that the public should know what he really said, I will quote the following:—

> "I am quite prepared to admit that the line could be worked with tank engines similar to those on the Glenties line, but I am convinced that the line can be worked in a more satisfactory manner and more economically with tender engines; and I am therefore strongly of opinion that this type of engine should be adopted."

There is no recommendation in his report of one type of engine for the line from Letterkenny to Burtonport, and another for the run from Derry to Burtonport; and that your Commissioners should seek to force that interpretation upon it, and publish a truncated sentence, the words in italics being omitted by you, so as to destroy the meaning which Mr. Malcolm clearly conveyed, only illustrates to my directors the reckless methods which your Board adopt in a controversy of this nature. Mr. Malcolm is no doubt quite prepared to admit that the line could be worked by horses, but he would naturally object to that admission being quoted as his recommendation. In concluding his report Mr. Malcolm recommended (as any practical railway man would) that all engines should run through to Londonderry, so that they might be systematically examined and running repairs carried out, under proper supervision and without the cost of keeping an expensive staff at out-stations, and gave that as an additional reason why tender engines should be provided. This advice was also rejected, and, although (before my directors sealed the working agreement) an assurance was obtained that its provisions would not prevent the reasonable interchange of rolling stock for through traffic, engines were specially excepted from this by your Board two years later on the ground that the terms rolling stock did not include engines.

My directors were advised to the contrary by an eminent English counsel (Mr. Vesey Knox), but your Board adhered to their opinion. We are thus in the unheard of position that, when we start a train from Burtonport, we must send an engine from Londonderry to Letterkenny to meet it and bring it into Londonderry, leaving the other engine idle at Letterkenny until a train in the other direction arrives. We bring the engines to Londonderry for repairs, &c., and you have even raised objections, in recent correspondence, to their being allowed on such occasions to haul a train after them. In a few years (it is feared very few) my directors will be compelled, at the expense of this Company, to replace these engines with new ones, but, so far as my directors can see, these remarkable conditions will remain. It was obligations like these which my directors had to undertake rather than allow the free grant voted by a beneficent Government to go to the South and West of Ireland—a contingency with which we were continually threatened by your Board during the negotiations.

But let Mr. Malcolm again speak for himself. On 8th September this year he reports:—

> "I am of opinion that tank engines, such as those in question, are not suitable for the work, and that tender engines of the type described in various reports dated 9th and 19th January, 26th April, 13th May, and 28th June, addressed to you, and 27th July, 1901, addressed to the Board of Works, would have proved more suitable in every way. The engines have neither fuel or water carrying capacity for such long runs as those on the Burtonport extension, and frequent and serious delays and constant inconvenience is the result.
>
> "I fear I can add nothing to what I have said in these reports except that I am convinced that a serious mistake was made in forcing tank engines on you for this work."

What can be clearer than this? In support of Mr. Malcolm I would remind you that Mr. Basil Hope, of the Midland Great Western Railway, who investigated the matter on behalf of your Board, recommended in the limited extracts from his report which you communicated to this Company that coal should be kept in bags at intermediate stations and served out to the engines on the way; and, further, that my directors, to meet the water difficulty, are arranging to erect an additional watering place between Letterkenny and Creeslough, although your Board have declined to pay the cost of same.

In view of these facts, is it any wonder that this Company have frequently had to run a wagon of locomotive coal on the trains to replenish the engines *en route*, and that the disgraceful scenes described in the Press of carrying this coal to the engines and bucketing water from streams adjoining the railway have taken place on the Burtonport line?

You omit to publish the names of the experts referred to in your letter as having been consulted by your Board before these engines were ordered.

My directors believe (and if they are wrong they invite you to correct them) that only one person was consulted, that he is a railway manager, and only an amateur in locomotive engineering, that he did not provide plans (when my Board asked for them none were available), and that his rough general specification had to be very largely altered and considerable expense incurred during construction, so much so that my directors can produce quotations from eminent makers to prove that the tender engines we recommended would have each cost only £5 more than the price ultimately paid by you for the unsuitable and defective engines provided. No doubt one of the reasons given for selecting tank engines

was lack of funds, but your action in thus saving about £20 has had the effect of crippling the undertaking from the outset, and of adding largely to the cost of working the line. On the other hand if our recommendation had been adopted this Company would have been responsible, and whether the engines turned out good or bad the position of your Board would have been unassailable. They further ask (and invite correction) if this gentleman did not advise that the task of designing and building the engines should be entrusted to a firm of the very first rank and not to a firm that had practically no experience of building large passenger train locomotives.

Much is made of the statement attributed to our former General Manager that the Company would be well advised to pay the difference themselves between suitable and unsuitable engines. After the conference with Mr. Malcolm on 24th July, 1901, when my directors were urging you to submit the matter to a real expert, and when you were on the point of doing so (see your letters of 2nd July and 3rd August, 1901), you suddently seized upon this suggestion and asked in your letter of 29th August, 1901, whether my directors would pay the difference asked by the firm with whom you had already placed your order, and estimated by them at £1,344 between tank and tender engines, and requested a reply within two days. My directors replied that it was your duty and not theirs to efficiently equip the line, and that they had no legal power to apply the monies of the shareholders of the Lough Swilly Company to provide rolling stock for the Burtonport line. They suggested that fresh tenders be taken, and asked for an interview between this Company's Locomotive Superintendent with Mr. Malcolm and a professional mechanical engineer to represent your Board. On 4th September, 1901, you peremptorily declined to act on any of the suggestions, and the correspondence closed. In no letter was it stated that if my Company had paid this difference your Board would have agreed to the engines running through to Derry. Such a suggestion is now made by you for the first time, and is most misleading.

Secondly.—As to the performance of these engines since the opening of the line, my directors need say little. It is well known in Londonderry and Donegal, if not in Dublin. The locomotives are in charge of and are worked by, the same staff that satisfactorily work and maintain the locomotives on the rest of the system. Nevertheless, Mr. Malcolm was asked by my directors to investigate the matter and report generally on them. The following are short extracts from his report:—

> "The engines should, of course, have been in thoroughly good order, but the working parts show signs of undue wear, which I attribute to the wearing surfaces not being as hard as they should be. Constant trouble has been experienced with the tubes at the fire-box end leaking and on examniation I found many of the tube holes oval.
>
> "Two draw-pins have already broken in service, and the quality of the material is, in my opinion, poor and unsuitable. Failures of similar pins with other engines are unknown.
>
> "The names of the makers of the tyres and axles are not stamped on them, and I am consequently unable to say if they were supplied by either of the firms named in the specification.
>
> "An eccentric strap also failed at the bolt-hole.
>
> "The fact that many of the tube-holes are oval seems to point to some defect in the staying of the crown sheet of the fire-box.
>
> "The repeated failure of all the engines of a group due to leaky tubes is quite unprecedented in my experience."

Mr. Malcolm also describes at length and sends detailed drawings of faults in the design of the connecting rods and sector plates.

You state that the engines have now been repaired, but at what cost? After conference with Mr. Malcolm our locomotive superintendent adopted the extreme course of driving the tubes into the fire-box end, thereby using up the spare length in the smoke-box end, an operation that should not have been necessary for three or four years instead of three or four months. The next repair will be a new set of tubes, at great expense. In fact, a new set is at present on order.

With reference to Mr. Malcolm's remark as to the maker's name not being stamped on the tyres, I beg to refer you to my letter of equal date, enclosing tracing of the engine tyres when new and what they are like now after a few months' work; and showing that in about six months all the engines will have to be taken off to have these tyres turned up. In addition to this and to the defects mentioned by Mr. Malcolm, I may remind you that the eccentric sheaves have worked loose on shafts of three different engines; that the lubrication is antiquated and most imperfect; and that several important and expensive alterations were made on the engines at our suggestion after they had reached us, and before we could take them over at all.

The successful runs made by your inspector, after the engines had been repaired by us, and during good weather, with a light train, proves nothing. Such successful runs are being made every day when the circumstances are similar, or else the line could not be worked at all, but a locomotive should not be a fair-weather tool only. Besides, as explained in a separate letter giving details, your inspector is quite wrong in his calculation as to the abundant water supply, as he failed to take into account the height of the feed pipes from the bottom of the tanks, the room occupied by oiling spaces and other matters. No doubt the blow-off point of the safety valves has been reduced, but that was necessary for safety, owing to their defective design.

B.—As regards the quantity of rolling stock supplied, my directors maintain, and are prepared to prove, that it is only half what is required for the efficient working of the line. As you are aware, four engines have been supplied. Three of these are in steam every day. What is the result? If one is taken in for repairs the line is depending entirely on the three engines that are required for the daily time-table. Two of these may be washed out on Sundays, if there are no Sunday specials, but what about the third engine that is doing the seven days' work? Then, if one of these fail, the service must be suspended during repairs. To put it another way, Mr. Malcolm reports that 15,000 miles per annum is sufficient for any narrow-gauge engine to run. The mileage of this line will work out at about 106,000. This could only be done with safety and regularity by seven engines, while the eighth should be in the shop undergoing repairs. On our main line the train mileage has risen above the proper average, but we at once ordered additional engines, and two will be delivered in a few months. This will give us ten engines for forty-nine miles as against four supplied by you for fifty miles. Mr. Malcolm in his report states:—

> "The four (unsuitable) engines supplied by the Board of Works to equip the line are not sufficient to work the present train service, and unless additional engines are supplied I am satisfied that the train service cannot be maintained."

Twelve carriages have been supplied. These would only be sufficient to make up the three trains run, and would necessitate the changing of all passengers at Letterkenny Station. It is only by supplementing this supply with our own carriages that all passengers can be run through without being disturbed, or any sufficient provision be made for special excursions and such-like trains.

Sixty wagons were supplied, with one horse-box and one timber truck. My directors have obtained a return of the wagons passing to and from the extension since shortly after the opening of the line. By taking any three consecutive days it will be found that in that period from 60 to 85 wagons pass Letterkenny Station on to the extension. That is, if my company did make good the deficiency, by providing their own wagons, in three and sometimes two days the entire new stock would be exhausted, and the traffic would have to wait until the wagons had been unloaded, and either loaded on the return journey with inward traffic or brought back empty for more. Notwithstanding this your Board have raised objections in your letters of 9th and 23rd inst. to Burtonport wagons being loaded with traffic from Letterkenny to Derry, it evidently being the opinion of your experts that the interchange should be altogether one-sided, or that more delays should be incurred by sentimental shunting of Burtonport wagons (while the supply lasted) for Burtonport

goods, and Lough Swilly wagons only for Lough Swilly goods. Mr. Malcolm reports that the usual "practice is that not more than one-third is kept running, the remainder being at stations for loading, unloading, etc." This indicates that the number should be doubled at least.

You mention that your letter of 1st July on this subject has not been replied to. A reply could not be sent, because my directors were obtaining further statistics from all the narrow-gauge railways in Ireland to compare with your statements. These have not all yet been received, but those to hand do not at all bear out your contention. In any case, there is little ground for complaint as to delay in reply, seeing that in the meantime my directors have been daily providing the carriages and wagons necessary to make up for the inadequate supply provided by your Board, and that their urgent letter of 3rd February on this subject was not replied to by you until 1st July, a delay of five months. Some or all of these facts were communicated to your Board, commented upon, and urged on your attention in the following letters:—17th April, 16th May, 8th June, 1901; 26th January, 3rd February, 22nd April, 19th May, 26th May, 30th May, 8th August, 14th July, 7th September, 26th May, 8th August. On 8th August your Board were furnished with particulars, in reply to Parliamentary questions, as to passengers being left behind on the Burtonport Railway, and other complaints. In each letter my directors expressly stated, *inter alia*, that the complaints arose from want of sufficient rolling stock, but this portion of their reply was apparently withheld from the responsible Minister who answered in the House of Commons.

On 3rd February, 1903, a comparative statement of the rolling stock owned by the Irish narrow-gauge railways was submitted for the information of your Commissioners. It showed that the average supply for 50 miles was nine engines, thirty carriages and vans, and 169 wagons; as against four engines, twelve carriages and vans, and sixty-two wagons supplied by your Board. My directors were willing, however, before the opening of the line and their experience of the traffic, to accept as sufficient an equipment proportionate to that provided for the Killybegs and Glenties Railways, but, in your letter of 28th January last, you contended that the circumstances were not analogous and the comparison not a fair one, although in your letter now under reply you justify the type of locomotive supplied by saying that it is similar to those on the Glenties Railway. The fact is that, while as regards traffic and the quantity of rolling stock required the Glenties line might be a fair comparison, it should never have been compared as regards the type of engine necessary for the Burtonport line, and for the following reasons:—The difference in length, 25 miles against 50; in grades, 5 chains of 1 in 50 as against 15 miles; while on the Burtonport line those severe grades are in some instances continuous for practically four miles. The curves also are different. My directors are convinced that the initial mistake was made by your Board when they erroneously assumed that the Glenties and Burtonport lines were of "the same general character."

My directors welcome your admission, now made for the first time, that the supply of engines and rolling stock was based on the assumption that the needs and development of the district would be satisfied by two trains each day in each direction. In this connection I am bound to remind you that a third train has been running each way per day since the 1st June, and that it was put on in response to the urgent recommendations of your Board, contained in your letters dated 14th and 25th February, and 11th, 22nd, and 23rd April. It would now appear from your letter under reply that this recommendation was made, to quote your own words, "with no detailed report of the traffic on the line," and "without means of judging of the efficiency of the time-table or of the rolling stock." Nevertheless, the recommendation was made even before the line was opened, and, in fact, a time-table for three trains each way per day was prepared by your Board's railway experts, and received by this company about the time of the opening. I should add, however, that this time-table was not adopted, as it would, amongst other objectionable features, have involved a daily collision between trains travelling in opposite directions on the same line of rails, and timed to meet between Gweedore and Falcarragh.

Your Board have now before them full particulars of the traffic in the printed accounts for the half-year ended 30th June, and sufficient evidence to show that the supply of rolling stock is wholly inadequate; and my directors trust that early arrangements will be made to make good this deficiency by doubling the present equipment.

As regards the design and construction of the railway, the question of this company's responsibility for the plans and specification, and the extent to which they were departed from in some cases and not in others, and the reasons why, will shortly form the subject of an arbitration asked for by us, in accordance with the terms of the Treasury agreement. That being so, my directors do not see that any object is to be gained by a discussion of the question in the meantime. It is sufficient for the public to know that there was ample provision in the contract documents for making such alterations as might present themselves to practical men as desirable during the construction, and in some instances this has been availed of, but seldom, if ever, are they of any practical advantage to this company.

With regard to the chairman's remarks on the great delay watering engines, I may mention, however, that I have a copy of a letter, dated 28th February, 1899, from the former general manager to this company to Mr. Radcliffe, C.E., strongly objecting to the bore of the stand pipes for watering, and demanding that they be made 6-inch instead of 4-inch. I may also mention that we are not responsible for the remarkable arrangement made with the contractor with reference to the water supply at Creeslough. When the well at this station ran dry this summer it transpired that the contractor had been allowed to beg off the obligation of putting in a gravitation supply; while pumping, as a perpetual tax on this company, while your Board protected themselves with an agreement that should the well run dry (a contingency obviously anticipated), during the period of maintenance the contractors would have to lay in the gravitation supply. Of course, if the contractors had got off before the well failed, the duty of providing a permanent suply would have fallen on this company. This illustrates how the interests of the contractors and the interests of the working company were respectively studied by your Board. Neither, it might be added, are my directors in any degree responsible for the incompleteness of the line, which compelled the Board of Trade inspector to postpone its opening, nor for the absence of station equipment, which left us to work it without many necessary articles until we supplied them ourselves.

With regard to the three visits made by Mr. Hall to the works during the four years of construction, what is more natural than that the engineer of the company that owns the Burtonport line (subject to the terms of the Treasury agreement) should know something about its construction? For your information and assistance, the results of his inspections were communicated to you in writing, and, although little attention was paid to them at the time, their accuracy is now being daily verified. Since your Commissioners raise this question of etiquette (and my directors had no intention of doing so), I may remind you that on many occasions your officials (and on one occasion the chairman of your Board) paid surprise visits to our workshops and railway, and cross-questioned our employees, including even the drivers and guards on their trains, without the courtesy of arranging or announcing their proposed visits. On the occasion of your chairman's visit, he could not find time to meet any of my directors to discuss the difficulties in working the line, although requested to do so.

No doubt a question of account as to promotion expenses, etc., is outstanding between us, and still unsettled, but my directors cannot understand why that subject is dragged into your published letter, except to confuse the issue, and give a misleading impression.

My directors are well aware that your Board have collected isolated instances—some accurate and some inaccurate—of delays on the main line causing delays on the Burtonport extension, and have argued with much skill that these, and not the leaking engines, the insufficient carriages, the dry wells, and soforth, are the cause of the bad running on the latter line; but while these arguments may pass muster in Dublin they will not stand investigation, nor have any weight locally, where the facts are well known.

My directors have developed on the Lough Swilly and Carndonagh lines the best passenger traffic in Ulster, and this result was not obtained by equipping their lines or running their trains in the manner which has drawn the attention of the Press of the country to the Burtonport Railway. Even on the Letterkenny line, which is in the hands of your Board, and worked under great disadvantage for want of crossing places, telegraph communication, or a sufficiently heavy rail, delays had been reduced to a minimum, and were certainly below the average of any other narrow-gauge railway in Ireland prior to the opening of the Burtonport extension.

My directors are also aware of the provisions of the Railways (Ireland) Act, 1896, and of the Order in Council of 1896, and are familiar with your powers and their rights under these statutes.

An investigation by the Board of Trade or by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant has no terrors for them, as they court the fullest inquiry into the manner in which they have not only fulfilled their obligation for the working of this line, but far exceeded them, in the expenditure of capital to make good defects in construction, and in provision of rolling stock to make up for the inadequate equipment so far provided by your Board.

My directors have shown no desire to go into print or before the public with their difficulties in this connection, or the shortcomings of your Board. These are matters for arrangement between the contracting parties, and could be settled amicably, provided there was a mutual desire to do so; but, seeing that your Board have thought fit to publish a lengthened reply to the moderate statement made by the chairman of this company, my directors have decided to send this letter also to the Press.

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed), ANDREW SPENCE,

Secretary.

The Secretary,
Board of Works, Dublin.

III.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS,
DUBLIN, 23*rd October*, 1903.

SIR,—I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 26th ultimo, received in this office on 29th, two days after a Dublin paper had refused to publish it. The Commissioners consider that the letter is inaccurate in several respects; that you have omitted to mention important facts, and that it is calculated to create prejudice.

You state (1) "that the engines were supplied contrary to the best expert advice." They were supplied upon the advice of Mr. Livesey, the Locomotive Superintendent and Manager of the longest narrow-gauge line in Ireland, a gentleman who was trained as a locomotive engineer, and who had a quarter of a century's experience as Locomotive Superintendent on narrow-gauge lines. You describe this gentleman as "only an amateur in locomotive engineering." As you have brought the question of his qualifications forward, the Commissioners would be pleased to learn if you employ the services of a qualified engineer as Locomotive Superintendent. They are informed that the gentleman who serves you in that capacity was the foreman in the engine shed of the Donegal Railway Company, under Mr. Livesey.

You state (2) "that their performance has fully shown the accuracy of this advice, and the folly of disregarding it." The Commissioners, as soon as they became aware that you were having trouble with the locomotives, employed Mr. Basil Hope of the Midland Great Western Railway to investigate the matter. His report shows that the condition of the engines was disgraceful, that it was due altogether to the incapacity of some of the drivers, and to the lack of proper supervision and control. The Board have, since the receipt of your letter, conferred with Mr. Hope, who confirms these statements, and explicitly informs the Commissioners that the type of the engines is in no way to blame for their bad performance.

On the 7th July the Board communicated to you the substance of Mr. Hope's report. After quoting numerous instances of gross incompetency on the part of some of the drivers he summarizes the causes of failure in these words:—

"Briefly these three heads are the causes of failure:—

"Firstly. The qualification of the drivers.

"Secondly. The mode of washing out the boilers.

"Thirdly. The mode of coaling."

Your Company was so impressed by Mr. Hope's statements that you wrote to the Board on the 13th July in the following words:—"On the general question I am to state that my Directors have taken very serious notice of the failures in the Locomotive Department so far as they have been found to be of an avoidable nature." You dismissed one of the drivers who, on the 6th June, with the 6.45 p.m. train, Letterkenny to Burtonport, Engine No. 3, having forgotten to take water at Letterkenny, after an hour's shunting, had to stop between Kilmacrennan and Creeslough to bucket water into his tanks, and who, two days subsequently, with the same engine and train, melted out his fusible plugs, showing that he had allowed his furnace crown to become bare of water. On the other hand you retained in your service another driver who failed to get up steam on the 18th June, and who on the 22nd of that month melted both his fusible plugs when driving No. 2 engine with the 7.50 a.m. train from Burtonport to Letterkenny. The first driver referred to had been dismissed from the Cavan and Leitrim Railway for a similar offence, and nevertheless with a full knowledge of the facts that he had been dismissed for a fault, you had taken him into your service and entrusted the lives of your passengers and the safety of property, confided to your care by the State, to his safe-keeping. It is somewhat astonishing, in the face of these facts, and of the refusal of Mr. Hope to modify his opinion as to the causes of failure, that you should continue to ascribe the bad performances of the engines to other than the true causes.

You have been good enough to forward to the Board extracts of Mr. Malcolm's recent reports on the condition and unsuitability of the engines. I am to inquire whether you placed before that gentleman the conclusions at which Mr. Hope had arrived; whether you informed him of the incompetence of the drivers above referred to, and whether you further informed him that you had taken into your employ two other men dismissed from the Donegal Railway for incompetence. One of these men understood his duties so imperfectly that you had to dismiss him for hooking off his engine and leaving his train standing on a bank while he went for water.

The Commissioners will be glad to learn if you consider that the engines have had a fair trial and fair treatment in the hands of drivers such as these, and they also wish to know if you can quote any instances of the engines having failed to do their work when in proper condition, in the hands of competent drivers, and supplied with good coal. Have they ever, under such conditions, arrived at Creeslough short of water, or at their destinations short of water or of fuel? If so, will you be good enough to give instances and dates. When the engines are allowed to leak at every tube end, and when you provide coal such as the Chairman of this Board, Mr. Batchen, and Mr. Robertson saw at Pennyburn and Burtonport on their recent visit, it is not to be wondered at if they run short of both fuel and water.

In connection with the question of fuel, I am to inform you that Mr. Basil Hope did not suggest that bags of coal should be kept at roadside stations to replenish the bunkers. What he did suggest was, that the coal at terminal stations should be kept in bags, because the quality you supplied was so inferior that when kept, as at present, in bulk, all the good fuel was picked out by the drivers who first served themselves, and little but slack and dross was left for those who came after them. The suggestion that you should keep coal in bags in roadside stations was made by this Board to meet the difficulties due to the condition of the locomotives as an alternative to the method adopted by you of running a wagon of coal, often in the rear of the train, and relying on the assistance of your passengers to bring the fuel to the engines.

You charge the Board with trying to force an interpretation on a portion of Mr. Malcolm's report by publishing a "truncated" sentence in which he admits that the line from Letterkenny to Burtonport could be worked by tank engines, and goes on to state his

preference for tender locomotives, but you appear to forget that there was no necessity for the Board to call your attention to this preference because it was communicated by Mr. Malcolm to yourselves. The object of the Commissioners was to show you that Mr. Malcolm admitted to them that the line could be worked by tank engines, and this admission having been made, they saw no further reason for disregarding the advice given to them by a Locomotive Superintendent and Railway Manager so experienced in the working of light railways as Mr. Livesey. The interpretation which you have forced on Mr. Malcolm's statement, that it was to be taken in the same sense as an admission that the line could be worked by horses, is contradicted by the context, and is, moreover, one which the Board, entertaining as they do the highest respect for Mr. Malcolm, cannot insult him by adopting.

The Board were informed, independently, by both their representatives at the Conference that Mr. Malcolm's views on the type of engine were largely determined by the consideration that it was desirable to run the engines right through from Londonderry to Burtonport, and *vice versa*, and in his letter to this Board Mr. Malcolm himself uses the following words:—

> "I may mention that when considering this matter I have not overlooked the fact that for the efficient and economical working of the line it will be necessary to use engines capable of running through from Burtonport to Londonderry, a distance of seventy-four miles."

But your Directors must be aware that, however desirable you may consider it, from the point of view of the convenient working of the line, to use the Burtonport engines between Londonderry and Letterkenny, it is not possible to do so with due regard to the safety of the public, because the Letterkenny line is laid with rails too light to admit of such heavy engines passing over them continually. Furthermore, even if the rails of this line were of the same section as those on the Burtonport line, you could not, under the agreement with the Treasury, use the engines belonging to the latter line over your own system. This difficulty could only be met by your company providing additional engines suitable for interchanging, and in number proportionate to the increased mileage, for assuredly you could not expect the State to provide you with hauling power over your own system. A similar remark applies to passenger carriages and other rolling stock. If there is to be interchange of rolling stock you must contribute your proportionate quota, a fact which you appear to have lost sight of in recent correspondence.

Before leaving the subject of the locomotives I am to refer to your statement that the tender engines recommended by you could have been obtained at a cost of only £5 each in excess of the price ultimately paid by the Board for those supplied by them. The Commissioners were at a loss to understand on what figure you could have based such a remarkable statement. They have, however, accidentally discovered that, under the pretext of asking their contractors to quote for an extra engine of the same type as those supplied for the Burtonport line, you obtained a quotation by making use of the Board's name. The correspondence has been sent to them. I am to inform you that the figure given to you is not even approximately the same as that paid by the Board, though no doubt the Commissioners would have to pay the figure quoted if they were now to order a single engine. Hence you have been led into a serious error, and your deductions are entirely wrong. I am also to remind you that the Board were advised that the type of engine recommended by you would have been unsafe for use on the Burtonport line, unless a leading bogey were fitted at considerable extra cost. The true figures were communicated to you in the Board's letter of the 29th August, 1901. The difference in cost between the tank and tender types for four engines would have amounted to, not £20, but £1,344.

In regard to your strictures on the quality of the material used in the engines, I am to inform you that the Board's Inspector, who carefully tested all the materials used, reports that everything was of the best quality. The tyres, of which you cannot find the maker's name, were manufactured by the eminent firm of John Brown and Company, of Sheffield, and if you look a little more closely you will probably find the name partially concealed by paint. The draw pins which broke were, at your request, made of the very best iron. The Commissioners are not surprised at draw pins breaking when some of the engines are in the care of drivers who charge through gates at level crossings, who overrun their stations, knock out the ends of carriage and engine sheds, and even demolish heavy stops.

The Commissioners are perfectly satisfied with the capacity of Messrs. Barclay, Sons, and Co., Limited, the contractors for the locomotives. Before placing the order with that firm they made ample inquiries, and received strong recommendations in their favour from some of the leading Scotch railway companies.

As to the annual mileage, viz., 15,000, which you say is sufficient for narrow-gauge engines, I am to inform you that on the Donegal line, under the management of a skilled locomotive superintendent, with drivers who know their business and who are carefully supervised, several engines have accomplished with perfect success considerably over 30,000 miles per annum, and in one case as much as 37,776. These figures are exclusive of shunting, ballasting, and piloting. The average *train* miles for the four years 1899 to 1902 of the six engines less than 22 years old which had been running throughout that period were—

Engine,	No. 4.	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7	No. 8	No. 9
Train miles.	19,310	22,877	29,189	22,568	27,583	21,834

It is not necessary further to labour this point, as the Board have already requested you to furnish them with full information on the subject of the traffic and the suitability of the time-tables, in order that they may be enabled to arrive at a fair conclusion. The Board will require to know, amongst other things, if, in the opinion of your directors, the third train per day, in each direction, will be made permanent.

With referenec to your remarks relating to the Board's urgent recommendations to your directors to put on the third train per day in each direction, I am to state that you apparently endeavour to raise a point against the Board by "truncating" one of the sentences in their letter to you of the 21st ultimo. Had you published the sentence in full you would have failed to make your point against this Department.

In the same paragraph of your letter you resort to still more questionable methods of effecting the same object, for you state that your company received about the time of the opening of the line a time-table prepared by the Board's "railway experts," which, amongst other objectionable features, would have involved a daily collision between trains travelling in opposite directions. I am to state positively that your company neither asked for nor received any such document. On probing the matter the Board have ascertained that one of your employees, in order to assist himself in the preparation of a time-table, privately asked the Board's railway engineer to lend him a copy of a time-table which had been prepared some years ago, not for the purpose of working the line, but of forming an estimate of the amount of rolling stock that would be required in certain assumptions. You have consequently made use of the good nature and desire to assist a member of your staff of one of the Board's employees in order to create prejudice against the Department. Apart from the above circumstance, you apparently forgot that the Burtonport line is equipped with the electric block system, and that a collision is not possible unless your drivers run their engines without the train staff, an irregularity which, I am to remind you, one of your drivers has recently been guilty of, as has been pointed out to you in the Board's letter of the 5th ult. On the occasion in question the driver of the 1.10 p.m. up train from Burtonport started his train from Churchill Station without taking the staff, and upon reaching Foxhall he sent his fireman back for the staff, while he himself proceeded to work the train single-handed into Letterkenny. The fireman was obliged to walk into Letterkenny with the staff, with the consequence that the trains were delayed for two hours.

Your statement that an urgent letter of your directors on the subject of the sufficiency of rolling stock was not replied to for five months is perfectly true. During the intervening months the Commissioners were collecting information from other narrow-gauge railways in Ireland for which they were dependent on

the courtesy of the officials of those lines. I am to point out that you have been engaged, by your own admission, for the last three-and-a-half months in making similar inquiries, and that your information is not yet complete. Apart, however, from this consideration the Commissioners are of opinion that your directors are hardly entitled to make a complaint as to delay in answering correspondence, seeing that at the date on which your letter was published no less than twenty-four letters of the Board to you remained unanswered (notwithstanding repeated reminders), some of them dating as far back as May, 1902.

On the subject of delay in watering engines and your statement that on the 28th February, 1899, your former general manager wrote to Mr. Radcliff strongly objecting to the use of four-inch stand-pipes (which had been fixed on by your company), and demanding that they should be made six-inch, you omitted to mention that Mr. Radcliff in his reply pointed out that it was then too late to make alterations, as all documents were in the contractor's hands. Your chairman's statement that it takes on the average fifteen minutes to water the engines is not borne out by the report of our agent on the line, who has been instructed to inquire carefully into this question. He reports on the 2nd inst. that he has never observed that more than from four to seven minutes were spent in watering, and that sometimes it can be done in three minutes. In this connection I am to refer to your challenge of the accuracy of our inspector's report on the abundant supply of water in the engine tanks both on arriving at Creeslough and Burtonport on the occasion of his recent visit, and to inform you that you are inaccurate in stating that he failed to take account of the height of the feed pipes, etc., that on the contrary, he took full account of all those factors, and that his original statement was perfectly accurate.

Before concluding, I am to refer to your statement that "as regards the design and construction of the "railway, the question of this company's responsibility "for the plans and specification, and the extent to "which they were departed from in some cases and "not in others, and the reasons why, will shortly form "the subject of an arbitration *asked for by us* in ac- "cordance with the terms of the Treasury agreement," and to inform you that the Board have not, so far, received any request whatever for arbitration from your directors. It is true that they offered you arbitration on certain limited matters, to which offer they have not yet received a reply. The Board must not be taken as assenting to the admissibility of arbitration until they learn definitely from you the points on which you seek arbitration. On this subject I am to refer to the Board's letter of the 31st July, 1903, in which it was stated that your company must specify the points that they wish brought before the arbitrator, and that they should not be allowed to delay doing so indefinitely.

While the Commissioners have no desire to prolong this controversy in the public Press, I am directed to state that they give you full permission to publish this letter, provided it appears *in extenso*, if your directors are of opinion that it will serve their interests to do so, and they have so informed all those newspapers which published your letter of the 26th ultimo.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

H. WILLIAMS,
Secretary.

The Secretary,
Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway
Company, Londonderry.

APPENDIX No. 10.

STATEMENT transmitted by Mr. R. H. TODD, LL.D., Solicitor, Londonderry, on 24th June, 1907.

LONDONDERRY,

24th June, 1907.

SIR,—In lieu of giving oral evidence for the purpose of correcting the mistakes made by Mr. Batchen and Mr. Shanahan, the Engineer and Assistant-Secretary of the Board of Works, in their evidence affecting the proposal for purchase of the Letterkenny Railway and the dispute between the Board of Works and the Lough Swilly Company as to the construction and equipment of the Burtonport Railway, I beg to submit, as you suggested, the following written statement to be added to the oral evidence already given by me:—

1. Mr. Shanahan stated that apparently the Board of Works were not satisfied that local public opinion was in favour of the purchase of the Letterkenny Railway by the Lough Swilly Company, and in proof of this submitted resolutions of the Donegal County Council and the Letterkenny Urban Council passed in the year 1900. But the first proposal for purchase was submitted by Mr. Dawson, the Secretary of the Lough Swilly Company, and myself on behalf of that company, at an interview previously arranged with the Commissioners of Public Works in the year 1896. The Commissioners of Public Works did not come to any conclusion then and the proposal for purchase was again submitted to Mr. Hanbury, the Secretary of the Treasury, in 1898, by a deputation introduced by the Duke of Abercorn, and representing not only the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, but representing the Londonderry Corporation and the Donegal County Council, the two public bodies liable for the £1,750 guaranteed interest on the capital advanced for the construction of the Letterkenny Line. The scheme put before Mr. Hanbury has already been submitted by me to the Commission, and prior to the interview with Mr. Hanbury resolutions in favour of the scheme had been passed by the Donegal County Council, the Londonderry Corporation, and the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, so that the public bodies interested were unanimously in favour of the purchase at the time the proposal was made.

The resolutions mentioned by Mr. Shanahan were not passed till two years after the proposal for purchase had been refused by the Treasury at the instance (as I believe) of the Board of Works. They were passed (as I am informed) for the purpose of assisting the promotion of the Strabane and Letterkenny Railway, then in contemplation.

2. Mr. Shanahan's evidence as to the applications by the Lough Swilly Company and others interested for an inquiry as to the defects in construction and deficiency of equipment of the Burtonport Railway is inaccurate. There was an application by twenty ratepayers, but it was not acted on, and I have reason to believe that the explanation given by Mr. Shanahan for the failure to hold this inquiry is not quite correct. There was an inquiry held pursuant to section 7 of the Railways (Ireland) Act of 1896, but it proved abortive, inasmuch as Mr. Tatlow, who was appointed by the Board of Works, was informed by me on behalf of the Company that the condition of the undertaking was unsatisfactory, as the line had not been properly completed by the Board of Works, that there was no development, as the Board of Works had refused to apply the surplus towards development, and that the working was unsatisfactory, because the line was not properly constructed and the supply of rolling stock was admittedly insufficient. The Board of Works, as I am informed by the Secretary, refused to supply the company with Mr. Tatlow's report.

The Donegal County Council, the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, and, I believe, the Londonderry Corporation—all applied to the Board of Trade and the Board of Works for an inquiry as to whether the line had been properly completed and equipped. And the Lough Swilly Railway Company made an express application to the Board of Trade to hold the inquiry under the 21st Section. I have no doubt whatever that the Board of Trade was willing to hold the

inquiry, but, as a matter of fact, both the application of the Lough Swilly Company and those of the public bodies interested were refused because of the opposition of the Board of Works. That body, in the first instance, invited an inquiry under the 21st Section, but as soon as it was found that the complaints of the railway company involved an expert and impartial inquiry into the action of the Board of Works and its officials, the Board strenuously opposed any inquiry under the 21st Section. I may add that three distinguished counsel have advised that the Company has a right to the inquiry under that section.

3. As to Mr Batchen's statement that the Lough Swilly Company refused to construct the Burtonport Railway, it is obvious that Mr. Batchen has forgotten the facts. There was a dispute between the Board of Works and the Company as to payment of promotion expenses, but on the 12th May, 1898, Mr. Dawson and I attended at the Board of Works, by invitation, and after an exhaustive discussion all matters of principle were settled. I thereupon, at 3 o'clock that evening, attended at the Privy Council, and pursuant of notice, applied for and obtained an extension of time for completion of the line—Counsel on behalf of the Board of Works appearing and approving of the application. Mr. Dawson had the contract for the construction of the line, duly scaled by the company, in his bag, and as he had not time to complete the vouching of the preliminary expenses on the 12th, it was arranged that he and I should attend, at 11 o'clock the next day, at the Board of Works, hand in the sealed contract, and complete the vouching of the accounts. When we arrived at the Board of Works on the morning of the 13th, Mr. Robertson, the Chairman, said that the Secretary of the Treasury had forwarded him a letter written a few days before by the company, complaining of the action of the Board of Works in refusing to fix the Free Grant. Mr. Robertson was very much annoyed that the company should write to the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of the Treasury complaining of the Board of Works' action, and declared that the Board would have nothing further to do with the Company, but would take the construction of the line into its own hands. Mr. Dawson and myself expressed our astonishment, pointed out that the scheme could not have proceeded had the order for extension of time not been obtained the previous day, observed there was no dispute now between the Board of Works and the company, and suggested that having regard to the circumstances the company was entitled to proceed with the construction of the line pursuant to the terms of the Treasury Agreement. It was subsequently pointed out to the Board that tenders had not been advertised for till after the expiration of the six months specified in the 11th clause of the Treasury Agreement, and that therefore the Board itself was responsible for the delay. But notwithstanding the protests and explanations of the company, the Board served notice pursuant to the provisions of the 11th clause, and took the construction into its own hands. On the advice of Counsel, the company took proceedings against the Board of Works and Treasury, by Petition of Right, to re-establish themselves in their position as Promoters; but when the Petition was ready for trial, The MacDermott, K.C., who was then consulted, advised that the company could not succeed, and the proceedings were abandoned, each side paying its own costs.

Had the line been constructed under the superintendence of the company, as it was contemplated, the present difficulty, in my opinion, would not, and could not, have arisen.

4. When the deviations were proposed the company was advised that the line with the deviations would be more expensive to work. The contractors pressed the company to consent to the deviations, and offered to pay the company a sum of money, the interest on which would meet the additional working expenses, and the contractors offered the sum of £3,000. The company were advised that it would take the interest on £5,000 to meet the additional expenses of working, and ultimately the amount paid the company was settled at £4,000. As the deviations were arranged chiefly for the benefit of the contractors, they of course paid the legal and engineering expenses in connection with the obtaining of the necessary Orders in Council, and the taking up of the land. The amounts paid, however, for legal and engineering expenses were substantially less than the usual scale charges in such cases. There was no secrecy about this arrangement, and no suggestions of secrecy. The transaction was an ordinary business transaction. The Board of Works and the company were at arm's length at the time. I was, however, informed by the contractors' representative that the savings to be effected by the deviations were to be shared in some way between the Board of Works and the contractors, and that the amounts paid the company and expenses of obtaining the Orders in Council, etc., were to be taken into account in settling the difference between the contractors and the Board of Works. It was an accepted fact at the time that the whole facts as to this transaction had been communicated to the Board of Works by the contractors, and fully discussed between them, and it now appears that a copy of the Agreement between the company and the contractors was handed by the contractors to the Board of Works.

5. I was not consulted as to the agreement between Messrs. M'Crea and M'Farland, Limited, and Mr. Radcliffe, the engineer, and I heard nothing whatever about this agreement till after Mr. Radcliffe had been taken over by the Board of Works. I then heard it only as a matter of gossip. I never saw the original agreement, and the first time I saw a copy was when it was produced before the Commission on the 15th May last. I make no comment on this document except this—that no matter what view may be taken of it, the transaction in no way affects the merits of the dispute as to the construction and equipment of the Burtonport Railway.

I submit that it is clear that sufficient rolling stock and a sufficient number of engines have not been supplied by the Board of Works for this line, and that the Board of Works and the Treasury have failed to carry out their agreement in this respect. I am personally unable to say whether it will require an expenditure of £78,000 to remedy the defects and omissions in the construction of the line. I submit, however, that it could not be contended that the line is in every respect properly constructed, seeing that a culvert was washed away because it was not built with proper lime and cement, and was not brought down to the proper foundation depth, and seeing that the abutments of an important structure like the Faymore Viaduct have not been sunk to the proper depth, but are full of cracks, are gradually subsiding, and are likely to result in some terrible catastrophe in the near future if the subsidence be allowed to proceed. I mention only two of the works that were admittedly left in an imperfect and improper condition. I am told there are other defects, almost, if not altogether, as serious as these. The lives of the public using the line are obviously in danger. The condition of the line has become a crying scandal, and I respectfully submit that an inquiry to ascertain how far the line and its equipment are defective, and who should in equity remedy the defects, is a matter of urgent public importance. Recourse to a court of law is obviously useless, as no court of law has the necessary machinery to ascertain the defects and provide the necessary remedy.

The company ask for no money. They simply ask that the line shall be properly completed and equipped as provided by Treasury Agreement, plans, and specifications. They have pressed in vain up to the present for an impartial public inquiry, and they have offered to abide by the decision of any expert appointed by the Board of Trade or the Treasury. I respectfully submit that in the public interest such an inquiry should be held without delay, and the defects found remedied by the persons or body liable to make them good.

Yours obediently,

(Signed), R. H. Todd.

Sir Charles Scotter,

Chairman, Vice-Regal Commission

on Irish Railways.

APPENDIX No. 11.

STATEMENT of BOARD of WORKS with regard to certain matters in connection with the Letterkenny to Burtonport Railway referred to by the witnesses from the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company (Mr. SPENCE, Secretary, and Mr. MACFARLAND, Chairman), and by Mr. R. H. TODD, LL.D., Solicitor, one of the representatives of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, in a memorandum supplementing his oral evidence.

EVIDENCE OF MR. SPENCE.

The statement by Mr. Spence, in answer to Question 18876, regarding the qualifications of Mr. Livesey, is refuted in the Board's letter to the company of the 23rd October, 1903, which is published in the Appendix.*

In answer to Question 18877, Mr. Spence stated that Mr. Livesey did not provide plans of the engines for the Burtonport Railway. It is the usual practice of small railway companies when inviting tenders for engines to specify the dimensions and general requirements. Drawings are afterwards prepared by the builders. This is the practice followed by the Lough Swilly Company themselves when they require new engines. In this connection please see the last few lines of witness's answer to Question 18911.

In answer to Questions 18886 and 18887, witness stated that the Board agreed to a conference between the engineers on the subject of the type of engine after the order for these engines had already been placed. The facts are as follow:—The Board informed the company on the 25th June, 1901, that they had accepted a tender for the supply of engines, but on receipt of a letter, dated 10th July, 1901, from the company, asking the Board not to place the order until the conference had been arranged, the execution of the contract was delayed, and Messrs. Barclay, the contractors, were not finally settled with until the 4th September, 1901, several weeks after the conference.

The capability of Messrs. Barclay and Son to build locomotives, referred to in the answer to Question 18890, was proved to the Board's satisfaction, as explained in their letter of the 23rd October, 1903.

The witness's answers to Questions 18923 to 18928, regarding the gradients, are misleading. Although there is no doubt only a small length of 1 in 50 gradient on the Glenties line, there are several stretches of 1 in 51, 1 in 52, and so on to 1 in 56, amounting in all to about three and a quarter miles. Two miles is the longest stretch of actual 1 in 50 without a break on the Burtonport line.

The four miles referred to in answer to Question 18928 as being 1 in 50 without a break are, as a matter of fact, broken by stretches of 1 in 55, 1 in 56, 1 in 55, and 1 in 260.

In answer to Question 18931, it is stated that the company's locomotive superintendent had formerly been locomotive engineer on the Glenties Railway, and in his opinion the Glenties engine did not work satisfactorily on that line. This man was not a qualified engineer, but had in reality been foreman in the Donegal Company's engine shed under Mr. Livesey, who was locomotive superintendent. The latter, whose opinion was valuable on account of his long experience, definitely informed the Board that the tank engines were considered satisfactory by his company.

Witness's answers to Question 18952 and the succeeding question led the Commission to believe that the type of engine was the point which the Board stated had been carefully enquired into by experts of great experience. This was not the case. The company's letter of the 17th April, 1901, and the Board's letter of the 19th April, 1901 (Questions 18943 and 18944), referred to the general questions of the quantity of rolling stock and the number of locomotives. The experts referred to were Mr. Tatlow and Mr. Roberts, the investigators, Mr. Robertson, chairman of the Board of Works, and Mr. Plews, general manager of the Great Northern Railway, Ireland.

As regards the type of engine, however, the Board fully satisfied themselves by expert advice as to the suitability of tank in preference to tender engines for the Burtonport Railway before the engines were ordered.

With regard to witness's statement in answer to Question 18966, that the builders would not have recommended the engines that were built had they known of the gradients on the line, the Board consider that in ordinary practice the locomotive engineer is the judge of the locomotive required and not the builder. The latter has to follow the instructions of the locomotive engineer. In the case of the Burtonport line engines about forty sheets of detailed drawings were prepared by the builders, submitted to Mr. Livesey, and approved by him on behalf of the Board. The actual building was carefully supervised on behalf of the Board by a most capable locomotive inspecting engineer at Messrs. Barclay's works.

In connection with the answer to Question 18975, that the manager's estimate of six locomotives was for two trains a day and occasional specials, and that the Board accepted the estimate of the traffic but rejected the estimate of the quantity of rolling stock, a reference to Question 380 in the Blue Book of evidence given before the investigators will show that the manager of the company, for the purpose of estimating the cost of working the line calculated on a two-train service. Questions 1144-1146 of the same Blue Book will show that in estimating the quantity of rolling stock he reckoned on a three-train service, and backed this up by calculating the number of vehicles, not so much on the probable amount of traffic as on the basis of stock owned by other companies, such as the Cavan and Leitrim, Clogher Valley, etc. Questions 462-481 of the same Blue Book will show that the investigators very carefully considered and discussed the question of the quantity of rolling stock, and in the estimate accompanying their report they recommended four locomotives, fifteen carriages, sixty wagons, two horse boxes, and two carriage trucks as being sufficient for the traffic on the Burtonport line.

In reply to Questions 19051, 19052, and 19056, Mr. Spence suggests that taking advantage of the delay in issuing advertisements for tenders, the Board seized on the opportunity of constructing the line themselves. The Board adopted this course with the greatest reluctance, and only undertook the work as a last resort in order that the proposals of the Government for the benefit of the district might be carried out.

The attitude which the company took up at this period was one of obstruction. They refused to be present at the opening of tenders. When particulars of the tenders were sent to them they insisted on making unnecessary inquiries into the solvency and competency of the contractors, Messrs. Pauling and Company (of whose competency and solvency under the agreement the Treasury were to be sole judges), although the Board had supplied them with sufficient evidence on these points.

Further particulars regarding the company's attitude are given in the Board's comments on Dr. Todd's letter to the Commission of 24th June, 1907.

The witness's statement in answer to Question 19092 is misleading.

The Board's engineer did not follow the company "with considerable pressure."

The letter read by the witness was in reply to the following letter he received from the company on the same day:—

"Londonderry,
"*29th July*, 1899,

"T. M. Batchen, Esq., C.E.,
"Bayview-terrace, Londonderry.

"DEAR SIR,

"*Letterkenny and Burtonport Railway.*

"Referring to the communication from the Board of Works of 25th instant, and your visit here on 26th instant,

"I am desired to request that you will send me, before three p.m. to-day, the plans and full particulars of the proposed deviations for the information of my directors.

"Yours truly,
"FRED. DAWSON."

* See Appendix No. 9, III.

The pressure was on the part of the company.

As regards the shortness of notice, it may be stated that the plans were immediately handed to the company that day, as requested, but their consideration appears to have been postponed for a week, until the 4th August. As a matter of fact, the plans of the proposed deviations remained in the company's possession for about two months, until the 20th September, 1899, during which period the company should have had ample time to consider them. The private agreement between the company and the contractor is dated 16th February, 1900.*

In reply to Questions 19099 and 19100, the witness stated that the Parliamentary plans for the deviations were prepared by Mr. Cooke and Mr. Hall, the company's engineers. The statement is not true; the Parliamentary plans for the deviations were prepared by the contractors, at their own expense. Neither Mr. Cooke nor Mr. Hall had anything to do with their preparation. The former gentleman signed them for a monetary consideration, and his name was lithographed on the plans. The name of the latter engineer was added by the company subsequent to the preparation of the plans.

In answer to Question 19104, it is stated by witness that not a single item in their £78,000 claim is based on the deviations. This is quite incorrect. A very large proportion of the £78,000 claim refers to works on the deviations, notably the three viaducts, and it is to be remembered that the company had power, under their private agreement with the contractors, to approve or disapprove of any of the works on the deviations, as stated in Mr. Batchen's evidence.

With reference to the passage in the Board's letter, quoted by the witness in answer to Question 19118, it may be noted that the Board's objection was not directly to the visit of the company's engineers, but to the visit being made and criticisms offered without their first going through the ordinary courtesy of giving notice to those in charge of the works. The General Manager, the Secretary, and the Engineer of the company spent two or three days going over the works in May, 1902, and no objection was made by anyone. It may be further stated that Mr. Batchen offered on several occasions to accompany both Mr. MacFarland and Mr. Hall over the works.

Mr. MacFarland's Evidence.

Mr. MacFarland stated, in reply to Question 19238, that rails and sleepers were put into the hands of the contractors three years before they were absolutely necessary, and were consequently used for temporary purposes.

The permanent way materials were supplied under conditions exactly similar to those on the Carndonagh line, to which no objection has been taken by the company. The facts are as follows:—

Prior to accepting tenders for the construction of these lines the Board of Works obtained quotations for the independent supply of the materials from several well-known manufacturers, and prices at the time were found to be high. During the negotiations with Messrs. Pauling and Company in connection with their tender for the construction it transpired that they held an option for the supply of large quantities of materials, and could supply them to the Board very much cheaper than the Board could get them direct from the manufacturers. Consequently the order for the supply of permanent way materials for both the Carndonagh and the Burtonport lines was given to Messrs. Pauling and Company. The rails were manufactured by the Moss Bay Company, and the sleepers by Messrs. Thomas Gabriel and Son and Messrs. Burt, Bolton, and Haywood. The specifications for the materials were approved by the company; the inspectors approved by the company were appointed to watch the manufacture. The Board's engineer and the company's engineer together made at least one personal inspection during manufacture.

It is quite untrue to say that the materials were delivered three years before they were absolutely necessary. The specification approved by the company provided for the delivery of 1,500 tons of rails and other materials before the 1st October, 1899, while, as a matter of fact, there were not more than 868 tons delivered at that date, and only in November, 1900, a year later, was the quantity delivered increased to 1,356 tons.

In the same manner half of the quantity of sleepers was to be delivered before the 1st September, 1899, and the remainder in June, 1900. Only 18 per cent. were delivered at the former date, and 50 per cent. at the latter date.

With regard to the witness's allegation, that the contractors were allowed to use the permanent way for temporary purposes, the company have already been informed by the Board of Works that in placing their order for permanent way materials with the manufacturers, Messrs. Pauling and Company arranged for a delivery of 10 per cent. more than actual requirements, and any rails and sleepers which they used for temporary purposes did not form part of the permanent way handed over to the company as a finished line. As a matter of fact, only about 667 yards of permanent rails were actually used for temporary purposes, and then only after the line had been brought to the proper formation level and the rails laid on good temporary sleepers. These rails were not used in the finished permanent way, but were lifted, and afterwards sold by the contractors on the completion of the works. Some of them, the Board understand, were purchased by the Lough Swilly Company for the purposes of their own line.

Mr. MacFarland stated, in reply to Question No. 19255, that the company never had an opportunity of knowing whether the deviations had been carried out in accordance with the plans until the line had been placed in their hands for working. He also stated, in answer to Question No. 19258, that the increase in length of the Owencarrow viaduct was an alteration from the plans of the deviations, as agreed to by them, and that, in fact, the plan was entirely set aside. The Board have to state that the working plans and sections of the deviations, showing the length of the viaduct, as increased from the Parliamentary plans, were submitted to the company by the contractors, it would seem in accordance with the private agreement between them, and these plans, signed by the General Manager and Engineer of the railway company, are now in the possession of the Board of Works.

The Parliamentary estimate for the viaduct authorised by the deviations was about £6,000, while the actual cost to the contractors was over £30,000, due to the increased length and the foundations having to be carried down to the rock, eighty feet below the surface.

The original contract price for this viaduct was £19,036, but as the foundations would have been difficult on the original site also, it may be accepted that the type of bridge actually built and costing much about the same price would have had to be constructed even if the line had not been deviated.

The increased length was authorised by the Board of Trade, when it was found impossible to build an embankment. Sir Douglas Fox and Partners, civil engineers, Westminster, were consulted about the difficulty in connection with the foundations, and their advice followed.

The "savings" which the contractors expected to make by the deviations were absorbed in the extra cost of the viaduct works, and the only parties who appear to have directly benefited in a monetary sense were the Lough Swilly Company themselves, who received the sum of £4,000 from the contractors.

Mr. MacFarland denies (Question 19314) that his company ever stated that the amount of alleged discrepancies reported upon by Mr. Hall after his visit to the line prior to the opening could be completed within one month, and he further states that this estimate of time was made by the Board of Works.

The witness's answers to Questions 19314, 19333 to 19337, are quite incorrect. The following is an extract from the company's letter to the Board, dated 3rd March, 1903:—

> "See my letter of yesterday's date. Apart from the Board of Trade's sanction, my directors are advised by their engineer that numerous works are necessary for the completion and equipment of the railway for its safe working. You have stated, however, that you will see these works executed, and my directors suggest that an early date be arranged for a meeting of your engineer and ours in Londonderry to definitely fix what requirements are necessary.
>
> "Meantime, however, my directors are anxious to open, and will open, the line for traffic at any

* See Appendix No. 8.

moment on getting the necessary certificate from the Board of Trade, on the assumption that your Board will see that the works and equipment our respective officers settle on shall be done and supplied at the earliest moment—*within a month, if possible*"

Mr. MacFarland refers, in Questions 19234, 19258, 19276, and 19291, to the increased cost of maintenance which would fall on his company by the manner in which the works were carried out, and by the deviations, and further states, in answer to Questions 19274 and 19275, that the deviations were not carried out in accordance with the plans, to the serious loss of the company in increased working expenses.

It has been shown above that the company, through their engineer, had approved of the variations on the deviation. With regard to the working expenses, the figures showing the cost of maintenance of the permanent way repairs and renewals, etc., taken from the accounts for the four half years ended 30th June, 1907, worked out per mile per year as follows:—

Burtonport Railway . .	£42 9 5
Carndonagh Railway . .	£39 0 0

which is very much under the cost of maintaining other narrow-gauge railways in Ireland, as will be seen from the following particulars for the same period, which have been obtained from the accounts of these railways:—

Railway.	Maintenance of Way, Works, &c.	
	£ s. d.	
Cavan and Leitrim Railway, ...	55 7 3	per mile per year.
Clogher Valley, ...	53 4 4	do. do.
Donegal and Killybegs, ...	56 11 7	do. do.
West Clare, ...	124 1 6	do. do.
South Clare, ...	70 6 6	do. do.
Schull and Skibbereen, ...	88 12 8	do. do.

The cost of working per mile per week as distinguished from maintenance for the four half years ending 30th June, 1907, is as follows:—

	£ s. d.
Half year to 31st December, 1905, . .	2 14 6
Do. 30th June, 1906, .	2 6 10
Do. 31st December, 1906, .	2 9 7
Do. 30th June, 1907, .	2 5 5

Dr. TODD'S LETTER to the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, dated 24th June, 1907.

The Board beg to submit the following observations on the various points mentioned therein:—

1. *Purchase of Letterkenny Railway.*—The Lough Swilly Company offered to purchase the Letterkenny Railway in 1896 for £40,000. At that time the Railways (Ireland) Act, 1896, had just been passed, and the schemes to be carried out under it were being considered. The company's argument in proposing to purchase the line was that if any extension of the railway were promoted from Letterkenny it would be necessary for them to have the Letterkenny line in their own hands to enable them to work the extension satisfactorily. No decision had, however, been come to as to what extensions were to be constructed under the Act, and the Board could not negotiate, and in any case they considered the offer was not one they could accept.

Resolutions were passed at the Summer Assizes, 1898, by the Grand Juries of Donegal and of the City and County of Londonderry in favour of a sale of the line to the Lough Swilly Company.

(The County Council did not come into office until 1899.)

The resolution of the Grand Jury of Donegal was sent to the Treasury, and Their Lordships decided (20th August, 1898) that it was not possible for them to agree to a sale. The County Council passed a resolution, in May, 1899, in favour of a sale, but, as explained in Mr. Shanahan's evidence, Question 17986, they subsequently rescinded it.

The deputation which submitted the proposal for purchase was introduced to Mr. Hanbury, the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, on 25th May, 1900, and not in 1898, as stated by Dr. Todd. The resolution of the Donegal County Council and the memorial from the ratepayers against the sale of the line, referred to by Mr. Shanahan in his evidence (Questions Nos. 17986-17987), were dated respectively 13th June, 1900, and June, 1900. Both resolution and memorial were put forward for the express purpose of influencing the Treasury against agreeing to the request of the deputation. The memorial contains the following statement:—"The deputation in no way represents the views of the taxpayers in the contributory areas of the Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy Urban and Rural Districts so far as any sale of the Letterkenny line to the Lough Swilly Company was suggested or advocated."

2. *Inquiries into Construction and Working of Letterkenny to Burtonport Railway.*—The statements as to the reasons which influenced the Board in not acting on Mr. Tatlow's report and in recommending the Board of Trade to postpone action on the memorial from twenty ratepayers for an inquiry into the working of the Burtonport Railway, given by Mr. Shanahan in the answers to Questions 17969-17975 are quite accurate.

All the facts in connection with the appointment of an arbitrator under Clause 21 of the Burtonport Railway agreement were before the Board of Trade, and they decided that they had no power to make the appointment of an arbitrator, and so informed the company on the 9th March, 1906.

3. *Construction of Railway by Board of Works.*—In giving his evidence before the Commission Mr. Batchen did not forget the facts. In making his statement Dr. Todd apparently did. The facts are as follow:—

(*a.*) A contractor satisfactory to the Treasury was obtained, but the company refused to proceed with the execution of the contract deeds and go on with the work until the amounts for engineering and promotion expenses were definitely settled with their approval. To this the Board replied, on 10th April, 1899: "The question of fixed expenses has nothing to do with the question before you, and the Board must decline to discuss them in connection with it. Any just claims of your company are sufficiently protected by the agreements."

(*b.*) The Board were obliged to have the following special notice served on the company by the Chief Crown Solicitor:—

"SIR,—Take notice that the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, in order to put an end to the unjustifiable delay which has occurred in carrying out the terms of the agreement between the Treasury, the Board of Works, and the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, with reference to the above contracts, have directed me to require the railway company to execute forthwith the contract deeds, mentioned in the Part I. of the schedule hereto, engrossments of which accompany this notice, and either to execute or cause their engineer to identify by his signature the specification mentioned in Part II. of the said schedule, and which is also furnished herewith.

"Accordingly, I hereby tender the said deeds and specification to the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company for execution, as hereinbefore mentioned, and require the company to return them to me at this office duly executed on or before the 15th day of April next.

"And further take notice, that in case the company refuse or neglect to do so on or before the date specified I am instructed to institute the necessary action, and take the necessary steps to ensure completion of the railway undertaking on behalf of the Treasury and the Board of Works, and will proceed to do so without any further notice.

"Dated 11th April, 1899.

"P. COLL, C.B."

(*c.*) The company refused to comply with the notice.

(*d.*) The company were informed on 18th April, 1899, that the Board would take the necessary steps to perfect the contract and carry on the works themselves.

(*e.*) The Board of Works made application to the Privy Council on 12th May, 1899, for an order for extension of time to complete the Burtonport line. The company were only invited to join in the application for extension of time in the case of the Carndonagh line.

(*f.*) In answer to the Board's invitation the company sent a long telegram on May 11th, 1899, which terminates as follows:—

"If your Commissioners agree to meet the company's representative on, say, Friday morning, the 12th inst., at 11 a.m., for this purpose, and have the matter settled, the solicitors will take the sealed memorials with them and have them lodged, and support the application for extension of time. If your Commissioners refuse to do this my directors will instruct their solicitors to oppose the extension of time being granted until the amount of the free grant is ascertained and fixed pursuant to the terms of the Act and agreements."

(*g.*) The meeting on May 12th, 1899, did not originate on the invitation of the Board, but in compliance with a request from the company. The Board of Works obtained the Privy Council Order for extension of time; the company did not oppose.

(*h.*) If Mr. Dawson and Dr. Todd could have produced satisfactory vouchers on May 13th, 1899, the documents would have been accepted by the Board. As a matter of fact, Messrs. Dawson and Todd disagreed. Dr. Todd stated that he had full plenary powers from the company to effect a settlement, while Mr. Dawson stated that Dr. Todd was acting in the matter without the authority of the company.

It is to be noted that the vouchers are not yet forthcoming, although eight years have elapsed.

4. *Deviations authorised from Original Plans.*—It is incorrect to state that the line would be more expensive to work on account of the deviations.

Several proposals were submitted by the contractors, and only those which were recognised as being improvements in point of alignment and would result in a reduction of cost of future maintenance were approved by the Board of Works. The following is an extract from a letter addressed by the Board to the contractors, copy of which was sent to the company:—

"Having regard to these circumstances, and especially to the advantage which will accrue to the company in the cost of working and maintenance and increase of traffic, the Board feel that they have no other course before them but to approve of the deviations."

No curves on the deviations were made of a sharper radius than shown on the original plans. This, indeed, formed a condition in the company's private agreement with the contractors. No gradient was made steeper than those shown on the original plans, and the 1 in 50 gradient at the Owencarrow viaduct was increased in length only 82 yards. In fact, the total increase of mileage of the railway due to the deviations is only about 460 lineal yards, and, in the opinion of the Board, they effect a saving in the maintenance of the line.

As stated in the evidence of their officers, the Board of Works were not aware of the private agreement and passage of money between the contractors and the company until the contractors had rendered a bill for extra works after the line was opened for traffic.

(Signed), H. Williams, *Secretary to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland.*

Office of Public Works, Dublin,
6th November, 1907.

APPENDIX No. 12.

List of Rates handed in by Mr. W. K. Fayle, J.P., Birr, representing the Birr Urban District Council, during his examination on the 15th March, 1907.

Comparative List of Local and Through Rates on Furniture between London and Birmingham and interior Irish towns, *via* Dublin, showing how the Through Rates favour London and Birmingham as against Dublin Merchants.

Local Rates.	s. d.	Through Rates. (Company's Risk). (Fourth Class).	s. d.	Excess of combined Local over Through Rates.	s. d.
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Thurles,	125 0		10 2
Dublin to Thurles,	31 10				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	135 2				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Tralee,	125 0		41 3
Dublin to Tralee,	62 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	166 3				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Midleton,	126 8		35 7
Dublin to Midleton,	58 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	162 3				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Queenstown,	126 8		
Dublin to Queenstown.	58 8				
Cartage, ..	2 6				35 4
	162 0				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Fermoy,	131 8		26 7
Dublin to Fermoy,	54 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	158 3				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Mitchelstown,	141 8		19 7
Dublin to Mitchelstown.	57 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	161 3				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Kilkenny,	115 0		21 5
Dublin to Kilkenny,	33 1				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	136 5				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Tullow,	120 0		7 11
Dublin to Tullow,	24 7				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	127 11				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Dungarvan.	125 0		40 6
Dublin to Dungarvan.	62 2				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	165 6				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Longford.	127 6		8 4
Dublin to Longford.	32 6				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	135 10				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Sligo,	132 6		15 9
Dublin to Sligo, ..	44 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	148 3				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Ballina,	133 4		26 5
Dublin to Ballina,	56 5				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	159 9				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Cavan,	127 6		11 6
Dublin to Cavan,	35 8				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	139 0				

Local Rates.	s. d.	Through Rates.	s. d.	Excess of combined Local over Through Rates.	s. d.
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Athlone,	133 4		3 1
Dublin to Athlone,	33 1				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	136 5				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Mullingar.	125 0		2 7
Dublin to Mullingar.	24 3				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	127 7				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Ballinasloe.	137 6		3 4
Dublin to Ballinasloe.	37 6				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	140 10				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Carrick-on-Shannon.	139 2		3 7
Dublin to Carrick-on-Shannon.	39 5				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	142 9				
London to Dublin,	100 10	London to Claremorris.	148 4		3 8
Dublin to Claremorris.	48 8				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	152 0				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Tralee.	120 0		22 11
Dublin to Tralee,	62 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	142 11				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Midleton.	110 0		28 11
Dublin to Midleton,	58 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	138 11				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Queenstown.	110 0		28 8
Dublin to Queenstown.	58 8				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	138 8				
Birmingham to Dublin,	77 6	Birmingham to Fermoy.	115 0		19 11
Dublin to Fermoy,	54 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	134 11				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Mitchelstown.	125 0		12 11
Dublin to Mitchelstown.	57 11				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	137 11				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Kilkenny.	107 6		5 7
Dublin to Kilkenny,	33 1				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	113 1				
Birmingham to Dublin.	77 6	Birmingham to Longford.	99 2		13 4
Dublin to Longford,	32 6				
Cartage, ..	2 6				
	112 6				

APPENDIX No. 13.

LIST of RATES handed in by Mr. JOHN M. COX, Dundalk, during his examination on the 15th March, 1907.

The following are some rates charged by the Great Southern and Western Railway, as compared with cross-Channel and Continental rates. One ton lots, and O.R. in all cases:—

	s.	d.
Dundalk to Mallow (G. S. & W.),	29	7
,, to Bristol (Rail Belfast),	18	10
,, to Buttevant (G. S. & W.),	29	2
,, to Hamburg,	22	6
,, to Youghal (G. S. & W.),	35	5
,, to Rotterdam,	22	1
,, to Midleton, Co. Cork (G. S. & W.),	33	4
,, to London,	24	8
,, to Athy (G. S. & W.),	19	2
,, to Havre,	20	6
,, to Kilkenny (G. S. & W.),	22	6
,, to Leith,	12	6
,, to Clonmel (G. S. & W.),	26	5
,, to Hull,	15	5
,, to Dungarvan (G. S. & W.),	34	7
,, to Lismore (G. S. & W.),	33	4
,, to Paris,	33	6
,, to Fermoy (G. S. & W.),	32	1
,, to Southampton,	20	0
,, to Cloughjordan (G. S. & W.),	23	4
,, to Copenhagen,	23	9
,, to Birr (G. S. & W.),	23	4
,, to Antwerp,	22	1
,, to Nenagh (G. S. & W.),	25	0
,, to Grangemouth,	15	5
,, to Maryborough (G. S. & W.),	20	0

In many cases the through rates offered are in excess of local rates. The following are instances:—

	Per Ton. s.	d.	Per Ton. s.	d.
Dundalk to Fermoy,	—		32	1
Kingsbridge / North Wall to Fermoy,	20	10	28	10
Dundalk to Dublin,	8	0		
Dundalk to Nenagh,	—		25	0
Kingsbridge to Nenagh,	12	6	20	6
North Wall to Nenagh,	13	6		
Dundalk to Dublin,	8	0	21	6
Dundalk to Youghal,	—		37	6
Dundalk to Cork,	22	6	29	7
Cork to Youghal,	7	1		

Scotch and Irish Rates Compared.

	Per Ton. s.	d.
Glasgow to Youghal,	29	2
Dundalk to Youghal,	37	6
Glasgow to Fermoy,	29	2
Dundalk to Fermoy,	32	1
Glasgow to Limerick,	21	8
Dundalk to Limerick,	25	0
Glasgow to Waterford,	21	8
Dundalk to Waterford,	21	8
Glasgow to Cork,	21	8
Dundalk to Cork,	22	6

APPENDIX No. 14.

ABSTRACT of PROPOSED EVIDENCE furnished by Mr. THOMAS JONES, Secretary and Manager, Dundalk and Newry Steam-Packet Co., Ltd., on 18th March, 1907.

(Mr. Jones was not examined).

Mr. Hanna, of Dundalk, made certain statements with regard to the rates and arrangements for live stock as affecting the Dundalk and Newry Steam Packet Company, Ltd., and also as to the rates between Dundalk and Liverpool, information as to which, Mr. Hanna stated he had obtained officially. I desire to say that Mr. Hanna was not authorised by our company to give any such evidence, and that he had not been supplied officially with the information that he submitted to the Commission, and that if my Company had any matter to complain of they would have been represented by their own officers to state their case.

That for a time there was some dispute between the Dundalk and Newry Steam Packet Company and the London and North-Western Company, but that this has been adjusted.

I have further to add that the relations between our Company and the Great Northern Railway (I.), are of a friendly and satisfactory character, and that I have no complaint to lay before the Commission in regard thereto.

APPENDIX No. 15.

COPY of a LETTER from Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P., to the Chairman of the Commission, relative to matters referred to by the former during his examination on the 13th March, 1907.

Blackrock,
County Dublin,
March 21st, 1907.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,

I am much obliged for your kindness and courtesy during my evidence, and I hope you have had time to look over Mr. Cunningham's book "Railway Nationalization."

I have had a letter from Mr. Acworth respecting the quotation which I gave, and I sent it on to Mr. Cunningham, and also replied to Mr. Acworth.

Now, with regard to the maps which I handed in and you looked over, on re-examination I find that they were very complicated, and, therefore, I have had a much more simple map prepared,* which I now forward to you, and which will show you at a glance the effect of English railways getting control of Irish

* See Map at end of Volume.

railways. The result of the Great Western Railway Company getting practically the control of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company and dominating its policy means that the traders have to be content with the route that suits these companies best, and in this case it is the Rosslare and Fishguard route. The map enclosed will show you that from places on the green line in Ireland no rates will be given to places south of the green line in England, except by the Rosslare route. For instance, a trader in Clonmel wishing to send his traffic to such places as London, Leighton, Bletchley, Leamington, etc., cannot take advantage of the superior services offered by the Dublin routes through the English ports of Liverpool, Holyhead, etc. A trader, say, at Rathkeale, on the red line, can only get through rates north of the red line in England, and he is debarred from using the Dublin routes between such places as Limerick and Reading, or Rathkeale and Oxford, and so on.

At the recent sitting of the Railway and Canal Commission Court in Dublin it was proved by traders that this denial of through rates by expeditious routes actually killed their business.

The same state of affairs exists in the North of Ireland since the Midland Company got control of the old Belfast and Northern Counties line. Their one idea apparently is to get traffic by the Heysham route, whether it suits the trader or not.

At the time of these incursions by the English railways into Ireland it was alleged before Parliament that they would be for the benefit of the Irish trader. Exactly the contrary has happened, and I have no doubt experienced enquirers, like the gentlemen comprising your Commission, will take all these circumstances into consideration. I am rather convinced from the evidence already put before you, it is perfectly clear that Irish produce of all sorts, namely—live stock, butter, eggs, poultry, bacon, vegetables, fish, and the like—requires all the facilities that can be afforded instead of, as it is, being crippled and delayed by the present tactics and policies of the existing railway management on the lines to which I have alluded.

I am sending a copy of this to the Press, as I have been privately attacked with regard to those statements, and I now challenge contradiction of the specific facts set forth in this letter.

With thanks and best wishes,

Very truly yours,

(Signed) WILLIAM FIELD.

Sir Charles Scotter,

Chairman, Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways,

13 St. Stephen's Green, North, Dublin.

N.B.—Will you kindly arrange to have this put as an addition to my evidence.

APPENDIX No. 16.

ABSTRACT of proposed EVIDENCE on behalf of LONDONDERRY CORPORATION furnished on 17th April, 1907, by Alderman J. E. O'DOHERTY, who was unable to attend for examination.

I am a solicitor, having practised in Derry for the last 36 years. I have had considerable experience in railway matters, both promotion and opposition. I represented North Donegal in two Parliaments up to 1890. I have been a member of local boards nearly all my life, and am one of the Aldermen of the city. I was examined before the Allport Commission on Irish Public Works. I give my evidence under three heads:—

PART I.

The interest and the policy of the railway companies has been, in my opinion, directed too much by hostility to sea-borne traffic, the policy of the great railways being to concentrate at large Eastern ports with long distance haulage. This has already injured and spells the final ruin of the smaller Eastern and the extreme Northern and Southern ports, and certainly as far as Sligo in the West. I think the policy should be to support in every way the smaller ports and encourage traffic by the shortest and cheapest railway route. I think one-third of the money spent in developing railways would have done more permanent good if it had been directed to the strengthening of the steamship service. At present the smaller companies are very largely under the thumb of the railway interest, and their final wiping out is inevitable if the large English and Irish railways are allowed their way. The competition of the sea is an absolute necessity for Ireland. The difference of rates where the sea is in competition with the railways is enormous. I can give instances:—The port of Derry is in special danger, the Midland of England and the Great Northern of Ireland being both interested in the port of Belfast, and the Great Northern in Greenore and Dublin. The merchants in Derry were early in the field in having railways into the city, but the railway to Coleraine was acquired by the Northern Counties and became a Belfast interest, and the Enniskillen was acquired by the Great Northern and became a Belfast and Dublin interest. Latterly there was developed a railway construction into Donegal with guarantees on the City of Derry and a large expenditure on the part of its merchants. These are now threatened and some of them acquired, and the trade of the city is seriously threatened.

PART II.

The great cross-Channel traffic to England and Scotland has been developed at the expense of the internal and local traffic in Ireland. Practically there is no interchange of commerce between the North and the South. The contrast in the rates from Londonderry to Dublin and Manchester is very striking. The result is that instead of the old home trade and manufactures we are now either direct importers from England or mere distributors from the Eastern ports. My impression is that the Irish companies have quite an undeveloped field in the internal and local traffic in Ireland, and they ought to encourage their station-masters in every way to look after it.

PART III.

BOARD OF WORKS AND DERRY CITY.

Derry guaranteed the construction of the Letterkenny line, and has paid an enormous amount on foot of the guarantee, and remains liable for a large

amount; yet the Board of Works backed the construction of an opposition line, promoted by the Midland and Great Northern, to the enormous injury of the guarantors, who, in my opinion, are equitably discharged by reason of that action. The Board refused to sell on reasonable terms the Letterkenny line to the working company, and yet presented the Midland of England the railway from Dungiven to Limavady. The result will be that, of course, the Midland and Great Northern will smash the Letterkenny line. The action of the Board with reference to the Burtonport Railway is also inexplicable. The contrast between that railway and the Carndonagh is striking and constitutes a scandal.

APPENDIX No. 17.

Abstract of Evidence furnished by the Rev. David Marshall, Omagh, who was not examined.

(Nominated as one of the representatives of the Omagh Board of Guardians, but not summoned to attend for examination.)

1. That when the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) was constructed the plans then deposited showed a station on the line at Mountjoy, and the grounds of the station are still in the Company's possession.

2. That the station was placed there and worked for years, and then withdrawn on the ground that it did not pay.

3. That witness believes that circumstances have so improved that it would pay now if re-opened.

4. As evidence of this we would show that the railway as a whole, at the time the station was closed, did not pay; while at the present time it is paying a dividend of 6¾ per cent. That Mountjoy has proportionately prospered in these years. Then a small shop supplied the district, and meal, etc., was sold in small quantities. Now there are two flourishing shops which keep six or seven horses on the road constantly carting goods. That two creameries are now in the district importing and exporting goods. That the farmers in the district are very much injured, having their cream or butter carted to Omagh, by which it is considerably deteriorated in value; and all the coal used in the creamery is carried by rail past the Mountjoy station and creamery, and has to be carted back to the creamery. That farmers purchase fertilisers and manures now by the ton, instead of by the hundred-weight as formerly. That the district is fertile and thickly populated, and that 4,000 people complain bitterly that there is not a station on a ten-mile length of railway. That higher education in the district suffers; there are good schools in Omagh, but our young people are handicapped for the battle of life because they cannot get to the schools, and yet a railway is laid near our very doors.

6. That witness, in the past three years, has paid the Company about £150 for running two excursions from the district, and we had to go to Omagh Station. These excursions were not thought of in former times.

7. That several public meetings have been held in the district to protest against the continued closing of the station, and asking that it be re-opened; and the people of the district have urged the Directors of the Company to re-open the station, but they have declined to do so.

8. That we have all the disadvantages of a railway—our fields cut up; to cross high bridges and line running near and parallel to county road—and not any of the advantages. Farmers here willingly consented to give their lands, believing they would have a station at Mountjoy, as it was marked on the plan the Company submitted to Parliament for permission to build the line.

(Signed) Rev. David Marshall,
Mountjoy Manse,
Omagh,
Co. Tyrone.

20*th April*, 1907.

APPENDIX No. 18.

Abstract of Evidence furnished by Mr. Harold Barbour (who was unable to attend for Examination) on behalf of the Lisburn Urban District Council, on 23rd April, 1907.

I am a member of the Lisburn Urban District Council. The nature of my evidence will be the heavy rates on flax as compared with its manufacture of products, and the fact that owing to the rates in some cases, the Scotch manufacturers can put their goods into Irish markets at a less rate than Irish manufacturers.

Annexed is a comparative table of the prices per ton for flax in Belgium, Holland, France, and Russia. These statements are in tabular form.

One point I wish to lay special stress on is the excessive difference between carriage at "Owner's Risk" and carriage at "Company's Risk." Experience has taught us here to carry all flax at "Company's Risk," and we, in consequence, are charged a price which is a great deal in excess of any of the rates charged in the countries I have named to you. It is surprising to find that even in Russia the rates are less than with us.

I will also give instances of delay in delivery of nets from Hilden to Irish fishing points, which delays, in several instances, have caused the fisherman to miss his market, and consequently handicapped the trade with us.

I will also point out one or two instances, showing that rates from here to towns in England are in excess of those to Irish towns.

Comparison of Railway Rates on Flax.

Attached are the following statements regarding railway rates on flax:—

(*a.*) Between Irish market towns and Hilden Siding, G.N.R.
(*b.*) French railway rates on Flax and Tow traffic.
(*c.*) Belgium railway rates on Flax and Tow traffic.
(*d.*) Holland railway rates on Flax and Tow traffic.

A few comparisons of these rates will clearly show that the Irish farmer is charged very much more per ton per mile than Continental farmers.

In the case of flax from Ballymena to Hilden Siding, G.N.R., the rate is 8*s.* 6*d.* per ton—station to station—no concession being made for quantities over one ton, and being 33 miles distance, works out at 3·09*d.* per ton per mile.

In France for 44·70 miles flax is carried, including cost of forwarding fee (7½*d.*), at the following rates:—

	Per ton per mile.
In 1 ton lots @ 8/9½, or at the rate of	2·36*d.*
2 ,, ,, @ 8/8½, ,, ,,	2·33*d.*
3 ,, ,, @ 7/2½, ,, ,,	1·93*d.*
4 ,, ,, @ 5/7½, ,, ,,	1·51*d.*
5 ,, ,, @ 4/7½, ,, ,,	1·24*d.*

In Belgium, for 34·10 miles, flax is carried at the following rates:—

Less than 5 tons @ 5/3½ per ton—1·86*d.* per ton per mile.
In 5 ton lots @ 4/4 per ton—1·52*d.* per ton per mile.

All rates are for goods loaded on wagon by senders or their carting agents, and discharged by receivers.

In Holland, for 32·93 miles, flax is carried at the following rates:—

Less than 5 ton lots @ 4/8 per ton—1·70*d.* per ton per mile.
In 5 to 10 ton lots @ 3/6 per ton—1·27*d.* per ton per mile.

In Holland the rates are not given per kilometre, but according to special tariffs based on a certain period in which the goods are transported, etc., etc. Lots under five tons are usually loaded and unloaded by the railway people.

Parcels of five tons and upwards must be loaded by the senders, and unloaded at destination by the consignees—except in the principal towns, where this is usually done by the railway people. During the months of March to November, the charges for loading and unloading are included in the freights.

Railway Rates on Flax and Tow between Hilden Siding, G.N.R. (I.), and the undermentioned Stations.

Miles.	Stations.	Flax. Rate, Per Ton.	Tow. Rate, Per Ton.
		s. d.	*s. d.*
21	Antrim, ...	5 0	7 4
29	Armagh, ...	8 3	8 8
—	Aghadowey, ...	—	13 11
215	Ballina, ...	28 4	25 0
26	Ballyroney, ...	9 6	9 6
33	Ballymena, ...	8 6	9 4
53	Ballymoney, ...	13 8	12 10
—	Ballycowan, ...	—	—
—	Ballynahinch, ...	—	—
18	Banbridge, ...	6 6	6 10
76	Ballybay, ...	14 8	16 0
—	Belfast Station, ...	2 3	2 3
39	Coalisland, ...	9 9	9 0
70	Castleblayney, ...	14 6	15 6
73	Cavan, ...	14 8	15 10
57	Clones, ...	12 8	13 6
—	Crossgar, ...	—	—
60	Coleraine, ...	14 8	14 0
49	Cookstown, ...	10 6	10 6
—	Castledawson, ...	10 6	10 7
85	Cootehill, ...	16 0	17 4
10	Dromore, ...	6 10	6 10
74	Drogheda, ...	14 2	14 2
52	Dundalk, ...	12 0	12 6
33	Dungannon, ...	8 9	8 6
24	Tandragee—Less than 3 Tons, ..	6 3	—
	Over 3 Tons, ..	5 9	7 9
35	Donaghmore, ...	11 3	11 3
—	Glarryford, ...	10 0	—
—	Kellswater, ...	—	8 9
223	Killala—3 Tons, ...	28 4	27 6
	For less, ...	30 10	30 10
—	Kilkeel, ...	18 4	—
—	Kilrea, ...	—	—
—	Katesbridge, ...	6 9	—
43	Warrenpoint, ...	12 9	12 9
97	Lisnaskea, ...	14 2	17 2
80	Limavady, ...	17 3	17 8

RAILWAY RATES ON FLAX AND TOW BETWEEN HILDEN SIDING, G.N.R. (I)., AND THE UNDERMENTIONED STATIONS—*continued.*

Miles.	Stations.	FLAX. Rate, Per Ton.	TOW. Rate, Per Ton.
		s. d.	s. d.
42	Markethill, ...	9 2	10 0
45	Monaghan, ...	10 6	9 2
38	Magherafelt, ...	11 7	10 11
—	Newtownards, ...	—	—
37	Newry, ...	9 6	9 6
59	Omagh, ...	12 6	14 9
18	Portadown, ...	5 10	5 10
—	Queensbridge, ...	3 3	3 3
79	Strabane, ...	13 6	19 6
27	Randalstown, ...	7 0	8 4
42	Stewartstown, ...	13 0	9 7
—	Macfin, ...	—	13 5
—	Trew and Moy—Under 3 Tons, ..	—	11 7
	Over, ..	—	11 1
120	Ballyshannon, ...	23 6	23 6
—	Donaghadee, ...	—	—
—	Tullymurry, ...	—	—

FRENCH RAILWAY RATES.

For Flax and Tow Traffic.

Kilometres.	Miles.	FLAX. One-ton lot. Rate per ton.	Two-ton lots. Rate per ton.	Three-ton lots. Rate per ton.	Four-ton lots. Rate per ton.	Five-ton lots. Rate per ton.
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
15 ..	9·30	2 7	2 7	1 11	1 5	1 1
34 ..	21·10	4 6	4 6	3 8	2 9	2 3
72 ..	44·70	8 2	8 1	6 7	5 0	4 0
		TOW.				
15 ..	9·30	2 4	2 3	1 6	1 1	1 1
34 ..	21·10	3 11	3 11	2 11	2 3	2 3
72 ..	44·70	6 11	6 11	5 3	4 0	4 0

7½*d.* per ton extra for forwarding without including loading and unloading wagons.

BELGIAN RAILWAY RATES.

For Flax and Tow Traffic.

Kilometres.	Miles.	FLAX. Five-ton lots. Rate per ton.	TOW. Five-ton lots. Rate per ton.	FLAX OR TOW. Less than five tons. Rate per ton.
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
10 ..	6·20	1 5½	1 3½	1 8
15 ..	9·30	1 9½	1 6½	2 1
20 ..	12·40	2 1	1 9	2 6
25 ..	15·50	2 5	2 0	2 10½
30 ..	18·60	2 9	2 3	3 3½
35 ..	21·70	3 0½	2 5½	3 8
40 ..	24·80	3 4½	2 9	4 1
45 ..	27·90	3 8½	2 11½	4 6
48 ..	29·76	3 11	3 1	4 8½
50 ..	31·00	4 0	3 2½	4 10½
55 ..	34·10	4 4	3 5½	5 3½
60 ..	37·20	4 8	3 8	5 8
70 ..	43·40	5 4	4 2	6 6
80 ..	49·60	5 9	4 6	7 2
90 ..	55·80	6 1	4 9	7 10
100 ..	62·00	6 5	5 0	8 6
120 ..	74·40	7 0½	5 4	9 9
140 ..	86·80	7 5	5 6½	11 0½
160 ..	99·20	7 9	5 8½	12 2
180 ..	111·60	8 1	5 10	13 1½
200 ..	124·00	8 5	6 0	14 1
250 ..	155·00	9 2½	6 5	15 8
300 ..	186·00	10 0	6 9½	17 3½
320 ..	198·40	10 4	6 11½	17 11
350 ..	217·00	10 10	7 2½	8 10½

All rates are for goods loaded on wagons by senders or their carting agents and discharged by receivers.

RAILWAY RATES IN HOLLAND.

For Flax and Tow Traffic.

—	Kilos.	Miles.	FLAX IN PRESSED BALES. Under five-ton lots. Florins per cent. Kilos.	s. d.	Five to ten-ton lots. Florins per cent. Kilos.	s. d.	Ten-ton lots and upwards. Florins per cent. Kilos.	s. d.
Rotterdam to Utrecht, ..	53	32·93	0·28	4 8	0·21	3 6	0·21	3 6
Rotterdam to Amsterdam, ..	73	45·36	0·34	5 9	0·26	4 4	0·26	4 4
Rotterdam to Helder, ..	150	93·19	0·57	9 7	0·45	7 7	0·45	7 7
Rotterdam to Venlo, ..	160	99·42	0·59	9 11	0·47	7 11	0·47	7 11
Rotterdam to Groningen, ..	246	152·86	0·55	9 3	0·40	6 9	0·35	5 11
			TOW IN PRESSED BALES.					
Rotterdam to Utrecht, ..	53	32·93	0·28	4 8	0·21	3 6	0·21	6 6
Rotterdam to Amsterdam, ..	73	45·36	0·34	5 9	0·23	3 10	0·23	3 10
Rotterdam to Helder, ..	150	93·19	0·57	9 7	0·38	6 5	0·38	6 5
Rotterdam to Venlo, ..	160	99·42	0·59	9 11	0·47	7 11	0·47	7 11
Rotterdam to Groningen, ..	246	152·86	0·74	12 5	0·40	6 9	0·35	5 11

APPENDIX No. 19.

ARTICLE from "*The Red Funnel*," Magazine (Dunedin, N. Z.), of May 1st, 1906, on "GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF RAILWAYS," by the Right Hon. Sir JOSEPH G. WARD, K.C.M.G., Premier of New Zealand, handed in by Mr. J. T. NOBLE ANDERSON, B.E., M.INST. C.E., during his examination on the 23rd April, 1907.

Although it is not my intention—nor, indeed, would it be possible—to trace within the narrow limits of this article the evolution of the railroad, from the original tramway, with its horse-traction and its primitive and nondescript rolling-stock, to the railroads of the twentieth century. A brief reference to the working of the horse-tram lines may be of interest to readers who, although familiar with the present-day railway and tramway systems, may be unacquainted with their earlier history and the fact that they are merely the result of the development of the antiquated and despised wooden tramway.

Authorities agree that the first authentic record of the practical use of rails for the purpose of reducing the traction of vehicles dates approximately to the year 1633, when it is recorded that wooden rails were laid on the roads traversed by wagons used to transport coal from the Newcastle mines in Northumberland. A century later some genius in Cumberland conceived the idea of affixing iron plates to the top of the wooden rails. This system was found to materially reduce the tractive power previously required to draw a load, and it rapidly superseded the simple wooden rail. The composite rail was in turn ousted by the iron rail, the use of which is first recorded in 1801. In the same year, or a little more than a century ago, the British Parliament passed the Act which authorised the construction of the first iron railroad in the United Kingdom. The line was about six miles in length. It was owned by the Surrey Iron Railway Company, and was intended for use in the conveyance of goods traffic. The proprietors allowed any person so desiring to use the track on payment of certain fixed tolls. Horses provided the power for working the line, and owners of goods were required to find both the tractive power and the vehicles necessary for the transport of their goods. The success which attended the first line induced the projection and construction of many others during the period intervening between 1801 and 1821, all of which were worked on the same principle.

The steam-engine—tried experimentally in 1784, and on what is now known as the Swansea and Mumbles Railway, in February, 1804—prominently obtruded itself on public notice about that time, and in 1823 power was given for the first time for the use of steam-engines as a means of locomotion, and also for any company owning a track to levy tolls for carriages used in their railway or tramroad for the conveyance of passengers or packages. The owner of the track was also given power to levy, at his discretion, an additional toll for the locomotive, which in many cases was provided by the user of the line; and up to about 1839 locomotives, the property of various coach proprietors and carriers, and manned by the employees of the respective owners, were running on some of the lines. Thus, from the most modest beginning, was evolved the world's railway system, which to-day exceeds 500,000 miles in length, is spread over the five continents, and represents a capital investment of over £7,000,000,000. The advent of the locomotive necessitated a complete change in the original railroad policy, and, as soon as steam superseded horse-traction, the question of public safety became of paramount importance. It was very early manifest that a system which could be worked with immunity from accident with horse-traction was fraught with danger where steam was the motive power. The companies speedily resorted to the practice of providing tractive power in addition to the track, and the public recognising its advantages, that system became general. Having due regard to the circumstances of the time and to the insignificance of the beginning of the railway system, it is not surprising that its potentialities were unforeseen by the great bulk of the community, including the majority of the legislators of the day, and that consequently the pioneer companies were not overburdened with restrictions in the legislative enactments passed by the British Parliament. Notwithstanding this, however, a few persons were sufficiently prescient to recognise the change that would inevitably result from the use of the locomotive, and the imprudence of passing legislation giving private companies powers which would enable them to ultimately dominate the position.

The views of the reformers, naturally, did not find favour with the companies, nor did they receive the support they merited from the people whose interests were at stake but the persistency with which the matter was pursued gave rise to the controversy in regard to State *versus* private ownership of railways, and resulted in the British Parliament, as long ago as 1844, at the instance of Mr. Gladstone, affirming the soundness of the principle of State ownership, so ably advocated by writers on railway reform, by including in "The Cheap Trains Act" of that year a clause empowering the Government of the United Kingdom, on certain terms and conditions specifically laid down, to acquire any railways then constructed. This power of pre-emption on the part of the State has been carefully preserved in all subsequent railway legislation passed by the British Parliament.

Private ownership of railways was originally objected to by the trader on the ground that the companies had forced the private carrier off the road, and, by killing his competition, deprived the trader of what he deemed to be his safeguard against unreasonable rates. A further ground of complaint was that the companies had so arranged their tariff charges as to stifle competition between themselves. The agitation against the companies' methods became so pronounced even at that early period of railroad history (1844) that a Select Committee was set up to investigate and report, and, after a searching inquiry, the Committee reported, *inter alia*, that fares and rates were too high, that indefinite concessions made to the earlier companies has been unnecessary, and that Parliament ought to reserve the power of purchase, to be exercised after a fixed period.

The outcome of the report was the passing of "The Cheap Trains Act," section 6 of which compelled the charging of a fare not exceeding one penny per mile for third-class travel, by not less than one train per day; the revision of the maximum scale of rates and charges by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury—in cases where the clear annual profits of the railway company for the preceding three years exceeded ten per cent. on the subscribed and paid-up capital—on such a basis as would reduce the company's profits to ten per cent.; and further limited the charge leviable by companies (in cases where they provided the tractive power and vehicles for transport of traffic, as well as the roadway along which it was conveyed) to a sum less than the aggregate amount authorised to be charged for three separate services—*i.e.*, use of track, provision of tractive power, and haulage and conveyance, respectively. The Act also empowered the Attorney-General for England or Ireland, or the Lord Advocate for Scotland, to proceed against the railway companies for breaches of the Statute under certificate of the Board of Trade, and, as indicated above, it further provided for the purchase of the railways of the State. The following year saw "The Railway Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845," passed, and in this a further and serious effort was made to effectively check the discrimination in rating practised by the companies. The desired end was not, however, attained, and, to appease the public indignation at the companies' methods a second Select Committee was set up, and they reported that the extravagantly high figure at

which the maximum rates were fixed was mainly responsible for the unsatisfactory railway charges generally. Combination among the railway companies and the pooling of lines gave the public grave concern for the next few years, and 1852 found them much perturbed at the various amalgamation proposals then on the tapis. Another Select Committee was appointed, and, as the outcome of their deliberations, additional legislation of a far-reaching character, under the title of "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1854," was passed. Section 2 of that Act imposed on the companies the duty of affording all reasonable facilities for receiving, forwarding, and delivering traffic, and prohibited differentiation of rates in favour of any individual or company.

Despite the legislation to secure efficient State control and equal treatment of customers, the railway companies pursued their own course, and, while not openly defiant, they evaded the law in divers ways. The public remained dissatisfied and uneasy, and from time to time appealed strongly to the Legislature for protection against the unlawful discrimination and preferentiation in rating practised by the railway companies.

The acuteness of the position, and the earnestness of the desire of Parliament to efficiently grapple with the matter are apparent from the number of enactments passed since 1845, each one of which contains some provision of a drastic and far-reaching character, designed and inserted for the specific purpose of protecting public interests and ensuring equality of treatment to all railroad customers. Various reforms were provided for in "The Regulation of Railways Act, 1868," but the companies do not appear to have regarded the position with the seriousness it merited for any considerable time; consequently public unrest and dissatisfaction again manifested themselves in connection with amalgamation proposals, and, as a result of the deliberations of the Joint Select Committee on Railway Amalgamation, 1872, railway legislation loomed large in the following year in the shape of "The Regulation of Railways Act."

It is abundantly evident, however (from the fact that a Select Committee was in 1881 set up to report on the general question of railway charges and inquire into the working of the Act of 1873) that the latter had been as barren of practical results as its predecessors; that the railway companies continued to dominate the position, and the disabilities of the general community still existed to such an extent as to demand redress. In 1883 it was considered that the companies were not providing sufficient workmens' trains, and that, as a consequence, grave inconvenience and hardship were being inflicted on the workers in certain populous localities. It was therefore determined to give to the Board of Trade statutory powers to compel the provision of sufficient workmens' trains with proper accommodation for the passengers carried by such trains, the State on its part agreeing to forego a portion of the duty payable by the companies in respect to passengers conveyed by such trains. The fruit of the labour of the 1881 Committee was "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888." This Act was designed for the purpose of compelling the due performance by the companies of the duties imposed by the several special Acts previously passed. It made it obligatory on the railway companies to revise their scale of maximum charges and re-classify goods, submitting both to the Board of Trade; was most pronounced in regard to undue preference in rating, and made the Board of Trade an arbitrator between the companies and those of their clients who were aggrieved.

It will be apparent that the re-classification of goods by all companies was a somewhat herculean undertaking, and the fact that it was not finally completed until 1892, and that the powers given to companies to charge are contained in some forty Acts of Parliament, some of which are applicable to several companies, will serve as an indication of the magnitude of the task, and the difficulties and intricacies of the problem with which the railroad authorities on the one hand, and the Board of Trade and Legislature on the other, had to deal.

The new classification and rate proposals of the companies did not meet with the concurrence of the Board of Trade; neither did the proposals of the latter find favour with the companies, who saw their dividends seriously threatened, nor with the public, who, having regard to the previous methods of the railroad companies, anticipated dangers ahead. Ultimately the Board of Trade submitted its proposals to Parliament, and, in accordance with the powers given it by Statute, moved Parliament to legislate; and, despite strenuous opposition on the part of the railway companies and the traders, whose interests it was sought to conserve, the Bill was passed.

The companies, who had in operation a large number of special rates, immediately cancelled many of them. This action on their part resulted in an increase in the charges previously made for transport of many classes of traffic hitherto carried at less than the classified rates. A strong agitation was at once raised by those whose rates were increased, and this culminated in the setting up of another Select Committee in 1893. The report of that Committee showed that a large number of rates had been raised on the date that the new conditions came into force, but the companies had kept within the four corners of the Act by merely substituting the maximum rates allowed by the Act for the special rates which had operated previously. In other words, they had complied with the letter, but evaded the spirit and intention of the Act. "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894," was the result. In it a very important departure was made from previous enactments, inasmuch as it made it incumbent on the railway companies, in all cases where disputes as to rates arose, to prove that the charges levied were reasonable and laid down the principle that the mere fact of the rate being within the maximum allowed by the Act was not, *prima facie*, an evidence of its reasonableness.

Enough has been said to show that neither, in the opinion of the people who used the railways and had to pay the charges imposed, nor of the Select Committees, who had at various times investigated and reported upon the complaints, were the companies carrying on the railway system in a manner calculated to advance either the interests of the country or its people; and, in the enactments passed for the purpose of ameliorating the disabilities of the people, the Legislature clearly indicated its opinion.

The question that naturally presents itself is: Why do traders and others, for whose protection the country has incurred a very heavy expenditure, not avail themselves of the machinery provided by the Legislature, and contest the legality of the imposition of railroad charges, which are not fair and equitable or according to Statute?—The answer is apparent and simple—viz: that in the great majority of instances the individuals affected are not in a position to provide the sinews of war necessary to fight an action against a corporate body strong in finance and backed up by the best legal talent of the country. Notwithstanding this, however, the law records of the Home Country contain ample evidence of the fact that large traders and others do successfully resist the attempts of the railroad companies to levy unreasonable rates or otherwise evade the requirements of the law, while the hundreds of lawsuits instituted against the companies, the reports of the Board of Trade, and the work of the Railway Commissions, all bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the people of the country are not at the present time obtaining from the railway system (for which they pay) the benefits to which they are justly entitled. The artisans and workers provide the bulk of the receipts from passenger traffic, and it might reasonably be expected that in return the companies would—in their own interests, if not from patriotic motives—so base their rates as to give preference to the home manufactures and products with a view to assisting in finding profitable employment for the masses of their countrymen, and, by so doing, ensuring a direct return to themselves in the shape of an increased passenger and goods business. The contrary policy, however, has for years been followed, and, as a consequence, foreign manufactures (the product of cheap Continental labour) have been given the benefit of minimum rates, while maximum charges have been imposed on home products, to the detriment of the British manufacturer and the artisan. What has been said regarding manufactured goods applies with even greater force to agricultural products and fruits, preferential rates in favour of the foreign article enabling the foreign producer to undersell the British product in its own market and make a profit out of the deal, thus diverting to the pockets of foreigners wealth produced by the labour of the British workmen, and,

by destroying the demand for the home-grown article, making agricultural pursuits unprofitable, and depriving the working classes of the country of many of their avenues for earning their livelihood. And what of the railway workers—that vast army of men employed in conducting the intricate operations of the railways, and guarding the safety of the lives of hundreds of millions of passengers who annually travel over the lines?—Is their condition satisfactory? Have the railway companies—whose services are dependent on the loyalty, intelligence and integrity of their employees for the safe conduct of the vast business of the railway system—of their own initiative done any thing worthy of the name to alleviate the conditions under which these men work?—It is a matter of history that the hours of railway men were so notoriously long, and their pay so absurdly out of proportion of their responsibilities lower, in fact, than the pay of hospital and lunatic asylum attendants—that public attention was forcibly drawn to the matter and a Select Committee set up to investigate. The evidence fully justified the action taken, and resulted in the passing of an Act imposing limitations on the hours of railway workers, and empowering the Board of Trade to inquire into complaints and adjust the hours in such manner as seemed equitable and reasonable. Notwithstanding this, the condition of raliway workmen is still regarded as being far from satisfactory. "The Workers' Compensation Act, 1897," compels the companies to pay compensation to workers injured in the discharge of their duties, and "The Railway Prevention of Accidents Act, 1902," confers on the Board of Trade power to require railway companies to provide all plant and appliances necessary for the prevention of accidents to their employees. The necessity for such legislation is apparent from the fact that the amount of compensation paid to workmen by the companies in 1904 amounted to no less than £162,155.

Turning now from the United Kingdom, the birthplace of the railway system, to that great country America, the home of trusts and monopolies, we find the railways of the United States, which comprise over 298,000 miles of track, earn 1,975,174,091 dollars annually, and employ over a million and a quarter of men in their operation are controlled and owned entirely by private companies. Constructed under charters granted by the various States, subsidised by enormous grants of land, the railroads early became a dominating power. Their charters conferred on the companies the right to demand and receive such sums of money for freight as they considered reasonable from time to time, and they placed the most liberal construction on their powers, and at a very early period of their history indicated in the most unmistakable manner that they would brook no interference with their plans and policy. Discrimination and preferentiation in rating became rampant to such an extent that the companies were able to dictate the direction in which the traffic should flow and practically to determine it destination. To secure this end, preferential rates were granted, not only in favour of towns, but of individuals. This system enabled the companies to bestow their patronage on individuals, to the detriment of the community, and it is not at all surprising, therefore, to find that discontent and dissatisfaction at railroad methods manifested themselves in an intense degree. Competition merely accentuated the difficulty, and in the end legislation was tried. A Committee was set up to consider the question of inter-State commerce in 1885. The evidence taken disclosed the fact that, by means of unwarranted discrimination in rates, the capitalist had been built up at the expense of the small man, the large dealer given advantages over the small trader. Capital had been made to count for more than individual credit and enterprise, monopolies fostered, the influence of corporate power extended, and the control of the commerce of the country thrown more and more into the hands of a few.

"The Inter-State Commerce Act, 1887," was the outcome of the Committee's report. It is most pronounced and drastic in dealing with the evils it sought to remedy, and emphatically forbids discriminations between persons, places and commodities, and is as equally pronounced in reference to the granting of all profitable and reasonable facilities to every particular person, company, firm, locality or corporation and to every description of traffic. The attempt to make railroad companies in America abandon their pernicious practices by Act of Parliament and charge equal rates for equal services to all members of the community was not more successful than it had been elsewhere, and the complaints against discrimination, preferentiation, drawbacks, and rebates are as pronounced to-day as at any period of the history of the American railways. Much attention has therefore been devoted during recent years to the question of State ownership of railways, influential Americans taking a very keen and intelligent interest in the working of the Australian and New Zealand Government railway systems, especially in regard to the methods adopted for ensuring equal treatment to traders in the matter of rates and facilities.

Having due regard to the industrial conditions of the country, the bitter complaints of the agriculturist and the business-man against the methods of the railway companies, and with the practical and satisfactory results of operating State railways in European countries within a few hours' journey from their shores prominently before them, it is most remarkable that the British public should year after year have complacently watched the passage through Parliament, at a cost of many tens of thousands of pounds, Acts empowering the construction by railway companies of new lines, and permitted the companies to gradually extend their sphere of influence throughout the length and breadth of the country. It would almost seem, from the apathy displayed in the matter, that the public did not realise that they were laying up a store of lasting trouble for themselves, inasmuch as they would ultimately be called upon to find for all time the ways and means required to pay interest on the millions spent by the companies in Parliamentary and legal expenses in promoting the legislation necessary to authorise the construction of the various lines. The appreciable effect of these charges will be the more readily recognised when I state that the amount involved would increase the capital cost of the lines by no less than £95,000,000. In other words, the Parliamentary and legal expenses incurred in connection with British railways amount to four and a half times as much as the whole capital cost of the New Zealand railways. The indifference in this matter is all the more noticeable when considered in conjunction with the fact that the advantages of State ownership were fully recognised and appreciated by the hardy pioneers who laid the foundations of the great self-governing British colonies, and who were responsible for the inauguration of the policy which has created the State-owned railways that have played so important a part in the development of and prosperity of the various Colonial States.

Looking first at the older countries in which State-owned railways are operated we find that Belgium was the first country to give a practical trial of State management, and with eminently satisfactory results. Germany followed, and to-day nearly every Continental country in Europe has its system of State railways, and the policy adopted in their management is to use them as a means of providing cheap transport facilities for the manufactures of the country to the seaports or other distributing centres, with a view to placing the people in the most favoured position for competing in the world's markets. This is strongly exemplified by the German State Railways which constitute ninety-five per cent. of the total railway mileage in Germany, and transport German goods to the seaport at the minimum rate, and so enable them to find their way to foreign markets on the most favoured basis. The success of the policy is evidenced by the fact of German goods superseding British goods in the British market. Notwithstanding the low rate charged on the German State railways, their average results are better than those shown by English companies, while the conditions of employment are more favourable on German than English railways. Similarly satisfactory results of working are shown by State-owned railways in the various European countries, notwithstanding the fact that a comparison of the rates of some of the more important countries with those charged by the British companies for carriage of similar commodities under similar conditions show that the State rates are very materially lower than those of the British companies, and so gratifying has State ownership proved to Continental peoples that the trend of public opinion is in favour of State acquisition of all lines, and the mileage of State railways is being regularly added to by State purchase of private lines.

Turning to the British colonies, we find practically all the railways are owned by the State, and that satisfactory results of working have been achieved by each State. Dealing particularly with New Zealand railways, it may be mentioned that the policy adopted is to regard them more as an adjunct to the settlement and development of the country than as a revenue earning machine; and in pursuance of that policy it has for years past been the practice to return to the people, by means of concessions in fares and freights, an amount calculated to equal the excess of the net earnings over three per cent., the latter being the return the railways are expected to yield on the capital cost of construction. In fixing upon the concessions to be granted, due regard is paid to the necessities of the growing industries of the colony, and these are invariably placed in a more favourable position as regards rates than a foreign product of a similar character. When a concession in rates has been decided upon, particulars are gazetted for public information, and the rate then becomes payable by every dealer or other person who forwards goods of that particular class over the railways of the colony so long as he conforms to the conditions laid down in specific terms in the published regulation. Impartiality is the fundamental principle of State railway management in New Zealand. No individual can, under any circumstances, obtain preferential treatment; all have to pay the same rates for the same service, and all are given the benefit of the lowest rate in all cases where alternative rates exist. To illustrate this it is necessary to point out that, owing to the length of its seaboard, and the fact that the larger towns are practically seaports, there exists what are known as "local" rates and "classified" rates. The former apply to certain localities, and are made to meet special conditions, and the latter apply to all other traffic carried over those portions of the line where ordinary conditions prevail; but if it is possible to make, by a combination of the local rates in operation to a given point and the classified rate from that point to the destination station, a lower charge than by computing the freight on the classified rate for the full mileage the goods are conveyed, the combination is used. If, on the other hand, the through classified rates are most favourable to the trader, they are used as the basis of the charge.

It has frequently been asserted by those who object to State-ownership of railways that it invariably leads to their being run on the lines of precedent, and not upon commercial principles; that State officers are devoid of initiative in the matter of railway management; and that the people of the countries in which the railways are largely owned by Governments, labour under many disadvantages in connection with the management of their lines as compared with the peoples living in those countries in which private ownership and management of railways are the predominant features. It is, however, difficult to understand the grounds on which such assertions are made. It surely cannot be contended that the experienced railway officer who controls the Government railways of any country does not compare favourably in the matter of ability and intelligence with his compeer in charge of a private railway, or that the dissatisfactionat the methods of rating adopted by private companies as manifested by the users of the railways in those countries where privately-owned lines predominate, is an evidence of privately-owned railways being more successfully managed and giving to the users of the lines greater benefits than are derivable from State railways; or that the general benefits that have been conferred on the community by the policy adopted in the administration of the State-owned railways in the various countries are an evidence that State management is not successful?

Is the practice of charging foreign products a lower rate than home products to the detriment of the home worker, of giving to the large trader concessions which are denied to the small dealer, or of allowing gigantic corporations engaged in certain lines of business to fix not only what rates shall be paid by them in respect to transit of their commodities over the railways, but to dictate the rates that shall be charged for the conveyance over the same road of similar commodities produced by smaller dealers, and what portion of such rates shall be granted to themselves as a drawback, an evidence of the efficient management on the part of privately-owned railways. Are the experiments which were authorised by the Belgian Government fifty years ago, under which the Minister controlling the State railways was empowered to inaugurate a system of reduced rates on particular commodities, with a view to ascertaining what the effect of low rates would have in inducing traffic on the railways, an evidence of want of initiative on the part of those controlling State railways?

To appreciate the value of this departure from ordinary principles which then governed railway management by railway companies, it must be borne in mind that the State railways of Belgium were then in their infancy; but, notwithstanding this, the results which were attained by the experiments were such as to justify the State railway authorities in extending the operation of the reduced rates to classes of goods to which it was not contemplated to apply them in the first instance. The policy of the State railways, even at that early period of their history, was that they should be worked to improve the national welfare, and afford cheap transit to persons and commodities; and the enormous increase in the exports of Belgian goods may be traced direct to the cheapening of railway transit. The German State railways followed closely with a similar policy, and introduced very low transit rates, for the purpose of protecting German industries and increasing exports, with a view to improving the industrial conditions of the Empire generally. The results of the experiments of these two countries and those which have followed in other countries in which State-owned railways are found, have been phenomenal. Traffic has increased to an enormous extent, industries have flourished, the wealth of the nations has materially increased, and the condition of the masses of the people has been greatly improved.

I have already shown that the policy pursued by the State-owned railways is to give equal treatment to all users of the lines, irrespective of the value of their business, to place the home product in the best position for competing with the foreign article, and to grant such concessions in fares and freights as are best calculated to conduce to the prosperity of the community as a whole.

The reductions which have been spontaneously made in fares and freights on the New Zealand Government railways, particularly during the past eleven years, furnish a most complete answer to the charge that under State management the railways do not keep abreast of the times. It was at the outset decided to make very considerable reductions in the rates for conveyance of the staple products of the country, and very large concessions were at once brought into operation, and have been entended from time to time as circumstances warranted.

The extent of the concessions in passenger fares will be better understood when I point out that at the present time a person can travel second-class a distance of 400 miles on the New Zealand Government railways for less than 20*s*. A great deal has from time to time been said regarding low rates of travel, induced on English lines by competition, and it has been frequently sought to show that the New Zealand public are at a disadvantage in regard to passenger rates, when compared with the rates ruling on English lines. The fallacy of such statements can best be shown by making a comparison of the rates charged for ordinary travel on the New Zealand Government Railways as compared with those operating on leading English lines, and in respect to places between which there is keen competition, heavy passenger traffic, and typical railway fares:—

—	Miles.	1st Single.	2nd Single.	1st Return.	2nd Return.
		s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*
From London to Glasgow, ...	402	58 0	33 0	110 3	62 11
New Zealand (same distance).	–	37 5	20 4	74 10	40 8
From London to Edinburgh,	392	57 6	32 8	109 6	62 8
New Zealand (same distance).	–	36 7	19 11	73 2	39 10
From London to Carlisle, ...	300	40 6	24 2	81 0	48 5
New Zealand (same distance).	–	28 3	15 9	56 6	31 6
From London to Liverpool, ...	202	29 0	16 6	58 0	33 0
New Zealand (same distance).	–	20 1	11 8	40 2	23 4
From London to York, ...	189	27 0	15 8	54 0	31 4
New Zealand (same distance),	–	19 0	11 1	38 0	22 2
From London to Manchester.	183	24 6	15 5	49 0	30 11
New Zealand (same distance),	–	18 6	10 10	37 0	21 8
From London to Hull, ...	181	25 11	14 0	49 10	28 0
New Zealand (same distance),	–	18 4	10 9	36 8	21 6

The foregoing table fully substantiates the claims which have from time to time been made by those who have studied the subject that the New Zealand fares compare more than favourably with those in operation in other parts of the world, and brings out prominently the fact that for every-day travel the New Zealand public have the benefit of exceedingly low rates. But in another way the New Zealander can travel 450 miles first class and 500 miles second class for the same rate that is paid by the Londoner for the 300 mile journey to Carlisle. The Londoner pays 33*s.* second class for the journey to Glasgow, a distance of 402 miles; for the same fare the New Zealander would be carried 716 miles. The extent to which passenger fares in New Zealand have been reduced under State management will be very apparent from a study of the foregoing figures.

Recognising the value of the education of the young people of the colony, the State railways grant to those children whose parents reside in localities too sparsely populated to warrant the establishment of schools, free school tickets for distances up to 60 miles to enable the children to travel between their homes and school. Similar tickets are granted to pupils who have passed the sixth standard or are holders of scholarships, exhibitions, or free places, tenable at district high or secondary schools. Workers are granted weekly tickets, enabling them to travel between their homes and work (one journey each way) on six days per week, at a charge of 2*d.* per trip for distances of from three to ten miles. The farmer and the orchardist have lime for manuring and increasing the productiveness of their lands, railed free of charge for distances up to 100 miles, and at very low rates for distances in excess of the hundred miles. The State, moreover, fixes the maximum price which lime-burners shall charge the consumer for such lime as is carried free under the regulation, and so protects the interest of the consumer.

The value of the concessions made in rates is estimated, at the lowest figure, to approximate three-quarters of a million pounds sterling, and, at the same time, many thousands of pounds have been spent in providing additional train services to meet the convenience of the people in the betterment of the track and structures, improving station accommodation, safety appliances, and rolling stock; and the New Zealand Government railways are to-day in a higher state of efficiency than at any period of their history. They are indispensable to the progress of the Colony and the prosperity of its people, and confer incalculable benefits on the whole community. As a property they are a splendid asset, their value being far in excess of the capital invested to date.

The growth of the business of the State-owned railways of New Zealand during the last ten years has been remarkable, not only in regard to the volume of the business, but in the fact that every item of traffic shows a large increase. I give below a comparative statement of the business as it existed on the 1st March, 1895, and on the same date, 1905, from which it will be observed that ordinary passengers have increased by 118 per cent., season tickets by 391 per cent., cattle by 71 per cent., sheep by 124 per cent., pigs by 79 per cent., total goods tonnage by 96 per cent., and total revenue by 92 per cent. During the same period the number of locomotives has increased by 45 per cent., the locomotive traction power by 115 per cent., passenger cars by 73 per cent., passenger seating accommodation by 98 per cent., sheep trucks by 117 per cent., trucks of all classes by 64 per cent., carrying capacity of trucks by 92 per cent., while the train mileage has increased by 90 per cent.

During the same period the mileage of line open for traffic has increased by 381 miles, equal to 19 per cent., and the capital cost of lines by £6,348,959, 41 per cent.

—	31st March, 1895.	31st March, 1905.	Increase.	Per Cent. of Increase.
Passengers (number), ...	3,905,578	8,514,112	4,608,534	118
Season Tickets ,, ...	28,623	140,453	111,830	391
Parcels, ...	444 981	825,468	380,487	86
Horses, ...	11,185	15,651	4,466	40
Carriages, ...	750	2,228	1,478	197

TABLE—*continued.*

—	31st March, 1895.	31st March, 1905.	Increase.	Per Cent. of Increase.
Dogs, ...	23,517	38,592	15,075	64
Drays, ...	705	2,307	1,602	227
Cattle, ...	40,890	110,924	70,034	171
Sheep, ...	1,519,921	3,412,984	1,893,063	124
Pigs, ...	43,292	77,768	34 476	79
Chaff, Lime (tons), ...	36,972	131,714	94,742	256
Wool, ,, ...	103,328	107,625	4 297	4
Firewood, ,, ...	85,102	109,174	24 072	28
Timber, ,, ...	198,578	493,327	294,749	149
Grain, ,, ...	388,556	732,479	343,923	88
Merchandise, ,, ...	377,938	630,832	252,894	67
Minerals, ,, ...	857,917	1,806,360	948,443	111
Total Tonnage, ...	2,048,391	4,011,511	1,963,120	96
Total Revenue, ...	£1,150,851	£2,209,231	£1,058,380	92
Locomotives, ...	268	389	120	45
Locomotives' Tractive Power (lbs.).	1,756,178	3,766,914	2,020,736	115
Passenger Cars (number), ...	498	864	366	73
Passenger Cars (seating accommodation).	17,455	34,643	17,188	98
Brake Vans (number), ...	204	307	103	50
Sheep Trucks, ...	390	848	458	117
Total Trucks of all Classes (number).	8,264	13,578	5,314	64
Trucks carrying capacity (tons).	50,861	97,549	46 688	92
Train Mileage Run, ...	3,221,620	6,107,079	2,885,459	90

The construction of lines has been vigorously pushed on, and profitable employment thus found for a large amount of labour. The country has been opened up and its resources developed by a wise administration of the State railway system, which, by placing an efficient and cheap train service at the disposal of the community has enabled the people to travel and to have the fruits of their labour carried to and from the markets at the minimum rates, and so induced the people to go on the land in ever-increasing numbers, instead of remaining in the cities.

The State has not contented itself with making concessions in fares and freights to users of the colony's railways, but it has from time to time shown in a practical manner that it recognises that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and has given to the railway servants of all grades tangible recognition of their services in improved classification and pay. The practical nature of the recognition is shown by the fact that the increases in pay granted to the railway staff during the past nine years have amounted (on the lowest estimate) to no less than £365,000. In other words, the State railway has given to the public and to the employees, during the past eleven years, concessions which amount to over one million pounds.

The conditions of railway employment are excellent, hours are good in every class, wages most liberal, and the staff enjoys many other privileges of considerable value. An excellent superannuation scheme has been established for the benefit of those who retire from time to time through ill-health or old age; and in the case of the death of an employee, by accident or other cause, before reaching the year of retirement, his widow receives an allowance during her widowhood of £18 per annum, with a further payment of 5*s.* per week in respect of each child under fourteen years of age.

When it is considered that the railways of the colony are divided into eleven sections, separated from each other, and that the population of the colony is under a million souls, the difficulties of management will be all the more apparent. The results which have been attained clearly demonstrate the success of State control of the railways, even under the unfavourable conditions resulting from isolation of small sections of the road; and it is a remarkable fact that at the present time State ownership of railways is engaging a very large amount of public attention in those countries where private ownership is most in evidence. If any further proof

is wanted of the advantages of State over private ownership of railways, do not the investigations of the British Parliament, the inter-State commerce of America, and the decisions of the law courts in both countries furnish it? Private ownership of railways has not tended to the benefit of the community, and dissatisfaction has inevitably arisen as the outcome of the preference and differentiation in rates, and from the tendency of private management to regard the convenience of the public as of secondary importance when compared with the dividends of the shareholders.

State ownership of railways means honest administration, as the statistics of all State-owned lines clearly show. There can be no discrimination or preferentiation in rating in favour of the strong as against the weak, no secret rebates in favour of the large company as against the individual, no creating of monopolies. Every unit of the community must and does receive equal treatment, and all pay precisely the same rate for the same service. The duty of the State is to foster the industries of the country, cheapen the cost of transport, and by so doing assist in finding profitable employment for the people and remunerative markets for the fruits of their labour, and there is no more efficient means to these ends than State ownership of railways.

APPENDIX No. 20.

DOCUMENT put in by Alderman W. E. REIGH, during his examination on 26th April, 1907.

1. I have long been a convinced believer in the policy of the State taking over the control and management of the Irish railways, and it is as such that I desire to lay before the Commission figures which, to my mind, clearly establish the soundness of the proposition, and facts which point to its absolute necessity in the general interests of the country.

2. The Commission have already received evidence (from Mr. Malone, representing the Dublin Port and Docks Board) to the effect that there are at the present time in Ireland about twenty railway companies, having a total train mileage of eighteen millions annually, while there are no less than eight of the great English railway companies, having individual train mileages exceeding the whole of the combined Irish railways, the average of the eight being about thirty million miles annually. The total capital value of the twenty Irish railways is only 38½ million pounds, which is less than one-third the capital value of the London and North Western Company, one of the eight great English companies to which I have referred. The proposition for the State purchase of the Irish railways is, therefore, not one of such magnitude as might at first be supposed.

3. I am not in a position to offer to the Commission evidence in relation to the financial position of all these Irish railways. I am interested in but two of the companies, the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western, and it is in reference to these companies only that I wish to give information. They represent, however, a capital value of nearly twenty million pounds, which is over one-half the total of all the Irish railways.

4. I submit to the Commission a number of returns (attached) I have prepared in relation to the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western Companies. The first marked (No. 1) shows the present nominal value of the two companies and the amount of dividends paid thereon during 1906. The second return (marked No. 2) is a calculation of the savings which could be effected by the State purchase of these two companies on the basis of an issue of 3 per cent. Government Stock for the purpose. It will be seen from this return that, without taking into account at all the undoubted savings that could be effected in the expenses of management by the nationalisation and amalgamation of these companies, there would be a saving in actual dividends payable (on an issue of 3 per cent. Government Stock to the nominal value of the companies) of £179,845, representing a capitalised sum of £5,994,833. Again, the net revenue of these companies is returned at £831,767 for year 1906, which shows a surplus of £238,328 in excess of the amount which would be required to pay interest, the capitalised value of this surplus being £7,977,600. It may be urged that as these two returns only deal with the nominal value of the Stocks they bear no relation to the amount which the State may be called upon to pay in the event of purchase, but this is not the case. You will see from the further return (marked No. 3) which I have prepared that the present market value of the stocks as compared with the market value of 3 per cent. Local Loans (Government) Stock approximates very closely to the figures in the preceding tables on which the calculations were based; so close indeed is the comparison that none of the results arrived at are appreciably affected. These returns prove that State purchase could not alone be effected with ample security to the taxpayer, but that a considerable surplus would be available for the extensions and developments undoubtedly necessary.

5. Having thus briefly touched on the feasibility of the scheme for State purchase I shall endeavour to deal with some defects in the present system of management of the Irish railways.

6. I think from the evidence you have already received it seems to be a generally admitted fact that the railways of Ireland are not assisting as they should in developing the resources of the country. Cheaper fares and more frequent train services are necessary; cheaper rates, additional rolling stock, and improved methods of transport for cattle, goods and minerals, as well as further railway extensions, are absolutely essential. Now, I submit that the predominant factor in restricting the operations of the present companies is lack of sufficient capital for development purposes, and this lack of capital is in turn, I believe, to a defective system prevalent in relation to railway finance. It seems to be the settled policy on the part of the directors to charge against capital every penny's worth of expenditure which can by any twist of the imagination be brought under such a heading, and how successful they are in this respect with their auditors is amply demonstrated in the published half-yearly accounts. What can be thought of the wisdom of charging as "capital" expenditure such items as relaying lines, strengthening of bridges, Parliamentary costs incurred in opposing Bills, expenditure on keeping up rolling stock, small extensions of stations, and even such insignificant items as new weighing machines? These charges in themselves can never be classed as dividend earning, and although perhaps they may not come to very much in any particular year, a year is but a short time in the life of a railway company and in a few years they do amount to a very considerable sum. The directors then find it necessary to make a fresh issue of capital—preference capital, mark you—bearing interest at 4 per cent., or perhaps even more, to the detriment of the ordinary shareholder. What is the position of the ordinary shareholder of the company? Before he can receive any return on his investment the fixed rate of interest must be paid to all the debenture, guaranteed, and preference shareholders. The amount of the preference capital is constantly increasing without any corresponding increase in the dividend earning power of the company, and the ordinary shareholder must put up with a reduced dividend. It will not do, however, for the directors to keep the ordinary dividends too low; the stock market is very susceptible, and even a temporary decline in dividends or profits means a very serious depreciation in the market value of the company's stocks, and renders it exceedingly difficult to raise fresh capital when required. Furthermore, the preference stocks of these railways as trustee stocks command considerable support, but they only remain

trustee stocks so long as a dividend of at least 3 per cent. is paid on the ordinary shares. If in order to do this it becomes necessary to augment book profits by charging revenue expenditure to capital account it may be very regrettable, but the directors do not seem to have any hesitation in doing so. Thus matters go on from bad to worse, and gradually the way is paved to the extinction of the ordinary shareholder. That this short-sighted policy on the part of most railway companies is duly appreciated by the financial public is apparent from the prices at which the ordinary stocks are obtainable. Out of fifty-one ordinary stocks of British railways which are dealt with in the Dublin market no less than thirty-nine, or 76 per cent., are quoted under par. The shareholder who at the half-yearly meetings of the Southern and Midland Companies endeavours to raise any objection to the report and statement of accounts is, on a vote being taken, simply overwhelmed by proxies which the directors hold from shareholders who individually do not take the trouble to analyse the accounts, and who seem to have no interest in their property beyond looking for present dividends. This charging of maintenance expenditure against capital account is utterly indefensible in the absence of any sinking fund or depreciation account. Any ordinary company in making up its accounts is compelled to write off as depreciation 1 per cent. on freehold buildings and 10 per cent. on machinery, but apparently there is no such obligation on railway companies, and the result is that directors are bringing valuable property into a condition of insolvency. I can easily conceive a case of exceptional expenditure—for instance, the relaying of main lines, or, say, the fitting of Westinghouse brakes to the passenger train service—where it might be desirable to spread the cost over a number of years, but I cannot conceive any circumstances justifying the charging of non-dividend earning expenditure to permanent capital.

7. As a consequence, what is the position of the directors in regard to extensions which even they may deem to be urgently necessary (instance Castlecomer and Arigna coalfields, Kingscourt and Castleblayney extension), but for which additional capital must be forthcoming? Railway companies are not philanthropic bodies, and the primary duty of the directors is to earn a dividend for the shareholders, not necessarily to efficiently discharge the obligations due to the general public. They cannot afford to risk expenditure on any undertaking which is not immediately remunerative, and remunerative to such an extent that it will earn at least a four per cent. dividend on its capital cost. In this country that is a practical impossibility for a new undertaking, therefore these necessary extensions must go by the board, and with them all hope of immediate revival of industrial, mining, and agricultural pursuits. Furthermore, the directors cannot afford to risk on any extended scale the adoption of any plan for reducing rates on the chance of an increase in traffic, grant more frequent train services, or, in fact, any facilities whatever which might in the least degree tend towards a reduction in immediate profits, however temporary, or however likely to result in ultimate permanent advantage.

8. There is just one other point in connection with railway accounts to which I would like to refer, and that is the keeping of reserve funds in the ordinary balances, in other words, investing same in the company's own business. This practice is, I think, strongly to be condemned on financial grounds, and I have continually raised the point in connection with the Southern and Midland Railway balance sheets in recent years. If a serious accident occurs, for which it may be necessary to draw upon reserve, there are no liquid assets, and stock has to be realised, just at the very moment when stock is most likely to be depreciated in value.

9. I do not know that I have anything further to add in regard to present railway administration. It is quite apparent that if proper railway facilities are important factors in making for the prosperity of the country then a change is urgently necessary in existing conditions, under which no such facilities may be looked for.

10. What would be the position of State ownership as contrasted with private ownership? In the first place, an enormous saving would be made in permanent charges alone by amalgamation of the present lines. There would be one set of directors in place of twenty, and the different posts of managers, engineers, secretaries, and accountants would be united and centralised, and clearing house charges would be greatly diminished. Most important of all, the investing public would look for a much smaller return on its money than in the case of a private company.

11. The State would, therefore, be in a position to do what the private company cannot at present do, namely, to provide such extensions and facilities as will tend to the industrial and agricultural development of remote parts of the country at present untouched, and generally to bring the railway service of the country into such an efficient state as to compete with the railway services of other countries. Homogeneity of policy and the absence of cut-throat competition would alone be an incalculable boon. No doubt certain districts derive considerable advantage from such competition at present, but where dividends have to be earned it simply results in extortion on districts where there is an absence of competition. Under one management there would also be no unnatural diversion of traffic in favour of one particular port, or in favour of one particular route, without regard to the distance to be traversed.

12. There is another aspect to the question. Individually our companies are somewhat insignificant in comparison with the great English and foreign railway companies. Even our largest companies find it impossible to manufacture all their rolling stock, while in the case of the smaller railways it is, of course, quite out of the question. If the lines were amalgamated, however, the setting up of national workshops in Ireland for the manufacture of locomotives and rolling stock of all kinds for the whole railway systems of the country would be both practicable and eminently profitable, and thus much needed employment would be given as well as training to our industrial population

13. In view of the pronounced success of the postal service, a success which undoubtedly no private company or companies could have achieved, I fail to see that there is any dangerous principle, either financial or commercial, involved in placing public railway monopolies under national control, and I am firmly convinced that such a course is absolutely essential for the prosperity of this country, which has been decimated by poverty and emigration through long years of misgovernment.

14. In the event of State control being decided upon there is the question of management. That, of course, is to a great extent a matter for the Government of the day, but my ideal would be a thoroughly Irish Board, having the prosperity of the country deeply at heart and bent upon making the enterprise successful. I would have that Board, who should be responsible to the people through a Minister for Commerce, consist of fifteen members, and sub-divided into three working Committees—a Finance Committee, a Traffic Committee, and a Works Committee—and constituted as follows:—

(1.) Five members to be nominated by Government, including a Civil Engineer and a Mechanical Engineer with extensive railway and general experience.

(2.) Four members to be nominated by the present railway directors, say, one each from the Great Northern, the Great Southern and the Midland Boards, and one elected from the boards of the remaining companies.

(3.) Four members to be elected by the County Councils, one from each province.

(4.) Two members to be elected by the City Councils of Dublin and Belfast, one from each.

Out of this Board a Chairman and Vice-Chairman would be elected, and these two gentlemen, along with the expert Engineers included under (1), should be required to devote their entire time to the railway service during their term of office, and to hold no other appointments or directorships whatsoever, or engage in business.

15. The Government age limit of 65 years should apply without exception to every member of the Board.

16. In the case of the four directors appointed under the transitory arrangement mentioned in paragraph (2) when vacancies arose they could be filled up by the County Councils as in paragraph (3).

17. I do not think I have anything further to add. I have endeavoured to set forth my views as clearly as possible, and I hope I have succeeded in making them intelligible to the Commission. I thank you, gentlemen, for having heard me at such length.

RETURN No. 1.

SHOWING the present capital value of the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western Railway Companies of Ireland, and the amount of dividends paid thereon during the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Name of Company.	Description of Stock.	Amount on 31st Dec., 1906.	Dividends paid during year 1906.
		£	£ s. d.
G. S. & W. Ry.,	4 % Debentures,	3,974,834	158,993 7 2
	4 % Guaranteed,	2,776,184	111,047 7 2
	4 % Preference,	1,194,272	47,570 17 6
	Ordinary,	5,325,520	213,020 16 0
	Totals,	13,270,810	530,632 7 10
M. G. W. Ry.,	4½ % Debentures,	201,700	9,076 10 0
	4¼ % „	769,339	32,696 18 2
	4 % „	1,376,927	55,077 1 7
	5 % Preference,	300,000	15,000 0 0
	4 % Rentcharge,	452,236	18,089 8 10
	4 % Preference,	1,040,309	41,612 7 2
	Ordinary,	2,370,000	71,100 0 0
	Totals,	6,510,511	242,652 5 9
Gross Combined Totals,		19,781,321	773,284 13 7

RETURN No. 2.

SHOWING the savings which could be effected by the State purchase of the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western Railway Companies of Ireland.

	£
Total present capital of the two companies,	19,781,321
Amount paid out in dividends during the year ended 31st December, 1906,	773,284
Interest at 3 per cent. on Government Stock to the amount of £19,781,321,	593,439
Saving in dividends,	179,845
Capitalised value of this saving at 3 per cent.,	5,994,833

Net revenue (excluding Baronial Guarantees and incidental items) for the year ended 31st December, 1906:—

	£
G. S. & W. R.,	582,268
M. G. W. R.,	249,499
Total,	831,767
Amount required to pay interest on Government Stock (see above),	593,439
Surplus revenue,	238,328
Capitalised value of this surplus at 3 per cent.,	7,977,600

RETURN No. 3.

SHOWING the *present market value* of the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western of Ireland Railway Stocks.

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

Description of Stock.	Amount issued to 31st Dec., 1906.	Market Value on 23rd Mar., 1907.	Present Value at Market Rate.
	£	£	£
4 % Debentures,	3,974,834	109⅞	4,367,349
4 % Guaranteed,	2,776,184	105½	2,923,874
4 % Preference,	1,194,272	105	1,253,986
Ordinary,	5,325,520	85½	4,540,006
Totals,	13,270,810	—	13,090,215

MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

4½ % Debentures,	201,700	120½	243,048
4¼ % „	769,339	115½	885,702
4 % „	1,376,927	108	1,487,081
4 % Preference,	1,040,309	104	1,081,921
5 % „	300,000	123½	370,500
4 % Rentcharge,	452,236	101½	459,020
Ordinary Stock,	2,370,000	63	1,493,100
Totals,	6,510,511	—	6,020,372
Gross Totals,	19,781,321	—	19,110,587

The market price of Local Loans Stock, £62,408,768 of which has been issued, was £96 per cent. on March 23rd. On the basis of this price the amount of Government Stock at 3 per cent. required to be issued to produce £19,110,587 would be £19,906,861—viz.:—

As £96 : £19,110,587 : : £100 : £19,906,861.

APPENDIX No. 21.

COPY of LETTER relative to the derelict Portumna Railway, from the Chairman, Great Southern and Western Railway Company, to Mr, W. T. TRENCH, D.L., Birr, King's County (Representative of the Portumna Derelict Railway Resuscitation Committee) handed in by the latter during his examination on 26th April, 1907.

Coolock House,
County Dublin,
29*th January*, 1889.

DEAR MR. TRENCH,

When the agreement for working the Portumna line expired (by which the G.S. and W.R. were losers to the extent of some £2,000 per annum), the Company proposed to the Loan Commissioners to take over the line at a nominal price, and work it for the public interest, though, no doubt, at a loss to the company. This offer was declined, and the result has been public inconvenience and the destruction of the property.

Our engineers now estimate the least outlay to put the line into safe working order at £10,000 to £12,000. We maintained the line under our agreement, and gave it up in good working order. I do not think our company would now accept the line in its present condition.

Yours truly,

(Signed) J. C. COLVILL.

W. Trench, Esq.

APPENDIX No. 22.

STATEMENT handed in by Mr. W. T. TRENCH, D.L., Redwood, Birr, representive of the County Council of the North Riding of Tipperary, and the Nenagh Urban District Council, during his examination on 26th April, 1907, representing a portion of the abstract of his evidence not given during his examination.

Complaints constantly appear in the public prints, but the Railway Companies do not think it worth their while to notice them.

Through rates are more reasonable than inland ones. The meaning of this apparently is that where competition exists, as in England and on the sea, rates are lower. In Ireland, on the other hand, where competition does not exist, rates are kept up as near strangulation point as possible. The same applies to agricultural machinery. No attempt is made by the companies to push their trade or to encourage traffic.

Passenger fares are far too high. Excursion trains are not sufficiently advertised. On the important branch from Ballybrophy to Limerick, passing by Roscrea, Cloughjordan, and Nenagh, there is not a single Sunday train. The company is afraid of getting too much traffic. It would involve more rolling stock to deal with it, and they are afraid of the expense and the additional work.

Witness believes that lowered rates would lead to increased traffic, but the Company is not likely to try the experiment for the reasons given above. The experiment was once tried on the G.S.W.R. some years ago by a private individual at his own risk, and with the best results, but it led to nothing.

The main line service is fairly good—third class carriages especially good on main line, and speed sufficient. The branch lines are very badly supplied in above respects. On both main and branch lines all sorts of irregularities occur, and are taken no notice of by the Company's servants. Drunken passengers, smokers in non-smoking carriages, spitting, dirty lavatories, and dear food at stations.

Goods service sufficiently expeditious, but complaints are made of arbitrary classifications leading to higher rates, and of general uncertainty as to what the rate may or may not be. Cattle suffer greatly on the railway; witness has known them to lose from ½ to 1 cwt. in weight travelling 100 miles. Cattle arriving at Liverpool from America suffer less on the voyage than cattle from Ireland. Great numbers of cattle travel by road, the owners finding it cheaper than railing them. Witness has found this to be the case himself, also that they suffer less hardship by road than in cattle trucks.

Combined Services.—The Shannon steamers are the only instance; they are of little use; few people use them; the boats are too slow—nine miles an hour. In any case there is no trade or industry along the river banks which would require passenger steamers as a means of communication.

The Shannon and the Grand Canal exist as possible competitors of the railway, but competition is stifled; the G.S.W.R. is believed to pay some thousands a year to the Grand Canal Company so that rates may be kept up.

The management is extremely unbusinesslike and narrow-minded. No attempt is made to encourage people to travel or to accommodate them, and the result is no one travels if they can avoid it. One would almost think the company imagined they were conferring a favour on the public by carrying them and their goods. The company is afraid of the outlay which would be necessary if business increased. There is no sufficient supervision over the business at the stations. Additional traffic at once produces disorder and confusion. Under ordinary circumstances everyone at the road-side stations takes it as easy as possible. No regard is paid to the great loss of time to the general public by unnecessary delays. Witness does not consider that the non-commissioned officers or the rank and file are to blame. It is the management at headquarters which is responsible.

Witness considers that the shortcomings of the Irish Railways have, without doubt, adversely affected the development of the resources of the country in every respect. But he does not consider it possible to say to what extent the expansion of traffic has been retarded thereby. It must be borne in mind that in an agricultural country unlimited expansion is not possible. On the other hand, witness does not believe that the company makes any effort to foster or encourage the expansion of any description of traffic.

As to query 5, viz.—"What suggestions are offered that would be conducive to better management and more effective service, with a view to the proper development of the resources of the country." The public feel that the companies are absolute masters of the situation, and that they look exclusively to their dividends, regardless of the requirements of the public, or of the broader view which would lead them to expect better returns as a result of increased trade and prosperity in the country.

Witness does not consider that subsidising the companies, in order to encourage a reduction of rates and fares, would be either a sound or a satisfactory remedy.

Motor trains would give a cheap service on branch lines in cases where an increased number of standard trains could not be run without a loss.

Motor services on the public road for goods and parcels are not likely to answer at present. The countryman, as a rule, prefers to drive into the nearest market town to sell his produce there, instead of sending it away to some man whose face he has never seen. Even the smallest farmer has a donkey and cart which will take him or his wife six or eight miles to market.

Witness does not believe that amalgamation would meet with favour, unless under State control. The intense opposition to the amalgamation of the G.S.W.R. and the Waterford and Limerick showed clearly what the feeling on the subject was. The result has proved that the public apprehensions were well founded.

The following points appear worthy of consideration in connection with the foregoing:—

(*a.*) CANALS AND WATERWAYS.—Whether these ought not to be dealt with at the same time, and in the same manner as the railways. They all form part of the same inland transit system.

(*b.*) GUARANTEED RAILWAYS.—The method of taxing lands benefited by such railways requires amendment. The taxation ought to be in proportion to the benefit received, in the same way as lands subject to a drainage charge. Accounts for these railways ought to be published with full details.

The "feeding value" of the guaranteed line ought to be credited to the districts taxed in cases where the guaranteed line is worked as part of another system.

APPENDIX No. 23.

STATEMENT transmitted by Mr. J. O. MOYNAN, M.A., County Surveyor for Tipperary (North Riding), on 27th April, 1907.

The two points I wish to bring under the notice of the Commission are:—

1. Passenger service.
2. State of some of the road overbridges.

As regards No. 1, while the passenger service is generally satisfactory, there is a need during winter for an up-train to reach Dublin before 12.45. During summer a train leaves here (Nenagh) at 7.30, reaching Dublin at 11.30; the next train leaves at 2.20, reaching Dublin at 5.45. This arrangement is also inconvenient, the gap between the 7.30 a.m. and 2.20 p.m. being too long.

It would also be advisable to have one train in and one train out of Nenagh on Sundays. At present there are no trains running here on Sundays. No. 2. There are in the North Riding of Tipperary ten road overbridges with iron superstuctures which have the following notice affixed by the Railway Company:—

"G.S. and W.R.—Notice—To owners and persons in charge of traction engines, steam road rollers, and other unusually heavy vehicles, take notice that this bridge is insufficient to carry weights in excess of the ordinary traffic of the district, and the owners and all persons in charge of traction engines and steam road rollers and other unusually heavy vehicles *are hereby warned* against taking such engines, rollers, or other unusually heavy vehicles over this bridge, and they are hereby informed that they will be held responsible for *any damage* that may be caused in consequence of such traffic being taken over this bridge contrary to this notice. Dated this 1st January, 1903. F. B Ormsby, Sec."

These bridges are unable to carry heavy weights, and cause a good deal of inconvenience during the threshing season to farmers. I have also had, when steam rolling the roads, to bring my rollers over eight miles of a round to complete the work adjacent to some of these bridges. If possible it would be very advisable to have them strengthened to meet modern requirements.

APPENDIX No. 24.

STATEMENT transmitted by Mr. THOMAS J. SHAW, J.P., Chairman, Town Commissioners, Mullingar, on 30th April, 1907, one of the witnesses appointed by that Body to give evidence.

(Mr. Shaw did not attend for examination.)

As the prosperity of a country is largely dependent on the methods and modes of transit employed to carry the traffic, products, and manufactures of that country, on their cheapness and efficiency it seems to me, on looking at the special needs of Ireland in this regard, that a substantial change in the present state of things is necessary for the following reasons:—

(1.) Freights and passenger charges are in very many instances too high, and need substantial reductions.

(2.) There are many districts in Ireland requiring railway extensions and connections, the linking-up of existing systems, and very little effort is made, or in many instances can be made, owing to the state of capital accounts to supply that need—the vast majority of extensions in recent years having been made as a result of baronial guarantees or Government subsidies.

(3.) The Irish railways are at present worked as independent units, and, as a rule, each exploits its own area merely, not looking much for or to the development of traffic from an area served by another company; for instance, Clara Junction is the present natural route by which traffic from a large part of the Midlands and North Midlands would flow to the South of Ireland. As a matter of fact, however, it is impossible to go from Horseleap, the station next Clara on the Midland line, to Tullamore, the station next Clara on the Great Southern line, distance 11¼ miles, and back in the one day, and this applies with equal force to all stations from Horseleap to Cavan on the Midland Great Western system to all stations south of Clara on the Great Southern system. In consequence of want of traffic facilities there is very little intercommunication between the fairs and markets of those parts of the Midlands and the South of Ireland.

(4.) The canal systems and navigable waterways of Ireland need to be better linked up and developed.

I think the best way such change could be effected would be by amalgamating the railways, canals, and navigable waterways of Ireland under one central authority.

I consider such amalgamation could be most satisfactorily done by the creation of a stock guaranteed by the Imperial Government, into which, after a fixed date, the existing stocks could be converted at a price to be fixed by arbtiration based on the average dividends for a period of years—any deficit in the interest to be a charge on Irish funds, thereby saving the Imperial Government against loss. The Board of Control, I would suggest, to be composed, as far as possible, of experts in railway management, with sub-Boards in Belfast and Cork, nominated, I should say, partly by the stockholders, partly by the body who would be charged on behalf of this country with taking steps to provide any deficit, and partly by the Imperial Government as guarantors.

It seems to me if any such course were to be adopted, it would be well to issue at same time, say, two or three millions stock to provide for betterments and much needed extensions for developing districts of country urgently in need of railway accommodation, and of better linking-up the various lines at present in existence in Ireland.

Surplus revenue to be devoted, after provision for reserve fund, to gradual reduction of passenger and freight charges and further extensions and developments.

In conection with the Irish railways, I may say I have most experience of the Midland Great Western Railway. I find them to carry on their business courteously, and with an anxiety to meet as far as possible the reasonable requirements of their customers, save as regards accommodation for third class passengers.

Owing, however, to various causes, chiefly over-capitalisation in the past, the service is not what is needed for the full development, from a railway point of view of the district traversed, rates and charges need to be reduced, and there are connections which, for the benefit of the country, it would be desirable to construct.

(Signed) THOMAS J. SHAW.

Mullingar,
30th April, 1907.

APPENDIX No. 25.

COPY of LETTER from Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P., to the Secretary of the Commission, relative to matters referred to by the former during his examination on the 13th March, 1907.

Dublin Port and Docks Board,
2nd May, 1907.

MY DEAR SECRETARY,

Kindly bring under notice of Chairman the fact that our costs, as a Port Board, to appear before the Railway Commission amounted to over £3,000. This proves my statement that the Railway Commission as a tribunal, is entirely out of the financial means of any ordinary trader.

G. E. Shanahan, Esq.,
Secretary,
Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways, Dublin.

With thanks for courtesy,
Yours,
(Signed) WM. FIELD.

APPENDIX No. 26.

COPIES of LETTERS from the JOINT COMMITTEE of MANAGEMENT of the RICHMOND DISTRICT ASYLUM DUBLIN, on the subject of the QUALITY of the COAL RAISED at ARIGNA, COUNTY LEITRIM, and the TRANSIT FACILITIES in connection therewith.

Richmond District Asylum,
Dublin, April 25, 1907.

DEAR SIR,

At the last meeting of the Joint Committee of Management of this Asylum, on the 18th instant, reports were submitted from the Clerk of Works of the Richmond Asylum and from the Engineer of the Portrane Branch Institution, on tests made of samples of coal from Arigna collieries in the County Leitrim.

The reports in question stated that the Arigna coal compared favourably with the Welsh steam coal, but the price of the latter debarred the Committee from considering the possibility of using Arigna coal for steam raising purposes. The Committee have no definite information as to the difference in cost of transit, but I am in communication with the Secretary of the Company with a view of furnishing you with precise details. The Joint Committee believe that the railway rates are excessive.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed), W. J. MURPHY,
Chief Clerk.

George E. Shanahan, Esq.,
Secretary, Vice-Regal Railway Commission,
13, Stephen's Green.

Richmond District Asylum,
Dublin, May 13, 1907.

SIR,

In further reference to my communication of the 25th April last, respecting the quality of Arigna coal as compared with Welsh steam coal, and railway rates in connection with the former, I am instructed to forward you a copy of a communication received from the Secretary of the Arigna Mining Company, Ballinamore, County Leitrim, dealing with the matter.

You will observe that the Secretary in his letter states that he is likely to have an opportunity of giving evidence before the Commission.

I also forward you an extract from the minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Committee of this Asylum, in which appear the reports of the Clerk of Works at Richmond Asylum and the Engineer at Portrane Asylum, on tests made of Arigna Coal.

Your obedient servant,

(Signed), W. J. MURPHY,
Chief Clerk.

George E. Shanahan, Esq.,
Vice-Regal Railway Commission,
13, Stephen's Green.

2 Enclosures.

Enclosure No. 1.

The Arigna Mining Company, Ltd.,
Secretary's Office,
Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim,
April 26, 1907.

DEAR SIR,

I am greatly obliged for your letter, and pleased to hear the test of our coal turned out so satisfactory, a result, I may say, that corresponds with our experience where the coal is properly used.

The conveyance charge totals 10*s*. per ton, made up as follows:—

Carriage to the railway at Arigna ...	2*s*.	per ton.
Rail freight, Arigna to Dublin, for 100 ton lots	6*s*.	,,
Cartage from railway to Asylum in Dublin	2*s*.	,,

We reckon the loss by breakage on the rough road between mine and rail at Arigna, at not less than 1*s*.

Had we got the railway made into the mine, and for which the Government offered a free grant, the charge of 2*s*. plus loss of 1*s*. would have been reduced to 6*d*. per ton, thus effecting a saving of 2*s*. 6*d*. per ton, a great consideration in coal business. Besides we could carry on our business under more certain conditions.

As things are, development is checked, and we lose the advantage that might be secured by a very much larger turnover, being greatly handicapped.

It is likely I shall have an opportunity of giving evidence before the Commission, but any information you may require I shall be most happy to supply on hearing what it is.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed), W. H. M'ADOO.

W. J. Murphy, Esq.,
Chief Clerk,
Richmond District Asylum, Dublin.

Enclosure No. 2.

At a meeting of the Joint Committee of Management, holden at the Asylum on Thursday, April 18th, 1907, Mr. Richard Jones, J.P. (Chairman), presided. Also present:—Colonel Henry Gore Lindsay, D.L.; Alderman John Irwin, J.P.; A. K. O'Farrell, Garret Begg, T.C.; A. S. Hussey, J.P.; E. P. Monk, T.C.; Alderman W. E. Reigh, John Ribton Garstin, D.L.; E. L. Richardson, Alderman Abraham Lyon, J.P.; James Vaughan, T. C.; J. T. Duignan, John Kavanagh, T.C.; John Carolan, T.C., J.P. (Chairman, North Dublin Union); Patrick Greaves, T. W. Hamlet, Patrick Dowd, Timothy J. Sheehan, T.C.; John Lumsden, James Brady, T.C.; P. J. Kettle, W. M'Loughlin, Alderman P. W. Corrigan.

Arigna Coal.

The following reports were submitted and ordered to be sent to the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, at present sitting:—

Mr. Moran, Clerk of Works, Richmond Asylum, wrote:—

"I beg to report for the information of the Visiting Committee that I have tested a sample of Arigna coal, with the following result:—

Quantity of coal used, ... 4 tons 16 cwts.
Quantity of water evaporated, 7,000 gallons
Temperature of feed water, ... 70° F.

"Considering the temperature of the feed water, the above is not a bad result, as it works out at 6½ lbs. of water evaporated for every pound of coal. Seven pounds is considered very good with the feed water at 70° F. There is a very large percentage of ash in this coal; in fact it forms nearly one-quarter of the bulk. The Committee, I think, have received a copy of Sir Charles Cameron's report from the North Dublin Union *re* this coal. I would be glad if they would refer to it.

The cost works out at £4 11*s.* 4*d.* for the twenty-four hours' consumption.

For the purpose of comparison, I have also had a test made with the contract coal now in use, and find that the result is almost identical, so far as steam raising purposes are concerned. The ash, of course, in the case of the latter is not one-half. It is, however, useful to us for concrete purposes, while that from the Arigna coal is simply dust. The cost of the coal is, however, an important consideration, and works out in favour of the English steam coal at £1 1*s.* per day less than the Arigna coal, which is equivalent to £383 per year. I have not the exact consumption of coal at Portrane, but taking it *pro rata* with Richmond the extra cost of Arigna coal seems likely to be £1,000 more than that paid for English steam coal at present contract prices. The Board, I trust, will compare the result of the test made at Richmond with that made at Portrane, where the use of economisers has enabled them to raise the temperature of the feed water to 260° F. I think this is a favourable opportunity of requesting the Committee to consider the advisability of erecting economiser plant at Richmond."

Mr. M'Clure, Engineer, Portrane, reported as follows:—

"A six-ton sample of Arigna coal was delivered here. The following are the results of the test:—

Sample tested,	5 tons.
Gallons of water evaporated,	10,400 ,,
Temperature of feed water,	260° F.
Percentage of large coal,	75 per cent.
Percentage of ash,	24 ,,
Steam-raising qualities,	See note.

"1. I consider the rate of evaporation satisfactory, as the above works out at 9·2 lbs. of water per lb. of coal.

"2. The percentage of ash is very much above the average.

"3. Regarding its steam-raising properties, I would like to test it under more severe circumstances before offering an opinion, as at the time this coal was being tested the demand for steam was only about half what it would be in December.

"Taking it on the whole I consider it fairly good coal."

APPENDIX No. 27.

STATEMENT of GRIEVANCES transmitted by the ROSCOMMON TRADERS' ASSOCIATION, on 15th May, 1907.

Traders' Association,
Roscommon, *May 15th*, 1907.

SIR,

I am directed by the Roscommon Traders' Association to place before you the undermentioned grievances which traders and others suffer at the hands of the Midland Great Western Railway Company.

Yours truly,

(Signed) H. I. M'COURT.

The Secretary,
Commission on Irish Railways.

(1) "Complaints are frequent as to the delay in the delivery of goods, particularly heavy goods, such as meal, flour, and artificial manures. Heretofore goods were conveyed to this station by night trains and delivered in the morning. Now they cannot be had until five o'clock in the evening; and as this very often happens on the market day, the inconvenience to traders is obvious.

(2) There is not sufficient storage room for goods, and, hence, the wagons are sometimes detained on sidings, with the result that goods cannot be unloaded, and remain there for a very considerable time.

(3) With regard to rates, Roscommon is very badly treated. For instance, the carriage per ton on artificial manures in wagon lots to Roscommon is 8*s.* 11*d.*, while to Westport, nearly twice the distance, it is 6*s.* 3*d.* The reason, of course, is the boat competition which exists at the latter town. This town is similarly treated with regard to other goods.

(4) Complaints are constantly being made of the neglect of punctually sending away returned empties. The delay is often very great, and considerable inconvenience is thus caused to traders.

(5) In the matter of passenger trains Roscommon has good reason to complain. The first train in the morning leaving here for Dublin is at 10.40. This arrives in Dublin about 2 o'clock. A person travelling by this train to Dublin has very little time left to devote to business in the city, and must, perforce, often remain over to the following morning to finish it.

(6.) Then, again, two trains pass here in the evening from Mayo to Dublin, one at 4.15 and the other at 5.15, while the only one that passes down after the 12.50 p.m. (except the night mail) is a train at about 8 o'clock in the evening. Thus, there is a great interval between the down trains."

APPENDIX No. 28.

DOCUMENT put in by Mr. J. DAVIES, General Manager, Midland and South Western Junction Railways, Swindon, during his examination on 10th June, 1907.

BRITISH DOMINIONS—AREA AND POPULATION.

Year 1905. Territory.	Estimated Area, Square Miles.	Year of Census (c) or Estimate.	Ascertained or Estimated Population.	Population per Square Mile.
EUROPEAN.				
England and Wales,	58,324	1905	34,152,977	586
Scotland, ..	29,796	1905	4,676,603	157
Ireland, ..	32,605	1905	4,388,107	135
Isle of Man and Channel Islands.	302	(c) 1901	156,599	519
Total United Kingdom.	121,027	—	43,374,286	358

Year 1905. Territory.	Estimated Area, Square Miles.	Year of Census (c) or Estimate.	Ascertained or Estimated Population.	Population per Square Mile.
AUSTRALASIAN.				
Commonwealth of Australia.	2,972,906	31-12-'05	4,052,570	1·4
New Guinea, ..	88,460	—	350,000	4·0
New Zealand, ..	104,471	31-12-'05	882,457	8·4
Total, ..	3,165,837	—	5,285,027	1·7

The following Table shows the Population of each Australian State and New Zealand at each Census from 1851 to 1901, and an estimate for 1905 :—

POPULATION OF THE SIX STATES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, 1851–1905.

STATE.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1905.
Victoria, ...	77,345	540,322	731,528	862,346	1,140,405	1,201,070	1,218,571
New South Wales, ..	191,099	350,860	503,981	751,468	1,132,234	1,354,846	1,491,763
Queensland, ...		30,059	117,960	213,525	393,718	498,129	528,048
South Australia, ..	63,700	126,830	185,626	279,865	320,431	363,157	378,208
West Australia, ...	5,886	15,100	25,270	29,708	49,782	184,124	254,874
Tasmania, ...	70,130	89,977	101,020	115,705	146,667	172,475	181,106
Australia, ...	408,160	1,153,148	665,385	2,252,617	3,183,237	3,773,801	4,052,570
New Zealand, ...	22,108	84,536	257,810	489,933	626,658	772,719	882,457

RAILWAY MILEAGE.

Year 1905.	Miles.	—	Gauge.	Gauge Mixed.
England and Wales.	15,731	10,466 Double or more, 5,265 Single.	4′ 8½″ 15,571	160
Scotland, ...	3,801	1,570 Double or more, 2,234 Single.	4′ 8½″ 3,797	4′ 7
Ireland ...	3,312	657 Double or more, 2,655 Single.	5′ 3″ 2,798	3′ 505 Single Elevated Rail, 9 miles.
Total, ...	22,847			

Gauge ...	1′ 11½″	2′ 3″	2′ 4″	2′ 4½″	2′ 6″	2′ 9″
Miles, ...	62	17	3	9	21	7
Gauge, ...	3′ 0″	3′ 6″	4′ 0″	4′ 6″	4′ 8½″	5′ 3″
Miles, ...	514	7	21	11	19,368	2,798

9 miles. Single Elevated Rail. Total, 22,847.

Year 1906.	Miles.	—	Gauge.	Gauge.
AUSTRALASIA.				
Western Australia.	2,260	1,611 Government, 649 Private.	—	3′ 6
South Australia.	1,926	1,746 Government, 180 Private.	5′ 3″ *499	3′ 6″ 1,427
		All Government Lines,	5′ 3″	2′ 0″
Victoria, ...	3,394	312 Double or more, 3,082 Single.	3,313	81
New South Wales.	3,390	203 Double or more, 3,187 Single.	—	4′ 8½″ 3,390
Queensland,...	3,381	3,138 Government, 243 Private.	—	3′ 6″
Tasmania, ...	619	463 Government, 156 Private.	—	3′ 6″
New Zealand.	2,519	2,406 Government, 113 Private.	—	3′ 6″
Total, ...	17,489	16,148 Government, 1,341 Private.		

* 11 Double. 488 Single.

Gauge. ...	3′ 6′	5′ 3″	4′ 8½″	2′ 0″	—
Miles, ...	10,206	3,812	3390	81	Total, 17,489.

CAPITAL.

Year 1905.	£	Miles.	Cost.
			£
England and Wales,	1,063,700,954	15,731	67,618 per mile of line.
Scotland, ..	180,694,726	3,804	47,501 „ „
Ireland, ..	38,405,255	3,312	11,596 „ „
	1,282,800,935	22,847	—
AUSTRALASIA.			
			£
Western Australia,	9,965,940	1,611	6,186 per mile of track.
South Australia, ..	13,610,520	1,746	7,797 per mile of line.
(The above is exclusive of the Palmerston Line—145 miles.)			
Victoria, ..	41,398,037	3,394	12,194 per mile of line.
New South Wales,	43,626,063	3,390	12,869 „ „
Queensland, ..	21,741,226	3,138	6,930 „ „
Tasmania, ..	3,926,713	463	8,490 „ „
New Zealand, ..	22,498,972	2,406	9,410 „ „
	156,767,471	16,148	—

RECEIPTS.

YEAR 1905.

ENGLAND AND WALES. 15,731 Miles. Total, £96,930,705.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	34,598,420		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	150,859		
Mails, ...	815,710	Total Coaching,	41,564,989
Merchandise, ..	24,185,392		
Live Stock, ...	867,855		
Minerals, ...	22,728,295	Total Goods,	47,781,542
Steamboats, Canals, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			4,146,713
Rents, Tolls, Hotels, &c., ...			3,437,461
Grand Total, ...			96,930,705

SCOTLAND. 3,804 Miles. Total, £12,491,636.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	4,001,757		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	800,791		
Mails, ...	211,904	Total Coaching,	5,014,452
Merchandise, ..	3,275,611		
Live Stock, ..	237,960		
Minerals, ...	3,289,715	Total Goods,	6,803,286
Steamboats, Canals, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			177,353
Rents, Tolls, Hotels, &c., ...			496,545
Grand Total, ...			12,491,636

IRELAND. 3,312 Miles. Total, £4,108,678.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	1,656,753		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	312,542		
Mails, ...	171,384	Total Coaching,	2,140,679
Merchandise, ..	1,288,908		
Live Stock, ..	282,849		
Minerals, ...	255,004	Total Goods,	1,826,761
Steamboats, Canals, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			11,626
Rents, Tolls, Hotels, &c., ...			129,612
Grand Total, ...			4,108,678
Grand Total for the United Kingdom,			113,531,019

RECEIPTS—*continued.*

YEAR 1906.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA. 1,611 Miles. Total, £1,634,444.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	422,113		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	66,227		
Mails, ...	18,258	Total Coaching,	506,598
Merchandise & Minerals,	1,011,813		
Live Stock, ..	38,890	Total Goods,	1,050,703
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			30,769
Rents, &c., ...			46,374
Grand Total, ...			1,634,444

SOUTH AUSTRALIA. 1,746 Miles. Total, £1,349,765

	£		£
Passengers, ...	334,797		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	48,649		
Mails, ...	18,883	Total Coaching,	402,329
Merchandise, ..	516,022		
Live Stock, ...	66,152		
Minerals, ...	327,932	Total Goods,	910,106
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			19,541
Rents, &c., ...			17,789
Grand Total, ...			1,349,765

VICTORIA. 3,394 Miles. Total, £3,787,619.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	1,501,597		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	156,528		
Mails, ...	61,588	Total Coaching,	1,719,713
Merchandise & Minerals,	1,792,575		
Live Stock, ...	208,862	Total Goods,	2,001,437
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			10,758
Rent, &c., ...			55,711
Grand Total, ...			3,787,619

NEW SOUTH WALES. 3,390 Miles. Total, £4,234,791.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	1,331,696		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.	157,365		
Mails, ...	74,200	Total Coaching,	1,563,261
Merchandise, ..	1,797,749		
Live Stock, ...	431,661		
Minerals, ...	398,666	Total Goods,	2,628,076
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			6,823
Rents, &c., ...			36,631
Grand Total, ...			4,234,791

QUEENSLAND. 3,138 Miles. Total, £1,546,083.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	411,604		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c.,	67,535		
Mails, ...	50,000	Total Coaching,	529,139
Merchandise, ..	772,058		
Live Stock, ..	102,562		
Minerals, ...	108,200	Total Goods,	982,820
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			20,343
Rents, &c., ...			13,781
Grand Total, ...			1,546,083

RECEIPTS—*continued.*

Year 1906.

TASMANIA. 463 Miles. Total, £241,088.

	£		£
Passengers, ...	98,202		
Parcels H. C. & D., &c.,	12,091		
Mails, ...	Nil.	Total Coaching,	110,293
Merchandise, ..	80,231		
Live Stock, ...	6,626		
Minerals, ...	24,185	Total Goods,	111,042
Sundries, ...			19,853
Grand Total, ...			241,188

NEW ZEALAND. 2,406 Miles. Total, £2,349,704.

	£		£
Passengers, ..	786,872		
Parcels, H. C. & D., &c., Mails, ...	142,643	Total Coaching,	929,515
Merchandise, Minerals, and Live Stock.	1,346,038	Total Goods,	1,346,038
Steamboats, Harbours, Docks, &c., ...			38,518
Rents, &c., ...			35,633
Grand Total, ...			2,349,704
Grand Total for Australasia, ...			15,143,594

PROPORTION of Working Expenditure to Total Receipts and Proportion of Net Receipts to Paid-up Capital.

Year 1905. Page xxxvi.	Receipts.	Expenditure.	Working Expenses. per Cent.	Net Receipts. per Cent.
	£	£	£	£
England and Wales,	96,930,705	60,757,317	63	3·42
Scotland, ...	12,491,636	6,780,469	54	3·16
Ireland, ...	4,108,678	2,526,877	62	3·61
Total, ..	113,531,019	70,064,663	62	3·39

Year 1906. AUSTRALASIA.

Western Australia,	1,634,444	1,201,753	73·53	4·34
South Australia, ..	1,349,765	764,385	56·63	4·30
Victoria, ...	3,787,619	1,999,023	52·78	4·51
New South Wales, ..	4,234,791	2,308,384	54·51	4·42
Queensland, ..	1,546,083	863,356	55·84	3·14
Tasmania, ..	241,188	172,601	71·56	1·74
New Zealand, ..	2,349,704	1,621,239	69·00	3·24
Total, ..	15,143,594	8,930,741	58·97	3·96

NET RECEIPTS.

	£	
Western Australia, ..	432,691	
South Australia, ..	585,380	
Victoria, ...	1,788,596	
New South Wales, ..	1,926,407	
Queensland, ..	682,727	
Tasmania, ..	68,587	
New Zealand, ..	728,465	
Total, ..	6,212,853	On a Capital of £156,767,471, £3·96.

RECEIPTS per mile and per Train mile and WORKING EXPENSES per mile and per Train mile.

Year 1905. Pages xliv. and xlv.	Receipts per Mile	Receipts per Train Mile
	£	*d.*
Coaching Traffic.	Coaching.	Coaching.
England and Wales,	2,642	48·71
Scotland, ...	1,318	42·30
Ireland, ...	646	43·67
United Kingdom, ..	2,132	47·58
Goods Traffic.	Goods. £	Goods. *d.*
England and Wales,	3,038	88·41
Scotland, ...	1,789	80·88
Ireland, ...	552	84·19
United Kingdom, ..	2,469	87·29

—	—	Receipts per Train Mile.	Working Cost per Mile.	Working Cost per Train Mile.
	£	*d.*	£	*d.*
Goods and Coaching Traffic.				
England and Wales,	5,680	64·23	3,645	41·21
Scotland, ...	3,107	57·49	1,740	32·20
Ireland, ...	1,198	53·71	758	33·97
United Kingdom, ..	4,601	62·93	2,909	39·79

AUSTRALASIA. Year 1906.

Goods and Coaching.				
Western Australia, ..	1,017	89·98	748	66·16
South Australia, ..	773	83·59	438	47·34
Victoria, ...	1,116	96·79	589	51·08
New South Wales, ..	1,258	85·75	686	46·75
Queensland, ..	497	70·25	278	39·25
Tasmania, ..	513	61·19	367	43·79
New Zealand, ..	980	87·75	676	60·47

ROLLING STOCK.

Year 1905.	Locomotives.	Carriages.	Other Vehicles.
Page 79. England and Wales.	18,962	43,226	581,035
,, 81. Scotland, ..	2,399	5,705	157,278
,, 85. Ireland, ..	876	2,008	21,792
Total, ..	22,237	50,939	760,105

AUSTRALASIA. Year 1906.

Western Australia, ..	326	315	8,191
South Australia, ..	327	423	6,382
Victoria, ...	511	1,210	10,951
New South Wales, ..	655	1,143	12,580
Queensland, ...	348	460	7,563
Tasmania, ...	76	142	1,424
New Zealand, ..	395	906	14,127
Total, ..	2,638	4,599	61,218

APPENDIX No. 29.

DOCUMENTS put in by Mr. EDWARD WATSON, J.P., Managing Director, City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, during his examination on 11th June, 1907.

EXTRACTS from speeches of Mr. JAMES COLVILL, Chairman, Great Southern and Western Railway.

Half-yearly meeting, 15th February, 1896:—

Mr. James Colvill, Chairman, said:—

"I shall now allude to the Bill which we have before Parliament for the purchase of the Drumcondra and North Dublin Link Railway Company's Act. It is right that we should inform you what our policy is in going in for the purchase of this Act. We well remember the old days when every half-yearly meeting here was full of the Kingstown and Kingsbridge Railway, and of course if that branch line had ever been carried out it would have been the most direct and quickest route for the American mails to Kingstown. We offered what we thought was ample for this company. We all know its history, and we have heard it over and over again. It has been a failure, and is now out of view. The line that was made in connection with the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Loop Line, joining the Liffey Branch, was a line that we could not have recommended the shareholders here to undertake and work. In the first place, we must regard what is not considered by the Board of Trade Inspector as a mere imaginary danger, but a very positive danger, because he forbade the using of that junction under Newcomen Bridge at any rate of speed over five miles an hour. That necessarily involves a considerable waste of time. You cannot come into a station, and then come down this junction slowly, and then get up speed with a very considerable gradient, unless you are prepared to submit to a great waste of time. Well, we did not consider it advisable to ask the company to undertake that risk. No doubt, it is true, as people say, that this line has been working, and that no accident has occurred upon it. On the Northern line they were working the Armagh line for a considerable number of years before anything went wrong, but, however, an accident did happen, and one that cost the company £150,000. Well, we did not consider it advisable to go in for the working of this Loop Line, and before it was made I told some of the gentlemen connected with it that the Great Southern and Western Railway, if they took my advice, would never work it. On reading what has taken place at the Chambers of Commerce in Dublin and Cork over the carriage of the mails from Kingstown to Kingsbridge, a person must conclude that that carriage is not satisfactory. I say that it is altogether unsatisfactory. Well, I don't see that it is in the power of the Wicklow Company to make it much better. They have very great difficulties about it. It would never pay them to run other trains than the mail trains. But some time ago the plan was proposed for making this line that is now called the Drumcondra and North Dublin Loop Line. That line was made with very favourable gradients and on a high level. It runs over the roads, and it will enable us, if the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway allow us, to work the mails, and I have no doubt they will; it will enable us to run the distance from Kingstown to Inchicore on the way south in little more than half the time that it now occupied. It would also enable us to put on breakfast cars for the passengers (hear, hear). This line now proposed would have its junction at Amiens street for the passenger traffic, and there is then a branch line which would make a connection with our North Wall station. We pay for the use of the North Liffey branch tolls to the Midland Company to the tune of £5,000 or £6,000 a year, and that £5,000 or £6,000 a year will go a long way towards paying us a very fair rate of interest upon the money we calculate it would cost in making this Drumcondra line, so that you will have a line of your own under your own control, and a better line than the other almost, I may say, without expense. I think this policy seems sound, and I think the Wicklow Company are disposed to give us every facility, and when we get our Act we will lose no time in opening the line, and so getting rid of what I consider a fair complaint as to the waste of time in travelling between Kingstown and Inchicore."

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

Half-yearly meeting, 8th August, 1896.

At the 105th half-yearly general meeting of the shareholders of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, held at Kingsbridge Terminus, Mr. James C. Colvill, the Chairman, presiding, said:—

"The next thing mentioned in the Report is the Drumcondra line. We have got our Act of Parliament. Some of our friends who did not like it tried to put up some opposition at the end of the day, but they were not successful, and the Act of Parliament is passed; and we are now in negotiations with the Wicklow Company to provide suitable connection with Amiens street, and I hope we shall lose no time in getting this line into work, and I expect that in the carriage of the mails things will go on much better as regards time than they have been doing in the past. I can't really say who is to blame about it, but the time consumed between Kingstown and Kingsbridge has been most preposterous, you know. And we will be running on a high level, and hope to use our own carriages and dining cars and breakfast cars—(hear, hear)—on this line, so that I certainly feel very sanguine that we will be able to save the better part of half an hour at any rate."

The Chairman, in replying, said:—

". . . . The delays between Kingstown and Kingsbridge, the backing of the trains and all the delay that took place there, should and must be removed (hear, hear)."

APPENDIX No. 30.

LIST of RATES handed in by Mr. W. T. WATSON, representing the DUBLIN MERCANTILE ASSOCIATION, during his Examination on 11th June, 1907.

—	Through Rates from Liverpool, including Dublin dues, 5d. per Ton.					Rates from Dublin.				Steamship Rate from Liverpool to Dublin any quantity, Dublin dues included per Ton.	Transfer to Rails in Dublin.
	Tons.				Under 2 Tons.	Tons.			Under 2 Tons.		
	6	5	3	2		6	5	2			
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Athboy, ..	—	—	—	—	10 11	5 2	—	6 0	6 4	6 5	1 6
Killucan, ...	—	—	—	—	10 5	5 8	—	6 7	6 11	6 5	1 6
Carberry, ..	—	—	—	—	10 5	5 0	—	5 11	6 2	6 5	1 6
Drumree, ..	—	—	—	—	8 11	3 4	—	4 0	4 2	6 5	1 6
Edenderry, ..	—	—	—	—	10 5	4 9	—	6 1	6 5	6 5	1 6
Enfield, ..	—	—	—	—	10 5	4 4	—	5 2	5 5	6 5	1 6
Gibbstown, ..	—	—	—	—	11 11	5 0	—	5 11	6 2	6 5	1 6
Hill-of-Down, ..	—	—	—	—	10 5	5 2	—	6 0	6 4	6 5	1 6
Horse Leap, ..	—	—	—	—	13 1	6 11	—	8 6	8 11	6 5	1 6
Kilcock, ..	—	—	—	—	8 11	3 4	—	4 0	4 2	6 5	1 6
Kilmessan, ..	—	—	—	—	9 9	4 1	—	4 11	5 2	6 5	1 6
Roscommon, ..	—	—	—	—	17 11	8 11	—	11 1	11 11	6 5	1 6
Streamstown, ..	—	—	—	—	14 11	6 10	—	8 5	8 10	6 5	1 6
Trim, ..	—	—	—	—	10 5	4 8	—	5 6	5 9	6 5	1 6
Athy, ...	—	—	—	—	12 5	6 11	—	—	7 0	6 5	1 6
Bagenalstown, ..	—	—	—	—	12 11	8 6	—	—	9 3	6 5	1 6
Carlow, ..	—	—	—	—	12 2	7 9	—	—	7 9	6 5	1 6
Charleville, ..	—	—	—	—	12 6	—	—	—	—	——	——
Goold's Cross, ..	—	—	—	—	15 5	10 5	—	—	12 5	6 5	1 6
Kildare, ...	—	—	—	—	11 11	5 7	—	6 0	6 6	6 5	1 6
Kilkenny, ..	—	—	—	—	12 11	9 6	—	—	11 1	6 5	1 6
Milford, ..	—	—	—	—	12 2	8 0	—	—	9 2	6 5	1 6
Mountmellick, ..	—	—	—	—	12 11	7 6	—	—	7 9	6 5	——
Newcastle West,	—	—	—	—	12 6	11 11	—	—	15 1	——	——
Rathkeale, ..	—	—	—	—	12 6	11 3	—	—	14 7	——	——
Navan, ..	—	—	—	—	8 10	—	5 0	5 8	6 0	6 5	1 6
Ballycumber, ..	—	15 6	—	—	16 1	8 8	10 1	—	10 1	6 5	——
Birr, ..	14 5	—	—	—	—	15 5	—	—	—	6 5	1 6
Athlone, ..	—	—	15 11	—	17 5	7 8	—	9 6	10 3	6 5	1 6
Castletown, ..	—	—	14 11	—	15 11	6 6	—	8 0	8 5	6 5	1 6
Donamon, ..	—	—	13 5	—	13 11	8 11	—	11 1	12 4	6 5	1 6
Kilmainhamwood,	—	—	12 5	—	13 5	6 0	—	7 0	7 4	6 5	1 6
Moate, ..	—	—	15 11	—	16 5	7 2	8 10	8 10	9 4	6 5	1 6
Nobber, ..	—	—	12 5	—	12 11	5 9	6 8	6 8	7 0	6 5	1 6
Wilkinstown, ..	—	—	12 5	—	13 5	5 3	—	6 1	6 5	6 5	1 6

APPENDIX No. 31.

COPY of LETTER from Mr. JOHN M. COX, Dundalk, who gave evidence before the Commission on the 15th March, 1907.

Dundalk,
June 18th, 1907.

DEAR SIR,

The following points appear to have been overlooked when I was giving evidence:—

1. The great need of a later train from Belfast to Dundalk and Dublin than 5.30 p.m. This was urged on the railway company by the Chamber of Commerce at Belfast and Dundalk without success. I do not know of any other part of the United Kingdom where two such important cities have no railway communication from 5.30 p.m. till 7.30 a.m.—fourteen hours. I do not count the "night mail," leaving at 10.30 and arriving in Dublin at 5 a.m., a passenger train.

2. The fact that all railways canvas, cater, and give special facilities for Cross-Channel traffic, while such a thing as canvassing, catering for, or giving special facilities for traffic from North to South is practically unknown.

3. There is a choice of nine routes from Belfast cross-Channel every week night, but the last train leaves for Dublin at 5.30.

4. The fact that my applications to the Board of Trade and Department of Agriculture were without any good result.

Yours truly,

(Signed) JOHN M. COX.

To
George E. Shanahan, Esq.,
13, St. Stephen's Green, N.,
Dublin.

APPENDIX No. 32.

STATEMENT transmitted by Mr. C. S. R. PALMER, M. Inst. C.E., as supplementary to his evidence on 6th June, 1907.

15, Victoria-street,
Westminster,
London, S.W.,
24th June, 1907.

SIR,—In pursuance of my evidence on the 6th instant, and in amplification more particularly of my replies to Questions 20046 and 20164, I submit the following further information:—

The average distance goods were carried for the two years ending 30th June, 1906, was 83 miles. This figure is deduced from performances of goods and mixed trains.

The freight rates for grain, for hardwoods (local timber), and lime for agricultural purposes in 1906, also the reduced rates granted towards the end of that year, are:—

LIME FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

Distance in Miles.	Rate per Ton in first part of 1906.	Reduced Rate per Ton at end of 1906.	Percentage Reduction.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
10	2 0	2 0	—
75	6 0½	4 8½	22
130	9 2	7 0½	24

HARDWOODS FOR EXPORT.

25	4 10	4 4	10
50	6 11	6 6	7
70	8 7	8 1	6

The distances given in the preceding and subsequent table are purely for convenience of example. There are, of course, proportional rates for intermediate distances:—

Distance in Miles.	Rate per Ton in first part of 1906 for Grain.	Rate per Ton in second part of 1906.		Percentage of Reduction.	
		Grain for Gristing.	Grain for Export.	Col. 3 of Col. 2.	Col. 4 of Col. 2.
Col. 1.	Col. 2.	Col. 3.	Col. 4.	Col. 5.	Col. 6.
	s. d.	*s. d.*			
10	2 6	2 6	12½ per Cent. rebate off the Rates in Col. 3.	—	12½
20	4 2	4 2		—	12½
60	9 1	7 10		14	25
85	11 2	9 8		13	24
150	15 3	12 0		22	32

The rates in column 3 are subject to a further deduction on products re-consigned after gristing, thus—assuming that the grain received at a mill comes from 20 miles and the products are consigned 40 miles, a through rate for 60 miles, plus 1*s.* 6*d.* for break of consignment, would be charged, and not the rate for 20 miles, plus the rate for 40 miles. This further reduction is from 4*s.* 2*d.*, plus 6*s.* 4*d.*, or 10*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* 10*d.*, plus 1*s.* 6*d.* or 9*s.* 4*d.*

The railway rates for over-sea goods received on through bills of lading at the port of Freemantle are:—

From Freemantle to Perth—12 miles—2*s.* 6*d.* *per ton.*
,, ,, Albany—352 miles, 15*s.* per ton.

These rates are for all goods, *i.e.*, of every description.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed), C. S. R. PALMER.

The Secretary,
Viceregal Commission on
Irish Railways.

APPENDIX No. 33.

STATEMENT FURNISHED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD, ENGLAND.

LOANS FOR RAILWAYS IN IRELAND MADE BY THE PUBLIC WORKS LOAN COMMISSIONERS (ENGLAND).

—	Advanced. 1.	Principal Repaid. 2.	Principal Remitted. 3.	Net amount outstanding against Borrowers in respect of Loans Written Off the Assets of the Local Loans Fund. 4.	Rate of Interest per Cent. 5.
RAILWAY COMPANIES. (TEMPORARY ADVANCE ACT.)	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford,	57,810 0 0	57,810 0 0	—	—	5
Newry, Warrenpoint, and Rostrevor,	8,400 0 0	8,400 0 0	—	—	5
Waterford and Kilkenny,	12,776 0 0	12,776 0 0	—	—	5
Athenry and Tuam,	30,000 0 0	30,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Dublin and Meath,	13,500 0 0	13,500 0 0	—	—	5
Rathkeale and Newcastle,	16,600 0 0	16,600 0 0	—	—	5
Waterford and Limerick,	20,270 0 0	20,270 0 0	—	—	5
	159,356 0 0	159,356 0 0	—	—	
RAILWAYS.—IRELAND.					
Dublin and Drogheda,	156,000 0 0	156,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Great Northern of Ireland (late Irish North-Western, Dundalk, and Enniskillen).	100,000 0 0	100,000 0 0	—	—	4
Waterford and Kilkenny,	123,000 0 0	123,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4. Afterwards 3½
Great Southern and Western,	495,000 0 0	495,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4.
Midland Great Western,	500,000 0 0	500,000 0 0	—	—	3½
Cork, Blackrock, and Passage,	15,000 0 0	15,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Cork and Bandon,	35,000 0 0	35,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Irish South-Eastern,	35,000 0 0	35,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Dublin and Belfast Junction,	75,000 0 0	75,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Londonderry and Coleraine,	70,000 0 0	70,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Waterford and Limerick,	120,000 0 0	120,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4. Afterwards 3½.
Limerick and Foynes,	40,000 0 0	40,000 0 0	—	—	do. do.
Limerick and Ennis,	30,000 0 0	30,000 0 0	—	—	do. do.
Killarney Junction,	100,000 0 0	100,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Londonderry and Enniskillen,	50,000 0 0	50,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Portadown, Dungannon, and Omagh Junction,	25,000 0 0	25,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Tralee and Killarney,	50,000 0 0	50,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Great Northern and Western,	134,000 0 0	134,000 0 0	—	—	do.
Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford,	229,300 0 0	229,300 0 0	—	—	do.
Finn Valley,	20,000 0 0	20,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4. Afterwards 3½.
Londonderry and Lough Swilly,	13,000 0 0	13,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Parsonstown and Portumna Bridge,	*12,450 0 0	5 11 8	—	12,444 8 4 (50 & 51 Vic., c. 37).	5
Athenry and Ennis Junction,	59,000 0 0	59,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Waterford, New Ross, and Wexford Junction,	60,000 0 0	35,328 13 3	24,671 6 9 (42 & 43 Vic., c. 35).	—	5
Belfast Central,	100,000 0 0	100,000 0 0	—	—	5 reduced to 4
Dublin and Antrim Junction	40,000 0 0	40,000 0 0	—	—	5
Belfast and County Down Railway Company,	†164,804 7 9	164,804 7 9	—	—	3½
	2,851,554 7 9	2,814,438 12 8	24,671 6 9	12,444 8 4	
TOTALS.					
Railway Companies (Temporary Advances Act.)	159,356 0 0	159,356 0 0	—	—	
Railways (Ireland),	2,851,554 7 9	2,814,438 12 8	24,671 6 9	12,444 8 4	
	3,010,910 7 9	2,973,794 12 8	37,115 15 1		
		3,010,910 7 9			

* The amount authorised to be written off was £12,450, but £5 11*s.* 8*d.* was recovered.
† Part of a sum of £166,000 authorised by 30 Vict., c. 32, to be advanced.

PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD,
OLD JEWRY,
LONDON, E.C.

10*th September*, 1907.

APPENDIX No. 34.

Copy of Letter from Sir ALEC. W. SHAW, Limerick, Representative of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce.

MULGRAVE-STREET,
LIMERICK,
October 12th, 1907.

DEAR MR. ACWORTH,—Following up my evidence before the Railway Commission, I enclose you herewith a docket which shows how we are handicapped in sending goods from the South to the North of Ireland, and that 3 cwt. of lard is charged at the rate of 67*s.* per ton, while we can send the same article to London and have it delivered free at consignee's address at 30*s.* per ton. You may recollect that after giving my evidence I handed you personally another docket referring to some small goods from Limerick to Donegal (in the notes of evidence it is incorrectly given as Dundalk). These goods went over three railways, and there were three local rates charged.

My argument is that there should be through rates from any one station to any other in Ireland, and then we should know what we are doing.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed), ALEC. W. SHAW.

W. M. Acworth, Esq.

(*Copy of docket referred to.*)

Larne Station.

Mr. S. Warwick, Larne,
To the Northern Counties Committee of Midland Railway Company, Dr.

July 4th, 1907. Invoice No. 31. From Antrim. 12 Bkts. Lard, 3 cwt.

Paid on, 8*s.* Delivery, 2*d.* scale rate, Total to pay 10*s.* 2*d.*

Received the amount above stated—10*s.* 2*d.*—
James Morris,
For Northern Counties' Committee of Midland Railway Company.

Note.—Value of Lard about £6.

APPENDIX No. 35.

CORRESPONDENCE between the VICE-REGAL COMMISSION and the GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY, as to a proposed New Station between Kildare and Athy on the Great Southern Railway.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS.

2139-07:

13, ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, NORTH,
DUBLIN, 19*th October*, 1907.

SIR—

I am directed by the Vice-Regal Commission to transmit, for the information of your Company, copy of a statement as to the proposed erection of a new station on the Great Southern Railway which has been recently furnished to the Commission by the Committee representing the inhabitants of the district concerned.

The Commission will be glad to be favoured with any observations which your directors may desire to offer.

I am, Sir
Your obedient servant,
(Signed), GEO. E. SHANAHAN,
Secretary.

F. B. Ormsby, Esq., Secretary,
Great Southern and Western Railway Co.,
Kingsbridge, Dublin.

The Statement referred to above, transmitted with letter dated 9th October, 1907, from DENIS BOLAND, Vicarstown, Queen's County.

PROPOSED STATION BETWEEN KILDARE AND ATHY ON THE GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

The inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Cush for several years have been applying to the Great Southern and Western Railway to have a station erected at Cush, County Kildare, and on the 10th January last they instructed their solicitor to write the Company a letter, of which the following is a copy:—

4, DAME-STREET, DUBLIN,
10*th January*, 1907.

DEAR SIR—

I am instructed by the traders and inhabitants residing in the vicinity of Cush, County Kildare, embracing the townlands of Cush, Vicarstown, Crosskeys, Cloney, Richardstown, Courtwood, and Derryoughter, to represent to the directors of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company the pressing need of a railway station at Cush. Cush is midway between Kildare and Athy Railway stations, about seven and a half miles from each. It is the opinion of the people that the Company would incur no loss by establishing this station. Such a station would probably do away with the necessity of maintaining a signal cabin at Oghill, a short distance from Cush. The goods traffic would be bound to be increased, and as the Bourbawn Coursing Ground is beside the railway at Cush, a station there would be the means of attracting a greatly-increased number of people to the two yearly meetings. A large number of people are deterred from attending the coursing meetings on account of the inconvenient access. The distance between the stations of Kildare and Athy is nearly fifteen miles, which is probably the longest

distance between any two railway stations in the country. I hope to receive a favourable reply at an early date.

Yours truly,
(Signed), VALENTINE KILBRIDE.

Francis B. Ormsby, Esq., Secretary,
Great Southern and Western Railway,
Kingsbridge.

This letter was simply acknowledged by letter, of which the following is a copy:—

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY,
GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE,
DUBLIN, 12*th January*, 1907.

DEAR SIR—
I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., with reference to the erection of a station at Cush, between Athy and Kildare, and to say that the matter shall have attention.

Yours truly,
(Signed), C. DENT, *per* G.H.J.,

V. Kilbride, Esq., Solicitor,
4, Dame-street, Dublin.

A meeting was held at Vicarstown on the 25th April, and a resolution was passed asking the Great Southern and Western Railway to receive a deputation to point out to the Company the necessity of a railway station at Cush. This resolution was sent to the Company on the 26th April, and formally acknowledged by them. On the 5th July, 1907, Mr. Boland, who had been appointed secretary, received a letter from the Company, as follows:—

KINGSBRIDGE, DUBLIN,
5*th July*, 1907.

Proposed Station at No. 100 *Bridge, Townland of Cush, between Kildare and Athy.*

DEAR SIR—
Referring to your letter of the 26th April last regarding the above subject, I beg to inform you that my directors will be in the neighbourhood of the above place on the 17th instant, and will take an opportunity of looking at the place, and at the same time, if convenient to you, they will be prepared to receive the deputation suggested in your letter of the 26th April. On hearing that you approve of this suggestion, I hope to be in a position to name the exact time the deputation will be received.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed), F. B. ORMSBY,
Secretary.

Mr. Denis Boland,
Vicarstown,
Queen's County.

In reply, Mr. Boland wrote that the deputation would meet the directors at Cush, on the 17th July. The Company sent him the following reply:—

KINGSBRIDGE, DUBLIN,
13*th July*, 1907.

Proposed Station at Cush.

DEAR SIR—
Referring to your letter of the 8th instant, I beg to inform you that my directors will leave Kildare on the 17th instant at 4.35 p.m., and should arrive at No. 100 bridge, in the townland of Cush, about 4.40 p.m., and I will be obliged if you will have the deputation at that place at that time.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed), FRAS. B. ORMSBY,
Secretary.

Denis Boland, Esq.,
Vicarstown,
Queen's County.

The deputation met the directors, chairman, and several at Cush on the 17th July, and pointed out to them the grievance under which the surrounding country suffered for want of railway accommodation. The directors said they would consider the matter.

In September the people heard that the Company contemplated putting up a station at Kildangan, which is two miles further away from Cush, nearer Monasterevan and Kildare, being only three miles from Monasterevan and five miles from Kildare by public road. The people then resolved to send a petition, dated 19th September, to the Railway Company, praying for the erection of the station at Cush. This petition was signed by all the leading men in the district between the suggested site to the town of Stradbally, six miles away. The signatories include a baronet, two deputy lieutenants, the magistrates, the clergymen of every denomination, and the county and district councillors. The following is a copy of the petition:—

To the Chairman and Directors of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company.

The memorial of the residents of Derryoughter, Vicarstown, Moyanna, Ballymanus, Killrory, Stradbally, and adjacent townlands in Kildare and Queen's Counties, showeth that there is urgent necessity for a railway station on the Carlow and Kilkenny branch line, midway between Kildare and Athy, owing to the unusually great distance, viz., fifteen miles, between these two existing stations. The townland of Cush would be the most suitable and convenient point for any such station, not only because it would be most central in the section of the line concerned, but also that it would be likely to develop traffic, and serve a larger and more important area both for goods and passengers there, than would be possible at any other point nearer the two existing stations. As a matter of fact, a station at any other point would be useless to the people of Queen's County. There is a vast carrying trade in agricultural produce, cattle, corn, etc., in the district within the radius of the suggested station site. The famous coursing ground of Bourbawn, which periodically attracts a very large number of visitors is on the very spot, viz., No. 100 bridge from Dublin, and both the revenue of the Railway Company and the facilities and convenience for transit of passengers and goods would be greatly increased by the erection of a station at the point indicated. Your memoralists, therefore, pray that your honourable Board may graciously accede to their wishes; or, if further evidence on the subject be necessary, that you may be pleased to receive a deputation on their behalf on a future date.

On the 21st September the Company wrote to Mr. Boland declining to grant the petition, on the ground that they considered Kildangan the more suitable site. The following is a copy of their letter:—

KINGSBRIDGE, DUBLIN,
21*st September*, 1907.

Proposed Station between Kildare and Athy.

DEAR SIR—
I laid your letter of the 19th inst., with memorial from the gentry and clergy of the several districts interested in the erection of a station at Cush, before my Board yesterday, and I am directed to inform you that this Company regrets that they cannot comply with the prayer of the memorial, as Kildangan is considered the most suitable site for the proposed station.

I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,
(Signed), FRAS. B. ORMSBY,
Secretary.

Denis Boland, Esq.,
Vicarstown,
Queen's County.

A public meeting was held on the 6th instant of the inhabitants of the surrounding districts at Vicarstown, under the presidency of the Rev. J. Delaney, P.P., Stradbally. the following is a report of the proceedings:—

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

Proposed New Station between Kildare and Athy.

A large and influential meeting was held at Vicarstown on Sunday, the 6th inst., in connection with the above. Mr. D. Dunne was appointed secretary of meeting.

On the motion of Mr. T. Connell, seconded by Mr. E. M'Evoy, the chair was taken by the Rev. J. Delaney, P.P. Amongst those also present were—Messrs. D. Boland, Co. C.; A Millar, D.C.; C. Miller, D.C.; John Kelly, D.C.; George Whelan, D.C.; P. Feeney, W. M'Donald, C. Feeney, P. Deegan, T. Conway, &c., &c.

Rev. Chairman, in the course of an eloquent address, said:—I resolved to come to take part in this meeting because I am convinced from what I have learned that a great injustice will be done to the districts represented by this meeting if the Railway Company refuse to erect a station at the point petitioned for by the people of this part of the Queen's County, and I trust the directors will carefully consider the claims put forward to-day.

Mr. C. Millar proposed the following resolution:—

"That we, the people of the districts chiefly interested in the erection of the proposed station between Kildare and Athy, beg to point out to the directors of the Company that bridge No. 100 is by far the most suitable site on the line for the station in question. If erected at this point, it would serve the largest area of county and the greatest number of people, and would, therefore, be of greatest advantage to the shareholders on the one hand and the general public on the other. This is so obvious to everyone acquainted with the actual facts of the case that if the station be erected elsewhere it can only be regarded as put up for the personal convenience of one or two influential persons."

Mr. Millar, in a very convincing and forcible speech, directed attention to the great advantage to the people of the surrounding districts a station at this place would be, as compared with a station at any other suggested point on the line. Many of them had at present to travel seven, eight, and nine Irish miles to the nearest railway station, and a station, at least, would reduce these distances by one-half on the average. As stated in the resolution, it is plain that if the Company put the station at any other point it can only be in the interest of a few local gentlemen, whose names I need not mention.

Mr. J. Kelly seconded the resolution, and said that after the exhaustive and eloquent addresses of their Rev. Chairman and Mr. Millar he would not detain them longer than to say that if the Company placed the station elsewhere on the line it would be a very lonely one, and likely soon to become derelict.

Mr. E. M'Evoy, in supporting the resolution, said he could not do better than quote the opinion of the local Press on the question at issue.

(*End of Statement.*)

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY, IRELAND.

KINGSBRIDGE, DUBLIN,
26*th October*, 1907.

Proposed Station at Kildangan.

SIR—

With further reference to your letter of the 19th instant, with regard to the proposed station between Kildare and Athy, on this Company's system, I am directed to say that my Company have nothing to add to what is already so clearly stated in the correspondence, a copy of which you enclosed.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed), FRAS. B. ORMSBY,
Secretary.

G. E. Shanahan, Esq., Secretary,
Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways,
13, St. Stephen's-green, N., Dublin.

VICE-REGAL COMMISSION ON IRISH RAILWAYS.

13, ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, N.,
DUBLIN, 31*st October*, 1907.

2293-07:

SIR—

Referring to your letter of the 26th instant, on the subject of the proposed station between Kildare and Athy, on your Company's system, intimating that your Company have nothing to add to "what is already so clearly stated in the correspondence," I am directed to remind you that only one communication from your Company was included in the enclosures to the letter from the Commission of the 19th idem., relating to the question of the change of site for the station from Cush to Kildangan, which formed the subject of the memorial from the people of the district forwarded to your directors on the 19th September, namely, the letter addressed to Denis Boland, Vicarstown, on the 21st idem.; and that the information on the point embraced therein is confined to the statement that your Company "regret that they cannot comply with the prayer of the memorial, as Kildangan is considered the most suitable site for the proposed station." I am desired to explain that, having regard to the statements contained in the memorial referred to above, and in the resolution adopted at a public meeting of the inhabitants at Vicarstown on the 6th instant, the Commission—before dealing with an application of the representatives of the inhabitants for permission to give evidence at the present Inquiry—deemed it expedient to invite the observations of your Company, which, it was presumed, would contain sufficient information to enable the Commission to deal with the case by correspondence.

I am to add that the Commission will be glad to be favoured with any further remarks that your Company may desire to offer in this connection.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed), GEO. E. SHANAHAN,
Secretary.

F. B. Ormsby, Esq., Secretary,
Great Southern and Western Railway Co.,
Kingsbridge, Dublin.

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY, IRELAND.

KINGSBRIDGE, DUBLIN,
9*th November*, 1907.

SIR—

Referring to your communication of the 31st ultimo, No. 2293/'07, on the subject of proposed station between Kildare and Athy, I beg to say that there appears to be some misunderstanding in the matter in regard to the alleged change of site from Cush to Kildangan, as it was never decided to provide a station at Cush.

My directors went down and saw both places, and came to the conclusion that Kildangan would be the more suitable.

They have no desire whatever to prevent the representatives of the inhabitants of the district from giving evidence at the inquiry before the Commission if they wish to do so.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed), FRAS. B. ORMSBY,
Secretary.

Geo. E. Shanahan, Esq., Secretary,
Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways,
13, St. Stephen's-green, N., Dublin.

APPENDIX No. 36.

Copy of Letter received from Mr. Edward Watson, J.P., Managing Director of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.

City of Dublin Steam Packet Company,

Office, 15 Eden quay,
Dublin, 1st *November*, 1907.

Dear Sir,—With reference to the evidence that I gave to the Viceregal Commission regarding the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's action in not utilising the Drumcondra Railway for the purpose of the acceleration of the mails, the main object for which it was constructed.

One of the secondary objects of this line was to develop the passenger traffic between the populous districts on the north side of Dublin and those of the south, and to enable the public to travel from one line to the other without having to drive through the streets of Dublin.

At an extraordinary general meeting of the Great Southern and Western Railway which was held on the 22nd May, 1905, the Chairman of the Company mentioned that they had seven engines built on capital account for working the Rosslare and Drumcondra lines, which engines were not earning anything, but which had been got ready in anticipation.

The railway was opened for traffic on the 1st December, 1906, and at the half-yearly meeting held on the 14th February following the Chairman mentioned that a service of fifteen trains had been run daily on the Drumcondra line throughout the winter.

At the time that these trains were put on it was pointed out to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company that the connections with other lines had been ignored.

You will see by an extract which I enclose that one of the leading Dublin journals characterised the time-table as "A masterpiece evidently designed for the purpose of teaching the public how not to travel."

In these circumstances it is not astonishing if the traffic was not developed to the extent expected.

Instead, however, of remodelling the time-table the Great Southern and Western Company have now taken the extraordinary course of abandoning the local service altogether, and the trains are no longer run. Yesterday I found the two stations, Glasnevin and Drumcondra, practically closed and the staff withdrawn, and I request you to be good enough to call the attention of the Commission to the matter.

It is difficult to understand why the Drumcondra line was made when it is not used either for its main or secondary objects, *i.e.*, the acceleration of the mail service and the development of passenger traffic.

It can hardly be supposed that the Company would have made this line in order to save the tolls paid to the Midland Great Western Railway Company for allowing the goods traffic to pass over the Liffey branch. At the time the Drumcondra scheme was embarked upon these tolls amounted to between £5,000 and £6,000 a year, as stated by the Chairman to the shareholders on the 16th February, 1896.

It is known that the Midland Great Western Railway Company would have made a reduction in the tolls, and brought them down to about £4,000 a year rather than have lost them altogether.

The present position of affairs is this—the Great Southern and Western Railway Company would have had the use of the City of Dublin Junctions Line had they adhered to the terms of their original guarantee, have run the mails at the same speed as at present, and the annual cost would only have amounted to £1,600 a year; the sum they are now paying is £1,250, and, in addition, over £20,000 has had to be expended by the Great Southern and Western Company in works at Amiens street station, so that at the least, assuming that the Great Southern and Western are paying four per cent. interest on the latter, the present arrangement costs them £450 a year more than the original one, while the mail service has not been improved, and there is no recoup in the way of passenger traffic.

As regards goods, it is true that the Drumcondra Railway has enabled the Great Southern and Western Company to save £4,000 a year in tolls paid to the Midland Great Western Railway Company; but as this railway has cost in round figures £400,000, at four per cent. interest, the Great Southern and Western Railway Company are losing £12,000 a year, and in addition have to pay taxes on, and the upkeep of, the new line.

In these circumstances I do hope the Commissioners may see their way to make such representations to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company as will at least ensure to the public the acceleration of the mail service and the passenger facilities which were undoubtedly undertaken to be given when the assent of Parliament to the construction of the railway was obtained.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Edward Watson.

Geo. E. Shanahan, Esq.,
Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways,
13, St. Stephen's Green, N.

Copy of Extract from the *Freeman's Journal* of 4th December, 1906, referred to in Mr. Watson's Letter of the 1st November, 1907.

DRUMCONDRA LINK LINE.

The New Time-Table.

Connections Ignored.—Inconvenience to the Public.

Considerable dissatisfaction has been expressed by the public at the recent time-table issued by the Great Southern Railway between Kingsbridge and Amiens street on the Link Line. It has been found that the Southern Company have carefully arranged all their trains simply to suit their own incoming and outgoing trains at Kingsbridge, and have ignored the connections with Dublin and Wicklow or Great Northern trains, except when these happen to connect by chance. In the further case of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway the Great Southern Company have some of their trains leaving for Kingsbridge exactly as the other trains steam in. There seems to be no connection with the North Wall at all, or London and North-Western Railway Company, while the running of the Southern mail train remains unaltered, in spite of the promise given that when the Link Line was opened the mail was to have been accelerated by half an hour.

The following time-table facts will be found interesting:—

The 9.45 a.m. from Kingsbridge reaches Amiens street at 10.5 a.m., so that passengers will have to wait some twenty minutes before getting a connection on to Westland Row branch. This means that it would be shorter to walk across town.

The 12.40 p.m. from Kingsbridge reaches Amiens street at 1 p.m., and travellers have to wait 23 minutes for Westland Row connection. The 2.5 p.m. from Kingsbridge reaches Amiens street at 2.25 p.m., only to find that the Westland Row train has just left two minutes before—at 2.23 p.m. The 3.5 p.m. from Kingsbridge also meets with the same fate, and the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway 3.23 p.m. is again missed by the disgusted traveller by another two minutes.

The 7.20 p.m. from Kingsbridge reaches Amiens street at 7.38 p.m., as the 7.38 p.m. of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway steams out, leaving the passengers blessing both companies, as in the old Waterford and Limerick days at Limerick Junction. Of the return trains to Kingsbridge, the 11.57 a.m. leaves Amiens street as the D.W.W. Railway train comes in at 11.57 a.m.

The 1.25 p.m. for Kingsbridge leaves just two minutes before the D.W.W. Railway train arrives at 1.27 p.m.

The 3.40 p.m. departs for Kingsbridge just two minutes before the connecting D.W.W. Railway train comes in at 3.42 p.m.

The whole time-table seems to strike one as a record of railway bungling, and is *a masterpiece evidently designed for the purpose of teaching the public how not to travel.*

APPENDIX No. 37.

RETURN showing the nature of the action taken by Irish Public Bodies, from whom notification has been received in reference to the following Resolutions of the Irish County Councils' General Council, of 18th October, 1906, on the subject of the Control and Management of Irish Railways.

Resolved:—"(I.) That we are of opinion that the present system of managing the Irish railways is detrimental to the interests of Ireland.

"(II.) That the placing their management in the hands of the British Government would be also detrimental to Ireland.

"(III.) That, on the other hand, it would be of great advantage to Ireland if all the Irish railways were put under one management, subject to the control of some body representing the people of Ireland; and that the General Council of County Councils could be made use of as such a representative body, if no other representative body were formed.

"(IV.) That the necessary legal powers should be given to the General Council, or other representative body, to purchase all the Irish railways, and to borrow money for that purpose on the security of the rates of the whole of Ireland, which added to that of the railways themselves, would make the security so perfectly safe that the necessary money could be borrowed at a reasonable rate of interest."

COUNTY COUNCILS.

Resolution approved by:—(15), Donegal, Dublin, Kerry, Kildare, King's County, Leitrim, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Queen's County, Roscommon, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford.

Note.—Tipperary (S.R.) County Council approved of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd paragraphs to the words "people of Ireland."

No action taken by:—(5) Antrim, Kilkenny, Londonderry, Tyrone, Wicklow.

Adjourned:—(1) Sligo (Witness—Alderman Collery—appointed).

Marked "Read" by:—(2) Armagh, Fermanagh.

COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCILS.

Resolution approved by:—(1) Cork.

The County Borough Council of Dublin referred resolution to Finance Committee for report.

The County Borough Council of Limerick took no action in view of a resolution already adopted favouring unification of all existing lines, with effective State or Public Control.

The County Borough Council of Londonderry appointed witnesses to represent their views before the Viceregal Commission.

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS, ETC.

Resolution approved by:—(43) Armagh, Athlone, Athy, Bagenalstown, Ballina, Ballybay, Belturbet, Carlow, Carrickmacross, Cashel, Castlebar, Castleblayney, Clonakilty, Clonmel, Drogheda, Dundalk, Dungarvan, Enniscorthy, Fermoy, Galway, Gorey, Granard, Kilkee, Kilkenny, Killarney, Kilrush, Kinsale, Lismore, Loughrea, Midleton, Naas, Navan, New Ross, Rathkeale, Skibbereen, Strabane, Tralee, Trim, Westport, Wicklow, Youghal.

Note.—Newcastle West adopted 1st, 2nd, and 3rd paragraphs to the words "people of Ireland." Omagh adopted 1st, 2nd, and 3rd paragraphs.

No action taken by:—(15) Ballymena, Banbridge, Bangor, Bray, Coleraine, Cookstown, Dalkey, Downpatrick, Hollywood, Limavady, Lurgan, Newcastle (Down), Portadown, Warrenpoint.

Witnesses appointed by:—(1) Enniskillen.

"Read and noted":—(1) Blackrock.

Marked "Read":—(4) Kingstown, Larne, Pembroke, Tipperary.

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS.

Resolution approved by:—(65) Ardee No. 2), Athy (No. 1), Ballinamore, Ballymahon, Ballymore, Baltinglass (No. 1), Baltinglass (No. 2), Bawnboy, Belmullet, Borrisokane, Carrickmacross, Carrick-on-Suir (No. 1), Carrick-on-Suir (No. 3), Cashel, Castlecomer, Castlerea, Clifden, Cloneygowan, Corofin, Drogheda, Dublin (North), Dundalk, Dunfanaghy, Edenderry (No. 1), Edenderry (No. 2), Edenderry (No. 3), Ennis, Glenties, Gortnahoe, Innishowen, Kenmare, Kilmallock, Kilrush, Kinsale, Limerick, Lismore, Lisnaskea, Listowel, Loughrea, Louth (Drogheda), Macroom, Meath (Drogheda), Millstreet, Mohill, Monaghan, Mountmellick, Mullingar, Naas (No. 1), Naas (No. 2), Newry (No. 1), Newry (No. 2), Oldcastle, Omagh, Roscrea (No. 1), Roscrea (No. 3), Scariff, Shillelagh, Skibbereen, Strokestown, Swinford, Trim, Urlingford, Youghal (No. 1).

Favours State Control:—Ballyvaughan.

Favours control by County Councils through which lines run:—Cavan.

No action taken by:—(9) Coleraine, Dungannon, Dunmanway, Kells, Killarney, Midleton, Oughterard, Stranorlar, Tandragee.

Marked "Read" by:—(4) Clogher, Magherafelt, Thomastown, Tipperary (No. 1).

Disapproved by:—(1) Waterford.

POOR LAW BOARDS.

Resolutions approved by:—(54) Athy, Ballina, Ballinasloe, Ballymahon, Baltinglass, Bawnboy, Belmullet, Cashel, Castlebar, Castleblayney, Castlerea, Clogheen, Corofin, Croom, Drogheda, Dublin (North), Dublin (South), Dundalk, Dunfanaghy, Edenderry, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Enniskillen, Galway, Glenties Gorey, Inishowen, Kenmare, Kilkenny, Kilmacthomas, Kilrush, Kinsale, Lisnaskea, Listowel, Millstreet, Mitchelstown, Mohill, Monaghan, Mountmellick, Naas, Newry, Omagh, Oughterard, Rathdown, Scariff, Shillelagh, Skibbereen, Sligo, Strokestown, Swinford, Tipperary, Tralee, Urlingford, Youghal.

Note.—Balrothery Union adopted first paragraph, and postponed remaining paragraphs.

Favours State control:—(1) Ballyvaughan.

Not adopted:—(1) Banbridge (equal votes for and against).

No action taken by:—(9) Ardee, Ballyshannon, Castletown, Coleraine, Dunmanway, Killarney, Stranorlar, Tandragee, Wexford.

Marked "Read" by:—(8) Armagh, Antrim, Belfast, Ballinrobe, Clogher, Dungarvan, Loughrea, Thomastown.

Disapproved by:—(1) Waterford.

A. KEOGH NOLAN,
Secretary.

Irish County Councils' General Council,
10, Leinster-street, Dublin,
November 21st, 1907.

NOTE.—A portion of this return is included in the Appendix to the First Report (see p. 497).

APPENDIX No. 38.

Abstract of proposed evidence furnished by Mr. J. B. Bosanquet, Portlaw, Co. Waterford, who was not examined.

Great loss and inconvenience is caused by the irregularity of trains on the Great Southern and Western Railway. I only speak of the very small portion of the Great Southern and Western Railway that I am in the habit of using—Kilmeaden to Waterford, and Waterford to Dublin and to Athy—both for goods, live stock, and as a passenger.

Bad and Irregular Service.

The train leaving Waterford on Sunday at 11 a.m. gets to Kilkenny at or about 12 noon. No train leaves Kilkenny for Carlow till about 6 p.m. The 11 a.m. from Waterford gets to Maryborough at 1.30. But train does not leave for Dublin till 3.22. The down train leaving Dublin at 9 a.m. on Sunday gets to Kilkenny at 12 noon, but no train leaves Kilkenny for Waterford till 5 p.m. The morning train from Dungarvan to Waterford is very frequently very late, so much so that we cannot depend on it to connect with the 9.50 a.m. at Waterford North for Dublin, and the train from Dungarvan this month runs into South Station and one has to drive a mile to make the Dublin connection at the North Station, but both my men and myself have been so often left all day in Waterford owing to train being late, that now I generally drive the whole way into Waterford to catch 9.50 a.m. train. All trains are frequently late and not to be relied on.

Train from Dublin getting to Waterford North at 7.10 p.m. does not now connect with the train for Dungarvan, as it now leaves the South Station at 7.0 p.m.

For example, on September 4th, 1906, I sent my man from Kilmeaden to Athy by 9.15 train—should get to Athy at noon—train missed connection at Waterford; man had to stay in Waterford all day till 3.40; did not get to my Kildare farm till 8 p.m., when too dark to pick cattle and sheep. Sent pigs by same train; boy and cart waiting for them at Athy *from* 12 *noon to* 6 *p.m.* Such things frequently take place. On Saturday morning, 6th October, telephoned from Kilmacthomas to Waterford to have two closed wagons to send barley to Athy from Kilmeadan; sent four loads of barley in the afternoon; *there were no wagons at Kilmeaden*; sent again on Monday morning; there was *one* open and *one* closed wagon; 42 bags were sent in open truck, all of which got wet and badly injured. I sent *95* bags, but the numbers stated to be in each wagon were 51 and 42, or 93 in all, but 94 were delivered at Athy. My men handed in 95—the receiving porter's book shows *95* as received. I believe they have not, in many cases, struck through rates between many of their own stations by the shortest way. For example, Kilmeaden to Athy, *via* Waterford, is 72 miles, but they charge on 195 miles, *via* Mallow. I have had to pay this for two trucks of grain. Owing to this method of charging I sent the last lot by carts 11 miles to Waterford and thence to Athy by canal. They have now struck rate and refunded.

I have made a claim against the railway for overcharge, loss of one bag of corn paid for, and injury by wet to 42 bags, as they put seed barley in an open truck, though I ordered two closed wagons. They refuse to pay for damage; I now mean to sue them.

This year (1907) the Great Southern and Western Railway have again supplied open wagons, without even oil covers, for corn, and our corn this year was bad enough without this. I have had to allow the merchant £5 on account of the corn getting wet; some had oil covers with holes put on to cattle trucks, which sagged in the centre and ran all the water through the holes.

I bought ninety-eight sheep to send to Kildare at Cahir, County Tipperary, on September 18th; could get no suitable train to send them by, as they would be hours at Limerick Junction, as goods trains do not connect; had to bring the sheep to my Waterford farm. Then I wanted to send them by mixed goods train from Kilmeaden to Athy, leaving at 4.5 p.m., to make connection with 11 p.m. up goods train, but was refused. I telephoned and wrote, but to the former I got refusal, and no reply to the latter. I saw the local manager; he would allow them in "P" wagons, and two bookings—first to Waterford, then Waterford to Athy. I wrote again to him, but he did not reply. I then wrote to Kingsbridge, and after about six weeks they gave me leave to put the stock on the 4.50 p.m. mixed goods, when it was too late to move the ewes to the ram. I was told by the stationmaster and Mr. Purdon to drive my stock past Kilmeaden station, 11 miles, into Waterford, and put them on rail there at 11 p.m., when my men would have no train to get home by. I wanted a through goods rate from Kilmeaden to Athy, and live stock carried in reasonable time.

It seems the custom of the Great Southern and Western Railway to *overcharge on corn* and to give all the trouble they can. When one looks for a refund on small lots, I suppose one would spend more in stamps than the refund would come to, so that in most cases, I daresay, it is never recovered. *Too much is charged for carrying stock* short distances, which causes loss to the railway and injury to the live stock, as they are driven so much from fair to fair.

The rates on heavy cheap goods, turnips, and brewers' grains, etc., almost prevent them being moved in summer time, the rate on brewers' grains, Dublin to Athy, is almost double the value of the grains at Dublin. Turnips, parsnips, and cabbage are three good vegetables, which could be sold in considerable quantities to town and city people, but the railway will not allow a temporary division to be put into their trucks and do not supply a means of dividing them. Six or eight tons are too much for city dealers, whereas a constant fresh supply could be arranged for to several dealers in ton, ton and a half or two ton lots, if railway rates were reasonable.

I think the railway would gain by issuing return tickets for return same day or following day at less than monthly tickets, as people would go backward and forward more and do more business.

The carrying companies are a great block to the development of the country. But until the country is producing more and agriculture and industries have more produce, and manufactures to move, I do not see how railways can give sufficient service and at proper rates, and at the same time pay interest on the capital spent on building and working the lines. Ireland, as an agricultural country, could, if worked, produce at least four times what she is at present producing, leaving out of consideration altogether the industries and other matters that would develop round the increased production and spending power of the agricultural community. If Ireland is ever to take her place as a prosperous country, the four things the Government of the country must grapple seriously with are (1) education suitable to the requirements of Ireland, not education which is only to make the people discontented and leave the country; (2) settlement of the land tenure, as till that is settled there can be no real progress in agriculture; (3) the railways and waterways and shipping; (4) the draining and manuring of the country—nineteen-twentieths of Ireland is exhausted or semi-exhausted, and half the land wants to be drained. To bring into the country all the manure required to build up the soil, and then to move the produce of the soil to the centres of consumption, is the natural work of the railways and canals. At present half the cost of useful manures is added by the cost of transit.

(Signed), J. B. A. Bosanquet.

Laharden House, Portlaw.
Co. Waterford.

Letter on the subject of the transit of Live Stock from the Great Southern and Western Railway, transmitted by Mr. Bosanquet on 24th November, 1907.

Great Southern and Western Railway.
Traffic Manager's Office, Dublin,

W. 30558. *November 22nd*, 1907.

Dear Sir,—Referring to your inquiry relative to the transit of stock from Kilmeaden to Athy, I regret not being in a position to offer you a suitable service between former station and Waterford, and would therefore suggest your walking the cattle to Waterford so as to be despatched to Athy per goods train leaving 11.30 p.m.

Yours truly,
(Signed), E. A. Neale,
per E. W

J. B. A. Bosanquet, Esq.,
Portlaw,
Co. Waterford.

APPENDIX No. 39.

Resolutions from Public Bodies.

I.

COPY OF RESOLUTION unanimously adopted by the COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL OF LIMERICK on *7th March*, 1907.

Proposed by Councillor E. J. Long, City High Sheriff, seconded unanimously:—

Resolved:—"That in the opinion of this Council the policy of Irish Railways should be directed more towards developing the agricultural and manufacturing industries of Ireland than has hitherto been their aim.

"To us it seems a grave injustice to Irish industry that Irish Railways should carry imported goods at lower rates than they carry similar Irish produce, which special treatment amounts to protection in favour of foreign manufacture.

"That the Irish Railway Companies be requested to discontinue this policy, and to give home produce as low mileage rates as those at which they now carry imported goods.

"That we believe the lowering of internal rates between stations in Ireland on all classes of agricultural produce would soon sensibly diminish the amount of such goods imported.

"That there should be Through Rates to all stations in Ireland for Irish traffic of all description.

"That this being a comparatively poor country, it is most desirable, with a view to the more economical working of the several Irish Railways, that the unification of all the existing lines under one Board of Management should be brought about, and with effective State or public control."

JOHN KERR, *Mayor*.

Passed unanimously.

7th March, 1907.

II.

COPY OF A RESOLUTION forwarded by the MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL on *7th April*, 1907.

"That this Council adopt the resolution of the General Council of County Councils on the Railways question. I do so the more readily as this Council was the first Council in Ireland to take action in the matter. Since then the Derry County Council adopted the resolution, which is now returned to them in a slightly modified form by the General Council. This question is a non-contentious one, all parties and classes being agreed that the present system is injurious to the country. The Ulster witnesses before the Commission, especially those from Richill, County Armagh, and from Enniskillen, have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the present system of through rates enables the British and even the foreign manufacturer to undersell us in our own markets, while the through rates given for agricultural produce, such as eggs, butter, etc., do not enable us to compete with Denmark and Italy in the English and Scotch markets, and the dead meat trade is practically destroyed. It has also been shown that even when Mr. Plews was willing to reduce the rates that the English managers would not agree. At the present time wagons are being run empty which might be used to carry produce, such as home-grown roots and feeding-stuffs for winter feeding of cattle, at rates of ½*d.* or ¼*d.* per ton per mile. Not only are manufacturers handicapped by the want of through rates from one Port of Ireland to another, but at the terminal points of the different lines the charges for terminals, loading and unloading are duplicated—say, I wish to send goods from Armagh to a point on the Great Southern and Western Railway, I have to pay two local rates instead of one through rate, and also have to pay the terminal charges four times instead of twice. We have been practically told by the Managers that there is no hope of the abolition of the through rates from Britain. The Coasting Steamers which now run from Wexford to Derry have carried goods for points ten miles or more inland on the Great Northern Railway and other systems, at rates 25 to 50 per cent. lower than previously. Owing to the Ulster Canal, Monaghan town gets much fairer rates than points not touched by the Canal; this proves that under the present system, where there is no competition, rates are charged up to a very high point. Instead, however, of trying to do better even at this eleventh hour, we find the railways giving evidence in favour of closing up the avenues of competition, namely, the Canals. The evidence shows that it pays to send not only soap, but even woollen goods to England and re-ship it back rather than send them direct by rail."

III.

COPY OF A RESOLUTION adopted by the CASTLEBAR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL on *22nd April*, 1907.

"That we, the members of the Castlebar Urban District Council in meeting assembled, believe that the transfer of the Irish Railways to the control of the Irish people, according to the scheme proposed by the General Council of County Councils, is necessary for the prosperity of the country; that copies of this resolution be sent to Mr. J. Redmond, M.P., Dr. Ambrose, M.P., Mr. Birrell, M.P., Mr. Sweetman, and the Chairman of the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish railways."

IV.

COPY OF RESOLUTION adopted unanimously by the BELFAST PROVISION CURERS' ASSOCIATION on *3rd May*, 1907.

"That this Association be represented before the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways to give evidence respecting what we consider the excessive rates of Railway carriage on dead pigs, the raw material of our trade. Also on the undue preference accorded, in our opinion, to some inland curing centres against Belfast, whereby we are suffering great loss and our trade gradually becoming transferred thereto. That a Committee be appointed to collect evidence, and that Mr. Robert N. Boyd, of Henry-street, Belfast, be and is hereby requested to appear before the Commission and give evidence on our behalf."

V.

COPY OF A RESOLUTION adopted by the KILKENNY CORPORATION on *14th May*, 1907, and transmitted to the Commission by the Irish Government on the 27th idem.

"That we consider that the only solution of the inland transit problem in Ireland that will prove satisfactory to the public and fair to the shareholders of the Railways is the State purchase of the Irish Railways at an equitable price, and entrusting their management to a public body so constituted as to represent all sections of Irish opinion."

VI.

COPY OF A RESOLUTION adopted by the BIRR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL and transmitted on *15th May*, 1907.

Resolved:—"That we, the Birr Urban District Council approve of the proposal for Nationalisation of Irish Railways by the State."

Unanimously passed.

VII.

Irish Railways.

COPY OF RESOLUTION adopted by the KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL at their meeting on 16th May, 1907.

"Resolution, 7th March, from Limerick Corporation, that the policy of Irish railways should be directed more towards developing the agricultural and manufacturing industries of Ireland; it is unjust to carry imported goods at a lower rate than similar Irish produce; the lowering of internal rates between stations in Ireland of all classes of agricultural produce would sensibly diminish the amount of such goods imported; there should be through rates to all stations in Ireland for Irish traffic; and effective State or public control should be introduced."

This resolution was adopted on the proposition of Mr. W. M'Mahon, seconded by Mr. W. O'Donnell.

VIII.

COPY OF RESOLUTION adopted by the COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE (DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION) at a meeting held on 17th May, 1907, on the motion of Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.

"That this meeting is of opinion that the Irish railways, as public utilities, should be unified and nationalised under proper control—to be operated as the high road of commerce for the good of the community, instead of being run for a small section of privileged private shareholders."

IX.

COPIES OF RESOLUTIONS adopted at the IRISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS at Dublin, on 20*th May*, 1907.

1. *Nationalisation of Irish Railways, Canals and Mines.*

"That this Congress desires to reiterate its emphatic opinion that Irish industry is most seriously handicapped by the exorbitant railway rates still charged for the transit of goods, which can only be effectively dealt with by the Nationalisation of the Irish canals, inland waterways, and railways, a measure which should be immediately undertaken by the Government, as recommended by evidence at the Viceregal Railway Commission. That this Congress re-affirms previous resolutions in favour of the Nationalisation of mines."

Moved by Mr. Hugh M'Manus (Belfast).

Seconded by Mr. L. Corrigan.

2. *Nationalisation of Irish Railways and Canals.*

"That in view of the evidence already given before the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways, showing that Irish industries are paralysed by the excessive charges in transit on the inland rates in comparison to the charges on foreign manufactured goods coming here from other countries, under the through rate system, this Congress considers the time has arrived for the Government to introduce a Bill in Parliament with the object of Nationalising all Irish railroads and canals."

Moved by Mr. L. Corrigan.

Seconded by Mr. R. O'Keeffe.

3. *Nationalisation of Irish Railways.*

"That, in the interests of the public health, the avoidance of numerous accidents and the general welfare of the country, this Congress declares the time has arrived when the Government should purchase the Irish railways and work them for the common good."

Moved by Mr. Thomas Foy (A.S.R.S.).

X.

COPY OF A RESOLUTION adopted by the CASTLECOMER UNION AND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL, on the 29*th May*, 1907.

"Resolved that we, the members of the Castlecomer Rural District Council, desire to express it as our opinion that until all the Railways of Ireland are purchased and placed under national control there cannot be any proper development of the trade and industries of the country, as from our experience of the manner in which the railways are worked we cannot but conclude they are worked in the interests of a class, by a class, and without any regard to the requirements of the people as a whole. That even in the matter of excursions there is but the slightest attempt on the part of the railway authorities to facilitate the travelling public, and we look upon their action in not giving better concessions to the delegates travelling to the late National Convention as in keeping with their whole attitude to the aspirations of the Irish people, and we trust the result of the findings of the present Royal Commission on Railways in Ireland will lead to the speedy purchase of the Railways, and their control by a popularly elected national body, and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Secretary of the Royal Commission as our reply to his letter asking for evidence relative to the Railways."

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